

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Liberty Hall Academy

AND/OR COMMON

Liberty Hall Site (Preferred):

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER On the campus of Washington and Lee University; .1 mile NE of state route 60; .7 mile NW of intersection of State Routes 60 and 11

X NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Lexington

X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6 (M. Caldwell Butler)

STATE
VirginiaCODE
51

COUNTY

Rockbridge

CODE
163

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
—DISTRICT	—PUBLIC	—OCCUPIED	—AGRICULTURE
—BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	—MUSEUM
—STRUCTURE	—BOTH	—WORK IN PROGRESS	—COMMERCIAL
X SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION		X EDUCATIONAL
—OBJECT	—IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	—ENTERTAINMENT
	—BEING CONSIDERED	—YES: UNRESTRICTED	—GOVERNMENT
		—NO	—INDUSTRIAL
			—MILITARY
			—TRANSPORTATION
			—OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Washington and Lee University

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Lexington

VICINITY OF

STATE
Virginia 24450

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Rockbridge County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
LexingtonSTATE
Virginia 24450

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) See continuation sheet #1

TITLE Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey, #81-87

(1)

DATE

1967, 1974

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

CITY, TOWN

221 Governor Street, Richmond

STATE
Virginia 23219

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

On Mulberry Hill, one mile north of Lexington, stands the sole above ground ruin of Liberty Hall Academy, the precursor of Washington and Lee University.

Seven buildings are known to have existed on the Mulberry Hill campus between 1783 and 1803. Specific dimensions for three of the buildings are stated in historical records: a rector's house, 25 feet by 20 feet; a smokehouse, 12 feet square; and a school house, 24 feet by 16 feet. A fourth edifice, the stewards house, is known to have been built with brick made on the campus. Two school buildings, predating the building now in ruins, had been constructed and subsequently destroyed on this campus. A barn was constructed in 1801 prior to the move to Lexington. Records identify a spring 100 yards north of the school building as the water source for Liberty Hall Academy.

The third school building, 30 feet by 38 feet in the clear, was gutted by fire January 10, 1803 at which point the Board of Trustees decided to relocate the Academy at Lexington.

In 1931 the University patched the standing ruins and added concrete buttresses to support the two surviving end walls. Corner fireplaces, four to each floor may be seen in the standing walls of the ruin, which tower three stories high.

In 1973 Washington and Lee University began the research on Liberty Hall and the surrounding area. A preliminary archeological survey was conducted in 1974 with follow-up excavations in 1975 and 1976. These excavations have located the limestone walls of a building 250 feet east of the school ruins. These walls define a building 64 feet in length and at least 22 feet wide. A walled spring was located one hundred and sixty feet north of the excavated building. It was used into the 20th century.

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER #8

PAGE 1

The Mulberry Hill campus had several structures besides the succession of school-houses. In 1789 a house was built for the Rector. Records state that it was a two story structure, 25 feet by 30 feet, with a stone foundation, brick walls and a roof of joint shingles. There were two exterior doors and ten windows. The brick for the house was made there on the campus.

Records also refer to a 1793 contract for the construction of a steward's house, containing a kitchen, dining room, and dairy; a 12 foot square smokehouse was also to be built. The last structure to be erected as part of the Mulberry Hill campus was a horse stable built in 1801.

Beyond its historical and architectural significance, Liberty Hall Academy distinguished itself in the field of theological education. In 1782 the General Assembly granted the Academy a charter, the first given to a school by the State of Virginia. In 1789 the Rev. William Graham formed a small class of students whom he trained systematically in theology. This jointly sponsored class in theology is one of America's first theological schools in connection with a college.

Although Alumni of Liberty Hall Academy include several college presidents, noted theologians and government officials, probably the most colorful individual associated with Liberty Hall was William Graham. A conservative theologian, he was a tireless spokesman during the Great Revival controversy of 1799 - 1810.

During Graham's term of service the Board of Trustees appealed to George Washington to donate a large block of James River Canal Company stock which the Legislature had voted to give him in recognition of his services and which Washington wanted to give to an educational institution in the upper country. Washington elected to do so in 1796.

In gratitude the name of the school was changed to Washington Academy in 1798. In 1804, subsequent to the 1803 burning of the school building, the Academy was moved to Lexington. Later, in 1813, the name Washington Academy was changed to Washington College. It in turn was changed to Washington and Lee University after the Civil War.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
—PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
—1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
—1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
—1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
X1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
X1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
—1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1783 - 1804

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, true to their traditional belief in education through church supported schools, established an educational institution, Augusta Academy, under the direction of Robert Alexander, in 1749. The school was located at New Providence, near Greenville, in Augusta County, Virginia. It was the first facility of its kind in Virginia west of the Blue Ridge. Alexander was succeeded by the Rev. John Brown, pastor of the local church, who moved the school to Mount Pleasant, near Fairfield, in what is now Rockbridge County.

On May 6, 1776, the Hanover Presbytery assumed full responsibility for Augusta Academy and moved its location to Timber Ridge, six miles northeast of Lexington. That same year the Presbytery renamed the school Liberty Hall in keeping with the patriotic sentiments of the time. They chose the Rev. William Graham as its principal, who served in that capacity for thirty years.

