



U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Oakland  
Nelson County, VA

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### 5. Classification

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#### Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

#### Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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### 6. Function or Use

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#### Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/DOMESTIC Sub: AN ORDINARY/TAVERN  
SINGLE DWELLING - (MANSION , FARM HOUSE)

#### Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: FARM HOUSE  
WORK IN PROGRESS RESTORATION PLANNING  
TEMPORARY ADAPTIVE REUSE IN WEST (REAR) ADDITION

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### 7. Description

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#### Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

GREEK REVIVAL

#### Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
roof STANDING-SEAM METAL, PROBABLY TIN  
walls BRICK  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions) ARCHITECTURE, COMMERCE

**Period of Significance** 1838 - 1875

**Significant Dates** 1838, 1850, 1857, 1872

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** GEORGE H. MITCHELL

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # 133 - Works Progress Administration of Virginia, Historical Inventory & Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey Form, 62-52
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

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- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Historic Resources

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 11.63 acres less highway easement along State Route 733

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1 <u>17</u>	<u>683856E</u>	<u>4176524N</u>	2 <u>17</u>	<u>683954E</u>	<u>4176570N</u>
3 <u>17</u>	<u>683998E</u>	<u>4176594N</u>	4 <u>17</u>	<u>684166E</u>	<u>4176326N</u>
5 <u>17</u>	<u>683956E</u>	<u>4176197N</u>	6 <u>17</u>	<u>683910E</u>	<u>4176455N</u>

\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Peter M. Rippe, Board Member  
 Organization: Oakland, Nelson County Museum of History date December 16, 2005  
 street & number: P.O. Box 39 telephone 434-823-1414  
 city or town Lovingsston state VA zip code 22949

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
 A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Nelson County Historical Society  
 street & number P.O. Box 474 telephone 434-263-5231  
 city or town Lovingsston state VA zip code 22949

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**7. Summary Description:**

Mitchell's Brick House Tavern, ca. 1838, is a two-story, painted brick house with a raised or English basement. In architectural style, it reflects the transition from Federal to Greek Revival, but is vernacular rather than high style in interpretation. The house is prominently located on the west side of U.S. Route 29 about 4 miles south of Lovingston, Virginia. It has a standing-seam metal gable roof. Exterior brick chimneys are located at both ends of the main house. The lower floor of the main house consists of an English basement with two rooms and a central hallway. The main floor likewise has two rooms and a central hallway, as does the upper floor. The main or second, and the upper or third floors are joined by a simple interior stair. The English basement was originally a completely separate entity only accessible to the upper floors from outside stairways. Today, this floor is connected to the main floor by a twentieth-century stair located inside what appears to be a 1920/1930 central rear dependency. All of the primary rooms within the house, except the north basement room, have fireplaces or evidence thereof. Both fireplaces on the main floor have Greek Revival mantels that appear to be original. The fireplace mantel in the south parlor has fluted insets below its shelf. This decorative fluting is like the fluted framing on the front door as well as the fluting around the main floor front windows. The front door is old but not original to 1838 -- evidence suggests that the original front door was a double door. Most of the interior doors appear to be original, especially on the main floor. Some of the woodwork and plasterwork on the upper floor has been replaced or modernized. The Greek Revival front porch may be original with some missing or replaced elements. The front steps are definitely twentieth century.

**Note:** "Oakland" is the umbrella name of the Nelson County Museum of History's overall project. It is planned that this project will ultimately include a living history museum, gallery-type exhibition buildings, as well as outdoor displays, a visitor's welcome center, a historical society library, offices, storage buildings and other guest/service facilities. The first historic name of the building that is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places was **Mitchell's Brick House Tavern**.

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**Detailed Description:**

BACKGROUND

The Oakland estate consists of the main house (Mitchell's Brick House Tavern) with two additions, several dependencies and a garage. The main section of the house, which faces east, is constructed of brick and stands two stories tall on an English basement. The façade is laid in Flemish bond, while the other walls are laid in five-course American bond brickwork. The house is believed to have been constructed in 1838. The additions to the original section are also brick, laid in common bond, and probably date from the first quarter of the 20th century. The south addition is single story and may have been constructed before the other addition. It adjoins the English basement through a door cut where there was once a window at the west side of what appears to have originally been a cooking fireplace (now completely blocked). It was used as a tax office from about 1940 to about 1970. The west or rear addition is two stories tall and appears to be the more recent addition based on its contemporary brick veneer and its modern interior detailing. However, within the body of this addition there may be some older framing possibly dating to the 1838 building of the house, since there is a tradition, related by Mr. Coco (the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century owner of the house), that the core of this addition was moved to its present location from what was the back yard of the house, then raised on new brick piers, completely modernized, and adjoined to the main house as a "T" wing (this probably occurred in the late 1920s). The house is now painted, with the exception of the west or rear addition, and has been since at least the early 1970s.

The other two buildings on the property consist of an old log smoke house (contributing), approximately eleven feet by thirteen feet, and an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century framed, vertical wood covered, "Delco battery shack" (**non-contributing**), about ten feet wide and ten feet deep with a metal shed roof. The smoke house is set on stone foundations with its original logs completely covered with deteriorating board-and-batten, and has a dirt floor. Currently, the building has a gable roof covered with corrugated metal without any evidence of a chimney (the roof of the smoke house was greatly altered when recent generations changed the use of the building to a tool storage building). The smoke house appears to have been moved into its current position sometime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century since its foundations have both been leveled and strengthened with fairly modern lime and sand-based cement. The "shack" was originally built by the Goodwin family probably about 1920 for use as a place to house the farm's Delco battery. After Rural Electrification, the building received a cement block chimney and an exterior covering of heavy tarpaper imitating brick (Bricktex). At one time the **Section**   7   **Page**   3  

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building had a raised wood floor, most of which has rotted away. There is a cement block chimney with a stove pipe hole added in the 1930's to allow the building to serve as a dwelling, when this windowless structure was used as a residence by a male retainer of the Goodwin family.

