

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# 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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Abigarlos  
 Other names/site number: DHR No. 124-0052  
 Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**

Street & number: 3321 Carney Farm Lane  
 City or town: Portsmouth State: VA County: Independent City  
 Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  N/A

**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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local  
 Applicable National Register Criteria:  
 A  B  C  D

<p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>  <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>                  State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
<p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### 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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

FUNERARY: cemetery

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

FUNERARY: cemetery

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal  
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; WEATHERBOARD; STONE: Slate

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Abigarlos is a two-story, side-gabled frame dwelling with additions that has at its core an early nineteenth-century farmhouse. It sits on the north bank of Tartts Creek, an estuary of the Western Branch of the Elizabeth River, in a suburban section of the City of Portsmouth, Virginia, that was until the 1960s Norfolk County. The property contains the house, a garage and a small cemetery with a single marble obelisk. The house, begun during the federal period and exhibiting much of that period's architectural craftsmanship, was significantly modified with notable Colonial Revival features in 1940 when it was moved to the current location. The 1940 Colonial Revival additions were designed by Mary Ramsay Brown Channel, the first female registered architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The house, garage and cemetery retain a high degree of integrity from both the early nineteenth-century and the 1940 period. All three resources are contributing.

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### Narrative Description

Abigarlos is located in the city of Portsmouth. It is in the western section of the city, west of the Western Branch of the Elizabeth River, and sits on the north bank of Tartts Creek, an estuary of the river. The parcel lies south of Carney Farm Lane, a road that extends east from High Street/Route 17. The current 2.138-acre parcel is a fraction of its original parcel. The surrounding subdivision of single family houses dating from the 1960s are set back from the street on large lots in a neighborhood with mature trees along this cul-de-sac road. East of the house, on a separate parcel with separate ownership, is a late nineteenth-century house built by the Carney family at the original location of Abigarlos. The nominated parcel contains the house, a garage, and a cemetery.

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An unpaved drive leads to the garage at the west side of the parcel. A modern concrete terrace stretches across the front of the garage, behind the west wing of the house to the west elevation of the core of the house. Gravel patterns north of the house indicate there may have been an earlier entrance with a circular drive. The lot is dotted with mature trees including live oak, holly and pines. South of the parcel is a tidal marsh with tall marsh grasses.

The cemetery, southeast of the house, has a single marker. A marble obelisk with chamfered corners on a marble plinth stands on a granite base. The plinth is inscribed on three sides. One reads "LYSANDER H. KINGMAN / BORN/APRIL 3, 1806, / DIED / FEB. 23, 1869." A second reads, "VIRGINIA / WIFE OF / L.H. KINGMAN / DIED MAY 22, 1864 / AGED 49 YEARS." And the third, "In memory of/ BETTIE: / Born Jan. 2, 1840, / Died June 16, 1864: / And also of other / children of L. H. Kingman / here interred viz / CYRUS, LYSANDER, OLIVIA, / & ANNIE." Lysander H. Kingman's first wife was Elizabeth Wright Carney. She was the daughter of James and Mary Polly Carney. While the exact date of the marker is unknown it appears to be from the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

West of the house is a garage. Sketches in possession of the current owner suggest the garage may have been designed by Mary Ramsay Brown Channel and built ca. 1940. It is a one-story, front-gabled, frame building with an open, shed-roofed addition to the east. The garage has a brick foundation and it is clad in beaded weatherboard, with board-and-batten siding in the gable ends. The roof has a hipped louvered cupola. The north elevation has two sets of double-leaf doors. Above them is a four-light window in the gable. The east elevation has a 6/6 double-hung, wooden sash windows. The west elevation has two single-leaf doors, each with a screen door, flanking a 6/6 double-hung, wooden sash window. The doors and window are beneath a shed-roofed addition supported by log columns on a concrete slab in a brick foundation. Both the primary roof and the shed roof have exposed rafter tails. The garage has an interior brick chimney at its southeast with a corbelled cap. Significant character-defining features of the garage all appear to date to its original construction.

