

VLR- 3/20/84 NRHP- 5/3/84

NHL- 7/17/91

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic THE HOMESTEAD (VHLC File #08-25)

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number U.S. Route 220 N/A not for publication

city, town Hot Springs N/A vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Bath code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Virginia Hot Springs, Inc., c/o Mr. John M. Gazzola, Director of Public Relations

street & number The Homestead

city, town Hot Springs N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24445

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bath County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Warm Springs state Virginia 24484

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
title Survey (File #08-25)

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

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historic THE HOMESTEAD

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city, town Hot Springs

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia

code 51

county Bath

code 017

3. Classification

Category

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

Ownership

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- private
- both

Public Acquisition

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- being considered
- N/A

Status

- occupied
- unoccupied
- work in progress

Accessible

- yes: restricted
- yes: unrestricted
- no

Present Use

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has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date June 1979

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depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond

state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Homestead is an internationally famous year-round resort situated at Hot Springs, a small town in the Warm Springs Valley of Bath County, Virginia. The narrow valley is flanked by the Alleghany Mountains which extend north-south through western Bath County, providing the Homestead with a panoramic setting that dramatically varies with the seasons. The elegant Georgian Revival hotel is comprised of several wings and additions. The earliest or main section, dating from 1902, was designed by Elzner and Anderson, architects of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the most impressive section, known as the tower, dates from 1929 and was designed by the prestigious architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore of New York. The sprawling hotel is situated atop a gradually rising hill surrounded by manicured lawns dotted with trees and shrubbery. Clustered about the hotel are several buildings associated with the resort. They include the Virginia Hotel built in 1892, a frame Queen Anne-style annex to the main hotel, the Spa or Bathhouse, a stone and stucco Georgian Revival building dating from 1892, the Casino, a frame building associated with the late nineteenth century Homestead, and a row of eleven turn-of-the-century frame cottages. Four thermal mineral springs are scattered about the north lawn of the Homestead. Each spring is isolated and most are sheltered by a simple gazebo or enclosure.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Although the first hotel at Hot Springs was built about 1766, no part of the original structure survives. A fire in 1901 destroyed all vestiges of the nineteenth-century main hotel, however, the Bathhouse, the Virginia Hotel, the Casino, and eleven cottages, all dating from the late nineteenth century, did survive.

By the late 1800s the Homestead had developed into a sprawling resort hotel as a result of the improvements and additions made by the Cincinnati architectural firm of Elzner and Anderson. The late nineteenth-century Homestead was a large two-and-one-half-story rectangular frame structure consisting of four wings enclosing a central courtyard. A one-story veranda with Ionic columns above an arcade extended across the front of the building and a double-story rounded Ionic portico was centrally positioned at the main entrance. The south side of the building featured a central projecting pedimented pavilion and two hip-roofed projecting end pavilions, while the north facade overlooking the springs featured a double-story veranda and a central rounded Ionic portico. Rising above the hotel, a slender cupola dominated the roof line of the west wing. Elzner and Anderson also designed a four-and-one-half-story wing attached to the northwest corner of the main building. Extending in a diagonal direction toward the Bathhouse, the wing had three tetrastyle pedimented porticoes along its east facade and a polygonal turret was situated at its north end.

After the fire of 1901 the present Homestead was built. The main section of the hotel, and the first section to be completed after the fire, is a rectilinear three-story brick structure with a fourteen-bay facade. Designed by Elzner and

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) leisure and recreation

Specific dates 1892; 1902-1929 **Builder/Architect** Yarnell and Goforth; Elzner and Anderson; Warren and Wetmore

