

VLR - 2/20/90 NRHP - 12/28/90

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Greer House  
other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 206 East Court Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Rocky Mount N/A  vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Franklin code 067 zip code 24151

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Harold C. Miller 19 Nov 1990  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Director, VA Dept. of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: SINGLE DWELLING

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: SINGLE DWELLING

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

GREEK REVIVAL

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood

roof Metal

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

The Dr. Thomas Bailey Greer House is located at the intersection of East Court Street and Orchard Avenue in Rocky Mount, the seat of Franklin County. Construction of this two-story, wood-framed, Greek Revival building began in 1861 but was halted because of the Civil War. The Greer House retained its original T-shape until a series of three small building campaigns on the east elevation altered the form of the dwelling to resemble a square on all but the southwest corner. The nominated site is approximately one acre in area, and includes, besides the dwelling itself, one noncontributing structure--a modern swimming pool.

**ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS**

The Dr. Thomas Bailey Greer House, also known as the 1861 House, faces north on a level site along East Court Street in Rocky Mount. Mature pine and cedar trees shade the yard around the house, with five pine trees lining the yard along the west or Orchard Avenue side. A semicircular drive is also located on the west side.

The original T-shaped dwelling is a two-story, three-bay structure built of wood framing members with a brick foundation laid in American bond. The entire structure is covered with weatherboards. The low-pitched hipped roof is covered with standing-seam sheet metal and encompasses the three interior chimneys that serve six original fireplaces. A plain cornice is located directly below the roof line except along the southeast addition. All of the original windows have six-over-six, double-hung sash with thin muntins. The first-story windows are slightly taller than those of the second story. The sills are plain wooden members and the lintels are decorated with molded corner blocks. With the exception of those on the south and southeast elevations all of the windows have louvered wooden blinds.

On the north elevation there is a central doorway located on both stories. The door of the first-story entrance is a five-paneled recessed door with a Greek Revival surround. The door is flanked by three-pane sidelights above a solid wood panel. A glazed transom is located over the door. There is light framing of the panes and heavy door surrounds with molded corner blocks. The second-story doorway is identical to the

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1861-1922

Significant Dates

1922

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Thomas Bailey Greer

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Located in the center of Rocky Mount less a quarter of a mile from the Franklin County Courthouse, the Greer House was built to be an imposing residence in this rural, small-town community. The importance of the house is also enhanced by its well-preserved original Greek Revival details. Only minor alterations have occurred during its continuous inhabitation. For this reason it serves as a good example of the late Greek Revival style and well represents its era of construction in this small community.

The Greer House draws local historical significance from its builder and original owner, Dr. Thomas Bailey Greer (1826-21 December 1891). Greer, a member of one of the most prominent families in Franklin County, was the third generation of Greers to live in the county. Like his father, Thomas Bailey Greer, a grandfather, Moses Greer, Dr. Greer was an active in county affairs. He was also a prominent physician and a member of the first Medical Examining Board of Virginia.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The house now known as the Dr. Thomas Bailey Greer House or, more commonly, the Greer House, has since its construction been a prominent structure on the east side of Rocky Mount. Begun in 1861 and completed soon after the Civil War, the house was built before the town of Rocky Mount was incorporated in 1873.<sup>1</sup> At the time of Greer's death in 1891, the site included about thirty-five acres.<sup>2</sup> This site was originally part of an approximately thirty-three-acre tract inherited by Greer's first wife, Celestia A. Taliaferro. In 1851 and again in 1862 Greer purchased land adjacent to that of his wife's. These purchases added two and one-fourth acres, bringing the total tract of land to approximately thirty-five acres.