The house is a two-story, side-gabled, frame house with additions. It sits on a brick foundation. It is clad in beaded weatherboard. The roof is slate save for the western addition, which is asphalt shingle, and the porch, which is metal. The roof of the main portion of the house, the eastern porch addition, and the western hyphen all have a modillion cornice.

The core of the house (ca. 1812) appears to have been a two-story single-pile house with exterior end chimneys. A full width, shed-roofed, one-story porch (ca. 1960) crosses the south elevation of the original building. A full-width, two-story, shed-roofed addition on the north elevation (1940) has created a new facade. A gambrel-roofed addition on the north side of the east elevation (1940) has an enclosed area above and a screened porch below. The west elevation has a one-story, gabled hyphen to a one-story, cross-gabled west wing (1974).

The facade of the main section of the building is symmetrical, with a single-leaf entrance door topped by a five-light transom. Flanking the entrance are 6/6, double-hung, wooden sash

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windows. There are three 6/6, double-hung, wooden sash windows on the second floor, aligned above the door and windows below. The south elevation of the main block of the house has a full width, shed-roofed, enclosed porch on the first floor. The porch stands on brick piers. On the second floor, above the porch, are three evenly spaced, 6/6, double-hung, wooden sash windows.

The east elevation of the core of the house has an exterior end chimney, laid in Flemish bond, with a single set of paved shoulders. On the first and second floors and in the attic, the chimney is flanked by windows. On the first floor they are narrow 6/6, double-hung, wooden sash windows, each sash having two columns of three lights; on the second floor are 4/4 double-hung, wooden sash windows; and in the attic are wooden four-light windows, save for two that have been replaced with vents.

The west elevation of the core of the house has an exterior end chimney, laid in Flemish bond with two sets of paved shoulders. The fenestration matches that on the east, though one of the attic windows has been replaced with a louvered vent. Additionally there is a 6/6, double-hung, wooden sash window on the second floor and a 4/4 on the first floor of the west elevation of the main portion of the house in the northern expansion, which lies north of a hyphen.

On the northeast corner of the building is a two-story, gambrel-roofed addition. It adjoins the main part of the house at a door in the main part's northern expansion. The lower level is a screened porch with square Doric posts supporting an entablature. Above is an enclosed room with pedimented gabled dormers on the north and south elevations housing 4/4 double-hung, wooden sash windows; and a third 4/4 double-hung, wooden sash window on the frame gambrel end.

On the west side of the house, a gabled hyphen which was originally a detached servant's or slave dwelling or possibly a kitchen, and later the main kitchen for the house, connects the main block of the house with a cross-gabled wing that was added in 1974. The hyphen has a wooden, single-leaf, nine-light, two-panel door on the north elevation and a single-leaf, single-light door on its south elevation. The west wing has a canted bay on its north elevation, centered below the gable. It has a single 6/6, double-hung, wooden sash window on its west elevation and paired 6/6, double-hung, wooden sash windows on its south elevation.

The house has a main floor, a second floor and an attic. The first floor is a modified central hall plan. A single run stair ascends to the south along the western wall of the central hall. East of the hall are two rooms, an office to the north and a parlor to the south. Each has a door to the hall and there is a door between them at the east. The office has a door to the porch addition to its east. West of the hall is a dining room to the south, which has an entrance to the hall. At the north end of the dining room is a door to a butler's pantry. A hall extends west from the butler's pantry through the hyphen to the kitchen in the wing.

The north and south entrances have single-leaf, six-panel wooden doors with five-light transoms.

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The hall, parlor, office and dining room all have a continuous wooden wainscot with a broad baseboard, a molded chair rail and crown molding. The parlor has a fireplace with a wooden mantel with hand-carved reeded pilasters supporting an entablature and a molded shelf. The office has a blind mantel that is similarly detailed. It may have been moved from the dining room, which has no fireplace.