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Homestead is one of the finest resort hotels in the nation. Situated at Hot Springs, Virginia in the Alleghany Mountains, the Homestead provides luxurious accommodations, excellent cuisine, and beautiful natural scenery for its internationally famous guests. Although the present hotel dates from the first decades of the twentieth century, the Homestead had its beginnings in the mid-eighteenth century as a health resort. As early as 1766, a small hotel, also known as the Homestead, was built to accommodate travelers who visited Hot Springs hoping to procure health from the thermal springs. Promoted primarily as a health spa throughout much of the nineteenth century, the Homestead also became an important social center favored by America's social elite beginning in the 1890s. During the twentieth century, the Homestead enjoyed a national reputation as an outstanding year-round resort which industrial giants such as Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller, and other prominent Americans often visited. Designed by Elzner and Anderson, architects of Cincinnati, Ohio, the present Homestead dates from 1902 and is an excellent example of the Georgian or Colonial Revival in architecture. The hotel's most impressive architectural feature is its ten-story tower. Designed by Warren and Wetmore of New York, America's foremost hotel architects of the early twentieth century, the elegant Colonial Revival tower serves as the hallmark and symbol of the Homestead today. The Homestead received additional notoriety as the site of the International Food Conference in 1943. This conference, attended by representatives of forty-four countries, can be regarded as a precursor of the later founding of the United Nations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first historical record of visitors to Hot Springs is noted in the diary of Dr. Thomas Walker, medical missionary and explorer, who traveled through the Warm Springs Valley enroute to Kentucky in 1750. He wrote, "We went to Hot Springs and found six invalids there. The spring is very clear and warmer than new milk."¹

The resort at Hot Springs had its beginnings as early as 1755 when a tract of land, located in the Warm Springs Valley and known as the Hot Springs Tract, was surveyed and granted to Thomas Lewis and Thomas Bullitt. The petition for the land patent stipulated that "if granted they would erect a hotel for the accommodation of visitors and properly stock it with wines, etc."² A hotel was built prior to 1766 and called the Homestead. Extant records of the first resort hotel are rare, however, notes made by travelers indicate the "crudity of accommodations and meagerness of the fare" at Hot Springs in the eighteenth century.³

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #13)

American Architect and Building News. Volume 67, March 3, 1900, plate 1262.
 Arnold, Gustavus. "The Homestead." Michigan Society of Architects Monthly Bulletin.
 Volume 30, December 1956.
 Burke, William, M.D. The Mineral Springs of Virginia. Richmond: Morris and
 Brother, 1851.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Approx. 27 acres

Quadrangle name Healing Springs, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>602580</u>	<u>4205790</u>	B	<u>17</u>	<u>602820</u>	<u>4205660</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>17</u>	<u>602760</u>	<u>4205870</u>	D	<u>17</u>	<u>602930</u>	<u>4205900</u>
E	<u>17</u>	<u>602930</u>	<u>4205940</u>	F	<u>17</u>	<u>602690</u>	<u>4206100</u>
G	<u>17</u>	<u>602550</u>	<u>4206140</u>	H	<u>17</u>	<u>602450</u>	<u>4206150</u>
I	<u>17</u>	<u>602450</u>	<u>4206080</u>	J	<u>17</u>	<u>602510</u>	<u>4206080</u>

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point (A) located on the E side of U.S. Route 220; thence approximately 900' SE to a point (B) located on the E side of the entrance drive to the Homestead; thence following the E side of said drive for approximately 500' N to a point (C); thence approximately 500'

(See Continuation Sheet #13)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date 1984

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date March 20, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

Anderson, the main section possesses such characteristic features of the Georgian Revival as a symmetrical facade, hipped roof, central projecting pedimented pavilion, stone belt course, modillioned cornice, and tall brick pilasters. The most prominent feature is the six-bay Ionic portico which has a double row of tall columns and shelters the three central front entrances of the hotel. Single-story, five-bay verandas with Doric columns and a turned balustrade flank each side of the grand portico, which creates a symmetrical colonnade that extends across the entire front of the building. The first floor of the building features a series of entries which allows ample access into the lobby from the verandas or portico. Each door is flanked by wide sidelights and surmounted by a graceful semicircular fanlight with tracery. Above the roof line of the flanking verandas, tripled or paired small square windows act as a clerestory and flood the lobby with natural light. Two-story brick pilasters divide the second and third stories of the facade and paired pilasters adorn the pedimented central pavilion. One-over-one sash double-hung windows on the second floor feature flared stone lintels with keystones, and an oval bull's eye window adorns the central pediment. The gable ends of this rectilinear section feature a full pediment with a modillion cornice and tripartite second-floor windows, each capped by a semicircular recessed arch with keystones. Two four-story brick wings extend approximately three hundred feet perpendicular to the rear of the main section. Known as the north and south wings, they exhibit the same architectural treatment as the main section.