**XXI** See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

VA Dept. of Historic Resources  
221 Governor St. Richmond, VA 23219

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of property .0891 acres

UTM References

A 17 409468 0599140  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rhonda L. Lefever

organization Center for Historic Preservation date January 1990

street & number Marv Washington College telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Fredericksburg state VA zip code 22401

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first, but it does not have a surmounting transom. A five-bay, one-story porch with a plain cornice supported by six square wooden Doric columns shelters the first-floor entrance. Approximately six feet of a flagstone walkway remains; it once extended from the original wooden steps of the porch to East Court Street. The porch steps, which are presently of stone, are located in front of the central bay of the porch.

On the west elevation, a one-bay porch about eight feet wide and supported by a single square wooden Doric column and two Doric pilasters shelters two entrances. One entrance leads into the service stair hall in the south ell of the house, while the other opens into the northwestern parlor. The service entrance, like the first-floor entrance on the north elevation, has a door flanked by three-pane sidelights above solid wood panels; it lacks a transom, however. The trim around the parlor entrance door is identical to the service door, but lacks the sidelights. The porch has plain cornice identical to that of the north porch, but is further embellished by a simple balustrade. Four concrete steps lead up to the landing.

A raised basement located beneath the rear ell is visible from the west and south elevations. The basement was horizontal sliding window sashes with louvered wooden blinds. A small wooden door providing an exterior access to the dirt-floored basement is located along the south elevation. It is believed that this basement room was once used as a dining room. The door on the south elevation opened onto a flagstone court that provided access to two log buildings covered with weatherboarding and connected by a porch. These two rooms, which are said to have functioned originally as the household kitchen, once had stone chimneys that served large fireplaces.<sup>1</sup>

The Greer House has sustained three small building campaigns on the southern portion of the original east end of the rear ell. These alterations have changed the original T-shape structure to resemble a square on all by the west elevation. The first alteration was a nine-foot addition to the south elevation of the main block. This is a two-story structure with a stone foundation and a lower roof line. It also included an exterior brick chimney. The first-floor window has six-over-six double-hung sash, and the second-story window has two-over-two double-hung sash. Later, a two-story shed-roofed structure was added to the south elevation of the first addition. According to photographs, this structure included a window and door. It served as a kitchen, and may have been the first attached kitchen of the Greer House. A Sanborn Map of 1922 shows the first addition and<sup>2</sup> the shed-roofed structure, so these had been constructed by that date.<sup>2</sup> The last addition to the house occurred in 1988. In this campaign, the shed-roofed structure and the added brick chimney were removed and replaced with a room measuring approximately eighteen and one-half feet by fifteen feet. This is a two-story addition with a concrete-block foundation. The first floor has a modern bay window and a door with a single-pane transom and one single-pane sidelight.

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The first-floor plan of the Greer House consists of a central passage with a single room on each side, and a passage running perpendicular to the central passage that provides access to the original south room and the recently added southeast room. The second floor is similar in plan to the first.

The interior retains many of its Greek Revival details. Wide baseboards are located throughout the house and have been copied and placed in the southeast room. The rooms located to the east and west of the central passage each contain a cornice with dentiled crown molding. Two of the original six brick fireplaces are located in these two rooms. All of the fireplace mantels have engaged Doric pilasters and plain Greek Revival entablatures. The room east of the central passage contains wall paper that is thought to date to 1901. All of the original doors within the house have four recessed panels. The door between the central passage and the west room is surmounted by a broken transom and framed in the Greek Revival-style with bull's eye corner blocks.

The original wide-pine-plank floor survives throughout the dwelling, with the exception of the landings on the north staircase. The floor of the first landing of this two-run, open-string stair is made of poplar and the second landing is made of white oak. The walnut newel post is rounded and tapered with a polished oval hand rail. The stair has rounded, tapering balusters, arranged with two on each tread. At one time brass strips along the back of each tread held the carpet in place. The stair base has six recessed panels that are graduated to conform to the slope of the stair. The outline of each panel is rectangular with a lancet top.