The **non-contributing** buildings consist of a cement block, two car garage, about eighteen feet by twenty-two feet, and a cement block chicken coop, eleven-and-a-half feet by twenty-five feet whose most recent use was as a canning or garden house. Both buildings probably date from about 1950.

In addition to the above, there is also a small Goodwin Family cemetery (**non-contributing**) with several mid-to late 20<sup>th</sup>-century gravestones about two hundred feet back from the southwest corner of the house. The cemetery dates from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and is protected for the Goodwin family in the current property owner's deed to Oakland.

The original portion of the house was constructed in a vernacular or rural interpretation of the Greek Revival style, with latent Federal style characteristics, reflecting the transition between the two styles. While it was constructed well within the Greek Revival period of American architecture, there are elements of the building's exterior and interior that are reminiscent of early Federal style houses. Examples of the Greek Revival influence include the corbelled brick cornice, the fluted window casings and the fixed transom over the front door. Decorative elements on the interior such as stair balustrades and door casings also reflect the Greek Revival style while the mantels, at least on the main floor, are more Federal in detail and proportion.

A. The Roof:

The roof on the original section of the house and the front porch is made of standing-seam metal. The roof rafters appear to be made of pine and are approximately three inches by six inches set on eighteen inch to twenty-four inch centers. There is a collar tie of similar dimension at the upper third of each rafter, which along with the lower ceiling joist forms a truss of sorts. The tops of each set of rafters are attached with a lap joint and wooden peg. The original skip sheathing is visible from the attic and is made up of random width one-inch boards.

There are two wood rake boards along each gable end. They have a bead molding along the lower edge. The rake boards on the east end match, and those on the west side appear similar but are

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mismatched. It is difficult to say with certainty, which boards are original and which are replacement, but they all appear to be 19<sup>th</sup>-century.

**B. The Brick Walls and Chimneys:**

The brick walls of the main house are painted and are in relatively good condition overall. The front of the house is laid-up in Flemish bond with the back walls laid in five-course American bond. There is a decorative brick cornice made up of three courses directly below the front and rear eaves.

The original mortar appears to be made of fine sand and lime. Its tan-orange color indicates that the sand may have contained a high proportion of silt or clay. The mortar joints were originally struck in an undercut or "weathered" pattern.

It is apparent that there have been ongoing efforts to repair and maintain the brick walls. Hiding these repairs may have been one of the reasons for originally painting the exterior brick.

There is one exterior end chimney on the north, and one on the south side of the house. The north chimney is out of plumb approximately six inches beginning at the roof line, leaning towards the north. The south chimney is in similar condition, but the lean is not as pronounced. Both chimneys have had what appear to be steel or iron bands installed at the bottom of the shoulders. The bands are attached to the house with bolts. The south chimney also has two vertical steel reinforcements above the shoulders.

**C. The Windows and Front Door:**

The English basement and the third or upper floor windows are 6/6 and the second or main floor windows are 9/9. The upper sash is fixed with a moveable lower sash. For the most part, the windows appear original to the house and most are functional. Several of the lower sashes on the third or upper floor have been replaced with modern sashes of similar size and profile. Most of the surviving original windows appear to have original glass. Most of the windows are covered with modern aluminum storm windows.

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The center, third floor window and the back door were removed or covered when the rear

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addition was constructed. The English basement and second main floor windows located on the right of the west side, the backs of the house were partially encased by the addition.

The windows have decorative, reeded wood casings. These casings are applied over the jambs. The jambs, sills and headers are mortised together to form a strong frame and are held within the masonry structure.

The front doorway jamb, exterior casing and transom appear to be original to the house. The front door has four flat panels and was probably made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but is not the original front door. The hardware on the interior and the wood infill on either side of the doorway indicate that the original entryway probably had double doors. The exterior of the front door frame is reeded in a manner similar to the front exterior window casings. The front basement doorway is also not original to the house and appears to have been a window opening.

**D. The Front Porch:**

The front porch is old but it is not possible to determine with certainty if it is original to the house. The flooring and steps are new and there have been several generations of repairs to the framing. The square board columns or posts and the beaded board ceiling seem to be more indicative of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century construction.

**E. The Interior Finishes:**

**a. Plaster:**

For the most part the plaster appears to be original to the house. In some areas, primarily in the main floor entrance hall, the north parlor, and the second floor stair hall, the plaster has been wallpapered. Above the chair rail in the entrance hall and continuing up the stairway wall to the hallway above, except for one back wall in the stairway, a ca. 1965 small repeat wallpaper has been used that depicts various Colonial buildings. The wallpaper used below the chair rail in the entrance hall was obviously chosen to coordinate. This coordinating paper is pink with textured horizontal stripes. The same paper is also used below the chair rail in the north parlor where it coordinates with a mid-1960s paper in a flowing fern design.

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There is evidence in the north parlor that the pink, green, and Colonial papers actually cover older papers. A section of the lower pink paper has come loose below one of the back windows in

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this parlor revealing what appear to be numerous layers of paper.

All of the plastered walls and ceilings appear to be original except in the south bedroom (upper floor) where all of the plaster has been replaced. There it appears that the existing material is gypsum veneer plaster installed over gypsum board lathe rather than traditional plaster on wooden lathe.

b. Doors, Windows and Baseboards:

The interior doors and casings seem to be original to the house. However, there is evidence that some doors may have been moved or that the "swing" was reversed. Ghosting of previous generations of locks and other hardware is also observable. Most of the windows and glass appear original except for those lower sashes already noted. There are nail holes and slight indentations on the interior window surrounds that indicate the presence of hardware at one time. It is likely that interior shutters were original to the house and that the nail holes are from the hinges.

