

VLR-6/19/96 NRHP-12/16/96

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

I. Name of Property

historic name Clark Royster House

other names/site number VDHR File No. 192-71

2. Location

street & number 300 Rose Hill Avenue not far publication

city or town Clarksville vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Mecklenburg code 117 zip code 23927

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

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

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

Clark Royster House
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, Virginia
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	8	buildings
2	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	8	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

WOOD/Weatherboard

roof METAL

other GLASS

Narrative Description

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

Clark Royster House
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, Virginia
County and State

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Settlement

Architecture

Period of Significance

1840-1860

Significant Dates

1840

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Royster, Clark

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Clark Royster House
Name of Property

Mecklenburg County, Virginia
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Approximately 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	718365	40156110
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Barthold O'Brien, Project Architectural Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date December 1995

street & number 5250 Cherokee Ave, 4th floor telephone 703-379-4487

city or town Alexandria state VA zip code 22312

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Frederick N. Oettinger Lt. Col. USA (Ret)

street & number P.O. Box 876 telephone (804) 374-8033

city or town Clarksville state VA zip code 23927

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Clark Royster House
Mecklenburg County, Virginia

Section number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The Clark Royster House is a Federal-style brick dwelling built in 1840. It is located among several outstanding residential buildings on Rosehill Avenue, in the town of Clarksville, Virginia. The two-story, single-pile brick dwelling has a rear wing that appears to have been built in two sections. A one-story, shed-roofed kitchen has been added at the rear juncture of the main block and wing, and a one-story frame sun porch or conservatory extends across the west elevation of the main block. Eight small outbuildings and a well are situated on the one-acre parcel that is perhaps located on the highest elevation in Clarksville.

The southeast front elevation of the main block is laid in Flemish bond with thinly spread mortar with painted pencil points; the side and rear elevations of the main block are five- and six-course American bond. The symmetrical, three-bay front elevation features a central, six-panel, front door topped by a rectangular transom light with a diamond-pattern fretwork. The door is flanked by fluted Tuscan pilasters that support a denticulated cornice. Stains on the main elevation show the outline of a one-story front porch that was removed during a 1960s restoration. A photograph taken around 1910 indicates that the porch had four Doric columns and a denticulated cornice. The fenestration on the front elevation consists of twelve-over-twelve double-hung-sash windows on the first floor and eight-over-twelve double-hung-sash windows on the second floor. These windows have beaded surrounds and louvered shutters and are topped by flat wood lintels with bull's-eye corner blocks. Exterior brick chimneys rise from the gable ends of the main block. The window to the right of the chimney on the northeast side is identical to those on the front elevation except for the addition of a header course along the top of its lintel. On the southwest elevation, the bay to the rear of the chimney features a door (interior) that leads to the one-story sun porch, or conservatory, that extends across this elevation.

The northwest (rear) wall of this sun porch is brick, but the southeast front and southwest side are continuously fenestrated with fixed fifteen-light windows. Six of these form the southwest side, and two more on the southeast front flank a similarly fenestrated door topped by three transom lights. The porch has a shallow shed roof embellished with a wood molding under the eaves. This delicate molding consists of turned pendants and appears to have been inspired by the Gothic Revival or Queen Anne style.

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Clark Royster House
Mecklenburg County, Virginia

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The rear wing appears to have been built in two sections. Like the side and rear elevations of the main block, both portions of the rear wing are laid in five-course American bond. The one-bay southeastern (front) section of the rear wing is 2½ stories, with six-over-six light windows in gabled dormers on both the northeast and southwest slopes of the pressed-metal roof. The twelve-over-twelve-light window on the first level of the northeast elevation is similar in size and detailing to the windows in the main block.

The northwest (rear) section of the wing appears to be two stories, but the first floor is actually a high basement. The basement level and first floor of the northeast and southwest elevations are lighted with six-over-six sash windows with plain wood surrounds and flat sills and lintels. The southwest elevation also includes a door that leads down to the high basement from the rear brick patio.

