

VLR-4/16/85 NRHP-5/9/85

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Beaver Creek Plantation (DHL File #44-1)

and or common Beaver Creek Plantation

2. Location

street & number Route 108 North N/A not for publication

city, town Martinsville X vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Henry code 089

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes options like district, building(s), structure, site, object, public, private, both, occupied, unoccupied, work in progress, accessible, agriculture, commercial, educational, entertainment, government, industrial, military, museum, park, private residence, religious, scientific, transportation, other.

4. Owner of Property

name J. Michael Bestler, M.D. Cemetery: Mr. James E. Covington, Jr. 6209 Three Chopt Road Richmond, Virginia 23226

street & number P.O.Box 3391, Beaver Creek Clinic

city, town Martinsville N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24115

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Henry County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Martinsville state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title HABSI has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date 1958 X federal state county local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Beaver Creek Plantation is a two and one-half story frame residence, constructed in 1839 with significant additions made around the turn of the century. The house is set upon a slight knoll amidst spacious, treed grounds, surrounded by wooded, undeveloped land. The original section of the building is comprised of the center five bays incorporating a center hall, double pile plan with original interior wood work in excellent condition. Two prominent gable front wings were placed on each side of the original section in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The wings project slightly and are tied to the original section along both the front and rear facades by two-story porches. The house features a Greek Revival style main entrance and a Classical Revival style two-story entrance portico. The cornice entablature with a decorative frieze appears to be a feature added at the turn of the 20th century. In 1958 a one-story addition to the north wing was made, consisting primarily of a solarium, only the narrow width of which is visible along the front (west) facade.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Beaver Creek Plantation is set upon a knoll above Little Beaver Creek about one mile north of Martinsville. The house faces west toward undeveloped pastureland which lies across Route 108 North. The spacious front and side lawns, generously planted with large trees, provide an appropriate setting for the residence, approached by a long, curving drive which ascends to the primary (west) facade. Beaver Creek Plantation's integrity of setting and location is enhanced by the boxwood plantings near the house as well as by the century and a half old boxwood hedges north of the house bordering the path to the family cemetery. Several outbuildings are situated east and south of the residence. The view to the east is of the 20th century barns set in a former pasture, currently no longer part of the estate parcel.

The main five-bay facade is dominated by a two-story entrance portico supported by paired columns. This portico and the gable front wings which flank the 1839 main section were added in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A two-story veranda spans the main block between the wings on both the front (west) facade and the rear (east) facade. The wings are roughly symmetrical with pent roofs between the first and second stories and narrow one-over-one sash double-hung windows on the first floors.

The center section of the house is the original portion, constructed in 1839 by Marshall Hairston who inherited the plantation acreage with its 1776 brick home from his father in 1827. Marshall built the frame house following a fire which destroyed his father's homestead. The 1839 section features beaded weatherboarding, a center entrance with Greek Revival-style transom and sidelights, and symmetrically placed double-hung windows with varying sash arrangements. Simple molding details the window trim. The main cornice of the original section and the two wings has a decorative frieze featuring triglyph moldings with guttae. This decorative frieze appears to be contemporaneous with the addition of the wings. It does not extend to the portico.

(see continuation sheet #1)

# 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                   |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                    |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian        |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                    |  |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation             |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |  |  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | economic history                                    |  |  |

**Specific dates** 1839, 1910      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Beaver Creek Plantation is a large, two and one-half story wood frame house set within an eleven-acre property which is part of the original 1776 settlement by Colonel George Hairston. Built in 1839, the residence is individually significant in the areas of architecture and regional economic history. It is important at the local level as one of very few remaining substantial, residential buildings dating from the ante-bellum period. The house retains its original Greek Revival-style main block and Georgian plan, and also exhibits significant later additions constructed around the turn of the twentieth century. Beaver Creek Plantation is also historically significant for its association with the development of southside Virginia's 19th-century tobacco plantation economy as a regional example of tobacco cultivation on a large scale.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Beaver Creek Plantation, now the Beaver Creek Clinic, dates from 1776 when Colonel George Hairston built a brick house on acreage that had accumulated to 1,200 acres by 1827, when he died. One of his twelve children, Marshall, inherited Beaver Creek Plantation as well as thousands of acres in other Henry County localities. In 1839 the original brick house burned, and Marshall Hairston immediately had the house rebuilt, the present Beaver Creek Plantation. This house remained in the Hairston family until it was sold to the present owner in 1983.