In 1921 major additions were built to the south and west of these wings, including a new dining room which was built at the end of the north wing, thereby creating an open courtyard between the wings. The courtyard was later filled with additions. Another addition containing the Garden Room, Crystal Room, Empire Room, and theatre was built south of the south wing in the early 1920s.

A year after the main section of the hotel was built, Elzner and Anderson designed the four-and-one-half-story west wing which actually extends in a diagonal direction from the north wing. This section, and the practically identical east wing which was added to the main section in 1914, are Colonial Revival compositions that complement the main section of the hotel.

Each five-course American bond brick wing has rusticated first and fourth floors, brick quoins, a central pedimented pavilion, a tetrastyle Doric or Corinthian portico located midway along both longitudinal sides, a bracketed modillion cornice, a stone belt course, and a gambrel roof with a row of hip-roofed dormers. The gable end of the east wing features a rich display of ornamentation. A five-story brick projection flanked by double-story sleeping porches with Corinthian columns accents the end of the wing. Rustication is suggested in the brickwork of the first two stories and at the tower corners. Tripartite windows, a Palladian attic window, and a richly embellished bracketed cornice with dentils emphasizes the Colonial Revival style of this design.

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

A one-story ballroom served as a connection between the east wing and the lobby of the main section before 1929. In that year, the hotel owners decided to alleviate the growing demand for more suites by constructing a ten-and-one-half-story addition located between the main section and the east wing. Known as the tower, this impressive Colonial Revival composition was designed by the architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore of New York, America's foremost hotel architects of the early twentieth century. In keeping with the classical dignity of Elzner and Anderson's earlier sections, Warren and Wetmore designed a central, square, brick tower accented with molded white wood trim and embellished with Colonial Revival elements. The central tower consists of two stages.

The first stage comprises the first seven stories of the tower. A seven-sided pavilion, known as the tower lounge, projects from the base of the tower's south facade. Its tall casement windows are flanked by engaged Doric columns with paneled fanlights above.

The second through the seventh stories feature recessed screened porches on every floor, one at each corner of the tower and a pair centrally positioned at the north and south facades. Slender, square, brick columns flanking the porches emerge from molded wood bases supported by large consoles at the third floor. The columns are capped by stylized acanthus leaf capitals with a central rosette. They rise four stories and support a full entablature adorned with classical wood urns. Above the seventh floor, a heavier full entablature with a bracketed modillion cornice defines the major division between the first and second stages of the tower.

Two five-story brick wings flank the tower to the east and west. The height of these wings eases the transition from the low-rise sections of the hotel to the high-rise tower. Simpler in design than the tower, the wings successfully tie the earlier, less ornate wings of the hotel to the imposing tower, thereby fostering the impression that the entire hotel may have been built at one time. The tower wings feature a rusticated brick first floor with an arcade of entrances in which each door is highlighted by sidelights, a transom, and an elliptical wooden fanlight. A stone belt course divides the first and second floors while a molded cornice between the fourth and fifth floors features pendentive brackets above a carved fretwork band. Fenestration above the first floor consists of paired six-over-six sash double-hung windows; however, those on the fourth floor are capped by large stone lintels with keystones. Each wing has a flat roof with an encircling turned balustrade. Double-story porches with square Doric columns project from the east and west facades of the central tower above the fifth floor of the flanking wings. The frieze above each column is adorned with a carved Adamesque oval sunburst and urn finials rise above the corners of these porches.

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The second stage of the central tower consists of a recessed square three-and-one-half-story brick section featuring a hipped standing seam metal roof surmounted by a beautifully detailed clock tower and cupola. This upper section of the tower is a superb Colonial Revival composition that appears as if it could stand alone as a complete design. Its sophisticated Georgian and Adamesque details are the most refined elements of the tower. These elements include brick quoins at the tower corners, a Greek key encircling the tower between the eighth and ninth floors, each of four five-bay facades divided by Ionic pilasters with a cushion frieze and bracketed modillion cornice, and a scroll pediment with either a thermal window or bull's eye windows centrally positioned above the pilasters at each facade. Interestingly, the scroll pediment is reminiscent of those found in the eighteenth-century architecture of Rhode Island which probably served as inspiration to the architect. Urns or finials adorn the roof line and a vented dormer with a broken pediment is seen above each scroll pediment. Fenestration of the upper stage of the tower consists of double-hung windows capped by either flared brick jack arches on the tenth floor, white paneled lintels adorned with carved Grecian lamps, or semicircular fanlight panels surmounted by keystones on the ninth floor. The crowning architectural element of the tower is the elegant cupola that rises above the hipped roof. It consists of a square base with urns positioned at each corner, round clock faces at each facade, and a cylindrical pavilion above. The cupola design is apparently based on similar Bulfinch-inspired cupolas of New England Federal architecture, however the prototype is the ancient Roman Temple of Vesta. It is encircled by free-standing Corinthian columns below a full entablature. Adorned by classical urns, the cupola is capped by a bell-cast metal roof with a fanciful wrought-iron weathervane above.