The rear wing features a brick ridge chimney and a brick flue on the northeast slope. Both stacks rise at the juncture of the two sections, but the ridge chimney was likely the end chimney on the southeastern section of the rear wing since it appears to match the end chimneys on the main block; the flue on the slope appears to be contemporary with the rear portion of the wing. The juncture of these two portions of the rear wing is delineated by a mortar seam in the wall and a break in the brick coursing. Although the pressed-metal roof is uninterrupted over this juncture, the southeastern portion of the wing has boxed cornices with moldings similar to the main block while the northwestern rear portion has a plain boxed cornice.

A frame, shed-roofed kitchen and bathroom wing extends across two bays of the main block and one bay of the rear wing. Added around the 1940s, it is clad with beaded weatherboard and has a brick foundation and a standing-seam-metal roof.

The interior of the main block features a center hall flanked by a parlor on the northeast and a dining room on the southwest. The paneled staircase in the center hall rises along the northeast wall to a half landing. Delicate scroll brackets ornament the open stringers. The molded stair rail is supported on round balusters, two per step, and terminates at a volute with a turned newel in the circle-end starting step. Similar turned newels are located on the half landing and at the top of the dog-leg staircase. A door at the rear of the center hall leads to a bathroom in the one-story rear addition. A door on the northeast wall near the front door leads into the parlor, and a door on the southwest wall, near the back of the hall, leads into the dining room.

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Clark Royster House
Mecklenburg County, Virginia

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The parlor features the tallest and most ornate mantel in the house. It includes Tuscan colonnettes supporting a stepped architrave cornice topped by a wide flat frieze and a denticulated cornice under the mantel shelf. A door on the right side of the rear wall of the parlor leads into a library in the southeast section of the rear wing.

In the dining room, the fireplace on the southwest wall has a mantel ornamented with molded linenfold pilasters topped by a plain frieze and a thin mantel shelf. A door to the right of the fireplace leads to the brick-floored sun porch. A door in the rear wall of the dining room leads to the kitchen in the one-story rear addition. A door on the northeast wall of the kitchen accesses a small room between the kitchen and the rear wing that encloses a stair leading down to a low basement beneath the library.

The library to the rear of the parlor has a mantel similar to that in the dining room. On the southwest wall of the library is a steep quarter-turn staircase leading to the second floor. This partially enclosed staircase has a square, chamfered, newel post. Four steps in the north corner of the library lead down to a small door on the northwest wall between the fireplace and staircase. This door opens into the high basement in the northwest portion of the rear wing. The walls and floor of the room are brick. Markings in the exposed ceiling rafters indicate that they were cut by a circular saw.

The hall, parlor, dining room, and library feature molded chair rails, picture rails, and shoe moldings. Doors throughout the first floor are six-panel and have paneled jambs. Doors and windows throughout have beaded surrounds and bull's-eye corner blocks.

Upstairs, the main block contains a center stair hall flanked by bedrooms over the dining room and parlor. The walls of the second floor stairhall are finished with flush wood paneling. The master bedroom, over the dining room, has a batten board closet in the south corner, which is a recent addition. Both bedrooms feature tall baseboards and crown moldings. Identical mantels in the bedrooms are similar to that in the dining room, but are simplified, having narrower freizes and flat, rather than linenfold pilasters.

Outside, eight frame outbuildings are arranged to outline the rear yard. Although the house is known to have had a combined slave house and kitchen, stables, and ice house, none of these survive. The present outbuildings are not original to the house, but were salvaged from other properties and moved here by the present owner, Frederick N. Oettinger, Jr.

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Clark Royster House
Mecklenburg County, Virginia

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Because they were not present on the property during the period of significance, they are noncontributing buildings. The Oettingers cleared out the original 65-foot-deep rock well, however, which is still in use, and is a contributing structure.

An indentation to the rear of the patio shows the former location of the combined kitchen and slave quarters. Its chimney was still standing when the Oettingers purchased the property in the 1960s, but it has since been removed. Another indentation east of the paved driveway indicates the site of the ice house. Although these buildings have obviously lost integrity, they were present during the period of significance so their archeological remains are contributing sites. According to the owner, the original stables were located to the northeast of the house near an additional well, although no trace is visible.

Large boxwoods line the front brick walk to the dwelling and a clump of boxwoods grow on the southwest side of the sun porch. Two oaks, which the present owner estimates to be between 250 to 300 years old, stand to the northeast and southeast of the dwelling. Other mature trees on the property include a holly, a magnolia, and a maple.