Beaver Creek Plantation is an important representative example at the local level of domestic architecture spanning the period of 1840 to about 1910. Although physically the house has a Classical Revival appearance attributable to the later additions, the Georgian plan of the 1839 original main block and its Greek Revival-style entrance have remained intact. Significant interior features also remain in their original condition: doors, flooring, staircase, mantelpieces, paneled wainscoting, door and window moldings. The large additions of the gable front wings and entrance portico reflect early 20th century architectural design trends in the emphasis on conservative taste and in the choice of a revival style.

When placed within the architectural and historic context of the region surrounding Henry County, Beaver Creek Plantation has an enhanced historic value. There is a scarcity of sites associated with the large Hairston family, as apparently only two other residences in Virginia are still extant. Marshall's brothers, Samuel and George, built Oak Hill (circa 1825) and Hordsville (1836), respectively. Hordsville, in Henry County, is a simple brick house, relatively devoid of exterior detailing. Oak Hill is located in Pittsylvania County and was designed by a local builder. It is a brick, Federal-style residence with a central-passage plan.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References (see continuation sheet #4)

Adams, Mrs. George F. Jr. Martinsville and Henry County: Historic Views. Winston-Salem, N.C.: Hunter Publishing Company, 1976.  
 Arnold, Benjamin William, Jr. History of the Tobacco Industry in Virginia from 1860 to 1894. Reprinting. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, (1897) 1973. Pp.9-86.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 11.7 acres  
 Quadrangle name Martinsville West Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

|   |      |             |               |   |      |             |               |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|-------------|---------------|
| A | 1 7  | 6 0 0 0 3 0 | 4 0 6 4 2 6 0 | B | 1 7  | 6 0 0 0 5 0 | 4 0 6 4 1 3 0 |
|   | Zone | Easting     | Northing      |   | Zone | Easting     | Northing      |
| C | 1 7  | 5 9 9 8 9 0 | 4 0 6 3 9 8 0 | D | 1 7  | 5 9 9 8 0 0 | 4 0 6 4 2 2 0 |
| E |      |             |               | F |      |             |               |
| G |      |             |               | H |      |             |               |

Verbal boundary description and justification (see continuation sheet #4)

*see plat in archives file*  
 See attached Plat of Survey for J. Michael Bestler, M.D., being part of the 42.5-acre tract as shown on "Plat of Survey for Beaver Creek Land Co., Inc." in M.B. 43-Pg. 70, H.C.C.C.C.O., now designated as Tract I. Scale: 1 inch equals 40 feet. Legal Reference:

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A Deed Book 220, pg.91.

|       |     |      |        |     |      |
|-------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|
| state | N/A | code | county | N/A | code |
| state | N/A | code | county | N/A | code |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Emma Jane Saxe  
 organization Historic Preservation Consultant date December 1984  
 street & number 7714 Thor Drive telephone 703-573-3642  
 city or town Annandale state Virginia 22003

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature H. Bryan Mitchell  
 title H. Bryan Mitchell, Director date February 19, 1985  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Division

For NPS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
 \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

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Beaver Creek Plantation, Henry County, Va.

Continuation sheet #1

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The south elevation consists of the gable-roofed section and the shed-roofed section of a wing added in the late 19th century. A rear, second-story porch at the juncture of the two sections leads to a set of exterior stairs connecting to a stoop at the side door of the first story.

The north elevation features a recessed, one-story addition constructed in 1958-59. The flat-roofed addition has clapboarding, single, fixed pane windows, and a single exterior brick chimney. The second story of the early 20th-century north wing has four windows. Above the middle two windows is a lighted gable peak.

The rear (east) elevation also has symmetrically arranged windows and center doors leading to the two-story, flat-roofed porch with one-story posts and turned, wood balusters. The first-floor windows with their six-over-nine sash appear to be the original window configuration.

The house is set upon a brick foundation. The standing seam, metal, gabled roof has three, gable-roofed dormers on each slope, also later additions. The four interior brick chimneys were originally exterior end chimneys prior to the wing additions. Post and beam construction is used, the hand-hewn oak timbers running the width of the original section. The flooring throughout the original section is heart pine.