A large one-story rectangular projection known as the Homestead Club and Grille is attached to the north wing of the main section. It is a mid-twentieth-century, twelve-bay addition with large plate glass windows flanked by engaged Doric columns. Among the most significant twentieth-century additions is the south wing or Conference Center, which was built south of the lobby in 1973. It is a low-rise brick structure that is connected to the main hotel by a narrow passageway. Unsympathetic in design to the main hotel, except that it is built of brick, the Conference Center appears to be a distinctly separate building.

The interior of the Homestead is also expressive of the Colonial Revival. The Great Hall or Lobby is an impressive rectangular room that extends two hundred feet in length and comprises the northern half of the main section of the hotel. Described as "one of the architectural gems of the South,"¹ the room is divided by two rows of sixteen magnificent two-story Corinthian columns with corresponding pilasters attached to the walls. The coffered ceiling is composed of molded beams, geographically positioned to form rectangular panels surrounded by dentils. The walls display molded architraves, dentil friezes, and clerestory lighting. Two fireplaces with Federal-style mantels are symmetrically placed along the west wall

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

and a series of doors along the east wall corresponds to each interior bay of the lobby. Each door is flanked by wide sidelights with a fanlight above, so positioned as to give the impression of a Palladian window. A balustraded gallery supported by square columns overlooks the lobby at each end of the room. A description of the lobby written in 1915 records its early twentieth-century elegance:

Entering the beautiful brick structure through the pillared porticoes one cannot help but notice the whole atmosphere which is so different from that found in any other hotel in the world. The spacious lounge 200 feet long, with its double row of snow white pillars [and] its heavy ornate furnishings, [is] decorated in moss green and ivory.

At the north end of the lobby, hallways lead to other wings of the hotel, while the front desk, main stair, and a succession of various lounges, the ballroom, and a theatre are accessible from the south end of the lobby. The dining room is located at the end of a long hallway that passes from the lobby through the north wing. Elegantly proportioned, the basically square room with an apsidal end is lighted by wide, round-arched windows flanked by fluted Doric pilasters. The most significant feature is the cove-vaulted atrium which is surrounded by fluted Ionic columns with a full entablature above. The coffered ceiling is sufficiently raised to allow for clerestory thermal windows.

Each wing of the hotel contains a central hall that extends the length of the wing and is flanked by rows of rooms or suites. Stairs are usually located at both ends of each hall. In 1915 a promotional booklet described the rooms of the new east wing:

In the new wing there are one hundred rooms all with outside baths and many with sleeping porches, much closet space, and handsomely furnished at a cost of over \$1,000 per room.³

The first floor of the tower contains a central corridor with lounges to the north and south, the most prominent being a large apsidal-ended room known as the tower lounge located directly beneath the tower. The second through fifth floors of the tower are longitudinally divided by corridors flanked by rooms with adjoining baths, while the sixth through tenth floors have central H-shaped corridors with adjoining rooms. In addition, each room on the second through sixth floors has access to an individual screened porch or loggia.

The Bathhouse or Spa Building, designed by Yarnell and Goforth and built in 1892, has undergone a great deal of remodeling during this century. An early twentieth-century photograph of the Bathhouse shows a two-and-one-half-story stuccoed Colonial Revival structure with a six-bay Corinthian portico projecting from the

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

gable end front. Palladian windows, framed by recessed rusticated stone arches, are seen on the first floor, while paired and tripled round-arched windows on the second floor are flanked by quoins and are positioned above a high belt course to give the appearance of an attic story. An unusual cove-vaulted cornice festooned with decorative swags surrounds the building and pedimented transepts with similar details project at the sides. During the twentieth century, the Bathhouse was remodeled and the building lost much of its original charm. Attic windows were blocked, Palladian windows were removed, and the portico was changed. A swimming pool pavilion, designed to complement the prevailing Colonial Revival style of the hotel, was built to the north sometime during the early twentieth century. It is a rectangular brick structure with apsidal ends surrounded by a full entablature with a bracketed modillion cornice. Tall round-arched doors and windows and a monitor roof flood the interior with natural light. To the south a covered passageway links the hotel's west wing to the Bathhouse. Known as the "viaduct," it was so called because the tall arcade beneath the passageway resembled an ancient Roman viaduct.