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Statement of Significance

This federal-style dwelling is significant as the former home of Clark Royster, founder of the town of Clarksville. As the elegant home of a prominent citizen who promoted the establishment and development of a new town, it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and is therefore eligible for the National Register under criterion A. Additionally, because of its association with Royster, a locally prominent figure, it is eligible for the National Register under criterion B. Finally, because of its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of architecture built during the antebellum period in Virginia's lower piedmont region, it is eligible for the National Register under criterion C. Because of its association with Royster, an instrumental figure in the founding of a new town, it is significant in the National Register area of Exploration/Settlement. Additionally, its excellent integrity and embodiment of a distinctive architectural style give it significance in the National Register area of Architecture. Because its primary significance is derived from its association with Royster, the property's period of significance, 1840-1869, corresponds to the period it was occupied by the Royster family.

Historical Background

Royster built the dwelling in 1840 on land he had inherited in 1792 from his father, William Royster. Clark Royster had inherited the 376 acres in two adjoining tracts. In 1818, he laid out the town of Clarksville on the 100-acre tract that adjoined Blue Creek, and in 1840, he presumably built an elegant residence, the Clark Royster House, on part of the adjacent 276-acre tract.¹

Royster established the town at the site of the landing for the ferry he operated on the south side of the Roanoke River. Royster was also a planter and tavern owner, and it is believed that his tavern was situated on the hill above the river, where Grace Hotel was later located, and where Central Fidelity Bank on Virginia Avenue now stands.² The sale of lots in the town was advertised in the *Petersburg Republican* in March 1818. The advertisement lauded the town for its location on high ground, its situation at the junction of two navigable rivers with an excellent harbor, its ample and excellent springs, an extensive back country, a public road, and its location in the heart of some of the richest tobacco lands in the state. The public sale of the town lots took place on April 24, 1818, and by 1819 a post office had been established. The town grew rapidly enough between 1819 and 1821 to justify the presentation of a petition requesting its incorporation in January 1821. The bill incorporating Clarksville was passed by the General Assembly on February 20, 1821.³

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Tobacco and flour inspection stations had been established at Clark Royster's Warehouse in January 1818 and no doubt contributed to the rapid development of the town. Two factories licensed in Clarksville in 1819 to "stem and manufacture tobacco" may have been the first in the county, and prior to the Civil War, Clarksville had the county's only tobacco market. Tobacco grown and harvested in the county was stored and processed in Clarksville and transported on the Roanoke River. By 1834, the town of Clarksville featured fourteen private houses, nine mercantile stores, a wheelwright, and a boot and shoe manufacturer.

Tobacco annually inspected in Clarksville rose from between 1,700 and 2,000 hogsheads in 1834, to between 2,600 and 3,300 hogsheads in the period between 1844 and 1849. The volume of business passing through the warehouses ranked Clarksville as one of the five largest tobacco inspection towns in the state. As a result, the population increased from two hundred in 1834 to one thousand in 1845, surpassing Boydton to become the largest town in the county.⁴

During this period, Clark Royster operated one of two tobacco warehouses in the town and gradually sold off his town lots. It was probably during this time of prosperity that he built the Clark Royster House. The tax assessment of 1820 indicates that Royster owned 22 lots in the town and paid taxes on buildings evaluated at \$10,000, which likely included the warehouse, the hotel, and his own residence.⁵ Although he paid land taxes on the 276-acre parcel on which the Clark Royster house now stands, the tax records indicate that he was not assessed for any buildings on parcel from the time that the tax records first began accounting for improvements in 1819 and 1839. In 1840, however, he was assessed for an improvement on the 276-acre tract valued at \$3,000, which undoubtedly signifies the construction of the present dwelling.⁶

Tradition holds that Royster erected the two-story dwelling as an addition to a 1½-story dwelling built by his father in the 1700s. The 1792 deed of sale from William Royster to Clark Royster clearly indicates that William Royster resided on the 376-acre tract in an extensive estate that included agricultural fields and livestock including horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs. He also owned 11 slaves. The household items listed in the deed imply that the main dwelling was elegantly furnished. The exact location of the dwelling, however, is not specified.⁷ Although tax records as early as 1782 concur with the extent and value of William Royster's estate, the fact that they do not list the value of improvements makes it difficult to determine the fate of this dwelling.⁸

