

NRHP-6/19/79

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

The Oaks

AND/OR COMMON

The Oaks

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

437 East Beverley Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Staunton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

6th (M. Caldwell Butler)

STATE

Virginia

VICINITY OF

CODE

51

COUNTY

in City

CODE

790

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

— DISTRICT

— PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

— MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

— UNOCCUPIED

— COMMERCIAL

— PARK

— STRUCTURE

— BOTH

— WORK IN PROGRESS

— EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

— SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

— ENTERTAINMENT

— RELIGIOUS

— OBJECT

— IN PROCESS

YES RESTRICTED

— GOVERNMENT

— SCIENTIFIC

— BEING CONSIDERED

— YES UNRESTRICTED

— INDUSTRIAL

— TRANSPORTATION

— NO

— MILITARY

— OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Dr. and Mrs. Fletcher Collins, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER

437 East Beverley Street

CITY, TOWN

Staunton

STATE

Virginia 24401

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

City Hall-Office of the Clerk of Circuit Court

STREET & NUMBER

109-113 East Beverley Street

CITY, TOWN

Staunton

STATE

Virginia 24401

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Staunton Foundation Architectural Inventory

DATE

April, 1976

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
RECORDS

Historic Staunton Foundation—Office

CITY, TOWN

Staunton

STATE

Virginia 24401

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

Certainly unique in its design, The Oaks is difficult to categorize using conventional stylistic terms. The 21-room, 3-story structure exhibits some elements of the Shingle Style, although it is executed in brick, with various bonding patterns. The rather restrained facade is organized into three main bays, and the whole is crowned by a complex hip roof with carved modillion blocks in the cornice. The front of the lot is surrounded by an iron fence with an acorn motif on the posts.

The right bay consists of a recessed entrance with a sleeping porch above. Both these porches, as well as the sleeping porch on the top level of the left bay, are recessed under the roof line, a typical feature of the Shingle Style. The slender, half-fluted porch columns are of the Tuscan order, and there is a swept pediment over the entrance to the second level porch. The double front doors each have two carved panels below large glass panes. The brass hardware is inscribed with Eastlake-inspired floral designs.

The central bay is dominated by a 3-part, round-headed window on the second level; a stained-glass window with oak and floral motifs is fitted into the semicircular arch. Square-headed, 3-part windows are placed above and below it on the other floors. Three doors, placed one above the other, originally led to small balconies. Unfortunately, the one at the third level has been removed; it was identical to the one that remains.

The protruding, 5-sided bay on the left features brick string courses and an open wedge pattern of rubbed bricks forming the joints between each side. The central window of the second level has two stained-glass panels and all three of the second-level windows have molded brick keystones. The first level has three square-headed windows; the third has a recessed sleeping porch.

Both side elevations have protruding bays with stained-glass panels in the windows on the second level.

The rear portion of the house is a 3-story, brick chalet-style structure. The gable roof has extremely wide eaves which extend approximately 4 feet from the walls. Unusually large triangular wooden brackets with chamfered edges support the rafters which have carved ends. There are two small wooden balconies off the top-story windows on the north and south sides of this wing.

There are also two outbuildings on the property. One is a 2-bay carriage house with segmental-arched openings which have been made rectangular with large concrete lintels; a loft is located under the shed roof. The other outbuilding appears to have been built in two stages and is now connected to the main house by a raised walkway. Although its original use is not known, part of it at one time did house Hotchkiss's gravity-flow water system.

(to continuation sheet #1)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

The Oaks, Staunton, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

7. DESCRIPTION

Interior: The main hall is located on the second level of the central bay. This huge room has an open staircase of oak, pine and mahogany with panelled wainscoting and turned balusters; there is a bench built along the staircase wall. The hall's brass chandelier, with its oak leaf motif, has been converted from gas to electricity. Both the hall ceiling and the wainscoting are made of tongue-and-groove cedar. The ceiling is divided into large panels in which the cedar is laid on the diagonal. The flooring is dark-stained oak. The other two main features of the hall are the semicircular stained-glass window with oak leaves and floral designs and the mantelpiece. It contains ceramic tiles with an oak leaf and acorn design; four are "character" tiles depicting human faces. This handsome mantel has spiral colonettes capped with consoles which support the mantel shelf. The elaborately molded central panel is flanked by two side panels in the frieze. Nine-panel doors lead into the adjoining music room and library.

The library is located in the protruding left bay and features Hotchkiss's unusual stand-up desk, a built-in bookcase covering an entire wall and a nicely panelled mantelpiece with slender, turned colonettes in the overmantel and small display shelves flanking the fireplace opening. The original interior shutters and brass gas jets still remain.

The music room's woodwork is all painted an ivory color. This was originally the parlor and is located in the right bay behind the entrance porch. The hearth and the area surrounding the opening are tiled. Both the mantel and overmantel are elaborately carved with fluting and beading. The overmantel has a beveled mirror below a small shelf with a spindle railing.