The house has a central hall, four over four Georgian plan with eight original fireplaces, refaced with colored marble in the late 1950s. The ten-foot wide hall has a single run open staircase with hand-carved, scroll brackets and plain balusters. It also features wainscoting with molded paneling and chairrails. Doors leading into the rooms have bulls-eye corner block molding.

The former parlor and living room are on the north side of the hall. Now the business office, the former parlor has paneled wainscoting, chairrail and ceiling molding, and a decorative frame for a mirror. The plain mantelpiece frames the pink marble-faced fireplace. Behind the parlor, the living room has plain wainscoting, chairrail molding, and a mantelpiece. The parlor is now the business manager's office.

To the south off the hall from the front entrance is the former library with a beaded board ceiling, original, paneled wainscoting, simple mantelpiece, and a black marble-faced fireplace. Behind this room is the dining room with molded, paneled wainscoting, chairrail, pink marble fireplace, and an elaborately molded mantelpiece.

The upstairs hall has low, molded wainscoting, molded door trim with plain corner blocks, and stairs leading to the third-floor attic. The four upstairs bedrooms in the 1839 section all have molded wainscoting and plain, wood mantelpieces. The master bedroom over the dining room has more elaborately molded door trim with bulls-eye corner blocks.

The interior of the south wing now reflects alterations made in 1935 by former owners,

(see continuation sheet #2)

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Mr. and Mrs. James Covington. They removed the wall between the two pantries, creating a kitchen. The conservatory at the front of the wing became a butler's pantry and breakfast room, with a laundry room underneath. They also installed new plumbing and central heating, rewired the house, and cut several doors in existing walls, making all rooms accessible from the inside of the house.

In 1958 the Covingtons did further renovation work, this time to the north wing, creating a self-sufficient apartment. The first-floor plan of the north wing was altered by an enlargement to the rear and the addition of a large, one-story solarium to the north. The sun porch at the front of the wing remained as such, while the former billiard room was converted to a bedroom. The enlargement to the rear accommodated a large bathroom, hallway, and a new kitchen with adjoining utility room, pantry, and furnace room. In 1958 the Covingtons removed the central heating system, installing a heat pump in the apartment and electric ceiling heat in the rest of the house. At this time they also added the marble hearths and facings to the fireplaces in the 1839 section of the house.

The present appearance of the interior reflects the 1983-84 rehabilitation of the house when its use changed from residential to office and medical facility. As the major portion of the rehabilitation work consisted of redecorating the interior, the plan and all original features were left intact.

The house and outbuildings are situated on an eleven-acre parcel which includes the spacious lawns at the front and sides of the house and a presently untended field in the rear of the property. The cemetery is under separate ownership by Hairston family members. The view from all vantages is undisturbed by contemporary intrusions. Several twentieth-century barns, located to the east beyond the eleven-acre parcel, contribute to the visual continuity of the property, but are not part of the nomination.

**Outbuildings.**

Office: Small, frame, gable-roofed building with three rooms, metal siding, some alterations to door and windows. Built sometime prior to 1860, it served as a plantation office. Around 1960 it was remodeled for an office.

Kitchen/Smokehouse: One-story, brick, gable-roofed building with two chimneys which served as house kitchen up until 1935. Dates to 1850 or earlier.

Garage: One-story, gable-roofed, frame garage with attached shed-roofed apartment. Built circa 1935.

Swimming pool and poolhouse: One-story, frame, gable-roofed building with screened porch extension adjacent to pool. Built in 1936.

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Beaver Creek Plantation, Henry County, Va.

Continuation sheet #3

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Henry County has only several examples of classical domestic architecture. Sycamore is a two-story, frame 1840 house measuring three bays. Its only interesting features are the center entrances on both the first and second floors, each with transom and side-lights. In comparison, Beaver Creek, with its traditional five-bay facade, is a far more substantial residence. Belleview is a notable 18th-century plantation house, also frame with a two-story center entrance portico, and is listed in the National Register.

Although the house was rebuilt in 1839, the plantation itself is associated with the significant portion of the life of George Hairston, born in 1750. He built the estate in 1776, and the original plantation lands included what is now most of the City of Martinsville. He became known as Colonel George Hairston following his active service in the Revolutionary Army in 1780-1781. He subsequently gained local recognition as a public benefactor when, following the war, he donated fifty acres of land for construction of the present Henry County Courthouse in Martinsville. As he stipulated, the courthouse and a public hall were built from proceeds of the sale of lots within the donated parcel. Col. George Hairston continued in public service as a member of the Virginia Legislature, justice of the Henry County Court, county sheriff, coroner, and school commissioner. He also served in the War of 1812 as acting Brigadier General at the age of 62.