The rear sun porch has a carpeted floor and beadboard ceiling. It was added to the rear of the house in such a fashion that the original, first floor facade exterior is largely undamaged. The windows flanking the porch door (one for the parlor and one for the dining room) are 9/9, double-hung, wooden sash windows which suggests that the building originally had a graduated fenestration and that the first floor windows on the current facade are replacements that are smaller than the originals.

The stairs from the first floor ascend to the south end of the second floor. The stair has a square post newel with a simple cap. Excluding the bottom step that abuts the newel, each step has three slender balusters that are square in section. To the west is a door to the west bedroom. To the east is a modified central hall that extends north to a point where the facade addition begins and there is a small set of steps to accommodate a 2-3' depression in the floor level. South of the steps is a door on the hall's west wall which leads to a winder stair to the attic. At the foot of the hall, to the north is a half bathroom. East of the hall is the master bedroom with a door to the hall on the south end of its west wall. At the east corner of its north wall is a door to a small set of steps and a modified hall that services a day room in the addition to the east as well as closets and a bathroom in the facade addition. The second-floor rooms have a chair rail and baseboard but no wainscot or crown molding. The master bedroom to the east has a fireplace with a mantel similar to the one below it in the parlor.

The stairs from the second floor to the attic ascend to the south. Wooden railings that flank the stair entrance effectively divide this large single attic room into east and west sides. The attic is finished with pine floors and plaster ceiling and walls. Several square wooden paneled doors with latches in wooden casing provide access to storage behind the knee walls.

### **Integrity Analysis**

Abigarlos stands on a portion of the farm on which it was originally built, in close proximity to its original location. Criteria Consideration B allows that moved property can be eligible if it is significant primarily for its architectural value, which Abigarlos is. Additionally, the move is within the period of significance and is part of the narrative of the retention and renovation of the house by architect Mary Ramsay Brown Channel. The design of Abigarlos is a synthesis of its original design and the 1940 changes. The 1974 addition of a kitchen wing impairs the design somewhat, however it consolidated additional kitchen space in a new area, thus reducing the pressure to alter greatly the plan, fixtures and finishes of the 1940s house and only impacting original materials of the earlier kitchen, which was a secondary interior space. The southern porch was originally screened but later glazed. The core of the house retains a strong degree of integrity with historic windows, interior and exterior trim, slate roofing, and floor plan. The marsh and the large parcel associated with the house at its original location contribute to a good

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integrity of setting. A 1960s subdivision along the north side of Carney Farm Lane resulted in a handful of single-family dwellings on large lots with a generous set back that do not impinge greatly on the integrity of setting. The house remains a high degree of integrity of materials, some from its original construction and some from the historic 1940 remodeling. Wooden exterior siding, wooden window sash, slate shingles, wooden flooring and trim are all historic and date from the period of significance. Likewise, the integrity of workmanship is also high given the limited extent of changes post 1940. The high degree of integrity of setting, material and workmanship contribute to a high degree of integrity of feeling. The integrity of association is strong as Abigarlos remains in the place where it was moved during its period of significance and it is sufficiently intact to convey the relationship between resource and place.



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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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**  
ca. 1812-1940

**Significant Dates**  
ca. 1896  
1940

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

**Cultural Affiliation**  
N/A

**Architect/Builder**  
Channel, Mary Ramsay Brown

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Abigarlos is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture. The house is a rare surviving example of an early 19th-century rural dwelling, updated in the mid- twentieth century by Mary Ramsay Brown Channel, the first female registered architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As such, it has design elements of both periods. The house was originally constructed ca. 1812. It has remained in the same family and on a remnant of the larger family farm since that time. Abigarlos was moved at least twice and perhaps three times, all on Carney family land. Its final move in 1940, within the period of significance for the house, was to its current location where it was renovated by then-owner Lucy Carney Warner with plans drawn by Channel. The period of significance runs from the house's estimated original construction date until the Channel renovations. The property meets Criteria Consideration B in that it is significant primarily for its architecture and that the moves are all contained within the period of significance and within the historic boundaries of Carney family land. The significant dates, ca. 1896 and 1940, refer to the two documented relocations of the house on Carney land.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The house known as Abigarlos sits on just over 2 acres of land that once was part of a larger plantation called Abigarlos. Thomas Wright patented 611 acres of land on the western branch of the Elizabeth River in Norfolk County (later the City of Portsmouth), between 1635 and 1647. While the early Wright genealogy is unclear, by 1748 the will of a later Thomas Wright in Norfolk County, Virginia, granted to his “Son Absolem Wright the remainder of my Land not before given that is to say in the Western Branch being a plantation called abigarlos on the Western Branch.”<sup>1</sup>