In the east-west passage that is located directly to the south of the central passage is a second staircase. This single-run, open-string staircase is embellished with the same details as the stair in the front central passage. The north central passage and the secondary east-west passage were once separated by a wall. This meant that on the second floor, the south room of the rear ell was totally separated from the two north rooms and was accessible only by the second staircase. This wall has since been removed to accommodate more open circulation on the second story. The new passage is defined by a walnut handrail and balusters copied from the originals. This handrail still separates the second story east-west passage and the south rooms from the north rooms of the house, but a door has been placed in the northeast room to provide access to the east-west passage and the south rooms.

There is documentation that a latticed well house was once located in the center of the east lawn.<sup>3</sup> Also, at the time of Dr. Greer's death in 1891 it is clear that a barn or some other sort of storage structure was on the property to house the equipment and cattle listed in the assessment of his property.<sup>4</sup> No other evidence of outbuildings exists. Today, a modern swimming pool is the only distinct auxiliary structure and is located in the east lawn.

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### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Works Progress Administration Papers. Franklin County Library, Rocky Mount, Virginia.

<sup>2</sup>Sanborn Map of Rocky Mount, #9066, 1922.

<sup>3</sup>WPA Papers.

<sup>4</sup>Franklin County Deed Book 22, pp. 77 and 116.

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Greer was a member of a family that was highly significant to the early history of Franklin County. His grandfather, Moses Greer, Sr., was one of the first justices commissioned when the county was created on 12 December 1785. His father, Thomas Bailey Greer, Sr., was a member of the House of Delegates from Franklin County during the sessions of 1819-1820, 1824-1825, and 1825-1826. Greer's first wife, Celestia A. Taliaferro, was a daughter of Franklin County's first physician, Dr. Richard. M. Taliaferro, who also was a county justice.

While living in Rocky Mount, Greer made many contributions to the community. One of three brothers who practiced medicine in Franklin County, Greer became known both locally and across the state for his achievements in medicine. During this time, medicine was establishing itself as a profession with educational standards, official licensing procedures, and recognized authorities that controlled access both to medical school and to various medical specializations. This is part of a larger process of professionalization that was occurring at the turn of the century--lawyers and architects, and dentists set up licensing procedures at roughly the same time.<sup>4</sup> At the encouragement of Governor William E. Cameron, the first State medical Examining Board was established during the 1883-1884 Virginia General Assembly. Greer, as an early member of the Medical Society of Virginia, and a member of the first State Medical Examining Board, was involved in the formalization of the medical profession in Virginia. While serving on the Board, Greer was placed on the committee that examined surgery because of his well-known efforts to modernize surgical procedures.

Greer was also interested in local politics and social activities. He served on the Board of Trustees for Rocky Mount and was a member of the Lone Star No. 75 Masonic Lodge.<sup>6</sup>

At his death in 1891, Greer left his "dwelling house and all the parcel of land. . . embracing about thirty-five acres," to his second wife Catherine Saunders Greer and to two of his daughters, Susan Bessie Greer and Mary Celeste Greer. Yet, with the agreement of her two sisters, another daughter, Emilee Nelson Greer Peters,<sup>7</sup> exchanged with Catherine Greer, her home for the home of her father. The house remained in the Greer family until 1985. The Greer House has changed hands twice between 1985 and 1987 when it was acquired by the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Donald L. Davidson.

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**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Franklin County Bicentennial Publications, Franklin County Bicentennial Commission, Rocky Mount, Virginia, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>Will of Thomas B. Greer, 18 November 1891, Franklin County Will Book 21, pp. 590-592.

<sup>3</sup>Franklin County Deed Books. Deed Book 29, p. 73, Deed Book 30, p. 26, Deed Book 27, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup>Magali Sarfatti Larson, The Rise of professionalism: A Sociological Analysis. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

<sup>5</sup>Book No 1 Minutes from Board of Medical Examiners from organization in 1884, November 15 together with the results of examinations from 1884 to December 16-18 1902, pp. 1-64. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>6</sup>Franklin County Bicentennial Publications and Marshall Winfield, Franklin County Virginia: A History by Marshall Wingfield (Berryville, Virginia: Chesapeake Book Company, 1985), p. 25.

