

VLR-12/9/92 NRHP-2/4/93

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

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name OAK GROVE  
other names/site number VDHR File No. 65-19

#### 2. Location

street & number N side SR 630, 1 mi. W of jct. with US 13 N/A  not for publication  
city or town Eastville  vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Northampton code 131 zip code 23347

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Walter C. Miller 23 Dec 1992  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

OAK GROVE  
Name of Property

Northampton, Virginia  
County and State

**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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
7	3	buildings
1		sites
2		structures
		objects
10	3	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Domestic: secondary structures

Agriculture: storage

Landscape: garden

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Domestic: secondary structures

Agriculture: storage

Landscape: garden

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial: Postmedieval English

Early Republic: Federal

Mid-19th-Century: Greek Revival

20th-Century Revival: Colonial Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood: weatherboard

roof Asbestos

other

**Narrative Description**

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

OAK GROVE  
Name of Property

Northampton, Virginia  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

Ca. 1750 - 1942

**Significant Dates**

Ca. 1750; 1811; ca. 1840; 1942

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

OAK GROVE  
Name of Property

Northampton, Virginia  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 171.6

**UTM References** See Continuation Sheet.  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

Zone	Easting	Northing

3 

Zone	Easting	Northing

2 

Zone	Easting	Northing

4 

Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** See Continuation Sheet.  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** See Continuation Sheet.  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Calder Loth, Architectural Historian

organization Virginia Department of Historic Resources date October, 1992

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone 804/786-3143

city or town Richmond state Virginia zip code 23219

**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. See Continuation Sheet

**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 Mrs. Helene T. Johnston

street & number 6621 Weymouth Court telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21212

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Oak Grove is an Eastern Shore plantation on a small peninsula near the confluence of Mattawoman Creek and the Chesapeake Bay. The manor house, at the western end of the peninsula, is an unusually picturesque weatherboarded structure in excellent condition. Like many old Eastern Shore dwellings, it has been altered and enlarged several times, thus reflecting its many generations of owners. The core is a gambrel-roofed colonial-period structure to which a two-story Federal wing was added to the north end and a two-story Greek Revival wing to the south end. The house was further enlarged in the 1940s with a kitchen and garage addition. Interesting original woodwork survives in each of the three early sections. Nearby are five early outbuildings. Spread before the west elevation is a 1940s formal garden designed by the Richmond landscape architect Charles Gillette. East of the house are three twentieth-century farm buildings. Two non-contributing twentieth-century tenant houses and a shed are on the eastern edge of the property. The house is approached by a long avenue lined with old ash trees.

### CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

#### SETTING

The core of the Oak Grove property is on a narrow peninsula on the Eastern Shore's bay side, in the lower part of Northampton County. The peninsula is bordered on the north by Mattawoman Creek and on the south by a tidal gut. Although low-lying and flat, the peninsula has one of the highest elevations in the generally low-lying county. Most of the peninsula is taken up by fields and pasture; trees dot the north and south shorelines. The manor house is situated near the western end of the peninsula. It is approached from the east by a long straight avenue bordered by large old ash trees. A broad grassy field lies between the house and the western shoreline. To halt erosion, the western shoreline in recent years has been graded into a wide slope. Before the western side of the house is a well-tended 1940s formal garden designed by Richmond landscape architect Charles Gillette. The garden features brick paths, herbaceous borders, and boxwood, and is framed by a picket fence. From the garden or western side of the house one looks out across the grassy field to panoramic views of the Chesapeake Bay. The western shore of the bay is visible on clear days. Although there is some new housing on the northern side of Mattawoman

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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Creek, the setting of Oak Grove remains largely unspoiled and maintains an air of pastoral serenity.