Other late nineteenth-century buildings on the grounds of the Homestead that survived the fire of 1901 include the popular luncheon pavilion known as the Casino, the once magnificent Virginia Hotel which was built in 1892, and a row of frame cottages west of the hotel.

The Casino is a one-story, hip-roofed, frame pavilion with corner octagonal turrets that is located on the sweeping north lawn of the hotel. A colonnade, now enclosed by plate glass, completely surrounds the building. The Casino was apparently built as a dining facility where guests could dine under the colonnade or about the surrounding lawn. The Casino today still serves popular daily luncheons to Homestead guests.

The Virginia Hotel was originally an excellent example of Queen Anne-style resort architecture. Unfortunately, the building has been greatly altered and consequently has lost much of its original integrity. Turn-of-the-century photographs reveal a stately four-and-one-half-story frame building with a steeply-pitched hipped roof and a double-story gallery across the front. The varied roof line, half-timbered gables, multi-level dormers with pinnacles, octagonal bay projections, and a round turret with a conical roof all contributed to the exuberant display of eclectic features typical of the Queen Anne style. Today the hotel stands mostly stripped of these distinguishing features. Originally built in 1892 to accommodate an overflow of guests, the Virginia Hotel proved unpopular because of its location across the main road from the old hotel. Soon after it was built, it was relegated to use as employees' accommodations, the role it serves today.

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

Directly west of the west wing of the Homestead a row of eleven late nineteenth-century frame cottages is situated along both banks of a meandering stream. Most of these single-story structures possess porches with turned posts, and some feature octagonal gazebos. They are simple cottages that were originally built to house families who desired more privacy while visiting the Homestead.

¹Gustavus Arnold, "The Homestead," Michigan Society of Architects Monthly Bulletin, Vol. 30, December 1956, pp. 11-15.

²The Homestead, Hot Springs, Virginia. (Hot Springs, VA: Virginia Hot Springs Company, 1915). Virginia Historical Society.

³Ibid.

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

Throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the development of the Warm Springs Valley as a resort area was mostly confined to Warm Springs, a small village located five miles north of Hot Springs. A large hotel and bathhouse attracted many visitors to Warm Springs and soon the town became the county seat of newly-formed Bath County in 1790. The town of Hot Springs, however, was slower to develop. Its streets were laid out in 1793.

As a health or pleasure resort, Hot Springs suffered in competition with nearby Warm Springs until the hotel was purchased by Dr. Thomas Goode in 1832. Dr. Goode was responsible for promoting the resort chiefly as a health spa by placing large ads in popular periodicals of the day such as Mr. Godey's Lady Book and Harper's Weekly, claiming the waters at Hot Springs were recommended for any number of maladies from gout to spinal irritations.⁴ Under his direction, improved bathhouses were built, and by 1846 Dr. Goode was able to announce the opening of a modern hotel called "The Homestead" in honor of its predecessor. In his book, The Mineral Springs of Virginia, published in 1851, Dr. William Burke describes the resort:

The accommodations for guests consists of a frame building, some 200 feet long, and two stories high. In this there is a neat parlor, dining room, bar-room, and numerous chambers. It has a portico running the whole length, which affords a pleasant promenade and place for lounging. Along the road

(See Continuation Sheet #7)

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

are several cabins, some of wood, others brick. All the buildings here will accommodate about 120 persons with tolerable comfort. Economy and good management are very perceptible in all the household arrangements.⁵

Bowing to the superiority of nearby Warm Springs and White Sulphur Springs as social centers for the wealthy, Dr. Goode instead stressed the health-restoring qualities of his resort and published letters he had received from guests as testimonials to the medicinal benefits of the waters. He personally advised his guests at the Homestead to pursue a strict regimen when "taking the waters" in order to receive the best results.