The baseboards, wainscot and chair rail on the second or main floor appear to be original and for the most part have not been modified. The baseboard in both the third or upper floor bedrooms may be original, but they have been stripped of paint and re-worked.

c. Mantels:

The mantels may all be original to the house. In the English basement, there is no mantel on the bricked-up cooking fireplace in the south room. In the north room there is an old (ca. 1830s) mantel, but its proportions have been badly skewed due to the fact that, along with the floor, it has been raised creating what appears to be an abnormally wide lintel. On the second floor, each bedroom has its matching mantel. Both mantels are simple Greek Revival productions (they could be original to the house, but they appear to have been modified since they both are slightly set out from the wall as if their fireboxes had been enlarged). The two mantels on the main floor of the house are almost certainly original to the house. Both are more Federal than Greek Revival in their taller and lighter proportions and are identical except for the fact that the mantel in the south room is decorated with the same reeding motif used on the house's exterior front window casings and exterior main floor door frames.

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d. Stairway:

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The dog-legged stair between the main and upper floors and associated flat-wainscot spandrel below are original to the house and appear to have not been modified. However, the stark simplicity of the square newel, matching four other supports within the stairway, and the thin rectangular balusters are slightly out-of-character for the style. Nevertheless, all elements including a beautiful sweeping handrail appear to have been carefully handmade.

e. Floors:

All of the upper floors of the house above the English basement are heart-of-pine. They appear to be original to the house although some of the planks may be replacements. The floor boards are considerably wider than most contemporary planks and are relatively uniform in width throughout. The boards are laid north to south, parallel with the front and back of the house. In the English basement, cement has been poured to an estimated depth of about six inches. This changed the proportions of these rooms considerably, especially in the north room where as a result the lintel space below the mantel is made to appear excessively wide. Currently, this cement is completely covered with large linoleum/rubber tiles.

f. Later Additions:

The interiors of the two later additions are modern, consistent with their later date of construction. The one-story south addition has modern windows and a cement floor. It also has a modern stock door frame and door, and what appears to be a plywood ceiling. It was built with smooth-faced red brick. The interior is finished with wallpaper over either plywood or fiberboard walls.

The interior of the two-story, west or rear addition has painted wallboard or fiberboard walls with ca. 1930 woodwork and windows. The doors, except one, are of the 1930s period; one appears to be a reused older door. The floor is constructed of pine planks of uniform width. There is a modern bathroom in this addition, and this is the only part of the house that has modern insulation.

Overall, the Oakland property, including the main house and outbuildings, is in good condition. The property's noteworthy features retain a high degree of integrity and are able to convey its architectural significance, and to impart associations with the property's historic importance as a former ordinary and farmhouse.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Summary Statement:

Over one hundred-fifty years have passed since coach travelers crossing Nelson County on the old Washington City/Lynchburg stage route made their way up to the simple Greek Revival house prominently situated on a small hill. "Mitchell's Brick House Tavern", offered lodging, food and beverage for man and beast from 1838 to approximately 1850. The property is significant today because it has survived, basically unchanged. It is a reminder of how travelers were accommodated and entertained during the decade of the 1840s before the coming of the canal and the railroad to Nelson County when the old stage road was still a national thoroughfare on the way into the old south as well as into the new southwest. "Mitchell's Brick House" represents the end of an era in American transportation and public hospitality

Once part of a vast Cabell estate, the property was sold to George H. Mitchell probably in 1837. Due to legal complications in an early Cabell will, his deed is dated December 28, 1840. However, this obviously post-dated document specifies that Mitchell had already erected buildings on the property. His first ordinary license is dated March 26, 1838.

Situated today on U.S. 29 about four miles south of Lovingston, the solid brick house has had several uses and many names during its history. After the advent of the canal-railroad, the obsolete ordinary was sold to a prominent and wealthy local physician. It was Dr. Arthur Hopkins who named his gentleman's plantation "Oakland" and lived there, perhaps operating a small clinic, from 1857 until his death in 1862.

The Civil War, however, ended Oakland's elegant pretensions. Without slaves and unable to pay their taxes, Hopkins' heirs sold the property to William H. Goodwin in 1872. Thereafter, it remained in the Goodwin/Coco family, a working farmhouse until its purchase, along with 11.63 acres, by the Nelson County Historical Society in the summer of 2004.

The Oakland property is significant as an unusual surviving example of an early to mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century ordinary or tavern, sited on one of the important early roads of rural central Virginia that provided a link to the young nation's capital city and a transportation artery to the City of Lynchburg and other destinations to the south. The property is eligible for listing in the National Register of

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Historic Places under criteria A and C. It is eligible under criterion A for its association with travel and the function of a tavern in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and as a farmhouse in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to late-19<sup>th</sup> century. Criterion C applies because the house is a good example, with a high degree of integrity, of a vernacular interpretation of architectural characteristics of the Federal and Greek Revival styles, capturing the transition between these as fashions changed. The property is also architecturally significant for its application of these styles, and vernacular traditions, to a building intended in part for public domestic use.

**Background Information:**

Oakland's recorded history begins in the early 1800s when this property was a small part of a much larger tract owned by Samuel Jordan Cabell, the master of Soldier's Joy.<sup>1</sup> Cabell's great plantation was subsequently divided several times until it passed into the hands of his daughter, Paulina Cabell Whitlocke.<sup>2</sup> After Paulina's death in 1827, her daughter, Sarah Cabell Bohannon and Sarah's husband, Dr. Richard Bohannon, a prominent Richmond physician and Professor of Obstetrics, inherited the property from which Oakland was to be carved.