<sup>7</sup>Will of Thomas B. Greer.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Department of Health Regulatory Boards, Record Group 37. Book No. 1 Minutes from Board of Medical Examiners from organization in 1884, November 15, together with the results of examinations from 1884 to December 16-18 1902, pp. 1-64. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

Will of Thomas Bailey Greer 18 November 1891, Franklin County Will Book 21, p. 590-592.

S. Quarles to Thomas B. Greer 28 April 1851, Franklin County Deed Book 30, p. 26.

Samuel G. Bright to Thomas B. Greer 22 March 1862, Franklin County Deed Book 27, p. 97.

John Wade to Celestia A. Taliaferro Greer, Franklin County Deed Book 29, p. 73.

Franklin County Land Taxes 1850-1880.

Works Progress Administration Papers, Franklin County Library, Rocky Mount, Virginia.

Winfield, Marshall. Franklin County Virginia: A History by Marshall Wingfield. Berryville, Virginia: Chesapeake Book Company, 1964.

Sanborn Map of Rocky Mount, #9066, 1922 and 1928.

Franklin County Bicentennial Publications. Franklin County Bicentennial Commission, Rocky Mount, Virginia 1976.

Interview with Elizabeth Lewis Edmundson, Descendant of Thomas B. Greer, 16 September 1989.

Interview with Jinny Greer Gulliams, descendant of Thomas B. Greer, 16 October 1989.

Cynthia M. Leonard, Comp. The General Assembly of Virginia, July 30, 1619-January 11, 1978: A Bicentennial Register of Members. Richmond: Published for the General Assembly of Virginia by the Virginia State Library, 1978.

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

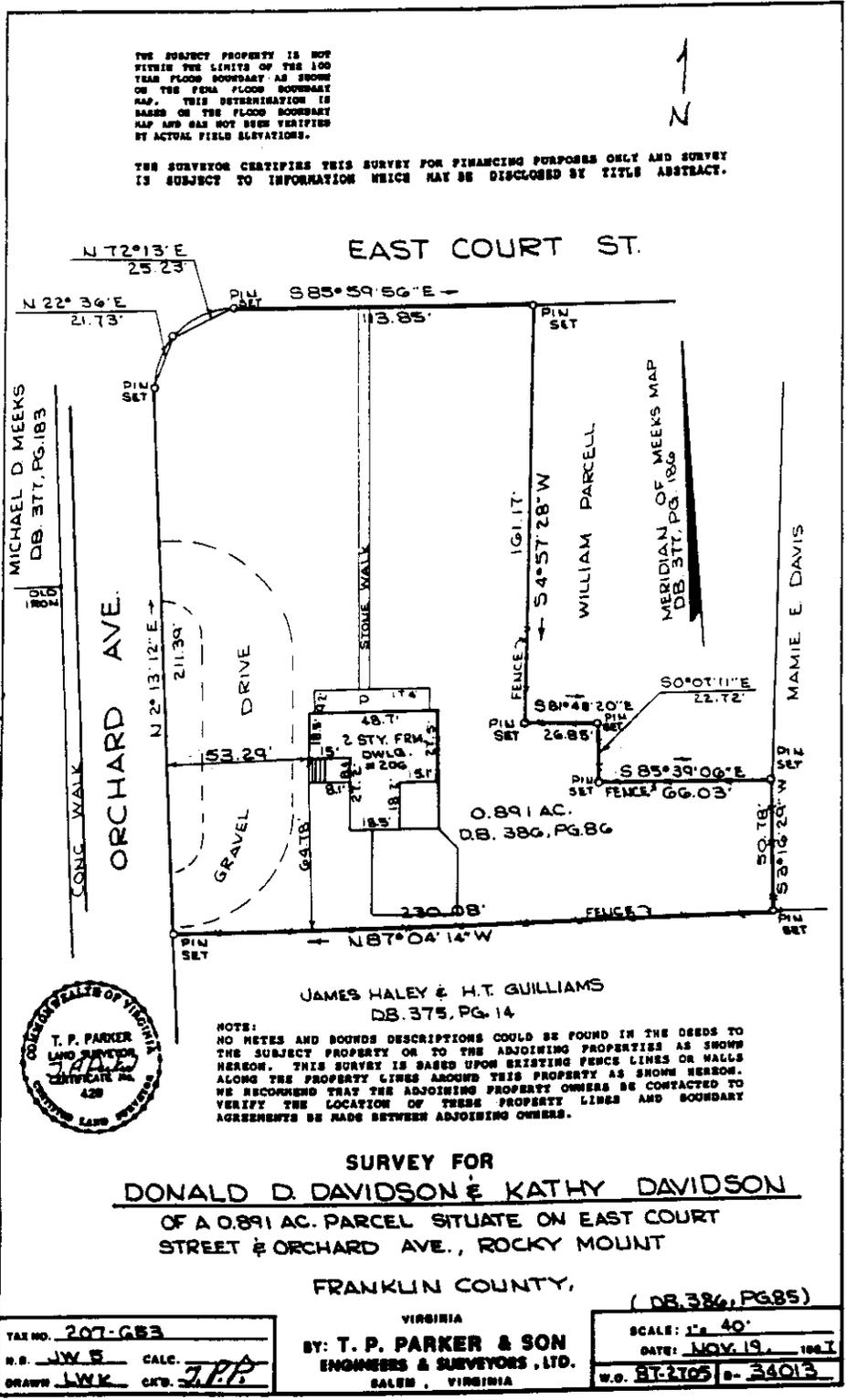
From deed dated 1 December 1987 (Franklin County Deed Book 423, p. 1168):