The spas of Virginia experienced a boom in popularity during the antebellum period. The annual tour of the springs was a social custom observed by aristocrats from all over the south who wished to escape the intense summer heat of the lowlands to relax at the mountain pools and enjoy the company of their peers. While most of the springs became fashionable resorts known for their social life, Hot Springs remained famous for its curative waters and continued to be visited by invalids searching for health. Travelers interested more in social gaiety tended to by-pass Hot Springs for more fashionable resorts further south.

In the summer of 1838, Hot Springs and other resorts in the Virginia mountains were visited by an estimated 6000 people. Guests came by stage coach or private conveyance, many of them subjected to jolting rides for hours over mountainous terrain, and some stayed weeks moving from one resort to another.⁶

With the death of Dr. Goode in 1858, improvements at the Homestead halted. Visitation at the spa began to decline, decreasing to a trickle during the Civil War. The poor economic conditions of Reconstruction further contributed to the stagnation of business at Hot Springs.

The Homestead then passed through a period of absentee ownership until the hotel was purchased in 1891 by a syndicate of businessmen who also owned controlling stock in the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. To maintain and develop the resort, the Virginia Hot Springs Company was formed and soon thereafter, a branch of the C & O Railroad was built from Covington to Hot Springs. As a result of new management, modernization began at the Homestead.

One of the first improvements was the construction of the Virginia Hotel in 1892. This large, frame, Queen Anne-style hotel, although grand in appearance and equipped with modern conveniences, never proved popular with guests. Besides being located immediately adjacent to the distracting train station, the hotel was built west of the old Homestead in an area that did not provide good views of the valley,

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8. DESCRIPTION -- Historical Background

nor did the terrain allow for spacious lawns. As work on the improvements of the old Homestead progressed, increasingly more guests preferred it to the Virginia Hotel. After a few years the new hotel was finally made into living quarters for resort employees, the role it has served to the present.

Also completed in 1892, the Homestead Bathhouse was designed by the architectural firm of Yarnell and Goforth and constructed at a cost of \$154,000. The stone and stucco Georgian Revival structure housed one of the finest equipped hydrotherapeutic spas in the world.⁷ Natural hot mineral waters from the adjacent springs were piped into the Bathhouse and used by guests in various combinations and methods of application under medical supervision to alleviate rheumatic pains and remedy various maladies.

At the time the property was acquired by the syndicate, the Homestead was a typical southern resort hotel:

It was built of wood throughout with handhewn timbers of oak, pine, and walnut and clapboarding of fat pine, the tall columns of the east porch lending dignity to the structure. It has no plumbing other than a few public toilets, it was heated by open fires and lighted by oil lamps. About the grounds were a number of cabins or cottages, rather crude affairs.⁸

An extensive remodeling program in the 1890s transformed the Homestead into a modern resort which, by the turn of the century, had attracted the social elite from all areas of the nation. Two important figures instrumental in elevating the resort to a height of elegance were M.E. Ingalls, one of the new owners, who directed all improvements at the Homestead from 1894-1914, and Fred Sterry, the manager of the hotel from 1894-1914. Sterry later became one of the most prominent hotel executives in the country, subsequently becoming manager of the Plaza Hotel in New York.

On July 2, 1901 tragedy struck when the Homestead was completely destroyed by a fire that burned the two hundred-room hotel to the ground in three hours. All buildings were razed except the Bathhouse, the Casino, and the eleven cottages which extend in a row beside the main road. Undaunted, M.E. Ingalls began immediate plans to rebuild. Fay Ingalls, who later succeeded his father as president of the Virginia Hot Springs Company, remembered his father's resourcefulness:

The morning after the fire my father wired Elzner and Anderson, the architects who had done most of the work on the alteration of the Homestead, to come immediately to Hot Springs and bring a contractor with them. They arrived the next day and departed that night. Before they left, outlines for the rebuilding had been settled and orders placed for materials.⁹

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The architectural firm of Elzner and Anderson of Cincinnati, Ohio was a leader in the use of reinforced concrete in commercial buildings. The Ingalls Building in Cincinnati (listed on National Register 3-7-75), the first concrete skyscraper, was designed by the firm in 1902. The principal architect, Alfred O. Elzner (1845-1933) wrote an article about the design in which he stated:

