

VLR-3/19/97 NRHP-6/5/97

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Guidelines for 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." Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Brook Hall

other names/site number: 095-0004

2. Location

street & number: 13160 Byars Lane

city, town: Abingdon

state: Virginia

code: VA

county: Washington code: 191

NIP: not for publication
vicinity X

zip code: 24340

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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. I recommend that this property be considered nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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

Brook Hall

Name of Property

Washington County, VA

County and State

5. ClassificationOwnership of Property
within Property

private	X	building(s)	X
public-local		district	
public-State		site	
public-Federal		structure	
		object	

Category of Property

Number of Resources

	Contributing	Non contributing
buildings	32	12
sites	0	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
Total	32	12

Name of related multiple property listing

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single family
Domestic: secondary structure
Domestic: secondary structure
Domestic: single family

Current Functions

Domestic: single family
Domestic: secondary structure
Domestic: secondary structure
Domestic: single family

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation	STONE
walls	BRICK

roof	METAL
porch	WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe present and historic physical appearance.)

 X See continuation sheet

Brook Hall

Name of Property

Washington County, VA

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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

☐ **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 value, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction

Period of Significance

1829-1830

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history

Criteria Consideration

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

Significant Dates

1830

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

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation of file (NPS):

- x 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
- x recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # unk
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- X State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 221 Governor Street, Richmond VA 23219

Brook Hall
Name of Property

Washington County, VA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: 15.73 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

 X 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	William T. Frazier and Lisa Marie Tucker	date	January 20, 1997
organization	Frazier Associates	telephone	(540) 886-6230
street and number	213 N. Augusta Street	state	VA
city or town	Staunton	zip code	24401

12. 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: Brook Hall Limited, L.C.
Street and Number: 98 15th Street, NW Suite 103
City or town: Norton

Telephone: (540) 328-1432
State: VA Zip Code: 24273

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 Preservation Act as amended. (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this information is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and manufacturing 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, D.C. 20013-7127; and the Office of Management And Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, D.C. 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

Brook Hall, constructed circa 1830 in northern Washington County, is the best overall example in the county of the Federal style of architecture and one of the most sophisticated examples in southwest Virginia.¹ It is unusually large for this area of the state and the entire house retains fine and elaborate details from that period. Of particular note is the interior of Brook Hall, which retains spectacular carved woodwork as well as very early, possibly original, paint on woodgrained doors and marbled mantels and baseboards.² The interior T-plan also is quite unusual. Originally located on a 615-acre tract along the historic stage road, now U.S. Route 11, the Brook Hall mansion occupies a 15.73-acre hilltop site which overlooks the road to the north and Halls Creek to the west. Besides the main residence, the property includes a nineteenth-century stone springhouse, a twentieth-century stone garage, and a noncontributing frame tenant house which dates to the mid-twentieth century.

The house is composed of two sections built at the same time: a five-bay, two-story brick house with a four-bay, two-story brick wing. Both the main house and the wing have exterior end chimneys and gable roofs, which are clad in metal shingles probably dating from the 1930s renovation. The main body of the house features a double-pile plan with an unusual cross-hall configuration. The central stair hall runs east-west. Intersecting it is a transverse hall which runs north-south for the entire length of the main house and connects it to the wing. The wing is single pile with each room opening onto a two-story gallery porch that extends across the east front of the wing. In both the main section and the wing, the raised basement is finished, as is the attic. The 8,800 square foot dwelling has twenty-six rooms.

¹According to Nanci King, president of the Washington County Preservation Foundation, who helped perform the intensive architectural survey of some 700 structures in the county in the early 1990s, Brook Hall is one of the largest houses in the county of any period and is rare for the fine details throughout and for its overall integrity.

²Matthew John Mosca, of Historic Paint Research in Baltimore, Maryland, examined Brook Hall and notes that "[T]he range and quality of the finishes is remarkable."

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

Minor rehabilitations occurred in the 1930s (including replacing the roof on the two-story porch, widening of the passage between the secondary parlor and the dining room and on the second floor, and the addition of an opening from the west ballroom into the wing). The main house retains historical integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Likewise, neither the springhouse nor the garage have been changed in ways that would reduce their integrity, although the springhouse is currently abandoned and facing deterioration.

Detailed Description

This masonry dwelling has a coursed limestone foundation with brick walls above. The east (primary) elevation of the main body of the house is laid in Flemish-bond brick as is most of the north elevation. All remaining sections of the house, including the east elevation of the wing, are laid in five-course American-bond brick with some three-course American, four-course American, and eight-course American intermingled.

It is clear that both the main section and the wing were built at the same time because the west wall, which runs the entire length of the house, is continuous with no breaks or changes in the brick pattern, nor are there any breaks in the stone foundation. The stretcher courses extend the entire length of the facade. All of the windows have the same jack arches and trim and sill styles, although the windows on the wing section are somewhat smaller, reflecting its role as a service area. On the interior, the same trim styles are used throughout most rooms in the main section and the wing.

The house contains five chimneys, all substantial brick exterior end chimneys with sloping shoulders above the second floor and capped with a series of four corbels. The brick bond of each chimney matches the style and quality of the wall it joins. The largest chimney is on the south wall, serving the kitchen. It features three-course American bond on the lowest section and five-course American bond above. On the north wall, paired chimneys on either side of the porch are laid in Flemish bond. The paired chimneys on the south side of the main block between it and the wing feature five-course American bond.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

All window and door openings on the main block of the east front of the house have brick jack arches composed of one whole brick with a small section of a second brick above. The windows in the main body of the house are nine-over-nine double-hung sash on the first floor with nine-over-six double-hung sash on the second floor. The windows of both floors of the wing are six-over-six double-hung sash. Attic windows at the gable ends of both sections also are six-over-six double-hung sash. All of the windows have a simple architrave surround with later storm windows which were added in the second half of the twentieth century. The front door (east), side door (north), and back door (west), are all single, six-paneled wood doors with six-light fixed transoms above. The transoms consist of three-over-three lights with engaged pilaster surrounds and decorative trim. The main body of the house features a cornice with stylized dentils and projecting rafter ends, while the wing has a simple, boxed cornice.