### Manor House (exterior)

The Oak Grove manor house is a picturesque dwelling erected in four stages. The house stands essentially unaltered since undergoing modernization and some remodeling beginning in 1941 when the property was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Gifford, of Louisville, Kentucky. The core of the house is a three-bay, colonial-period dwelling covered by a gambrel roof. The eastern facade is sheltered by a shed-roofed screened porch probably added in the late nineteenth century. The east facade is covered by a glassed-in sun room added by the Giffords. The walls are sheathed with early beaded weatherboard. The gambrel roof, covered by composition shingles (as are the other sections of the house), is visible above the porches. Each side of the roof has three shed dormers, although the northernmost dormer on the west side has been doubled to accommodate a bathroom. The sash on the east side appears early but not original. The east elevation windows preserve early frames and molded sills. Patches in the weatherboard indicate that the center door has been altered. Whatever chimneys this early section had were removed when the wings were added.

The north wing, probably added about 1811, is a three-bay, two-story, side-passage structure sheathed with beaded weatherboarding and covered by a gable roof. The eaves have unornamented cornices. Both east and west entrances are sheltered by probably original gabled porches with turned posts. The east porch has railing benches with traditional scrolled supports. The windows have Federal sash and are hung with louvered shutters. Two interior-end chimney stacks with corbeled caps project from each gable. The northern chimney has an exposed paneled breast at the first-floor level, but the brickwork is currently completely covered with ivy.

The south wing, although added around 1840, is almost identical to the north wing thus making the house a nearly symmetrical composition. A principal difference is that the south wing does not have a west entrance. All three sections have brick foundations laid in American bond; however, any original brickwork of the center section is hidden by the porch and sun-room. None of the sections has a basement. Because the house was carefully restored more than fifty

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3 OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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years ago, and has been maintained in excellent condition ever since, it is difficult to determine what is early and what is replacement exterior fabric. In any case, the general consistency of the exterior and its good state of repair add to the aesthetic appeal of the structure.

At the south end of the south wing is a one-and-a-half-story kitchen wing with attached garage, both added by the Giffords. The architecture of this addition harmonizes with the earlier sections. The addition has little impact on the overall composition since it is largely obscured on the eastern side by two outbuildings.

### Manor House (interior)

Like the exterior, the interior has been maintained in excellent condition since the 1940s rehabilitation. Alterations thus are difficult to detect or date. The first floor of the center section likely was built with a hall-parlor plan but currently is one long room. According to Ralph T. Whitelaw, the Giffords removed a cross partition to create the space.<sup>1</sup> A break in both the floorboards and the cornice indicate the location of the partition. The location of the original stair is difficult to discern. The current owner says an old visitor recalled it was against the interior partition of the center section's former north room.

Original woodwork in the center section includes the paneled chimney breasts at either end of the room as well as the doors, door frames, chair railing, and plain wainscoting. The chimney breasts are nearly the same, consisting of three horizontal panels. In each case part of the bottom panel is cut off by a plain Greek Revival mantel. The openings of both fireplaces are faced with King-of-Prussia marble, probably added when the mantels were installed. On the east wall the original windows have been removed and replaced by two French doors leading into the sun-room.

The plan of the second floor has been altered in various remodelings. Currently it has two bedrooms, a bath, and a passage that extends across the east front. The two rooms retain what appear to be original eighteenth-century paneled doors.

The north wing consists of a side passage and one large room on each floor. The passage has a simple but elegant open-string Federal

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4 OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

stair with thin square balusters, paneled spandrel, and simple scrolled brackets. The square newels have ball finials. Other trim includes plain wainscoting and a punch-and-dentil cornice. The first-floor room in this section is outfitted as a library with twentieth-century built-in bookshelves on either side of the chimney breast. The library also has a punch-and-dentil cornice and plain wainscoting--the cornice work has been pulled out from either side of the chimney breast to crown the bookshelves. The outstanding feature of the room is the elaborately carved Federal mantel which features intricate reeding with interlacing swag patterns. The frieze is enriched with reeded paterae.