Records at the Nelson County Court House indicate that in 1840, Bohannon and his wife sold thirty-seven acres of Sarah Bohannon's inheritance to George H. Mitchell. Curiously, the deed describes the property as "being the same tract on which the said George H. Mitchell has lately erected a dwelling house and store house . . ." At first glance, this document seems to imply is that George Mitchell built his "dwelling house" on property that he didn't yet own. However, a closer reading of the original deed reveals a crucial sentence virtually hidden in period "legalese" "*Richard L Bohannon and Sarah C. [Cabell], his wife, for and in consideration of the sum of two hundred and ninety six dollars...paid to them by the said George H. Mitchell, through the hands of George Whitlocke...*" [Underlining for emphasis] George Whitlocke was Bohannon's father-in-law and the widowed husband of Paulina Cabell Whitlocke. What seems to be indicated by this curious wording

is that Whitlocke had either transferred or sold what he thought was his thirty-seven acre tract to Mitchell prior to the 1840 deed of sale. Whitlocke must have been unaware of the terms of Samuel Cabell's will in which the property in question passed from Cabell's daughter, Paulina Whitlocke, to her daughter, Sarah Bohannon. Whitlocke obviously believed that he inherited the property in 1827 upon the death his wife, Paulina. However, when it became apparent either to Whitlocke, Mitchell,

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1 Nelson County Record Book A, 8.

2 Nelson Co. Will Book C, 109. 1823 plat shows Whitlocke owning 647 acres.

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or Bohannon, or when Whitlocke's deed of sale defaulted, that George Whitlocke had no right to sell the property, he seems to have done "the right thing:" he paid his daughter and son-in-law for the property while passing the deed over to Mitchell.<sup>3</sup>

From the "dwelling house" statement in the 1840 deed as well as from architectural evidence it is possible to date what was then called Mitchell's Brick House Tavern to about 1838, the year in which Mitchell obtained his first license to operate an ordinary (an inn and tavern) "at his house . . ." At the same time, George Mitchell was also a court appointed "constable . . . in and for the County of Nelson."<sup>4</sup> Being that he was both an innkeeper and a lawman, one would expect that his tavern/ordinary would have been an especially safe haven for both weary travelers and thirsty locals.

Perhaps the dual responsibility of innkeeper and constable was too much for him, for in February 1840 George resigned his office as constable.<sup>5</sup> About a year later, George and some of his friends were arrested and cited "for firing guns, drumming in the public road and alarming the neighborhood."<sup>6</sup> Mitchell seems to have preferred being "the life of the party" rather than a court appointed peace keeper!

In 1842, Robert Mitchell joined George as a partner in his inn keeping.<sup>7</sup> Robert may have been George's brother, nephew, or cousin, but probably not his son. In 1843, Robert was appointed a constable.<sup>8</sup> George, not to be outdone and despite his earlier infraction, was reinstated as a constable in 1844.<sup>9</sup> Records show that he continued to operate his ordinary, providing ". . . good wholesome and cleanly lodging and diet for Travellers and stableage fodder and provide or pasture and provender as the Season may require for their Horses . . ."<sup>10</sup>

George H. Mitchell's last one-year license to operate an ordinary was issued on May 26, 1845. After that, it appears that he left the business. There currently exists considerable confusion as to who actually owned and ran the Mitchell ordinary between 1846 and 1850. Later records

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3 *Nelson Co. Deed Book 9*, 236-237.

4 *Will Book D*, 493.

5 *Nelson Co. Order Book 1853-1840*, 364.

6 *Order Book 1841-1846*, 13.

7 *Ibid*, 133.

8 *Will Book F*, 431.

9 *Will Book G*, 28.

10 *Will Book G*, 115. Typical wording for a Nelson Co. ordinary license.

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clearly indicate that Robert Mitchell “purchased” the property from the estate of George H. Mitchell, but to date no deed of sale has been located. What is clear is that a contentious relationship developed between the two men, especially after July 28, 1846, when both men appeared in court contesting the ownership of “one sorrel horse.”<sup>11</sup> From that time on, “Ro Mitchell vs. George H. Mitchell - upon motion and attachments . . .” becomes a relatively common entry in the Nelson County Court Order Books until Robert’s death.<sup>12</sup> The case is never explained.

What is clear is that by January 22, 1849, Robert Mitchell and his family were in full control of the property. On that day, the Order Book records that Andrew L. Fogus, Robert’s son-in-law, was granted a license “to keep a house of an ordinary and house of public entertainment at Mitchell’s Brick house . . .”<sup>13</sup> This document connects George H. Mitchell’s 1838--1846 period of inn keeping to Robert Mitchell’s proposed disposal of his property in his will proven on August 27, 1849.<sup>14</sup> For almost twelve years Oakland was an operating inn and tavern.

Mitchell’s Tavern or “Brick House,” as it was consistently called, operated on what was a well-used, important, stage road linking the nation’s capitol city to the middle, inland, south. Records from 1839 reveal that the “Washington City to Lynchburg Stage” passed Mitchell’s Brick House three times a week on its two-hundred-mile journey from the Federal City via Leesburg, Winchester, Warrenton, Orange Court House, Charlottesville, Lovingston and Amherst Court House to Lynchburg.<sup>15</sup> Mitchell’s prominent hilltop location on the west side of the stage road about one hundred and sixty-five miles south of Washington and about thirty-five miles north of Lynchburg made it an easily visible and accessible landmark.