The main block of the house is adorned with three entries. All three entries originally had single-bay porches. Only the porch on the north elevation remains. This porch consists of a pedimented gable supported on four attenuated Doric columns which bulge at the center and taper at both the top and bottom. The cornice returns at both ends of the gable. A turned-post railing runs between the colonnettes with benches incorporated into the porch at either side. The ghost outlines of the east and west porches remain on the brick walls and match the outline of the extant north porch.

The wing features a two-story gallery that extends across the front of the wing and has chamfered posts at both levels. A turned-post railing runs between the chamfered posts at the first-floor level. Two entry doors with six-panel designs lead from the first-floor porch into the two rooms of the wing. The second story of the porch reputedly was used as a children's porch. It has a half wall with beaded siding on the inside and weatherboard on the exterior.

Interior Description

Plan

Brook Hall's unusual T-plan is little changed from its original construction. Entering from the east front entrance, the main body of the house features an

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

open-well stair that connects the first floor to the second and attic floors. A transverse hall intersects with this stair hall and provides access to each of the four rooms on the main floor. To either side of the stair hall on the first floor is a bedroom. The main parlor sits at the northwest corner and the secondary parlor (also known as "Colonel Byars's Room"), which adjoins it, lies to the south. The secondary parlor also contains a small stair to the second floor, a door to the outside, and a door to the near wing room. The two rooms comprising the wing are a dining area and a kitchen to the far south end. These two rooms also open onto the full-length porch, which connects to and continues the function of the transverse hall.

The second floor is similar in configuration to the first floor in that the central stair lies perpendicular to a transverse hall extending along the central north-south axis of the house. A large, double-pile ballroom is located to the south of the stair, with two bedrooms to the north, one on either side of the transverse hall. A twentieth-century door was added to the ballroom to gain access to the wing rooms. A frame two-story bath tower has been added to the exterior of the intersection of the main body of the house with the wing.

Originally the only access to the two second-floor wing rooms was through the secondary parlor. A single-run staircase to the west side of the fireplace leads up to the first of the rooms, which then opens into the other room. Both rooms also have doors onto the second floor of the gallery porch.

Like the first two floors, the third floor is divided into two sections. In the main body of the house, the third floor is connected by the main stair and consists of a suite of two rooms to either side with a central room located at the top of the stairs. The third-floor wing is reached from a secondary, small, very steep stair, located in the northern room of the second-floor wing. The third floor wing consists of one large space.

The basement level also is divided into two separate sections. The northwest room of the basement is accessible only from the entry door beneath the north porch and consists of one large room with a dirt floor. The remainder of the basement is entered through steps located on the east side at the junction between

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

the wing and the main body of the house. Doors at the bottom of the steps lead to the main section and to the wing. In the main section, wood floors are laid directly on log joists with a fireplace in each room and plaster walls.

First-Floor Trim Work and Finishes

Brook Hall features sophisticated and elaborate finishes and woodwork throughout. All of the trim is similar throughout the house, in both the main section and the wing, including base molding, chair rail, picture molding, window trim, door trim, and doors (with the exception of the parlor).

Of particular note is the first-floor main parlor (the northwest room), which retains an elaborately carved mantel with a central sunburst and flanking fan motifs in the mantel frieze. To the east side of the mantel is a built-in cabinet with symmetrical trim dating from the mid-nineteenth century with bull's-eye corner blocks. The level of sophistication of the mantel is duplicated on the door surrounds, which feature elaborate, full-entablature caps with detailed stencil work swags in the frieze and stylized guttae on the underside of the cornice. The windows, like the built-in cabinet, feature a later, symmetrical trim with bull's-eye corner blocks. A paneled wainscot runs along the perimeter of the room with a three-quarter-round molding at each window where the wall angles in. The recesses along each side and above the window openings are paneled. A picture rail encircles the room.

The main parlor opens into the transverse hall running along the north-south axis. An elaborately carved and reeded archway connects this hall to the main stair hall. Both sides of the hall are lined with an oak-grained wainscot similar to that which runs alongside the stair going to the second floor. This finish appears to have been painted over the earlier mahogany woodgraining which still remains on the stair wainscot between the second and third floors. The base molding in both the hall and the stair are painted an ochre color with a black marbled finish. A central plaster medallion accents the ceiling at the intersection of the transverse hall and the stair hall.

The doors into the two rooms to the east of the transverse hall feature paneled door frames. The northeast bedroom has a black marbled mantel with three

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 6

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

pyramidal projections in the frieze supported on a surround with Doric pilasters. To the west of the fireplace is a narrow cabinet with mahogany-grained doors. A paneled wainscot runs around the perimeter of the room. The base molding is marbled black.

The southeast bedroom, like the northeast room, features a black marbled mantel. This mantel also has a tri-partite arrangement with a pyramidal section to either end of the frieze separated by a central reeded section. Doric pilasters support the frieze. A small cabinet is located to the west of the fireplace. A paneled wainscot runs the perimeter of the room as does a picture rail. Like the northeast room, this room also has a black marbled base molding.

The southwest room of the main section (secondary parlor) is located across the long hall from the southeast room and adjacent to the large parlor. This room contains a slightly less detailed mantel to that found in the main parlor, as well as wainscot, and marbled black base molding. The mantel features a central block with reeding flanked on either side by a reeded area located above each of the Doric pilasters in the surround. To the west of the fireplace is a door which obscures the stair leading to the bedroom suite on the second floor level. To the east of the fireplace is a passage into the dining area and kitchen of the wing. This passage appears to have been widened during the rehabilitation of the house in the 1930s.

The dining room, the northernmost of the two wing rooms, features a stylized mantel with a central, abstracted sunburst panel flanked on either side by smaller abstracted sunbursts. Fluted Doric pilasters on either side of the firebox opening support the frieze and mantel shelf.