While concrete/steel construction is not by any means a new material, it has nevertheless demonstrated its general adaptability to the many complex problems of modern building, even to the most exacting of all; the skyscraper--the first example of which is the Ingalls Building.¹⁰

Elzner, who had formerly worked in the office of Henry Hobson Richardson, joined George M. Anderson (1869-1916), who was a graduate of the Ecole Des Beaux Arts in Paris, to form the firm of Elzner and Anderson in 1887.¹¹ The Colonial Revival-style Homestead was one of the firm's most famous designs, marking importance with the Ingalls Building, the Denton Building, and the Children's Hospital in Cincinnati, and Berea College in Kentucky.

The main section of the Homestead, containing the lobby and ballroom, was built first. This section still serves as the main building of the hotel. The ground plan was designed substantially the same as the old building and the former Edwardian-style lobby was copied almost exactly by Elzner and Anderson. By the spring of 1902 the hotel was reopened, within a year the west wing was completed, and by 1914 the east wing was built. All were designed by Elzner and Anderson. A promotional brochure printed by the Virginia Hot Springs Company in 1908 heralded the new Homestead:

The new Homestead erected in the fall of 1902 on the most ultra modern lines has kept pace with the progressive age, with every up-to-date feature being introduced until it stands today the representative all-year-round resort hotel of the country.¹²

During the early twentieth century the Homestead enjoyed a national reputation as an outstanding year-round resort to which national political figures, business giants, and the wealthy upper class elite flocked to take the waters and enjoy the social life. Many built country estates near the hotel and were responsible for setting the tempo of the social life at Hot Springs.

The 1920s proved to be a prosperous decade for the Homestead. In 1921 a new dining room, ballroom, theatre, and several lounges were built to the west of the main section, and in 1929 a major addition known as the tower was built. This ten-story Colonial Revival-style addition, built at a cost of one million dollars,

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was designed by Charles D. Wetmore (1867-1941) of the architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore of New York. Wetmore in partnership with Whitney Warren (1864-1943) became one of the nation's most famous designers of modern hotel buildings of the early twentieth century. Some of the firm's most notable designs include the Biltmore Hotel and the adjoining New York Central Railroad Terminal, the Ritz Carlton, the Commodore, the Ambassador, the Vanderbilt, and additions to the Plaza Hotel in New York.¹³ Besides hotels, the firm also specialized in railroad architecture, business buildings and residences. Fay Ingalls in his book, The Valley Road, remembered offering the tower commission to Wetmore:

He enthusiastically undertook to design the building. One condition was laid down which he heartily subscribed, that whatever was done must be strictly in keeping with the simple colonial architecture which distinguished the rest of the hotel.¹⁴

When the actual construction of the tower was begun, a troublesome foundation problem had to be solved. It was uncertain whether the cavernous terrain of the area would support the weight of the ten-story steel and brick structure. Close cooperation between the architect and skilled engineers was necessary and Charles Wetmore apparently welcomed the collaboration. The practical approach to his work is indicated by his remark that "as this is an age of mechanical progress and adjustment, the architect must be something of an engineer and must cooperate in the closest possible manner with the construction engineers."¹⁵ The tower was built and has been a success since its opening in the spring of 1929. It quickly became the hallmark architectural feature of the hotel complex, and today it serves as the symbol of the Homestead.

During the early 1920s the landscaped grounds of the Homestead were designed and executed by Olmstead Brothers of Boston. New improvements included a formal garden and a new approach to the hotel. In 1914 Peter Lee staked out an eighteen-hole golf course immediately north of the hotel. A Philadelphia landscape architect specializing in golf course design improved the course, and in 1924 it was revised by William S. Flynn.¹⁶ Flynn also designed the famous Cascades Golf Course which is three miles south of the Homestead and is owned by the Virginia Hot Springs Company. The famous golfer, Sam Snead, a native of Bath County, learned to play golf on the course at the Homestead. Today he is the golf professional representative of the resort.