Based on architectural remains still present in the old house as well as on descriptions of other contemporary ordinaries, the Mitchell Tavern was probably arranged as follows: on the lower floor, the so-called English basement, guests were received, provisions were stored and servants

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11 *Order Book 1846-1850*, 30.

12 Examples of ongoing case: *Order Book 1846-1850*, 298, 310, 369.

13 *Ibid*, 307. “...it appearing to the satisfaction of the court that the said petitioner [Andrew L. Fogus] is a person of good character and not addicted to gambling...”

14 *Will Book H, 1847-1851*, 224-225.

15 See: *New Map of Virginia State and Steam Boat Routes* (Pub. by Augustus Mitchell, Philadelphia, 1849). For stage coach mileage routes and charts see: *Coulton’s Route Book Through the United States of America* (Pub. by J.H. Coulton, NY, NY, 1850).

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were accommodated. The south room on this level was probably the inn's main kitchen although there may have also been a separate outside kitchen building. Travelers would have been greeted and registered on this floor and then directed to ascend an outside stairway either at the front or the back of the building to the second or main floor level of the tavern. On the main floor, two large rooms were divided by a central hall. Judging by the more refined details of the fireplace mantle in the south room, it was possibly the lady's parlor. Likewise, simpler detailing in the north room would seem to indicate that it was probably the bar and main dining area. The public sleeping areas would have been on the third level with as many guests as possible sharing the available beds. It is also possible that the innkeeper and his family might have lived in one of two rooms on this upper floor. A more likely scenario however, is that the innkeeper and his family lived above the stable area that would have been located directly behind the house in a separate building, originally named in Mitchell's deed as the "storehouse." Possibly, the remains of this building (the frame?) are contained within the current back dependency wing of the house that is known to have been moved into its present location, placed on new foundations, and bricked over in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>16</sup>

In Robert Mitchell's aforementioned will, he directed that his brick house and property be sold with the proceeds equally divided among his three daughters: Mariah Phelps, wife of James M. Phelps; Martha Mitchell who was then a minor but who later married Jefferson Mays, and Stella Fogus, wife of Andrew Fogus. (At the time of Robert's death, Fogus was operating the Mitchell Tavern, as noted above. George H. Mitchell seems to have been completely out of the picture.)

An inventory of Robert Mitchell's estate was filed in the Nelson County Courthouse on September 27, 1849.<sup>17</sup> It lists household furniture including eight feather beds, all completely furnished, a "Mahogany Side Board," both Windsor and split bottom chairs, a "Woodin" clock, a  
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pine cupboard plus a number of other possibly tavern-related pieces. In addition, since Mitchell had

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<sup>16</sup> Numerous books and articles relative to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century ordinaries and taverns in Virginia and elsewhere have been consulted. Especially recommended are: Alice Morse Earle, *Stage-Coach and Tavern Days* (Macmillan Co., NY, 1930 - reprint of 1900 publication); Rhea Mansfield Knittle, *Early Ohio Taverns* (Privately printed, Ashland, Ohio, 1937); Kym S. Rice, *Early American Taverns...* (an exhibition catalog for Fraunces Tavern Museum, NY City, printed by Regenery Gateway, Chicago, 1983); Patricia Ann Gibbs, *Taverns in Tidewater Virginia* (an unpublished Master's thesis, College of William and Mary, 1968); *The Brugh Tavern* (an on-line document relative to a three-story log structure built ca. 1785-1790 near Troutville, Botetourt Co., VA, <http://members.aol.com/imbrugh/brutaver.htm>).

<sup>17</sup> *Will Book H*, 268-271.

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legally transferred the operation of his tavern to his son-in-law, Andrew Fogus, it is possible that much of the tavern's furnishings had already been deeded to Mitchell's heirs and are therefore not included in his inventory. Nevertheless, the quantities of "earthen ware, glass tumblers & Decanters" plus two "Demmyjohns" would seem to indicate the operation of a "public house." Mitchell's inventory also includes an assortment of farming equipment and some twenty-five slaves spread between Mitchell's Nelson County tavern property, another tract of land he owned nearby which he called Hargrove Place, and a working farm that he owned in nearby Amherst County. It seems obvious, that by the time of his death, Robert Mitchell had interests that far exceeded what was by then his dwindling tavern business.

Despite Robert Mitchell's will, his inventory, and what appears to be clear title to all his properties it took Mitchell's heirs nearly eight years to settle his far-flung estate. Not until May 7, 1857, was the tavern property deeded out of the estate. Presumably, James M. Phelps and his wife Mariah, one of Mitchell's daughters, reached an agreement with her sisters, Martha and Stella, that "in consideration of the sum of one thousand dollars to them in hand paid . . ." she and her husband became the sole owners of "some Thirty acres with the buildings and Appurtenances and Known as the 'Brick House,' it being now occupied by James M. Phelps and being the same . . . property divided by the will of Robert Mitchell."<sup>18</sup>

Less than five months later, James and Mariah Phelps signed a deed transferring what was then estimated to be thirty-seven (not thirty as above) acres to Arthur Hopkins. Dated September 18, 1857, this document describes the property as "Being the same Conveyed to George H. Mitchell by R. L. Bohannon and wife . . . purchased of said Mitchell's Trustees by Robert Mitchell (a confusing statement, considering the aforementioned litigation) and devised to said Phelps . . ."<sup>19</sup>

The new owner, Dr. Arthur Hopkins was a fascinating character who had been practicing medicine in the town of Lovingston since about 1825. Although he had been born Arthur Pollard, at about twenty years of age he changed his name to fulfill the terms of the will of an eccentric and wealthy grandfather, Dr. James Hopkins of Amherst County. Arthur was his grandfather's sole heir.

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<sup>18</sup> *Deed Book 15*, 357-358.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 335.