To the south of the dining area is the kitchen. The principal feature of the kitchen is a large walk-in firebox opening which extends the full width of the room and is over five feet high. Both the kitchen and the dining room open onto the first floor of the gallery-style porch.

Second-Floor Trim Work and Finishes

Of particular significance on the second floor are the nineteenth-century paint colors, which may be original, and a double-pile ballroom which is located to the

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 7

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

south side of the stair hall. The ballroom is composed of two large rooms joined by a framed opening with four full-height, mahogany-woodgrained doors. The original ochre and blue-green trim colors remain in these two rooms. The rooms features identical elaborate mantels with fluted Doric pilasters, tri-partite friezes, and cabinets to one side. To the east of the mantel in the west room, a twentieth-century opening has been added to allow access to the wing.

To the north side of the main stair hall is a chamber on either side of the long hall. The northwest bedroom is a large room which retains feathering on the doors, ochre-colored trim, black marbled base molding, and an ochre-colored mantel. The mantel is an abstracted version of the ballroom mantels and features a tri-partite frieze with Doric pilasters in the surround.

The northeast bedroom retains what appears to be original blue-green paint on all exposed trim and the mantel as well as black marbled base molding. The mantel in this room is even simpler than that of the bedroom across the hall and features a simple Doric pilaster surround devoid of any decoration in the frieze.

All doors on the second floor are mahogany woodgrained as is the wainscot leading along the stair to the attic level. The trim color in the stair hall on the second floor is blue-green.

The wing rooms have been altered somewhat as they were used by former tenants as a smokehouse. The trim has been painted a forest green with marbled baseboards, and the floors throughout this area have been replaced. An original mantel on the far southern wall of the two rooms has a simple Doric pilaster surround.

Attic Floor

The attic finishes are much less elaborate than the remainder of the house. The walls are plaster with architrave trim, chair rail, and base molding. The base molding is painted black and the doors blue-green. All other trim and the walls are white. Beaded-board walls separate the front room from the back in each of the suite of rooms. The trim color in the stair hall is blue-green.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 8

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

Stair

The stair that connects the three floors in the main block of the house is a two-flight open-well stair with an elaborate nineteenth-century paint scheme. Ornamental brackets and turned balusters adorn the open stringer stair. Green fluted pilasters form a contrast against the mahogany-woodgrained and paneled wainscot and echo each newel post on the stair. Although the newel posts are now painted white, scratches in the paint reveal that they were also the apple-green color of the pilasters. A black marbled baseboard runs the entire length of the stair to the third floor. Between the first and second floor, the paneled wainscot has oak woodgraining that matches that of the first floor hall, while on the second and third floor stair runs the panels retain an earlier mahogany graining. The top rail is painted dark brown throughout.

Neither of the secondary stairs have notable finishes or trim.

Outbuildings

In addition to the main house, the Brook Hall property includes a stone springhouse contemporary with the house, a stone garage, and a noncontributing frame tenant house. The springhouse, currently abandoned, sits several hundred feet west of the house on the creek. The garage is just south of the house, and the tenant house lies farther down the lane 450 feet south of the house (see Site Plan).

The early-nineteenth-century springhouse is constructed of coursed limestone. A standing-seam metal gable roof extends over steps leading down into the building. This entry door is located on the east elevation. The door, of poplar, is deteriorated as only one board remains, but it appears to be original as do the 16-inch strap hinges with a leaf design. The gable end to the west has weatherboard siding. This west elevation features a single opening in the stone, but it has been covered with wood siding. A similar opening is located on the north side of the springhouse. Inside, the springhouse is set up to be used as a dairy. The floor is a limestone platform with 16- to 18-inch channels on the right and left for the cooling water to flow through.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA

NC
The garage building was erected in the early twentieth century. It is constructed of random-sized limestone blocks and has a standing-seam metal gable roof. Large modern vertical-board bi-fold doors are located on the east elevation. Weatherboard covers the gable ends at the north and south elevations. The interior has a dirt floor and exposed stone walls. It is used for storage.

NC
The hip-roofed, one-story frame tenant house dates to the middle of the twentieth century and is set atop a concrete-block foundation. It is clad with aluminum siding and features two-over-two double-hung sash aluminum windows. A single brick flue is located along the front elevation of the house, which also features a one-bay entry portico.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Brook Hall, built circa 1830, is historically significant as an extant Federal style brick mansion, rare in this area of the state for its size and elaborate features and especially distinctive for its original interiors.³ The house exhibits a high level of sophistication throughout in its interior finishes and woodwork, much of which dates to the early nineteenth century and has been altered little over time.⁴ The house is one of only a few Federal-era houses of this scale in southwest Virginia and is the only known example in Washington County to have this unusual T-plan configuration or such sophisticated interior woodwork and finishes. Especially notable is the main stair which is finished all the way to the attic floor and retains the original finishes between the second and attic floors. Built as a large residence, Brook Hall also provided shelter for friends and visiting dignitaries. Included as part of the property are an early nineteenth-century stone springhouse, an early-twentieth-century stone garage, and a noncontributing circa 1950 frame tenant house.

Colonel William Byars, the man who had Brook Hall built, was a prominent local resident. According to local historian Lewis Preston Summers, Byars served as a major in the Washington County militia, was a founding member of Emory and Henry College and served on its Board of Trustees, resided as a Justice of Washington County in both 1810 and 1844, and was a trustee of Abingdon Academy. His political ambitions led him to run for the U.S. Congress in 1833 and

³According to Nanci King, president of the Washington County Preservation Foundation, who helped perform the intensive architectural survey of some 700 structures in the county in the early 1990s, Brook Hall is most significant for its totality as a complex house that retains more of its historic details than any other house in the county. It not only is one of the largest houses in the county of any period, but it also has elaborate details throughout and these details retain their integrity. In the county, most older houses are frame or log, and those that are brick are of simpler designs and smaller size. Most houses of any comparison in terms of fine detailing are later or do not retain all significant features.