Thirteen days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the Federal government asked the Homestead management to make their facilities available for the internment of 363 Japanese diplomatic representatives, prominent businessmen, and Japanese press members. They arrived on December 29, 1941 and departed April 1942 when negotiations were completed to return to America U.S. diplomats in Tokyo. During the four-month internment the Homestead was forced to close to the general public.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

From May 17 to June 14, 1943 international attention focused on the Homestead when it hosted the International Food Conference. This conference was attended by representatives of forty-four countries, and can be regarded as a precursor of the later founding of the United Nations.¹

Following World War II the Homestead began a major campaign to improve services for its sophisticated clientele. In 1959 the Homestead pioneered the sport of southern skiing by constructing a one million dollar ski area located north of the hotel. A number of other sports activities became available or were improved at that time. Tennis, skeet and trap shooting, horseback riding, trout fishing, bowling, swimming, and golf continue to be popular activities at the Homestead.

Today the Homestead enjoys a reputation as a modern convention center. In 1973 the nine million dollar south wing was added to the hotel. This large brick addition includes 190 guest rooms and a conference center capable of accommodating large conventions.

The Homestead has attracted many of America's most prominent twentieth-century citizens including Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Mellon, Paul Mellon, Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, the famed New York City social queen, who made the Homestead her summer headquarters in the 1930s. All but three twentieth-century American presidents have been guests at the Homestead. They include William McKinley, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt when governor of New York, Harry Truman as a senator, Dwight D. Eisenhower after his retirement from the presidency, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon when vice-president, Gerald R. Ford when vice-president, and Ronald Reagan as a governor of California. Many other governors, senators, dignitaries, and ambassadors are included in the Homestead guest files.

The Homestead today remains an internationally famous resort offering some of the best accommodations, cuisine, sports activities, and leisurely pursuits available in the world.

¹ Aubrey Gutshall, General Facts About the Homestead (Hot Springs: Virginia Hot Springs Company, 1983), p. 1.

² Fay Ingalls, The Valley Road (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 12-13.

³ Ibid., p. 13.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background (Footnotes)

⁴ Gutshall, General Facts About the Homestead, p. 2.

⁵ William Burke, M.D., The Mineral Springs of Virginia (Richmond: Morris and Brother, 1851), pp. 237-238.

⁶ Oren F. Morton, Annals of Bath County (Staunton: The McClure Co., Inc., 1917), p. 48.

⁷ Gutshall, General Facts About the Homestead, p. 2.

⁸ Ingalls, The Valley Road, pp. 61-62.

⁹ Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁰ Alfred O. Elzner, "The First Concrete Skyscraper," Architectural Record, Vol. 15, 1904.

¹¹ Henry F. Withey, AIA, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970), p. 197.

¹² Virginia Hot Springs, Passenger Department, Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, n.p., 1908.

¹³ Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects, (Deceased), pp. 636-37, 647.

¹⁴ Ingalls, The Valley Road, p. 170.

¹⁵ "Whitney Warren, Architect, 78, Dies," New York Times, 25 January 1943, p. 13.

¹⁶ Gutshall, General Facts About the Homestead, p. 4.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

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- Withey, Henry F. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Verbal Boundary Description & Boundary Justification

NE following S side of a paved walk to a point (D); thence approximately 200' N to a point (E) which is called Magnesia Spring; thence approximately 1000' NW along a meandering stream to a point (F) located on the S side of U.S. Route 220; thence approximately 600' W following S side of U.S. Route 220 to a point (G); thence approximately 200' W to a point (H); thence approximately 200' S to a point (I); thence approximately 200' E to a point (J) on the E side of U.S. Route 220; thence approximately 1100' S following E side of U.S. Route 220 to origin.

Boundary Justification: Virginia Hot Springs, Inc. owns several thousand acres of land surrounding the Homestead, however only a small portion of this land immediately surrounding the main hotel and associated buildings is included in the National Register nomination. Boundaries mainly conform to roadways to the east and west of the hotel and a stream to the north. The southern boundary is drawn to exclude private houses and a church south of the hotel. Forested land is excluded east of the Homestead main drive and a golf course exists north of the stream that serves as the northern boundary. Twentieth-century private commercial property that is not associated with the Homestead is excluded north of U.S. Route 220 and on both sides of VA Route 615. Wooded, mountainous land exists west and south of the Virginia Hotel and west of U.S. Route 220. The land within the designated boundaries is sufficient to define the natural setting of the Homestead.

THE HOMESTEAD

HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA



APPROXIMATE SCALE

1" = 200'

MAP 1 of 2