The Land Tax Books for Henry County describe Beaver Creek in 1826 with an acreage of 1,163 acres and a sum of \$1,000 added to the land for buildings in the ownership of George Hairston. The total number of acres he owned in the county in 1826 was about 143,000. Other thousands of acres had been given previously to his children when they married. In 1828 the ownership designation changed to "George Hairston, deceased." From 1827 through 1836, inclusive, the value added to the land for buildings remained at \$1,000. In 1840, under ownership by the George Hairston Estate, this value increased to \$2,500 where it remained for subsequent years. Thus 1839 is the confirmed date of construction of the present house at Beaver Creek Plantation.<sup>1</sup>

The role of tobacco plantations in the ante-bellum period of Virginia's economic history is an extremely important one. The tobacco plantation economy, based on the predominance of slavery and a single-crop type of agriculture, supplied the product for Virginia's burgeoning tobacco processing industries. Great fortunes were generated from the cultivation and marketing of the fine tobaccos grown in the region, as illustrated by those of George and Marshall Hairston.

A recognized authority on Virginia's tobacco plantation economy, Joseph Clarke Robert, studied a number of Virginia counties in the Piedmont region, including Henry County, to determine how tobacco production units were organized and managed.<sup>2</sup> From his analysis of 1860 data, he found that about three-fourths of the planters in Henry County had farms of 100 acres or less of improved land and that the average size of the Henry County tobacco plantation was approximately 47 acres of improved land, with a total acreage of 129. The figure for Nottoway County, an area that was more inten-

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Beaver Creek Plantation, Henry County, Va.

Continuation sheet #4

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sively cultivated northeast of Henry County near Farmville, is 207 acres total. Thus the Hairston plantation is of particular historical importance as a regional example of an exceptionally large tobacco plantation, having consisted originally of about 1,200 acres.

The significance of the property as the seat of George Hairston's extensive landholdings in Henry County falls within the period of 1776 to 1882 when Marshall Hairston died. The important role of the estate in the history of Henry County and the Piedmont region continued under Marshall Hairston's management. At the turn of the 20th century, later generations of Hairston's managed a reduced, 60,000-acre tobacco plantation.

<sup>1</sup> Land Tax Books, Henry County, 1826-1843.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Clarke Robert, The Tobacco Kingdom, Plantation, Market and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina, 1800-1860 (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965, originally copyrighted 1938), Appendix C.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Herndon, George Melvin. William Tatham and the Culture of Tobacco. Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1969. Pp. 399-446.

Hill, Judith Parks America. A History of Henry County, Virginia. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1976. Originally published in Martinsville, Va., 1925. Pp. 189-193.

Land Tax Books, Henry County, 1826-1843.

Pedigo, Virginia G. and Lewis G. History of Patrick and Henry Counties, Virginia. Roanoke, Va.: The Stone Printing & Manufacturing Company, 1933. Pp 147-157.

Robert, Joseph Clarke. The Tobacco Kingdom, Plantation, Market, and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina, 1800-1860. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965. Originally published 1938.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Beaver Creek Plantation nomination is comprised of 11.7 acres of land which is all of the property remaining with the house under the current ownership plus a small parcel incorporating the family cemetery, which is under separate ownership. The area is bounded on the west by Route 108 and on the south by Little Beaver Creek, and encompasses that portion of the original setting of the house which most contributes to the architectural quality of the residence. The acreage includes lawns, the boxwood plantings, the cemetery to the north, and a former pasture on the east side of the buildings.



596 55' 597 598 1 590 000 FEET 599 FIGSBORO 3.1 MI. 600 79° 52'