An indenture dated August 20, 1766, between Absalom Wright Boatwright and Barnaby Carney, both of Norfolk County transfers for five shillings the land bequeathed to Absalom by his father Thomas, described as

situate on the North side of the Western Branch of Elizabeth River ...containing by estimation One Hundred & thirty three acres be the same more or less. And Bounded according to the Ancient known and reputed Bounds thereof. Which said Tract or parcel of Land is the same that the said Absalom Wright now lives on and all Houses, Buildings, Orchards, Ways, Waters, Water Courses, Profits, Commodities, (illegible) and Appurtenances whatsoever to the said premises hereby granted or any Part thereof: To have and to hold the said Tract or parcel of land and all and singular other the Premises hereby grants with the Appurtenances unto the said Barnaby Carney his Executors, Administrators and assigns for the

<sup>1</sup> Norfolk County Will Book H page 229

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day before the Date hereof for and during the full Term and Time of one whole year from thence next enuring fully to be complete and ended yielding and Paying therefore the Rent of One PepperCorn on Lady Day next if the same shall be Lawfully demanded; to the Intent and Purpose that by Virtue of these Presents and of the statute for transferring uses into Possession the said Barnaby Carney may be in active Possession of the Premises and the thereby enabled to accept and take a grant and releases of the Reversion and Inheritance thereof to him and his heirs....<sup>2</sup>

Barnaby Carney's will, dated 24 April 1773, gives his wife Sarah a life estate on his real property and to his son James Carney (1770-1822), "the plantation that I purchased of Absalom Wright ..."<sup>3</sup> Land tax records show Sarah paying taxes on 270 acres of land in Norfolk County until 1798. It appears that she died that year, as in 1799 her sons Barnaby Carney, Wright Carney, and James Carney each begin paying taxes on 90 acres of land in Norfolk County. Given the easy division of 90 into 270, and that Absalom Wright figured his plantation as 133 acres, there may have been some equalization of inheritance for the three boys.<sup>4</sup> It is believed that James Carney built the original Abigarlos house on his land around 1812.

James Carney appears to have died intestate as there is no will probated for him, rather an extensive accounting filed in 1824. However a portion of the farm passed to James Carney Jr (1818-1871), who passed most of his real estate to his children, including Wright B. Carney (1853-1921). Based on tax records, it is evident Wright built a large house between 1896 and 1897 on a parcel that is now adjacent to the current "Abigarlos" parcel.<sup>5</sup> This house survives under separate ownership. Upon the construction of the "new Carney house," the house now known as Abigarlos was moved and its old foundation was incorporated into the new house. Wright B. Carney's holdings are platted in a March 1940 map of Home Farm, the W. B. Carney estate.<sup>6</sup> They encompass almost 95 acres stretching east from Cedar Lane, north of Highway 17/ High Street, towards the Western Branch of the Elizabeth River.

Lucy Carney, a daughter of Wright B. Carney, was born in the Abigarlos House in 1893. According to an undated manuscript that is a recollection of Lucy Warner nee Carney, the house Abigarlos had "four chimneys two tall and two short with fireplaces in every room."<sup>7</sup> Shortly after its first move, (ca. 1896 with the construction of the new Carney home) the house was moved a second time, sometime between 1896 and 1940, even closer to its current location to a site known as "the bottom" and "family servants lived in it. The chimneys were removed (and) a chimney cut into (the) center of (the) house."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Norfolk County Deed Book 23, p.50