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He inherited money and property in Amherst, Nelson, and Buckingham counties.<sup>20</sup> We can assume that Dr. Arthur Hopkins “modernized” his new home, changing its ambiance from that of a public tavern to what could be called “a gentleman’s country plantation.” It was Hopkins who gave the house the name “Oakland.”<sup>21</sup> He lived there until his death late in 1862. However, despite the property’s newly acquired elegance evidence exists in the form of an unpaid bill that Dr. Hopkins may have kept a medical clinic in his home.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps he also treated sick and wounded Confederate soldiers during the first couple of years of the Civil War. To this day, rumors persist of a Confederate cemetery located somewhere at the back of the property.

According to the November 11, 1862 will of Arthur Hopkins all of his estate, “real and personal,” was left to his wife, Elizabeth R.C. Hopkins during her life. At her death, his property was to be divided between his son, James W. Hopkins and his daughter, Ann Maria Hite. At the time of the writing of his will, Dr. Hopkins had not heard from his son for several years. His property, therefore, was left to his daughter with the stipulation that it was “for her sole and separate use, free from the control of her husband and not liable to his contracts or debts as if she were unmarried . . .” Ann Maria was both to take care of her mother, who was appointed Executrix of her late husband’s will, and to search for her lost brother so he could receive his fair share of what was at the time a rather rich inheritance.<sup>23</sup>

In 1863/64, Oakland is identified as the “Hite House” on the J.F. Gilmer Confederate Military Map of Nelson County.<sup>24</sup> The Gilmer maps are remarkable documents, first for their quick  
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production time, and, secondly, for their accuracy. Obviously, a Confederate agent working for

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20 For additional information on the early life of Dr. Arthur Hopkins, alias Arthur Pollard, see: The Rev. Silas Emmett Lucas, Jr., *The Wills of Amherst County, Virginia 1761-1865* (Southern Historical Press, Easley, S.C., 1895), 178-180.

21 The name “Oakland” first appears in *Nelson County Deed Book 18*, 257, January 2, 1871 when Hopkins’ heirs are trying to sell the property. The reference leads one to believe, however, that Oakland had been the common designation for the property throughout the Hopkins’ period of ownership.

22 *Nelson Co. Chancery Court Papers* - Box dated 1871, loose. Original letter, to Dr. Hopkins, dated March 19, 1860 from J.H. Shelton writing for Mr. Lawrence W. Wills. Shelton concludes that he will pay for whatever care Dr. Hopkins is able to provide for Mr. Wills’ ailing wife. The bill was never paid!

23 *Will Book L*, 445.

24 CSA General J.F. Gilmer Map for Nelson County, VA (CSA Engineers Bureau, 1863/64, in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society).

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General Gilmer went door to door, knocked, and was told by whoever answered the door that the house belonged to Ann Maria Hite.

With the fall of the Confederacy, emancipation, and the worthlessness of all Confederate investments, there came a great depreciation in the fortunes of the Hopkins/Hite family. Poor Ann Maria could no longer afford to keep Oakland. Despite the fact that she was able to locate her long lost brother, James, he seems neither willing nor able to assist the family. Instead, he deeded all of whatever was left of his father's estate to his sister. This deed, dated October 1, 1867, describes the sad situation: "...And whereas at the time of the death of the said Arthur Hopkins . . . he was the owner of several valuable slaves, since liberated by the result of the late Civil War besides a small tract of land his homestead containing 37 1/2 Acres, some household and kitchen furniture, plantation utensils, and debts due him . . . which in the ruined state of the country there is no hope or prospect of realizing . . . and as soon as the stay law expires, the household and kitchen furniture and the small live stock must be sold to make up the deficiency whatever it may be . . ." <sup>25</sup>

It was not an easy matter to sell Oakland at a time when very few people in the South had any money. At first, Ann Maria tried to sell the property locally, resulting in a series of temporary and ultimately aborted transactions. Then she accepted a contract from a Pennsylvanian named Daniel Mosby. Like the others, Mosby defaulted and once again Oakland reverted to Ann Maria, her husband J.J. Hite, and E.R. Hopkins (the widow of Arthur Hopkins). Finally, on January 2, 1871, what ultimately turned out to be a reliable purchaser was found. James C. Pettit's deed to "a certain tract of land . . . called 'Oakland' . . . was signed and recorded." <sup>26</sup> But again, Pettit appeared to be just another defaulter without enough cash-in-hand to complete the purchase. The difference this time was that Pettit's relatively new father-in-law, a local Nelson County farmer named William H. Goodwin, came to his son-in-laws' rescue. Records show that on September 9, 1871 Goodwin took over the payments due on Pettit's deed and the "... parcel of land called 'Oakland' ... on which said Arthur Hopkins resided at the time of his death . . ." passed into the Goodwin family. <sup>27</sup>

Almost immediately, on October 28, 1872, William H. Goodwin included the Oakland tract

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<sup>25</sup> Deed Book 18, 254.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 257.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 254.

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along with surrounding acreage in a deed of sale to his son, Edwin Goodwin.<sup>28</sup> A sizable and ultimately relatively prosperous farm was created. Oakland, alias Mitchell's Brick House, soon became known as the Goodwin House. In 1901, Edwin willed the house and its surrounding property to his nephew, Charles N. Goodwin.<sup>29</sup> In 1920, he in turn in willed the farm to his wife Rosa Belle Stevens Goodwin (1876-1967) and their children.<sup>30</sup> One of the children, Elizabeth Goodwin Coco (1907-2000) received title to the house and approximately eleven acres of the property in a partition deed dated March 12, 1963.<sup>31</sup> Mrs. Coco was the aunt of Josephine Goodwin Campbell who inherited the house with its 11.63 acres on November 20, 2000.<sup>32</sup> In the fall of 2004, Josephine Campbell sold the old house and its property, by then called the Goodwin-Coco House, to the Nelson County Historical Society.<sup>33</sup>

The Nelson County Historical Society, a (501) c (3) organization, will continue to hold the title to Oakland. However, the Society has entrusted the property to the overall management of a separate, but complimentary, (501) c (3) entity called: "**Oakland – The Nelson County Museum of History.**" This museum organization has its own board and is responsible for developing the Oakland project. The restoration of Mitchell's Brick House Tavern is the first phase in what both the Society and the Museum hope will become a dynamic museum and rural history center for Nelson County.