⁴Matthew John Mosca, of Historic Paint Research in Baltimore, Maryland, examined Brook Hall in November 1996 and declared that "[w]hat is immediately observable on entering the building is the remarkable array of painted decorative finishes, and what appears to be original plain painted woodwork finishes throughout the house. The range and quality of the finishes is remarkable," (introduction to his paint research report submitted December 30, 1996).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA

to serve in the Virginia House of Delegates from Washington County between 1809 and 1811.⁵ Byars made his living off of his extensive land holdings, which included a mill and over 1,700 acres of land. Land tax records reveal that Byars was a captain in the Washington County militia from 1814 to 1815, a major from 1816 to 1818, and a colonel after that.

Because of his prominence in the local community, Byars entertained many important people at Brook Hall. Over time, this illustrious list allegedly included U.S. presidents Andrew Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt, and James K. Polk as well as Virginia governors David Campbell, John Floyd, and John Buchanan Floyd. Reportedly, Louis Phillipe, later the King of France, visited William Byars at the earlier Brook Hall in 1814.^{6,7}

Historical Background and Significance

Located in Washington County along the historic stage road that is now state Route 11, the Brook Hall property currently is composed of a 15.73-acre tract of land centered around the Brook Hall mansion. The house itself sits high above Route 11 atop a knoll which slopes down to the west towards Hall Creek, along which the springhouse is located. (Halls Creek in early records was described as a branch of the Holstein, also spelled Holston, Creek.)

The 15.73-acre tract, known historically as the Brook Hall Farm, was part of a much larger tract originally granted to John Beatie in the early eighteenth century. Beatie transferred 248 acres to his son-in-law, James Dysart, on May 18, 1784.⁸ Dysart sold the original log Brook Hall (located across Route 11 until it burned in the

⁵Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia*, Johnson City, Tennessee: The Overmountain Press, 1989.

⁶Washington County Historical Society File Folder on Brook Hall, located in the Washington County Historical Society library.

⁷Jerry Simpson. "Ghosts Keep Watch in Brook Hall," *Washington County News*, May 13, 1965.

⁸Washington County Deed Book 1, Page 7.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 12

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

twentieth century) and the surrounding land to William Byars in two sections: 615 acres in November 1807 and 224 acres in January 1805.⁹

Tax records show William Byars's accumulation of wealth through the acquisition of land. In 1805, Byars purchased his first parcel of land from James Dysart--224.75 acres which would become a part of the Brook Hall estate.¹⁰ Two years later, in 1807, Byars purchased the 615 acres that included the original Brook Hall and upon which the new Brook Hall eventually would be constructed.¹¹ In 1818, Byars purchased a 286-acre parcel located to the east of his existing two parcels. By 1830, his property had increased from 224.75 acres to 1,716 acres and he was at the height of his wealth. It is during this era that Brook Hall probably was constructed. Between 1829 and 1830, the 615-acre parcel that Byars had purchased from Dysart underwent a substantial taxation increase related to the buildings located on the property. None of Byars's other parcels reflected this increase of taxable value. In 1829, the land upon which Brook Hall stands was taxed at a rate of \$6.64 on a value of \$8,302. A year later, these numbers had jumped to a tax of \$9.06 on a value of \$11,316, an increase of 37%.¹² Minor taxation increases on the same piece of land occurred in 1823 (from \$7,386 to \$7,995, a 8% increase) and 1824 (from \$7,995 to \$8,302.50, a 4% increase).

In his will of 1858, Colonel Byars left the mansion and its surrounds to his daughter Amanda J. Ernest for the duration of her life.¹³ In 1885, Amanda J. Ernest willed the Brook Hall Farm to her four children--Amanda, William, Fannie, and James-- and Lucy J. Ernest in 1885.¹⁴ Ten years later, in 1895, the Brook Hall Farm passed from Lucy Ernest to Elizabeth Cannon and A. B.

⁹Washington County Deed Book 3, Page 631 and Deed Book 3, Page 228.

¹⁰Washington County Land Tax Records, Richmond, Virginia, Microfilm, 1805.

¹¹Though Deed Book 3, Page 631 records this sale of land, William Byars was not taxed on the land until 1813. See Washington County Land Tax Records, Richmond, Virginia, 1807-1813.

¹²Washington County Land Tax Records, Richmond, Virginia, 1829-1830.

¹³Washington County Will Book 16, Page 406.

¹⁴Washington County Deed Book 40, Page 514.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA

Cannon.¹⁵ The Cannons sold Brook Hall to Minerva Johnson in 1897.¹⁶ With Minerva's death, the property passed to her heirs John and Malilou Johnson in 1898.¹⁷

During the depression, in 1932, the Johnsons decided to sell the Brook Hall Farm to Professor and Mrs. Harry Garnard.¹⁸ Harry Garnard was a graduate of Columbia who had taught at the Citadel for two years and arrived in Glade Spring to teach romance languages at Emory and Henry College. Brook Hall was abandoned when the Garnards purchased the property. The main house was used for food storage and the wing was used as a smokehouse. During the 1930s the Garnards undertook the first rehabilitation of the house. Brook Hall stayed in the Garnard family and was rented out throughout much of the twentieth century until it was sold at auction in 1995 to Brook Hall Limited, L.C.¹⁹

A survey conducted on Brook Hall by the W.P.A. in 1937 reports that interior designers associated with the newly founded Colonial Williamsburg Foundation recently had made a visit to Brook Hall to study its original milk paint colors as a source of information for their restoration work in Williamsburg. Additionally, the surveyor reports that Nelson D. Rockefeller attempted to purchase the mantel from Brook Hall's main parlor for use in the restoration of the Governor's Mansion in Williamsburg.²⁰ This claim has not been substantiated by Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Brook Hall is an excellent example of a significant antebellum mansion located along a well-traveled historic route in southwestern Virginia. Based on an extensive architectural survey of Washington County performed in the early 1990s, Brook Hall is the best-preserved example of Federal style architecture in the county and stands out as unusually large and ornate for this section of the state.