<sup>3</sup> Norfolk County Will Book 2, p 16

<sup>4</sup> Norfolk County Land Tax Books 1773-1799

<sup>5</sup> Norfolk County Land Tax Books 1896-1897

<sup>6</sup> Home Farm, the W. B. Carney Estate, plat, March 1940

<sup>7</sup> Diary manuscript of Lucy Carney Warner, nd

<sup>8</sup> IBID

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A map drawn by Ms. Warner shows the large extent of the Carney farm with the Wright B. Carney House, a barn, cow shed, corncrib, windmill, tennis court, oil house, smoke house, outhouse, chicken house, generator house, graveyard, three servant houses, garage, dock house and orchards.<sup>9</sup> This area of Portsmouth, formerly Norfolk County, was an agricultural center, well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Plantations evolved into truck farms where produce was transported by barge to steamships in the Norfolk and Portsmouth harbors for transport to markets along the east coast. The Carney farm at one point had its own wharf for transport of agricultural goods.

Lucy Carney's manuscript continues, "I was told all the timber in the house was cut from trees on the land and built by slave labor....It was moved from its foundation to one side so that the foundation and cellar could be used under the new house...The cellar of the old house had kitchen and dining room in the cellar (sic)."<sup>10</sup>

The Abigarlos house was moved once more in 1940 when Lucy Carney Warner had the house moved to its current location on a parcel of roughly 2 acres of the 95-acre tract inherited by her. Much of the surrounding land was inherited by other family members and later subdivided and developed for commercial and residential uses. In 1944 John Coleman purchased the Carney Nursery business and some of the related real estate within the 95 acres and re-named it the Coleman Nursery, carrying forward the agricultural tradition of the Carney business. Coleman's Nursery, formerly the Carney Nurseries, evolved from truck farms to retail nursery, finally closing in 2004.

A 1940 typescript signed WBC 3rd, on The Carney Nurseries letterhead notes that Lucy Warner, identified as an aunt, bought Quarters 1, 2, 3, and a store house of the Wright B. Carney farm. It notes #3 was wrecked and #2 was moved to the west of her property to be a cook's quarters. It continues,

Quarters #1 - original Carney House. L. C. moved this house Oct. 15. (second time) on exact spot that Quarters 3 originally stood and has completely remodeled the house throughout to coincide (sic) with the period that it was constructed in. While the kitchen of her home is built of original lumber it was not that way originally as the house adjoined the "L" now attached to house on hill. Also the beauty of the house has been ruined somewhat by the addition of Porch and Sleeping Porch on East Side (sic). The architect says that it looks proper. I say not. Does not harmonize with rest of house.<sup>11</sup>

This criticism of the renovated Abigarlos house does confirm the use of a servant's, perhaps slave, quarter as a kitchen addition.

While the city of Portsmouth does have thirteen other documented early 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings, they are clustered in the eastern portion of the city and are high-style examples of urban architecture, including several side-hall English basement houses. Abigarlos appears to be the

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<sup>9</sup> IBID

<sup>10</sup> IBID

<sup>11</sup> William B. Carney, III typescript description Abigarlos House 1940

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only remnant of a Federal period rural dwelling in the city. Though altered, aspects of the Federal style in Abigarlos include its side gabled form, symmetrical elevations, graduated fenestration, sash windows with narrow muntins, a modillioned cornice, paneled doors, transoms, and trim that is relatively attenuated and flat.

If one expands the search to include the current City of Chesapeake, which annexed a large portion of Norfolk County, there are only 11 extant surveyed single dwellings from the Early National Period. Of those, only two are in the western branch area of the city: Wildwood (131-0436), a small Greek Revival house which was expanded with a large Colonial Revival addition in the 1930s; and a house at 208 Poplar Hill Road (131-0414), a two-story, side-hall house, an unusually sophisticated house for its rural setting. The house on Poplar Hill Road was also part of a large truck farm. Thus Abigarlos is significant as a rare surviving example of an early nineteenth-century farmhouse.