The room above is similarly treated but with a plain cornice. The mantel also has fancy reeding but no paterae. At the stair landing is a narrow door reached by a fold-down ladder. The door gives access to a narrow stair leading to the attic. Interestingly, beside the stair is the original beaded weatherboarding of the north wall of the center section.

The south wing, although nearly identical on the exterior with the north wing, has Greek Revival woodwork on the interior. Instead of a side passage, however, the stair ascends between the walls and has paneled dados on either side. The window and door frames on both first and second floors have symmetrical architrave trim with turned corner blocks. The Greek Revival doors have interesting panel arrangements consisting of three vertical panels above a pair of horizontal panels. Neither the first-floor room or the second-floor room has cornice work. An original Greek Revival mantel survives on the second floor but the mantel below has been replaced more than once. The current owner states that the present first-floor mantel--Federal style with Wellford-type composition ornament swags--was installed by the Giffords and is not original to the house.

Adjacent to the dining room is a small den; beyond that, to the north, is a doorway opening into the sun-room, a pleasant mid-twentieth century space with views over the garden and the Chesapeake Bay in the distance.

Contributing Outbuildings

Immediately in front of the house, on the east side within the picket fence around the curtilage, are two old outbuildings, probably



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

early nineteenth century or earlier. The southern structure is a frame smokehouse with flush board siding, box cornice, and gable roof. It is set on brick piers. Almost touching it, to the north, is an office building also covered with flush boarding but with a slightly more decorative cornice. The north side of the building has two doors side-by-side, indicating that the interior was once partitioned. It currently is one large room.

South of the manor house is a range of three contributing outbuildings. The western fronts of these buildings are nearly aligned with the western facade of the manor house, thus creating an interesting enfilade of structures. Included among them is a structure now used as a small guest house. It is covered in weatherboards and has a gable roof and paneled chimney. The west slope of the roof has very deep eaves, suggesting that the building's original use may have been a dairy. Probably dating from the mid-nineteenth century, the structure has a very plain interior.

South of the guest house is a flush-boarded storage building with a gable roof and a leanto addition on the south end. Between the guest house and the main house is a shed-roofed equipment building. The building is difficult to date but portions of it may be nineteenth century.

The barn and two corncribs to the northeast of the manor house appear to be of early twentieth-century construction, however, with their small scald gable roofs they make for a picturesque grouping and are appropriate to the agricultural character of the property.

Non-contributing structures

Oak Grove has three non-contributing resources. These include the mid-twentieth-century frame tenant house near the eastern end of the avenue, the twentieth-century shed behind it, and the two-story frame tenant house in the southeast corner of the nominated portion of the property.

1. Ralph T. Whitelaw: Virginia's Eastern Shore (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, 1951), p. 302

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6 OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This waterfront Eastern Shore plantation is distinguished by its early manor house, a rambling frame structure built in several stages. Its evolutionary quality is typical of the architecture of the region where the various generations of owners are reflected in the fabric of their dwellings. Oak Grove has a mid-eighteenth-century, gambrel-roof core to which a Federal wing was added about 1811, and a matching wing with Greek Revival trim was added around 1840. A complementary 1940s wing and alterations in the oldest section echo the Colonial Revival ethic of the mid-twentieth century. The Colonial Revival flavor is heightened by an eighteenth-century-style garden designed by Richmond landscape architect Charles Gillette. Four early outbuildings and a cluster of wooden, twentieth-century farm buildings preserve the rural flavor of the property. Noteworthy is Oak Grove's scenic setting on a narrow peninsula overlooking the Chesapeake Bay.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The oldest portion of the Oak Grove manor house probably dates to the mid-eighteenth century when the property was owned by John and Sarah Haggoman. In 1764, following the death of his wife, John Haggoman left the property to his son John. The Haggoman family sold the property in 1790; two years later it came into the ownership of Nathaniel Darby.