¹⁵Washington County Deed Book 53, Page 393.

¹⁶Washington County Deed Book 54, Page 153.

¹⁷Washington County Will Book 25, Page 146.

¹⁸Washington County Deed Book 144, Page 456.

¹⁹Washington County Deed Book 929, Page 491.

²⁰"Brook Hall" Survey Report, Works Progress Administration, #3686, March 3, 1937.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 14

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

Throughout, the workmanship of the structure is of very high quality. Especially notable are the sophisticated interior finishes and woodwork, much of which date to the original construction of the house in the early 1800s. These early finishes have been deemed remarkable by one of the foremost historic paint experts in the mid-Atlantic²¹ and may even have merited the attention of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in the earlier part of this century. Fortunately, Brook Hall retains all of the features that give it historical significance. Changes to the structure have been minor and the building setting and atmosphere remain appropriate to its original function.

²¹Matthew John Mosca, Historic Paint Research, Baltimore, Maryland.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 15

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Coletti, Vivian. *Division of Historic Landmarks Survey Form #95-4*. "Brook Hall." September 1992.

Newman, W.C. *Historical American Buildings Survey Report*. "Brook Hall." July 7, 1967.

Simpson, Jerry. "Ghosts Keep Watch in Brook Hall." *Washington County News*. May 13, 1965.

Staff. "Brook Hall Included in Annual Historical Itinerary (sic) on August 7." *Journal Virginian*. " July 21, 1955.

Summers, Lewis Preston. *History of Southwest Virginia 1746-1786, Washington County 1777-1870*. Johnson City, Tennessee: The Overmountain Press, 1989.

Vance, Rosalie. "First County Sheriff Built Brook Hall and Now It's a Haven for Antique Hunters." *Washington County News*. February 29, 1968.

Washington County Deed Books and Will Books. Washington County Courthouse, Abingdon, Virginia.

Washington County Land Tax Records. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

Works Progress Administration. "Brook Hall." March 3, 1937.

Unpublished Material

Washington County Historical Society Files. "Brook Hall." Unpublished Notes.

Washington County Historical Society Files. "William Byars." Unpublished Genealogical Notes.

Matthew John Mosca, Historic Paint Research, "Survey of finishes at Brook Hall, Glade Spring, Virginia, and examination of interior surfaces and an historic paint finish report on exterior woodwork," December 1996 (submitted to Frazier Associates).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 16

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

Interviews

Personal interview by Frazier Associates with Mack Strugill, local historian, (540) 783-8369, on June 13, 1996. Notes in Frazier Associates files.

Telephone interviews by Frazier Associates with Nanci King, local historian, (540) 628-9635, on August 21, 1996 and January 20, 1997. Notes in Frazier Associates files.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 17

BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA

UTM References

1	428180 Easting	4068680 Northing
2	428380 Easting	4068730 Northing
3	428480 Easting	4068380 Northing
4	428340 Easting	4068320 Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary line is indicated on the attached USGS map and corresponds to the above-mentioned UTM reference points.

Boundary Justification

The boundary lines follow the legal property lines beginning at Route 11 and extending south along Hall Creek (which is contained within the property up to where it bends to the west at the rear of the lot). This 15.73-acre property, containing Brook Hall, an associated springhouse, a garage, and a noncontributing tenant house, is a small portion of the original parcel owned by William Byars.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 1

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are of:

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA
VDHR FILE # 95-4
Frazier Associates
June 1996**

**Filed at the Virginia State Archives
Richmond, Virginia**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. VIEW OF: Southwest corner
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14887/5
PHOTO 1 of 18 | 6. VIEW OF: East Elevation, South
end
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14887/2
PHOTO 6 of 18 |
| 2. VIEW OF: Northeast corner
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14887/8
PHOTO 2 of 18 | 7. VIEW OF: Garage
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14880/21
PHOTO 7 of 18 |
| 3. VIEW OF: West Elevation
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14880/13
PHOTO 3 of 18 | 8. VIEW OF: Spring House
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14883/6
PHOTO 8 of 18 |
| 4. VIEW OF: North Elevation Porch
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14880/7
PHOTO 4 of 18 | 9. VIEW OF: Tenant House
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14887/17
PHOTO 9 of 18 |
| 5. VIEW OF: East Elevation, North
end
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14887/13
PHOTO 5 of 18 | 10. VIEW OF: Kitchen Fireplace
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14880/6
PHOTO 10 of 18 |

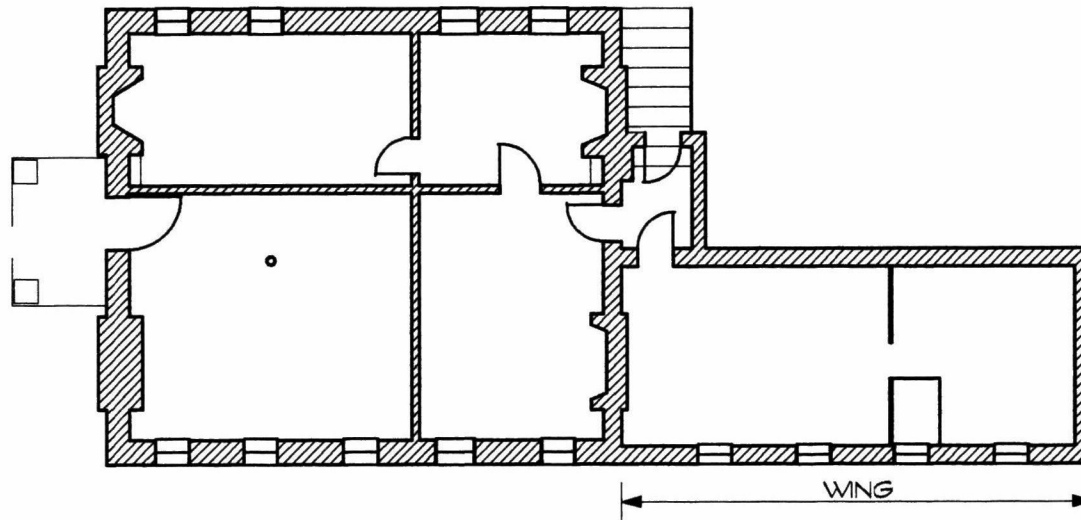
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number PHOTOS Page 2

**BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA**

11. VIEW OF: Stair Detail
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14884/18
PHOTO 11 of 18
12. VIEW OF: Hall Detail, First Floor
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14884/15
PHOTO 12 of 18
13. VIEW OF: Mantel Detail, Parlor
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14885/17
PHOTO 13 of 18
14. VIEW OF: Stair Hall, Looking to
First Floor
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14484/19
PHOTO 14 of 18
15. VIEW OF: Parlor, West Wall
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14484/20
PHOTO 15 of 18
16. VIEW OF: Door, North End of
Transverse Hall
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14484/16
PHOTO 16 of 18
17. VIEW OF: Mantel, NE Corner
Room
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14484/24A
PHOTO 17 of 18
18. VIEW OF: Secondary Parlor, South
Wall
NEGATIVE NUMBER: 14485/7
PHOTO 18 of 18

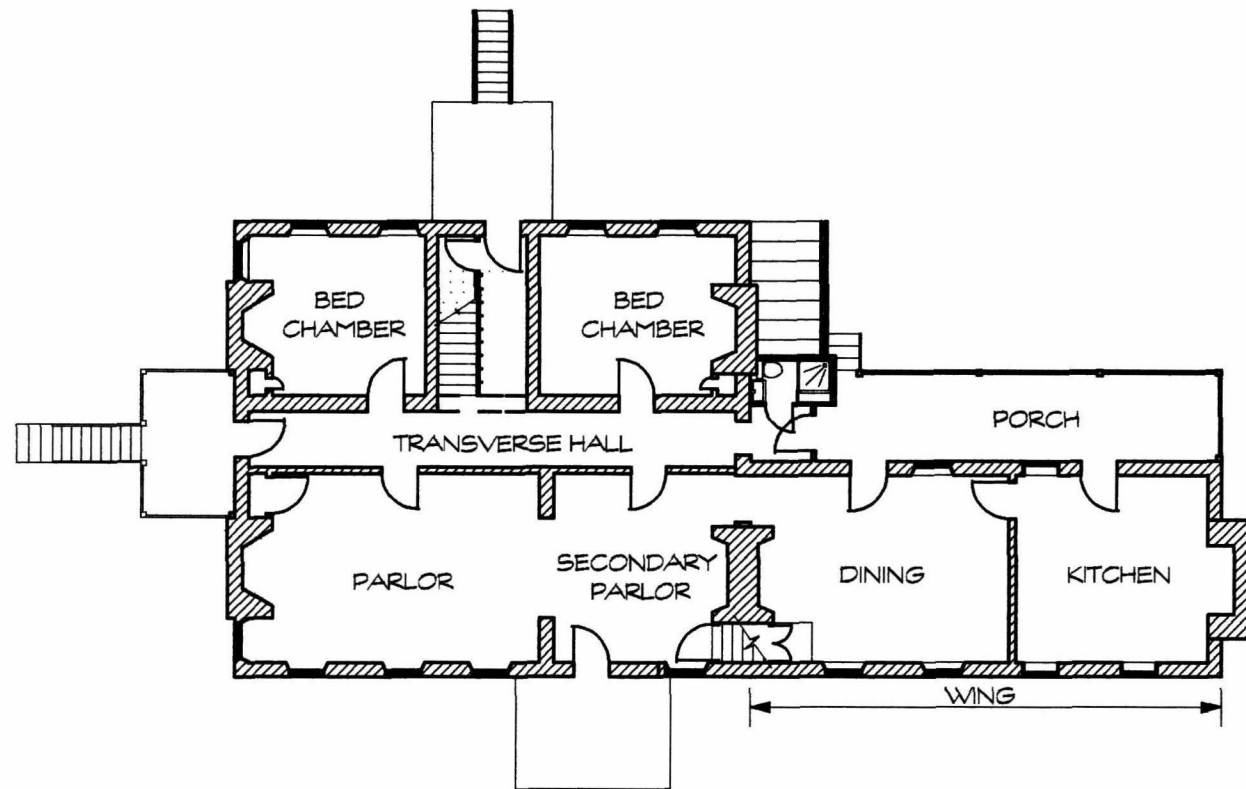


BROOK HALL - Basement Plan

WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



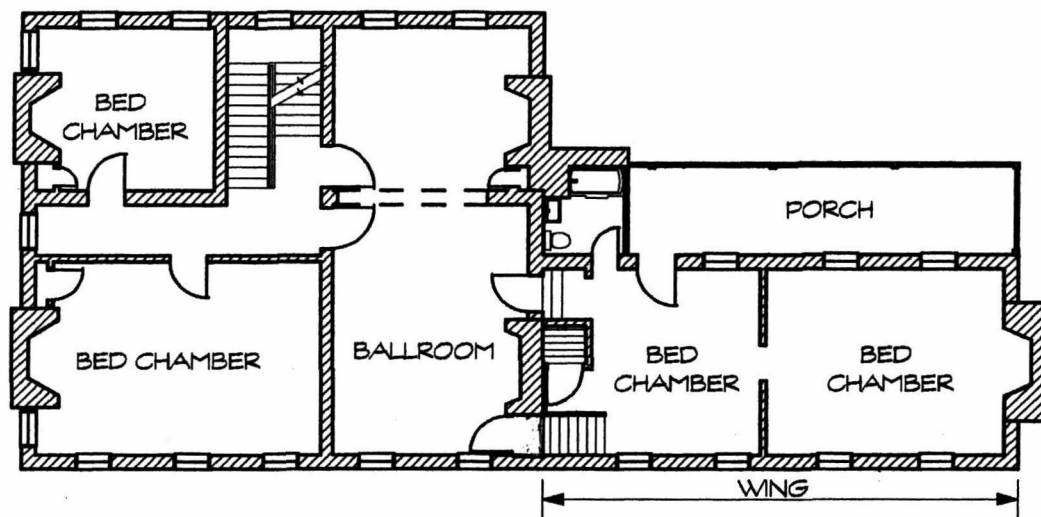


BROOK HALL - First Floor Plan

WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



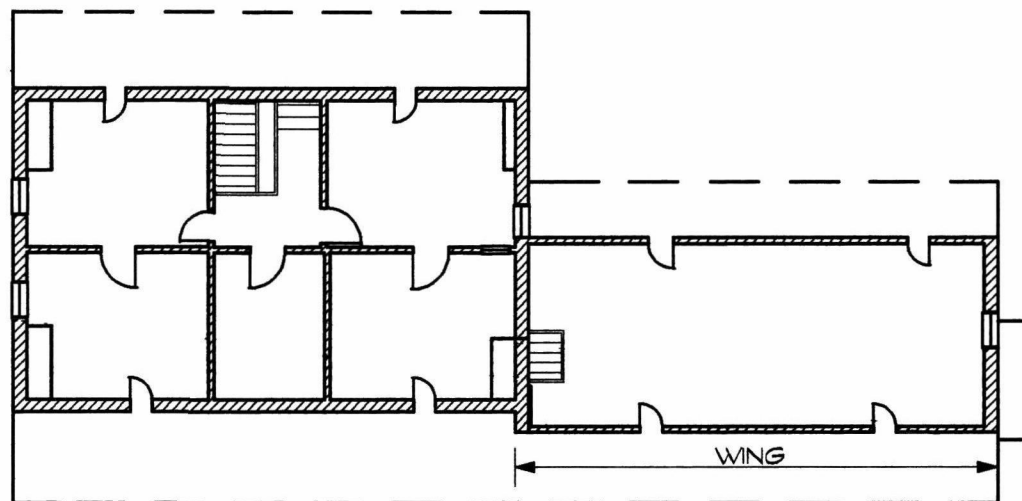


BROOK HALL - Second Floor Plan

WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"



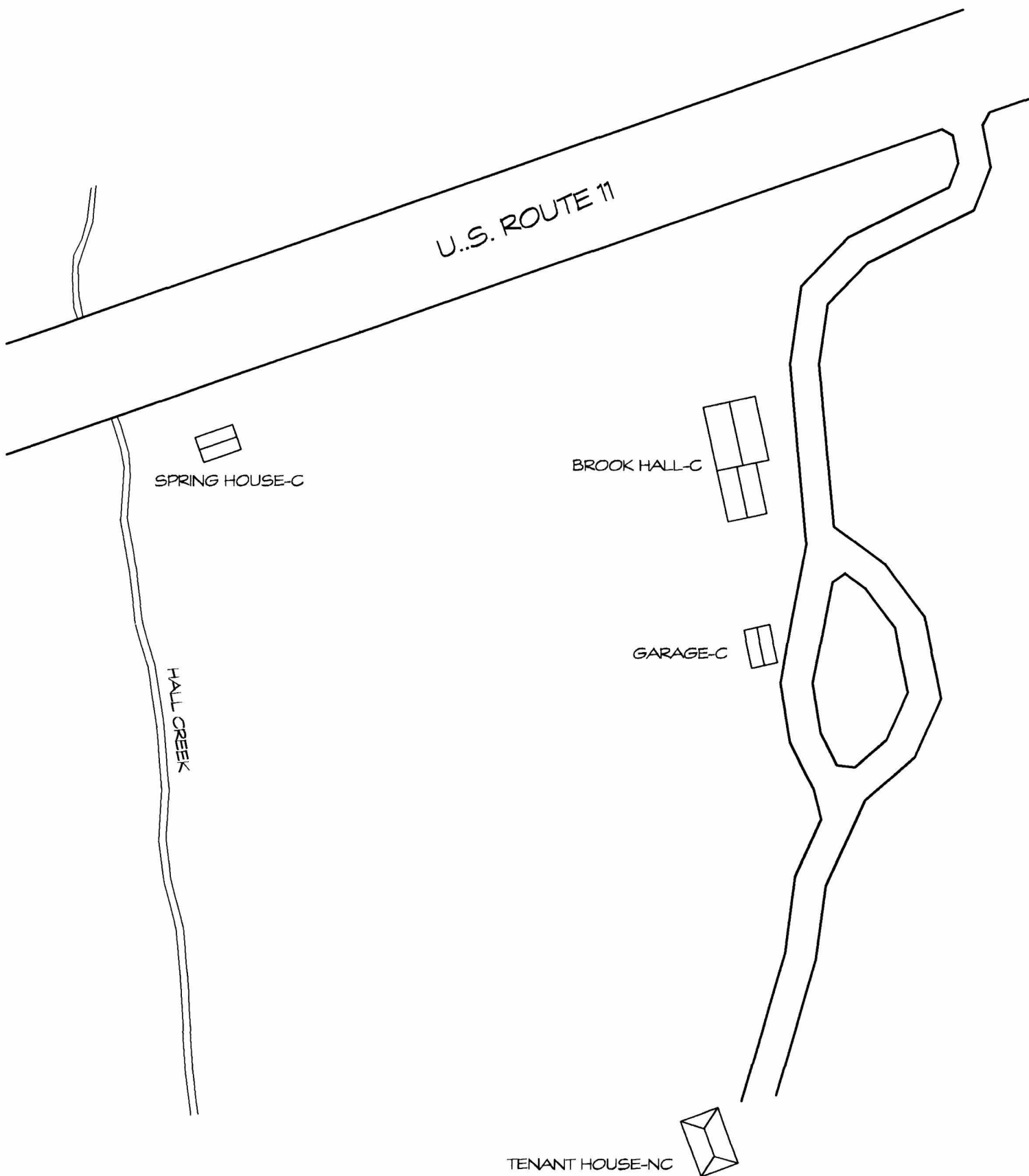


BROOK HALL - Third Floor Plan

WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"