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Clark Royster House
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During his lifetime, Clark Royster acquired a significant amount of property, and after his death in 1848 much of it was sold. According to his will, however, his widow, Lucy, was given life tenancy of the dwelling where they resided together and the 22½ acres on which it stood, as well as all of its furnishings, five slaves of her choosing from his estate and "as many horses, cattle, hogs and sheep as she may desire."⁹ Lucy Royster remained in the house as a widow until she died around 1860. According to the terms of Clark Royster's will, the executor William Townes, was to sell the entire estate and divided the proceeds from the sale among Royster's heirs.¹⁰

The 22¼-acre tract that included the house was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Fletcher Humphreys in 1863.¹¹ In this transaction, the property passed to another locally prominent family, since Mrs. Humphreys (nee Elizabeth Chapman Boyd) was the daughter of Richard and Lucy Anne Goode Boyd of Oakley Plantation, and was the great-granddaughter of Alexander Boyd, founder of Boydton, Mecklenburg's county seat. The Humphreys had seven children. Their daughter Sarah Catherine Humphreys Crowder, who was born in the Clark Royster House in 1861, was the maternal grandmother of current occupant, Mary Ann Boyd Oettinger.¹²

A photograph taken around 1910 shows the dwelling with a three-bay front porch with four doric columns supporting a denticulated cornice. The five women standing on the porch in the photograph include Lelia and Isabelle Humphreys, who resided in the dwelling until the mid-twentieth century. According to the Oettingers, the unmarried sisters ran a private school in the house.¹³

Frederick N. Oettinger Jr. and his wife, Mary Ann Boyd Oettinger, purchased the property in 1961 from twenty-two heirs of the Humphreys family. Between 1962 and 1964, the Oettingers restored the house with the guidance of local architect Otis Wilkerson. The sensitive restoration included the replastering of the interior walls, the addition of hot water, heat, electricity, and an upstairs bathroom, and the removal of the deteriorated front porch. Although cove moldings were added to the ceilings, the existing chair rails, picture rails, doors, hardware, and mantels are all original.

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Mecklenburg County, Virginia

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Notes

1. Susan L. Bracey, *Life by the Roaring Roanoke*, (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, 1977) 191.
2. *Clarksville Times and Mecklenburg County Record*, undated news clipping on file at the Clarksville Public Library, Clarksville, Virginia.
3. Bracey, 121-122.
4. Bracey, 352-353.
5. *Mecklenburg County Land Book* 1820.
6. *Land Books* 1819-1840.
7. *Mecklenburg County Deed Book* 8: 161.
8. *Land Books* 1782-1819.
9. *Mecklenburg County Will Book* 16: 373; *Land Books* 1847-1849.
10. *Land Books* 1859-1861; *Deed Book* 36: 575.
11. *Deed Book* 36: 575.
12. Frederick N. Oettinger, Jr., and Mary Ann Boyd Oettinger, interview by Margarita Jerabek Wuellner, April 1994, Clarksville, Virginia.
13. Mr. and Mrs. Frederick N. Oettinger, Jr.

Bibliography

- Bracey, Susan L. *Life by the Roaring Roanoke*. Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, 1977.
- Clarksville Times and Mecklenburg County Record*, undated news clipping on file at the Clarksville Public Library, Clarksville, Virginia.
- Mecklenburg County Deed Books, Land Books, and Will Books*. Documents on microfilm at the Virginia State Archives, Richmond, Virginia.
- Oettinger, Frederick N. Jr. and Mary Ann Boyd Oettinger, interview by Margarita Jerabek Wuellner, April 1994, Clarksville, Virginia.