On the first level, the largest room is the original dining room, now used as a theater. The unusual built-in cupboard has panelled and glass doors, mirrors and spiral colonettes. A plate rail surrounds the room. The mantelpiece has two overmantels, one with a panel and the other with a beveled mirror. Spiral columns with Corinthian capitals support the two overmantel shelves.

Across the hall from the dining room is the old breakfast room which contains the door to Hotchkiss's enormous walk-in safe located under the entrance porch (it was here that he housed all his now highly-valued map collection). The corner fireplace in this room features a mantel with a shell motif in the frieze and green, glazed tiles surrounding the opening.

(to continuation sheet #2)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 1888-1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Major Jedediah Hotchkiss
Winslow & Wetherell, Boston

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oaks is one of the most historically and architecturally significant structures in Staunton. From 1868 until his death in 1899, it was the home of Major Jedediah Hotchkiss. A versatile man, Hotchkiss made his mark in a number of fields including mapmaking, surveying, land and coal speculation and education. Arriving in Virginia in 1847 from New York State, he spent the next twelve years engaged in the founding and administration of two boys' academies (Mossy Creek Academy and Loch Willow Academy) in Augusta County. In 1859 he began practicing engineering in the nearby town of Staunton.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Hotchkiss offered his services as a mapmaker to the Confederate forces; he eventually attained the rank of Major. After first serving under Gen. Robert E. Lee as topographical engineer, he joined Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's staff in the same capacity and soon became one of the General's closest aides. Because there were no reliable maps of the Shenandoah Valley and the Central Virginia area at this time, Hotchkiss had to be scout, geologist and investigator in order to make his maps. His campaign maps, now housed at the Library of Congress, are considered by Civil War historians to be among the finest ever made.

It was after the end of the war that Hotchkiss returned to Staunton and began speculating in land and minerals. He also lectured and wrote extensively about Virginia's geology, geography and Civil War history.

In 1888, he began work on the great expansion of his house, assisted by the Boston architectural firm of Winslow & Wetherell. It is believed that much of the credit for the design and detailing of The Oaks goes to Hotchkiss, who supervised its construction very closely until its completion in 1890.

The house is a true wonder of Victoriana, both inside and out. Defying conventional style categorization, The Oaks's exterior displays many elements of the Shingle Style, although it is executed in brick. The somewhat restrained facade belies the richness of its interior which features seven magnificent mantelpieces executed by local craftsmen, tongue-and-groove cedar panelling and wainscoting, stained-glass windows, brass lighting fixtures, built-in cupboards and bookshelves and a

(to continuation sheet #3)

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The Oaks, Staunton, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

7. DESCRIPTION

The third level contains the bedrooms which open onto a huge central hall. It is less ornate than the main living level, but there are two mantelpieces of note. The bedroom in the right bay has a mantel with Delft tiles surrounding a rectangular opening. Attached colonettes support a mantel shelf with dentil blocks underneath. There are corner blocks and a raised central panel in the frieze. The mantel in the left-bay bedroom has small fleur-de-lis tiles in earth colors around the opening. These, in turn, are surrounded by tiles depicting birds in a continuing, naturalistic setting. Double elongated fluted consoles form the supports for the mantel shelf. The frieze contains various carved panels.

The older rear wing of The Oaks connects to the front section in all three levels. In the basement of the wing is a large fireplace opening, which indicates that this room was probably the original kitchen. The second level of the wing now contains a small kitchen behind an additional dining room. In this room is a very simple mantelpiece which consists of pilasters supporting an undecorated frieze and mantel shelf. The original staircase of the wing remains in a hall between this dining room and the newer front addition. The third level of the wing contains an additional bedroom and bath. The flooring of the back wing is random-width pine, and all of the woodwork and molding is much simpler than that in the 1888 front section of The Oaks.

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The Oaks, Staunton, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #3

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PAGE 2

8. SIGNIFICANCE

unique stand-up desk.

What happened to Hotchkiss's original house when this enormous "wing" was added is something of a puzzle. There was a house on the site when he bought the property in 1868; his own 1870 map of Staunton bears this out. A large addition to the rear of this original house appears on his 1884 map which, because it is of the same scale as his 1870 map, allows an overlay. Tax records for this period reveal a doubling of assessed building value in 1876 and another significant rise again in 1884. This chalet-style rear wing could have been built around this time. The main front was erected in 1888 on the site of the original building, perhaps incorporating part of the original foundations into its own.

Hotchkiss's office was housed in a small outbuilding to the right front of The Oaks; it has been demolished. There are two other outbuildings: one is a 2-bay carriage house, now used as a garage; the other, built in two stages, originally housed Hotchkiss's gravity-flow water supply.

The Oaks remained in the Hotchkiss family until the 1940s when it was sold by Hotchkiss's niece to the mother of the present co-owner, Margaret Collins. The Collinses use the house as their private residence but also use it as the home of Theater Wagon, Inc. Performances are given in the original ground-floor dining room.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wayland, John W. Historic Homes of Northern Virginia. Staunton: The McClure Company, Inc., 1937.