BROOK HALL - Site Plan

WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SCALE: 1" = 100'



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97000490 Date Listed: 6/5/97

Brook Hall Washington VA
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

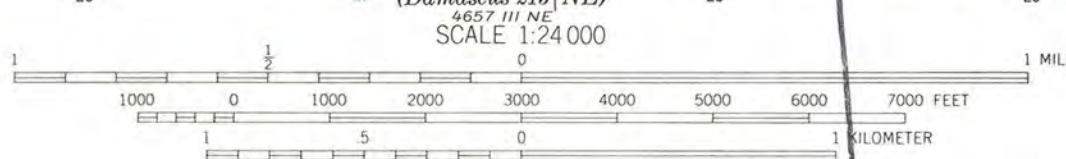
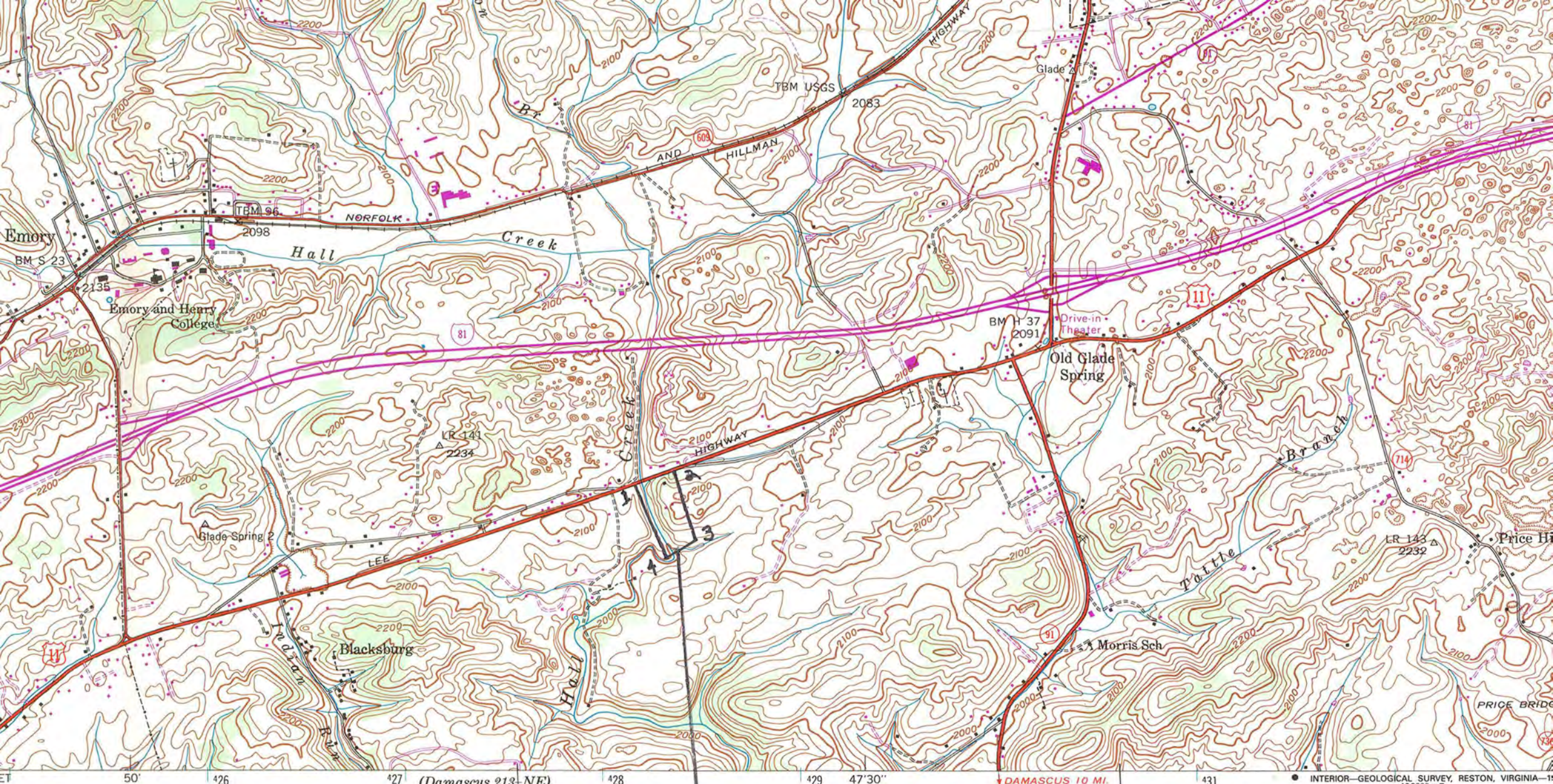
7/14/97
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

The Period of Significance for this property is defined as 1829-1830. Because the 20th century garage is outside of the Period of Significance it is considered non-contributing.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

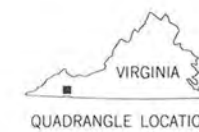


Contour interval 20 feet
Datum is mean sea level

BROOK HALL
Washington County, VA
UTM References

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225,
OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
AND U.S. TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY, CHATTANOOGA, TENN. 37401
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

1. 428180/4068680
2. 428380/4068730
3. 428480/4068380
4. 428340/4068320



ROUTES USUALLY TRAVELED
HARD, IMPERVIOUS SURFACES
OTHER SURFACE IMPROVEMENTS
Interstate Route U. S. Route Stat

GLADE SPRING,
212-SE

N3645-W8145/7.5
PHOTOINSPECTED 1976
1938
PHOTOREVISED 1969
AMS 4657 IV SE—SERIES V8