The property is also significant as an evolved house and for the alterations designed by Mary Ramsay Brown Channel (1907-2006). A native of Portsmouth, Virginia, Channel received a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Randolph-Macon Women's College in 1929. Unable to matriculate at the University of Virginia, she earned her advanced degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1933, graduating second in her class. Returning to Tidewater Virginia, she worked for the Norfolk firm Rudolph, Cooke & Van Leeuwen.<sup>12</sup> In 1935, she passed the Virginia licensing board exam for architecture and became the first licensed woman architect in the Commonwealth. She then opened a private practice in Portsmouth. She was married in 1941 and after the birth of her first child she limited her commissions largely to residential and ecclesiastical work. Given that much of her residential work was in Portsmouth and many of the church projects were Episcopal parishes, it can be assumed that she received most of her commissions through personal connections. Her father was the rector of St John's Episcopal Church in Portsmouth, later becoming the bishop for the diocese of Southern Virginia.

Though she did not have an active practice in her later years, Channel did continue to design and she volunteered to sit on Portsmouth's Commission of Architectural Review during the 1970s. She maintained her license until 1990.<sup>13</sup>

Much of her residential work was in Portsmouth, and the bulk of it new construction with notable examples in the Swimming Point, Waterview, and Glensheallah neighborhoods. Abigarlos is something of a departure as it involved the rehabilitation of and additions to a historic house. Channel was well-versed in the Colonial Revival style. Her designs were generally pragmatic with sensitivity to aspects of interior design and domestic functionality.

Historic photographs in the collection of the owner show the pre-renovated house as a two-story house with a central interior chimney; a one-story, full-width, shed-roofed rear addition; and dual

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<sup>12</sup> John Wells and Robert E Dalton The Virginia Architects 1835-1955, New South Architectural Press Richmond 1997 p. 49

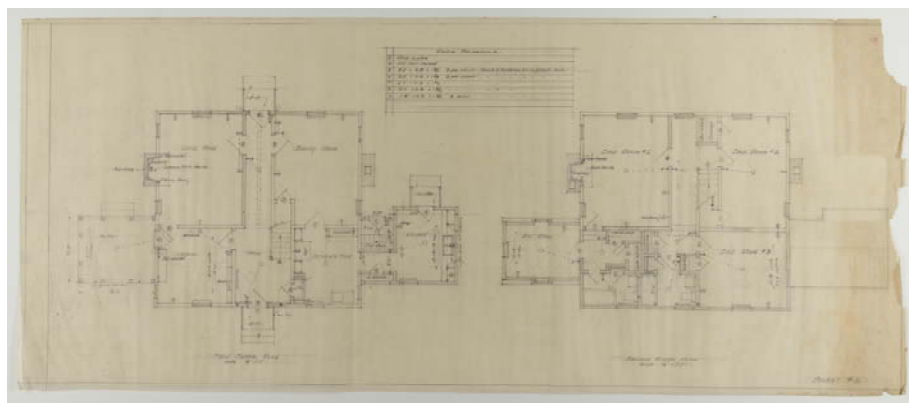
<sup>13</sup> Cornell Alumni News December 1978, p.46

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front doors.<sup>14</sup> A photograph dated October 24, 1940, and titled in pencil on the rear “Last shift-Lucys house” shows the house without a central chimney, on rollers, at its current location, with a fragment of a brick pier in the foreground, indicating that the final move of the house was not a large one.<sup>15</sup> Additional photos show the un-renovated house in the context of outbuildings, however, it is not entirely clear if they were associated with the house at its ultimate or penultimate location.<sup>16</sup>