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Continuation Sheet

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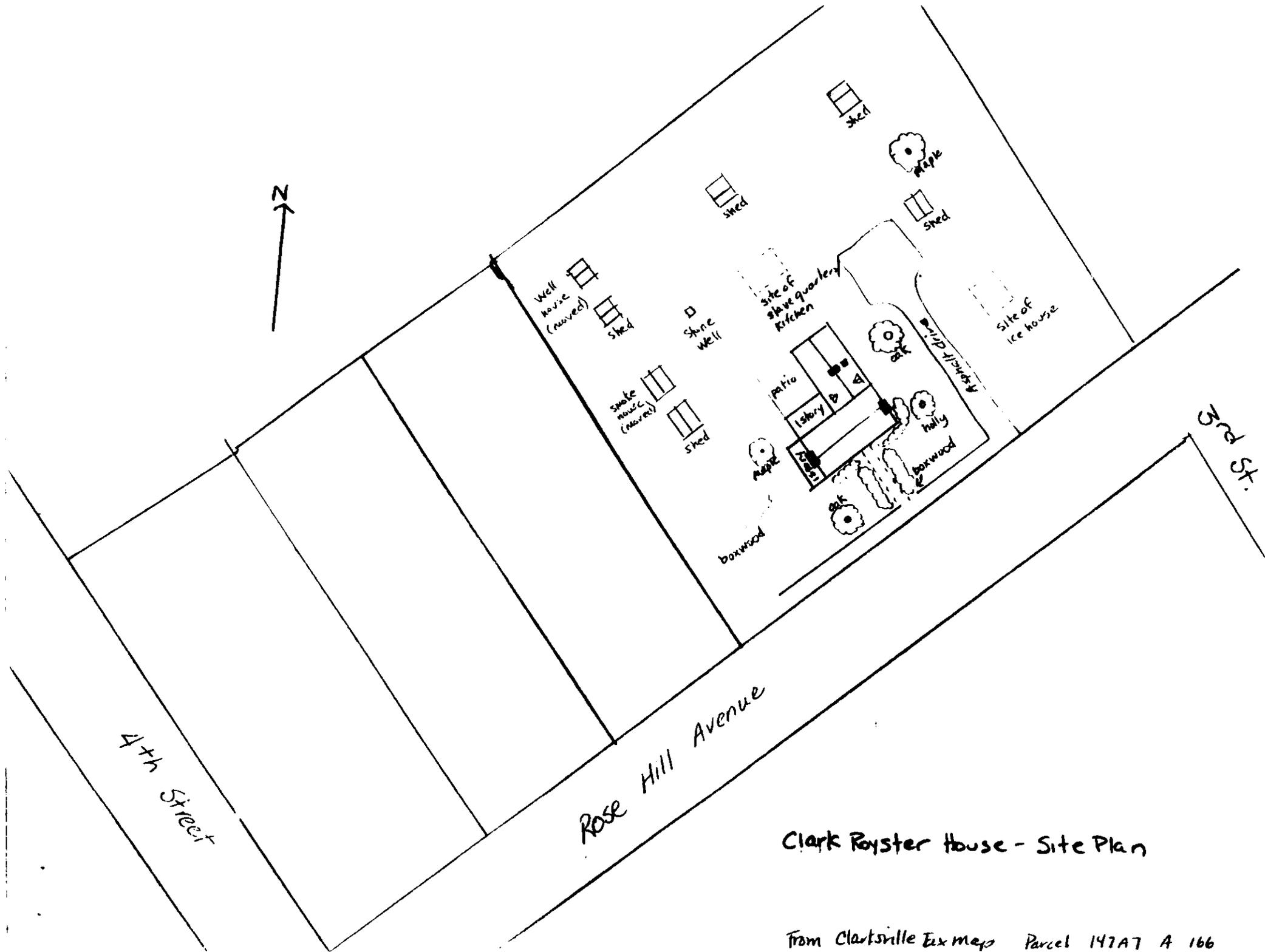
Clark Royster House
Mecklenburg County, Virginia

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary of the Clark Royster House is shown on the accompanying map which is derived from Mecklenburg County Tax Parcel Map Number 147A7.