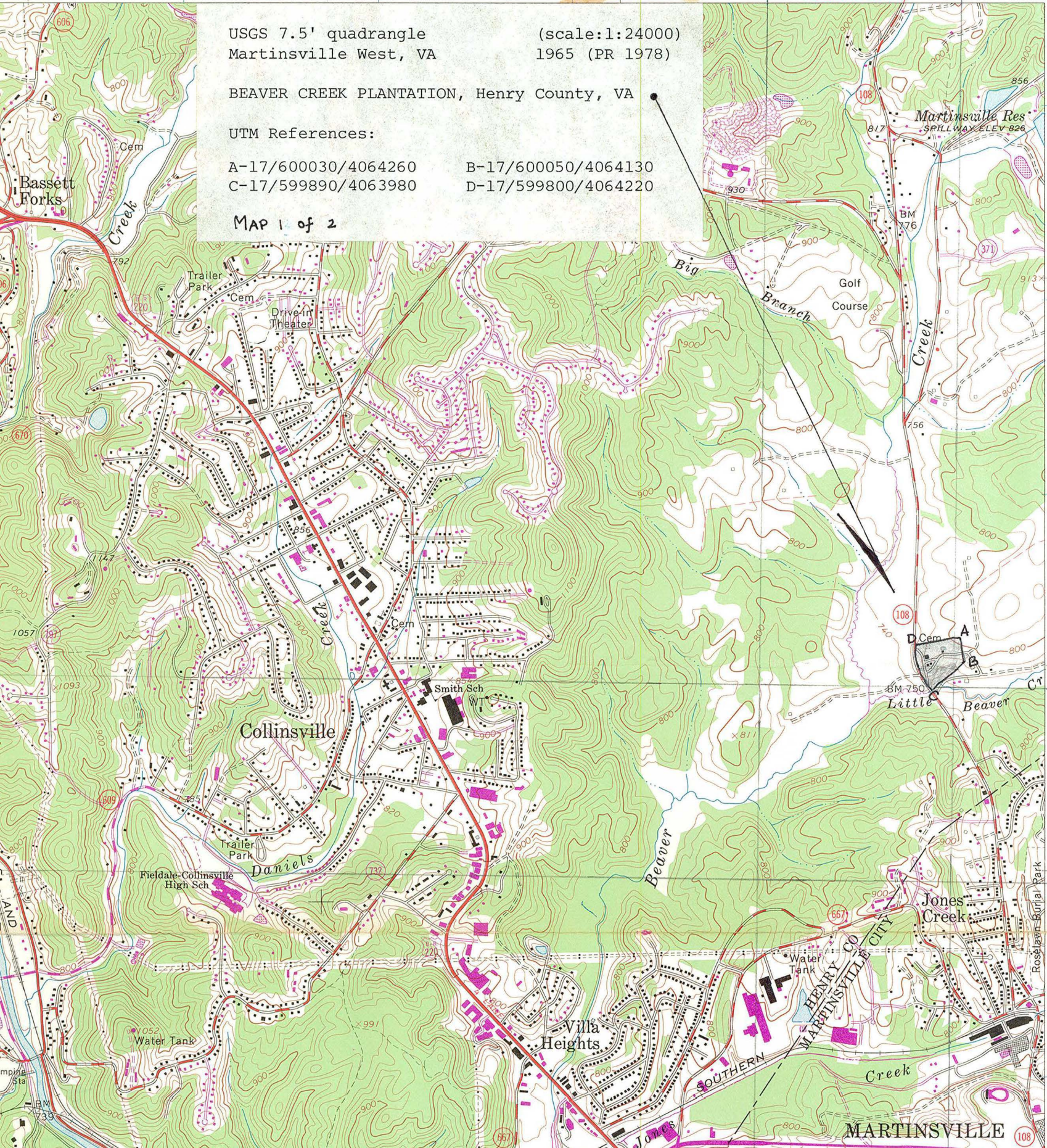
USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)  
Martinsville West, VA 1965 (PR 1978)