In 1780 the Revolutionary War forced the closing of the school. Graham moved the library and scientific apparatus of Liberty Hall into his dwelling at his farm on the Maury River near Lexington. He taught several pupils there until 1782 when Liberty Hall Academy was officially reopened by the Board of Trustees. At that time Graham and two of his neighbors, Joseph Walker and William Alexander, donated 100 acres of land at a point where their farms converged. This location was known as Mulberry Hill and became the campus for the revived Academy.

The first structure on the Mulberry Hill campus was a one room frame schoolhouse, which was destroyed by fire early in 1783. In April 1784 the Board of Trustees authorized the construction of a new building, to be one story high and to measure 16 feet by 24 feet. It survived until December 1790, when it too was destroyed by fire.

Classes were held in temporary quarters until a new building could be built. Additional land was purchased from Graham to accommodate the new school building and by autumn of 1793 construction was begun.

This building was constructed of limestone, with a wood shingle roof. It stood three stories high and measured 30 feet by 38 feet in the clear. There were four rooms on each floor, each having its own corner fireplace, providing four corner chimneys, a rarity considered a significant architectural feature peculiar to that part of the Valley of Virginia. All of the windows in the building were situated in the front and back walls, the end walls containing only the fireplaces. The first floor had four windows front and back, while the second and third floors had five per windowed side. In January 1803 this building too was gutted by fire. The water supply for the school was a spring located approximately 100 yards from the academy building. It was walled in 1795.

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ITEM NUMBER 6,11 PAGE 1

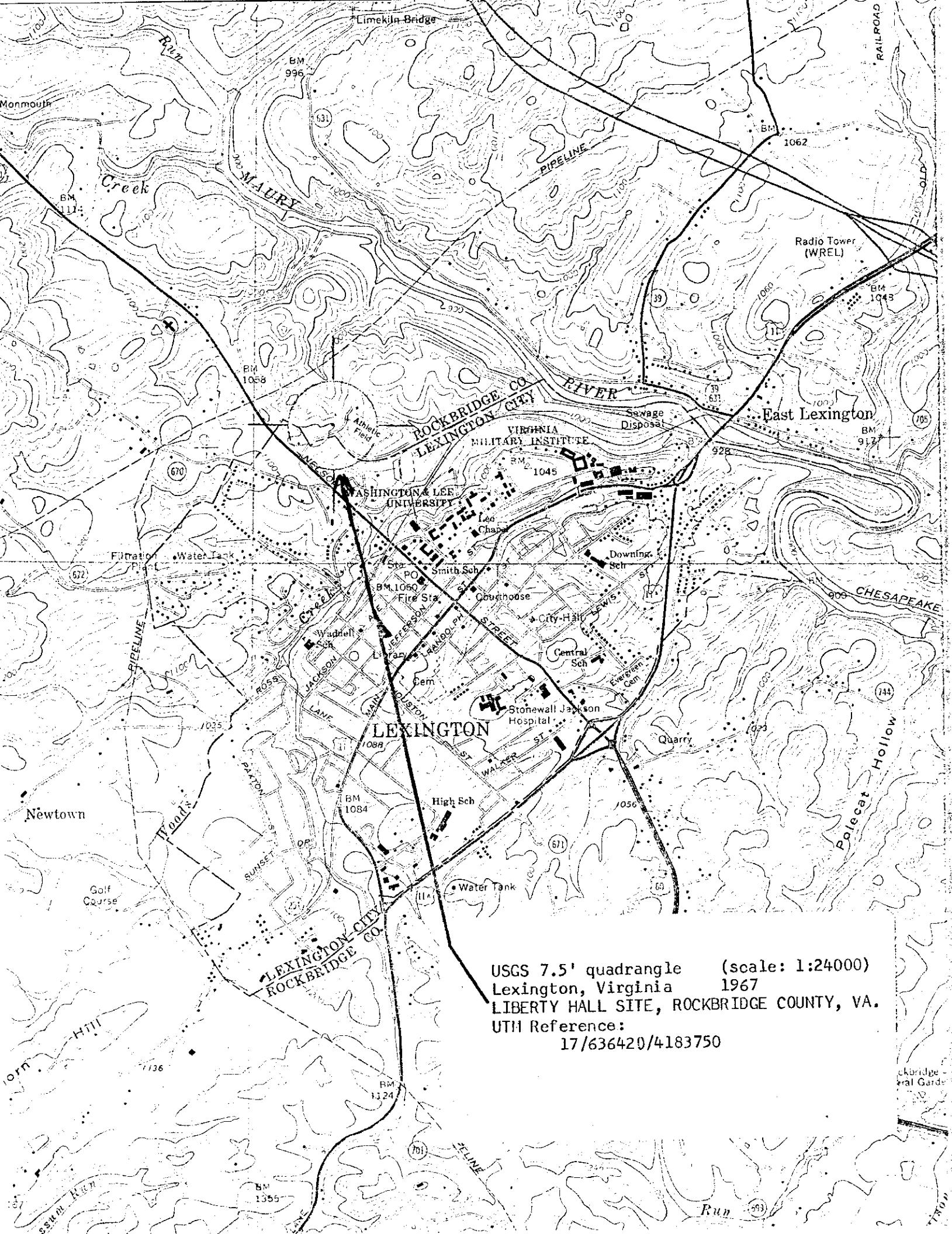
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory
1957 Federal
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

(2) Va. Research Center for Archaeology - Staff
Wren Kitchen, The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia 23186

December 7, 1976
804-220-2773



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale: 1:24000)
Lexington, Virginia 1967
LIBERTY HALL SITE, ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.
UTM Reference:
17/636420/4183750