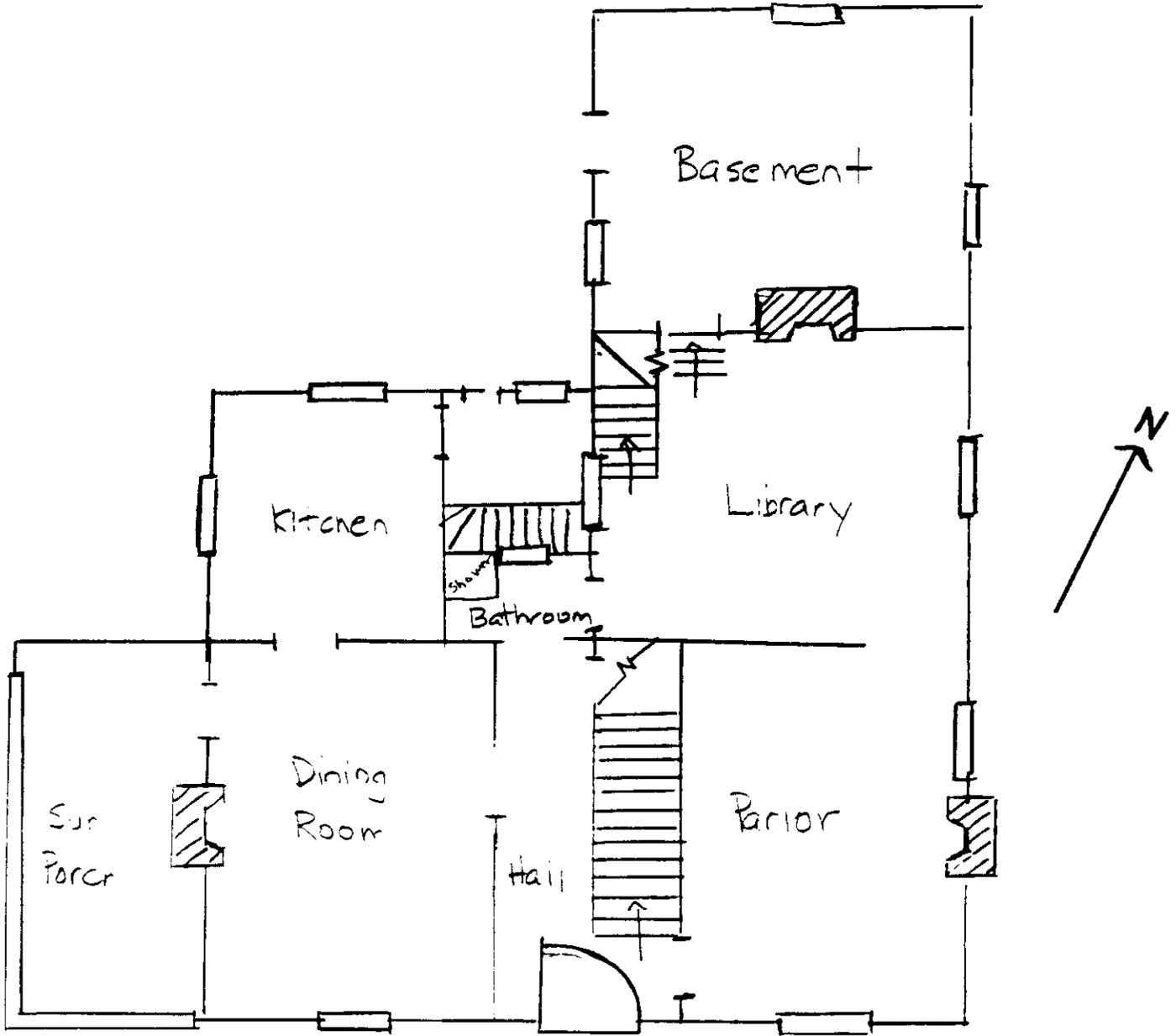
Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the full extent of the remaining house lot and includes all the contributing buildings, structures, and sites.