Nathaniel Darby died in 1811. His will contained the following reference indicating that the construction of the north wing was about to begin. "It is my will that all of the materials so far as they are now got towards putting an addition to my House should remain for the benefit of the Plantation without account."<sup>1</sup> The nearly matching south wing was most likely added after 1840 when the property passed from Nathaniel Darby's widow to Arthina Nicholson, great-niece of Mrs. Darby's husband.

The property passed through various owners over the next hundred years. In 1941 it was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Gifford of Louisville, Kentucky. The Giffords undertook an extensive rehabilitation of the property, converting it from a traditional farm into a prestigious country estate. This conversion involved the construction of an architecturally sympathetic garage and wing addition, the rehabilitation of the house including the installation of modern systems, and the installation of a colonial-style formal garden designed in 1942 by the noted Richmond landscape architect, Charles Gillette. Some of the alterations undertaken in the rehabilitation, such as the removal of a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7 OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

partition in the oldest section and the construction of a sun-room, would not be regarded as appropriate treatments today; however, they are consistent with the Colonial-revival ethic of the 1930s and '40s and enabled the house to serve its intended use as a comfortable country home suitable for entertaining and weekend guests. Because these alterations represent the social customs of a period over fifty years ago, they are included in the property's period of significance. In 1951 Oak Grove was purchased from the Giffords by Mr. and Mrs. J. Edward Johnston, Jr., of Baltimore. Mrs. Johnston continues to use the place as a country home. During this forty-year period Mrs. Johnston has made no alterations to the house and grounds, and continues to maintain the property in excellent condition, just as it was when acquired from the Giffords.

Although no archaeological survey has been undertaken at Oak Grove, the fact that the property is elevated and surrounded by water on three sides offers a strong possibility that it contains prehistoric sites, most likely of the Woodland Period. The property may also contain the site of a dwelling erected prior to the oldest section of the present house. In 1715 the property was owned by John and Sarah Powell, who presumably were living in the vicinity, possibly in a dwelling on or near the site of the present house. Sarah Powell later married John Haggoman (q.v.) who likely built the oldest section of Oak Grove sometime after 1736, but before 1764 when John Haggoman, by then a widower, left his homeplace to his son John.

1. quoted in Ralph T. Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore (Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, 1951) p. 302.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   8  

OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

### Major Bibliographical References

John William Robertson, M.D., On Land and Sea (Eastern Shore News, Inc. Onancock, VA., 1962) pp.32-33

Ralph T. Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore (The Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, 1951; reprint by Peter Smith, Gloucester, Mass. 1968), pp. 310-304.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 9