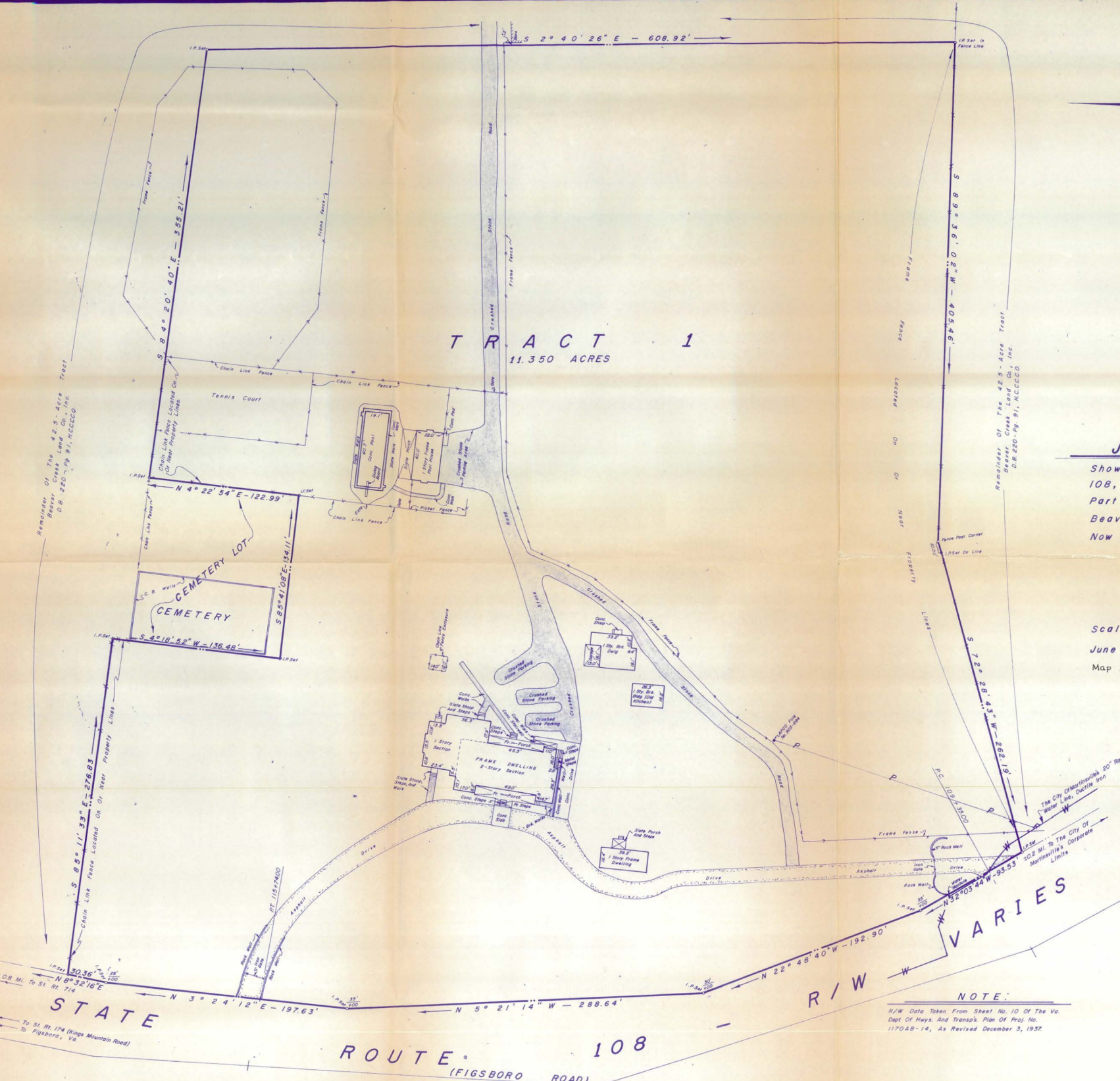
BEAVER CREEK PLANTATION, Henry County, VA

UTM References:

A-17/600030/4064260 B-17/600050/4064130  
C-17/599890/4063980 D-17/599800/4064220

MAP 1 of 2





To St. Rt. 174 (Kings Mountain Road)  
To Figgsboro, Va.

STATE ROUTE 108  
(FIGSBORO ROAD)



**T R A C T 1**  
11.350 ACRES

PLAT OF SURVEY  
FOR  
**J. MICHAEL BESTLER, M.D.**  
Showing Property Situated On The Easterly Side Of State Route 108, Martinsville District, Henry County, Virginia; Being Part Of The 42.5 - Acre Tract As Shown On "Plat Of Survey For Beaver Creek Land Co., Inc." in M.B. 43 - Pg. 70, H.C.C.C.C.O., Now Designated As Tract 1.

Legal Reference: D.B. 220 - Pg. 91, H.C.C.C.C.O.

Scale: 1" = 40'  
June 13, 1983  
Map 2 of 2

Beaver Creek Plantation  
Martinsville, VA.

NOTE:  
R/W Data Taken From Sheet No. 10 Of The Va. Dept. Of Hws. And Transp. Plan Of Proj. No. 11704B-14, As Revised December 3, 1937.



Prepared By  
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Martinsville, Virginia