BEGINNING at a pin set on the easterly side of Orchard Avenue, said point being the northwesterly corner of property of James Haley and H. T. Guilliams (D.B. 375, p. 14); thence with the easterly side of said Orchard Avenue, N. 2 13' E. 211.39 feet to a pin set; thence N. 22 36' E. 21.73 feet to a pin set; thence N. 72 13' E. 25.23 feet to a pin set on the southerly side of East Court Street; thence with the southerly side of same S. 85 59' 56" E. 113.85 feet to a pin set on the northwesterly line of property of William Parcell (D.B. 117, p. 163); thence with the same S. 4 57' 28" W. 161.17 feet to a pin set; thence S. 81 48' 20" E. 26.85 feet to a pin set; thence S. 0 07' 11" E. 22.72 feet to a pin set; thence S. 85 39' 06" E. 66.03 feet to a pin set on the westerly line of property of Mamie E. Davis; thence with the same S. 3 16' 29" W. 50.78 feet to a pin set on the northerly line of property of said Haley and Guilliams; thence with the same and following an existing fence line N. 87 04' 14" W. 230.08 feet to the PLACE OF BEGINNING and containing 0.891 acres situate on East Court Street and Orchard Avenue, as more particularly shown on survey dated 19 November 1987, prepared for Donald L. Davidson and Kathy L. Davidson, by T. P. Parker & Son, Engineers and Surveyors, Ltd.