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28 Ibid, 269-270.

29 *Will Book N*, 405.

30 *Will Book O*, 84-85.

31 *Deed Book 99*, 316.

32 *Will Book 032*, 828.

33 Documents in process of being filed, Nelson Co. Courthouse, Lovingston, VA.

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## **10. Geographic Data**

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The property is bounded on the southeast by the southbound lanes of US 29, on the west by State Route 733 and adjacent property lines and on remaining sides by adjacent property lines. The tract consists of 11.63 acres less a strip of land deeded to the Commonwealth of Virginia 24 March 1998 to provide a 20 foot easement from the center of State Route 733.

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the nominated property conform to the current property lines. While the remaining acreage is but a small portion of what, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was a much larger tract, it includes the historic brick tavern building and its immediate environs. South bound US 29 not only provides a well defined front boundary for the property, but also closely corresponds to the location of the old Coach Road that passed in front of the tavern at the time of its construction.

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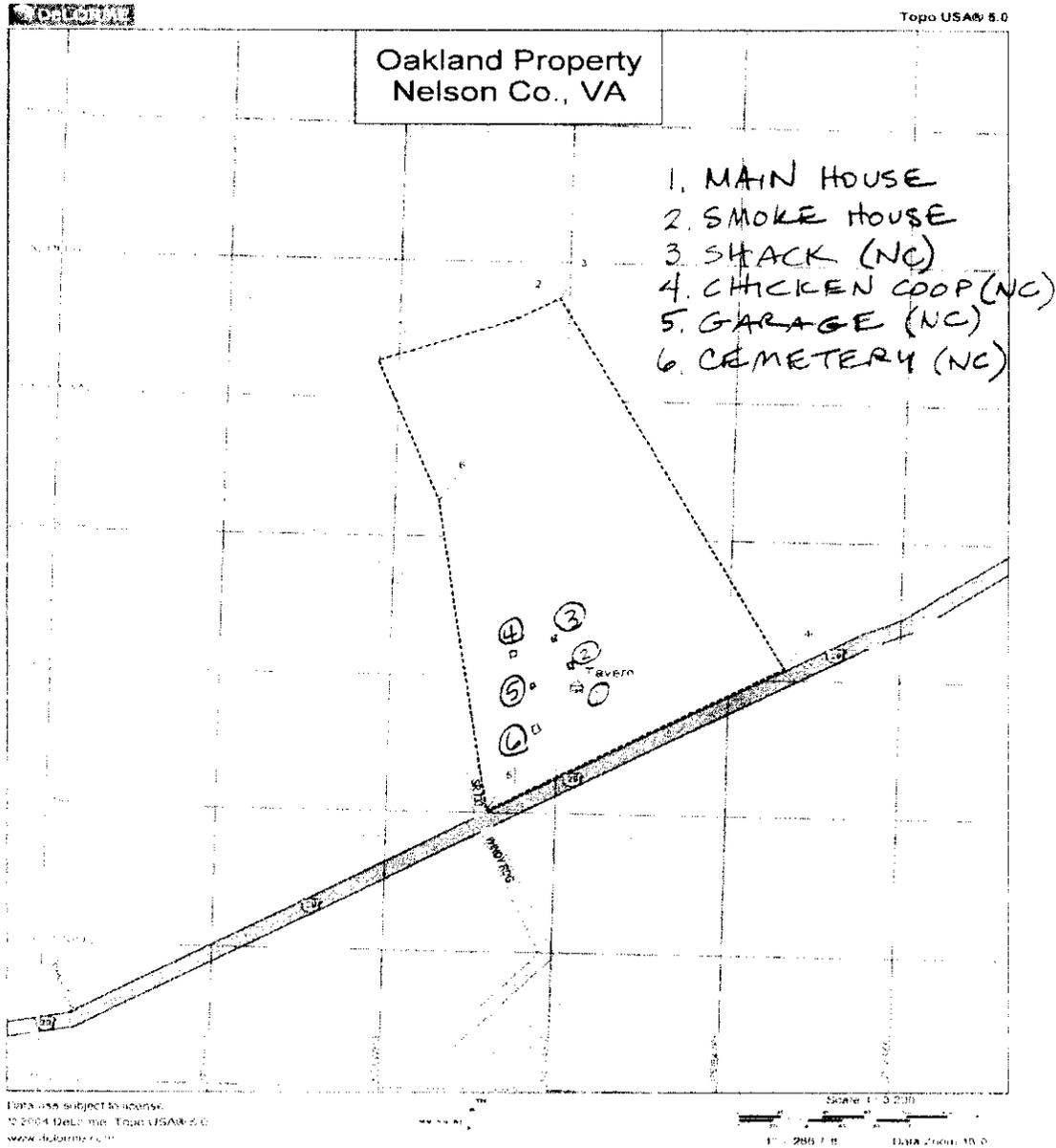
**Information applies to all following photographs: Oakland, Nelson County, Virginia**  
**Photographer: Peter Rippe**  
**Photographed: December 13, 2005**  
**Digital images preserved on CD.R disk**