**OAK GROVE; NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

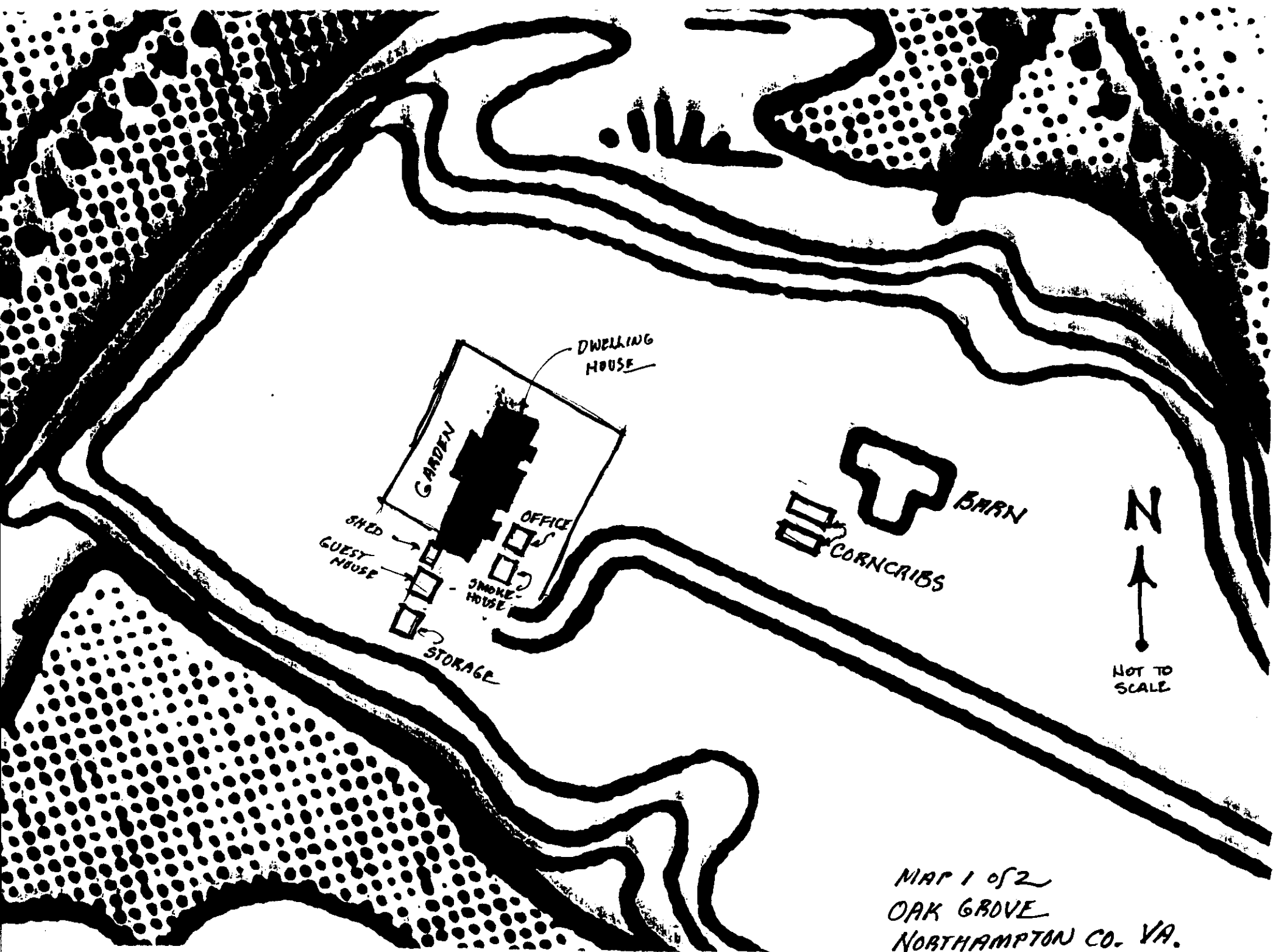
	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A.	1 8	4 1 5 7 6 0	4 1 3 8 0 4 0
B.	1 8	4 1 5 6 8 0	4 1 3 7 6 6 0
C.	1 8	4 1 5 5 6 0	4 1 3 7 7 4 0
D.	1 8	4 1 5 5 4 0	4 1 3 7 1 4 0
E.	1 8	4 1 5 3 4 0	4 1 3 7 1 1 0
F.	1 8	4 1 5 3 2 0	4 1 3 6 6 8 0
G.	1 8	4 1 5 1 0 0	4 1 3 6 7 0 0
H.	1 8	4 1 5 0 7 0	4 1 3 7 9 9 0

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the northwest corner on Mattawoman Creek: UTM point A--18/415760/4138040; south to UTM point B--18/415680/4137660; northeast to UTM point C--18/415560/4237740; south to UTM point D--18/415540/4137140; east to UTM point E--18/415340/4137110; south to UTM point F--18/415320/14366; southeast to UTM point G--18/415100/4136700 north to UTM point H--18/415070/4137990, thence along the southern shore of Mattawoman Creek to UTM point A.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries were drawn to include the 171 acres historically associated with Oak Grove since 1792.