For Abigarlos, Channel developed a new foundation plan for the relocated house that included a partial basement to house a boiler and laundry room. The foundation would be large enough to support the existing house, additions to the sides, and a full extension of the house to the north. Piers were built within the crawl space along the former principal north wall. Her plan has a central hall on the first floor with two large rooms, living and dining on either side at the south side of the house. In the north side of the house the hall is slightly wider with a single run stair ascending to the south along the hall’s west wall. The hall is flanked by a library to the east and a butler’s pantry (with no access to the hall) on the west. She uses two “old mantels” on the first floor in the library and adjacent parlor. Her door schedule notes four doors “in place,” two of which access spaces in the north side of the house, suggesting that the lean-to addition was not removed but rather expanded to a full two stories. Parallel dashed lines in the south hall suggest the removal of a partition wall, which would confirm the replacement of dual exterior doors on the south elevation to a single, central one. This is reinforced by her use of poche’ in her drawings for new construction; two wall sections on the south wall, flanking the removed partition, suggest infill as well as a new partition wall on the east side of the hall. The small, two-story addition to the northeast has a porch on the first floor and day room above. A one-story addition to the northwest, originally a servant’s or slave dwelling, houses a small kitchen.<sup>17</sup>



*Abigarlos, floor plan, Mary Channel, 1940*

*International Archive of Women in Architecture, College of Architecture and Urban Studies and the University Libraries at Virginia Tech.*

<sup>14</sup> Historic Photograph in collection of Elizabeth Respass

<sup>15</sup> Historic Photograph in collection of Elizabeth Respass

<sup>16</sup> Historic Photograph in collection of Elizabeth Respass

<sup>17</sup> Mary Ramsay Brown Plans and Specifications Remodeling of House for Mrs. F. D. Warner, nd Special Collections Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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The second story has two principal bedrooms east and west of the hall, which runs on a north-south axis parallel to the stair. A third bedroom to the northwest is in the expanded second story, as is a hall bath, and a master bath is adjacent to the day room above the porch addition.

Channel's design re-oriented the house with a facade on the north elevation. Excluding the additions, Channel brought symmetry to the north and south elevations with a central entry with single-leaf door with transom above, flanked by sash windows on either side, with three sash windows on the second floor aligned above the door and windows below. On the south elevation she retained the graduated fenestration with 9/9 windows on the first floor and 6/6 on the second. On the new facade she used 6/6 windows on both levels.



*Abigarlos, north and west elevations, Mary Channel, 1940  
International Archive of Women in Architecture, College of Architecture and Urban Studies and  
the University Libraries at Virginia Tech.*



*Abigarlos, east and south elevations, Mary Channel, 1940  
International Archive of Women in Architecture, College of Architecture and Urban Studies and  
the University Libraries at Virginia Tech.*



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Her specifications call for a slate roof.<sup>18</sup> All interior plaster was to be removed and new plaster applied on rock lathe. She called for new cypress weatherboarding with a beaded edge. She requested that existing cornice trim be retained or replicated if too damaged with new trim to match the original. Original floors were to be retained as well as door and window frames as possible. Existing trim was to remain and any new pieces replicated to match the original. The butler's pantry trim also could be used to patch as needed. The owner was to restore the mantels, which then were reinstalled by the contractor, implying the mantels are original to the house.<sup>19</sup>

After the death of Lucy Carney Warner, the house passed to her son, who constructed a larger kitchen wing, adapting the former kitchen to a laundry area. It may have been he who changed the screened porch to a sun porch with the addition of glazing. The house is currently owned by Lucy Warner's granddaughter, representing over 200 years of ownership and occupancy by the same family.

Abigarlos is a rare surviving dwelling in the Western Branch area of Portsmouth dating from the early nineteenth century. It is part of a rural, agricultural tradition that was once the dominant land use and driving force of the local economy. However as times changed, family members who inherited the house have adapted it. The most significant changes were made by Mary Ramsay Brown Channel for the then-owner Lucy Carney Warner. Channel was the first female registered professional architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Her commissions were largely residential and ecclesiastical. Abigarlos appears to be her only significant preservation project. She retained much of the original trim, fixtures and finishes. Her contributions could be considered mimicry of the existing features or alternatively a Colonial Revival treatment, seen in much of her original designs of the period. Colonial Revival architecture, particularly for domestic architecture, was still very popular in Virginia in the 1940s. Although the movement had its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, it experienced a resurgence in the 1930s and 1940s following the restoration of nearby Colonial Williamsburg. There became a renewed interest in all things colonial, with its architecture epitomizing conventional standards of good taste.