1. Front view of Mitchell's Brick House Tavern. Camera is looking west; house faces east.
2. Side view of Mitchell's Brick House Tavern showing modern southern addition (office) and either modern or moved and rebuilt back addition. Camera is looking north.
3. Detail of Greek Revival lights and decorative reeding on outside of front door frame.  
Camera is looking west.
4. Front window frame. Camera is looking west.
5. Detail of decorative reeding on front window frame. Camera is looking west.
6. Back door into house from what was an outside porch showing reeded frame similar to front door (area is now enclosed in back addition). Camera is looking east.
7. Mantel in south parlor, main floor. Camera is looking south.
8. Detail of mantel in south parlor showing "reeded block" decoration. Camera is looking south.
9. View of main floor stair hall showing modern wallpaper, simple newel post and balustrades.  
Camera is looking west.
10. Front view of Mitchell's Brick House Tavern. Camera is looking northwest.
11. View of smoke house. Camera is looking north.
12. View of Delco Battery shack. Camera is looking northwest.

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SKETCH MAP - NOT TO SCALE

ARRINGTON QUADRANGLE  
 VIRGINIA  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 SHIPMAN 15' QUADRANGLE

CHARLOTTESVILLE 32 MI  
 LOVINGSTON 8 MI

5259 IV SE  
 (LOVINGSTON)

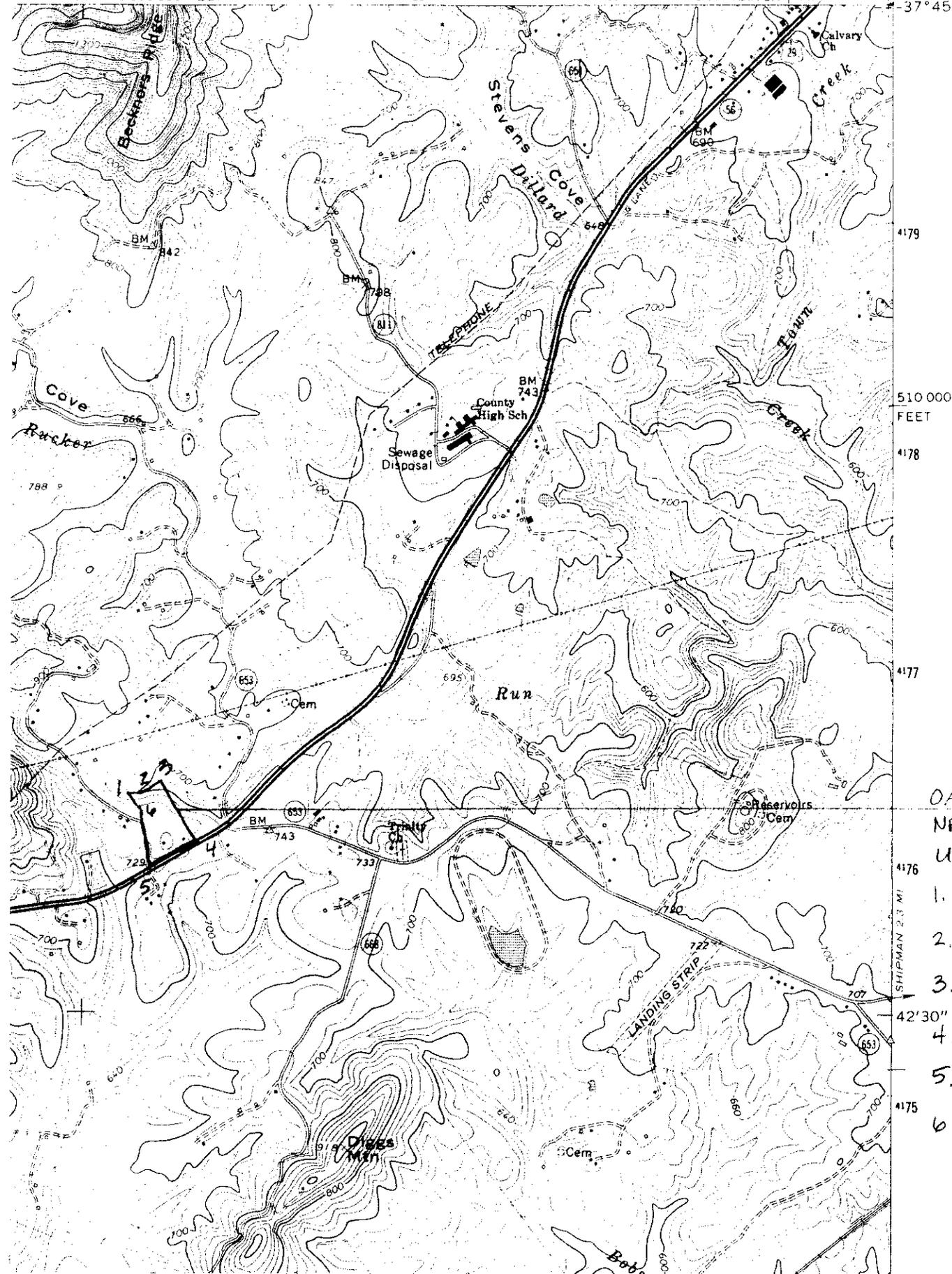
55' 1 880 000 FEET

685

686

78° 52' 30"

37° 45'



62-52

OAKLAND  
 NELSON CO, VA  
 UTM ZONE 17

1. 683856E
2. 4176524N
3. 683954E
4. 4176570N
5. 683998E
6. 4176594N
7. 684166E
8. 4176326N
9. 683956E
10. 4176197N
11. 683910E
12. 4176455N

SHIPMAN 2.3 MI

42' 30"

4175