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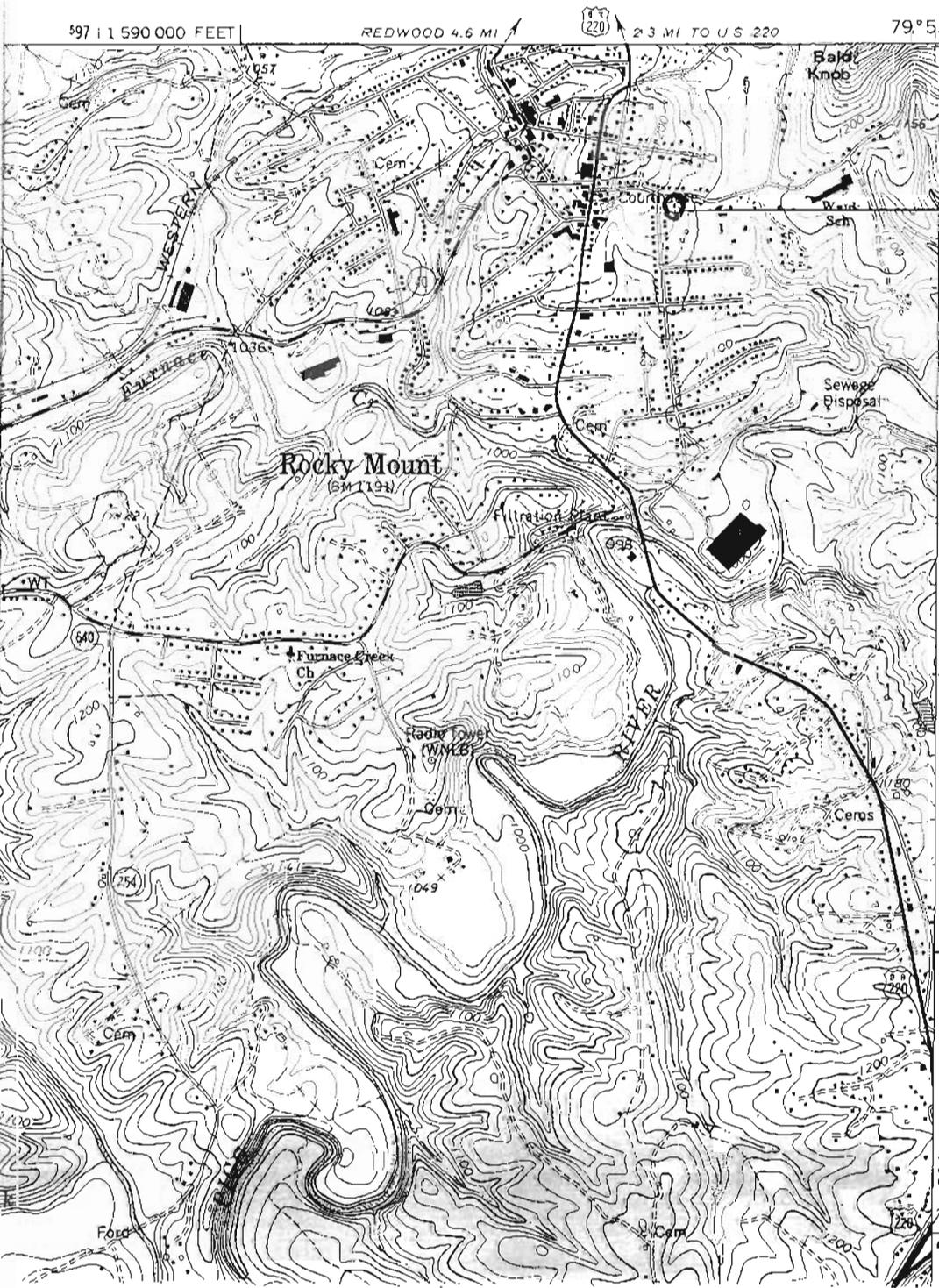
### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Dr. Thomas Bailey Greer House consists of 0.891 acres with legally recorded boundaries that represent the domestic core of the 35-acre tract conveyed to Catherine S. Greer from Thomas Bailey Greer at the time of his death by will dated 18 November 1891.



ROCKY MOUNT QUADRANGLE  
 VIRGINIA - FRANKLIN CO.  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5088 111 SE  
 (REDWOOD)



GREER HOUSE  
 FRANKLIN CO,  
 UTM 17/409468/0598149

4085  
 37°00'  
 1095  
 4094  
 240 000  
 FEET  
 4093  
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 BOONES MILL 13 MI.  
 ROANOKE 24 MI