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The Oaks, Staunton, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #4

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description - 437 E. Beverley Street

Legal Description - City Engineer's Map #343, 1958. Block D, Lot 8.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Collins, Dr. Fletcher. Various interviews in Spring, 1978.

Craig, Lillian. "Agents of Peace and Progress." Virginia Cavalcade, Spring, 1965.

Staunton Tax and Deed Records. City Hall-Office of the Clerk of Circuit Court, Staunton (to continuation sheet #3)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	66,94,7,0	4,22,41,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of the building and the land on which it sits.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

William T. Frazier, Executive Director

ORGANIZATION

Historic Staunton Foundation, Inc.

DATE

November 10, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 2534

TELEPHONE

(703) 885-7676

CITY OR TOWN

Staunton

STATE

Virginia 24401

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

[Signature]

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE DEC 19 1978

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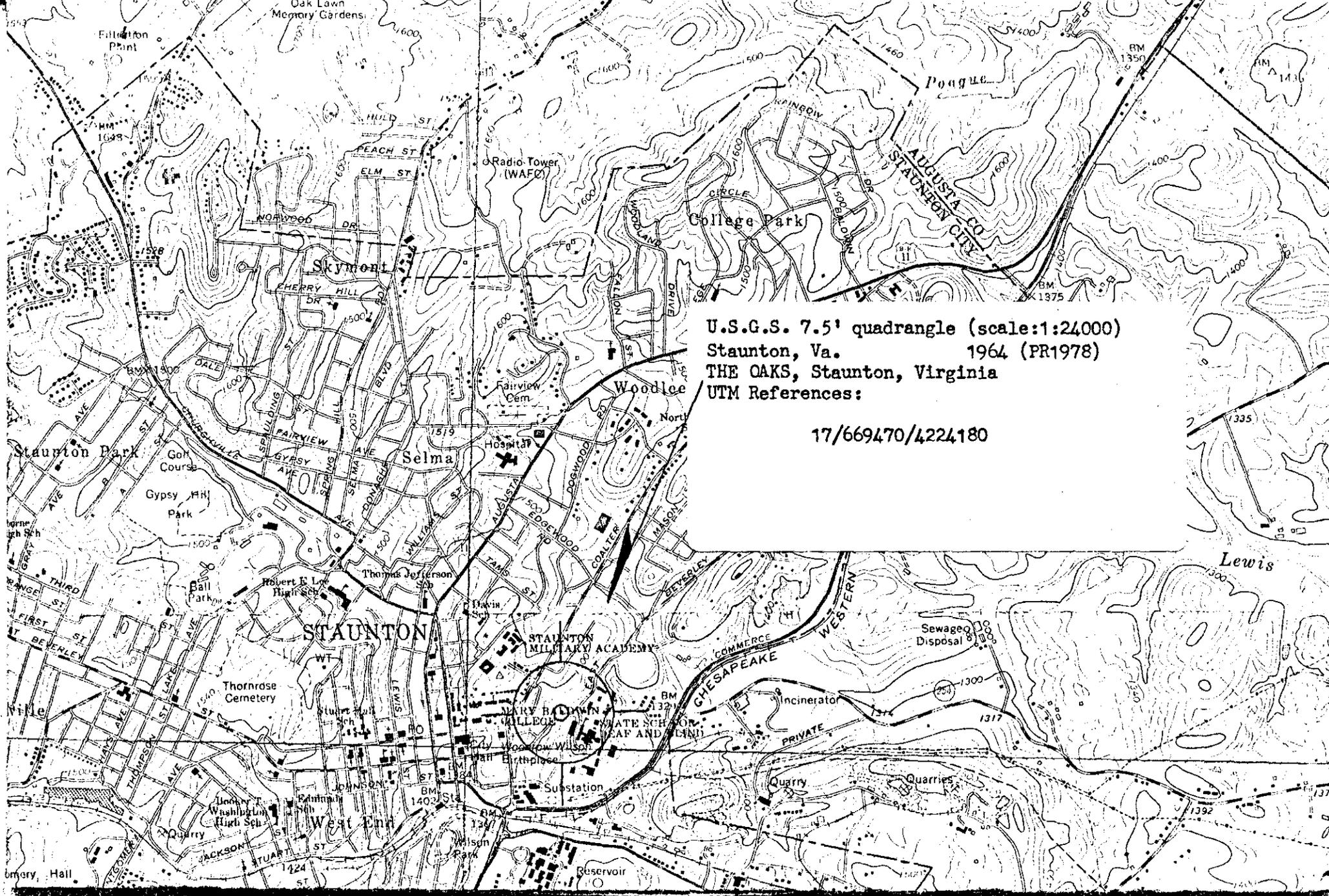
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Staunton, Va. 1964 (PR1978)
THE OAKS, Staunton, Virginia
UTM References:

17/669470/4224180