Channel's designs expanded the addition on the north elevation to two full stories and re-oriented the facade to the street side of the house. However she retained significant Federal features including symmetrical elevations, graduated fenestration, dentilled cornice, multi-light transoms, narrow window muntin profiles, slim balusters, mantels with reeded pilasters, and simple chair rail and wainscoting. Channel also made use of a former outbuilding to house an attached kitchen wing, in the tradition of rural architecture that often recycles structures for new uses. Abigarlos is locally significant for its dual architectural legacies.

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<sup>18</sup> IBID

<sup>19</sup> IBID

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Carney, Robert L. The Carney Family of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky. Prestonsburg, Kentucky: Williams Printing, 2002.

Brown, Mary Ramsay Remodeling of House for Mrs. F.D Warner, 4 sets of drawings.

Mary Brown Channel Architectural Collection, 1936-1978. Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University;  
<http://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=vt/vibl bv00628.xml>

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<http://vaheritage.org/2014/03/20/mary-brown-channel-architectural-collection-at-virginia-tech-special-collections/>

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Notes on Home Farm, type script 1940.

Warner, Lucy Carney journal and map, no date.

“W. B. Carney, Home Farm,” hand-drawn map, no date.

Wells, John, and Robert E Dalton. The Virginia Architects 1835-1955. Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997.

Winters, Shirley “Carney Homes Still Stand on the Original Land Grants.” The Virginia-Pilot and the Portsmouth Star. April 24, 1960.

Speidell, Phyllis, et al. Truckin’ on the Western Branch. Virginia Beach: Donning Company Publishers, 2014.

Stewart, William Henry. History of Norfolk County, Virginia and Representative Citizens. Biographical Publishing Company, 1902.

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register

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previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** DHR no. 124-0052

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 2.138

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.850551° Longitude: -76.371143°

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of Abigarlos encompasses all of the City of Portsmouth tax parcel 07600060. The true and correct historic boundaries are shown on the attached Location Map and Sketch Map.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the house, garage, and cemetery, all of which are contributing resources as well as the full extent of the 2.138-acre parcel that is all of the acreage historically associated with the house which still remains with it.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

organization: Hanbury Preservation Consulting

street & number: P. O. Box 6049

city or town: Raleigh state: NC zip code: 27628

e-mail maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com

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telephone: 919 828 1905

date: February 2019

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

The following information is common to all photographs:

Name of Property: Abigarlos  
City or Vicinity: Portsmouth  
County: N/A, Independent City State: VA  
Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury  
Date Photographed: February 2018

1 of 20: House, exterior, northeast corner, camera facing southwest

2 of 20: House, exterior, east elevation, camera facing west

3 of 20: House, exterior, facade, camera facing southeast

4 of 20: House, exterior, facade hyphen, camera facing south

5 of 20: Garage, exterior, west elevation, camera facing east

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- 6 of 20: House, exterior, porch addition east elevation, camera facing northwest
- 7 of 20: House, interior, first floor, parlor, camera facing southwest
- 8 of 20: House, interior, first floor, parlor mantel, camera facing east
- 9 of 20: House, interior, first floor, parlor, camera facing northeast
- 10 of 20: House, interior, first floor, dining room, camera facing southeast
- 11 of 20: House, interior, first floor, dining room, camera facing west
- 12 of 20: House, interior, first floor, butler's pantry and dining room, camera facing south
- 13 of 20: House, interior, first floor, hall, camera facing west
- 14 of 20: House, interior, second floor, master bedroom, camera facing east
- 15 of 20: House, interior, second floor, master bedroom mantel, camera facing east
- 16 of 20: House, interior, second floor, day room, camera facing east
- 17 of 20: House, interior, second floor, modified hall, camera facing south
- 18 of 20: House, interior, attic, stair, camera facing down
- 19 of 20: House, interior, attic, camera facing west
- 20 of 20: Obelisk, camera facing east

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.