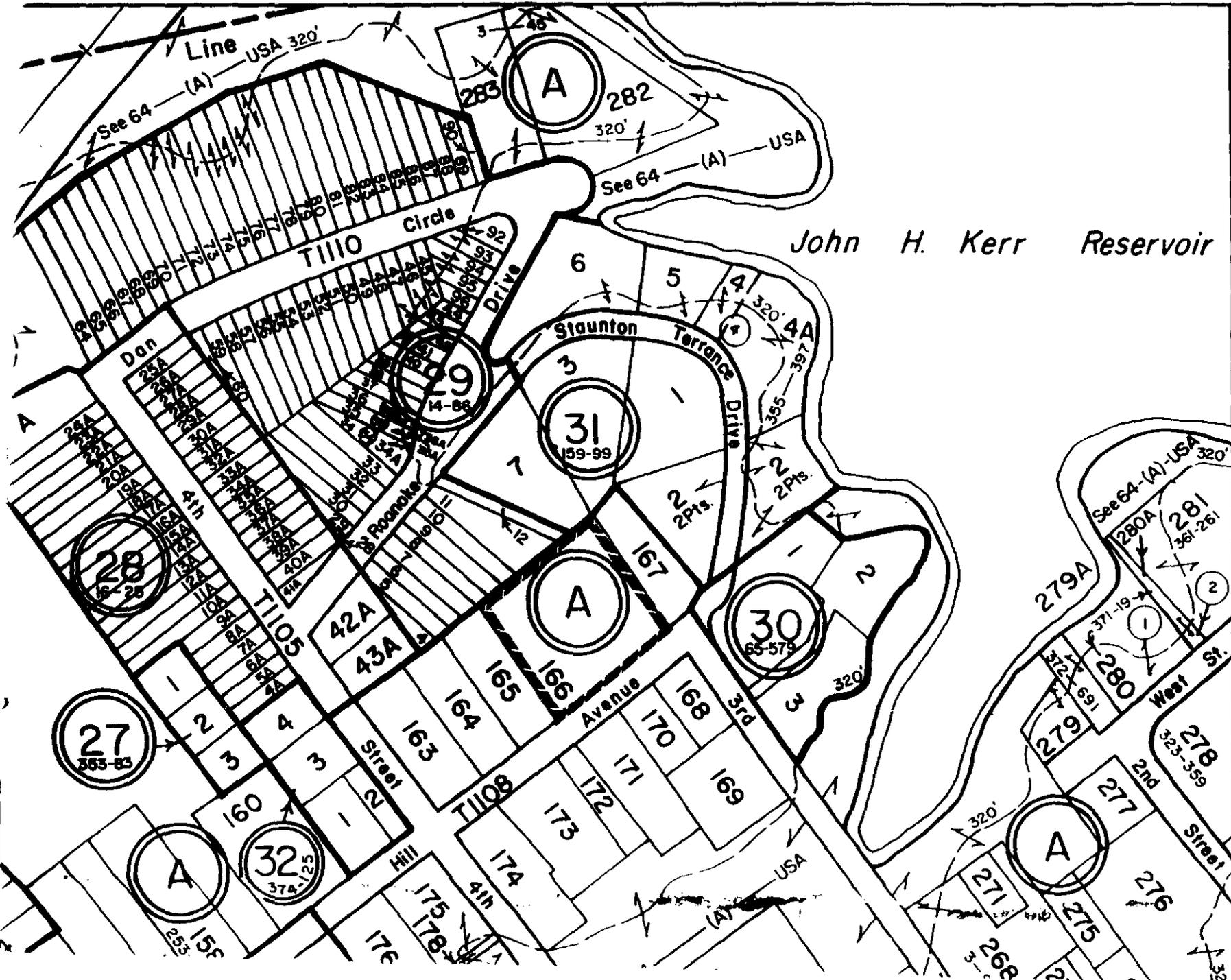
Clark Royster House - Site Plan

From Clarksville Ex. map Parcel 147A7 A 166

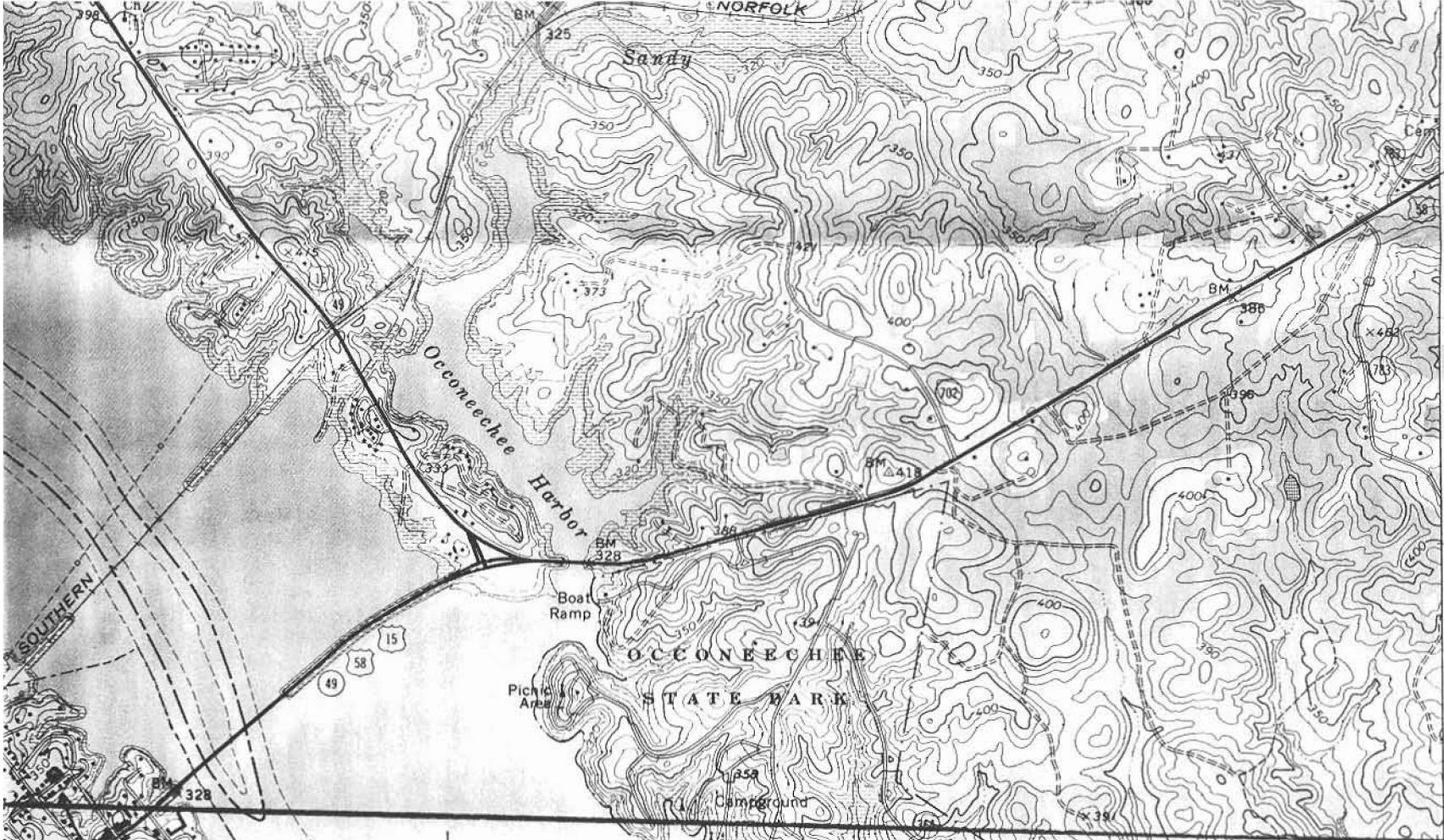


Clark Boulder House - First Floor Plan

Clark Royster House Boundary

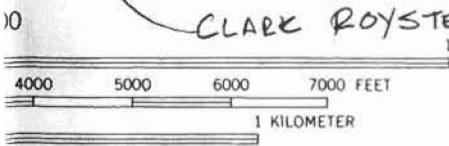


- #s Not
- 141
- 231
- 16
- 16



Clark Royster
house
17 718365 4056110

32°30' 720 721 722 723000m E 78°30' 36°37'30"

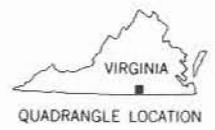


CLARK ROYSTER HOUSE
MECKLENBURG CO., VA

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route

ACCURACY STANDARDS
DENVER, COLORADO 80225,
A 22092
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1979 and other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1981

CLARKVILLE NORTH, VA.
NE/4 CLARKVILLE 15' QUADRANGLE
N3637.5—W7830/7.5
PHOTOINSPECTED 1988
1968
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 5257 II NE—SERIES V834

(TUNGSTEN)
5357 III SW