DWELLING HOUSE

GARDEN

SHED  
GUEST HOUSE

OFFICE

SMOKE HOUSE

STORAGE



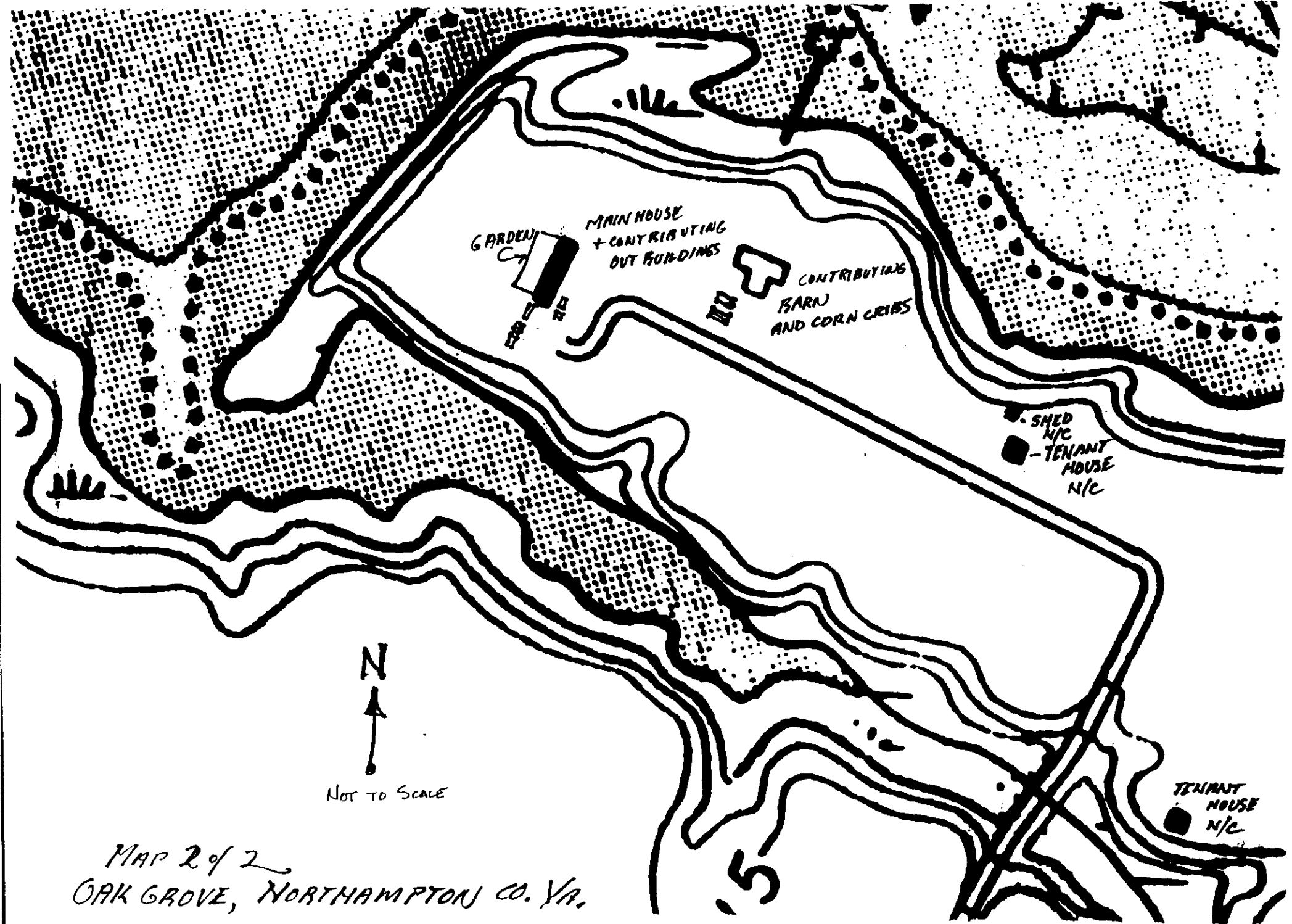
BARN

CORNCRIBS



NOT TO SCALE

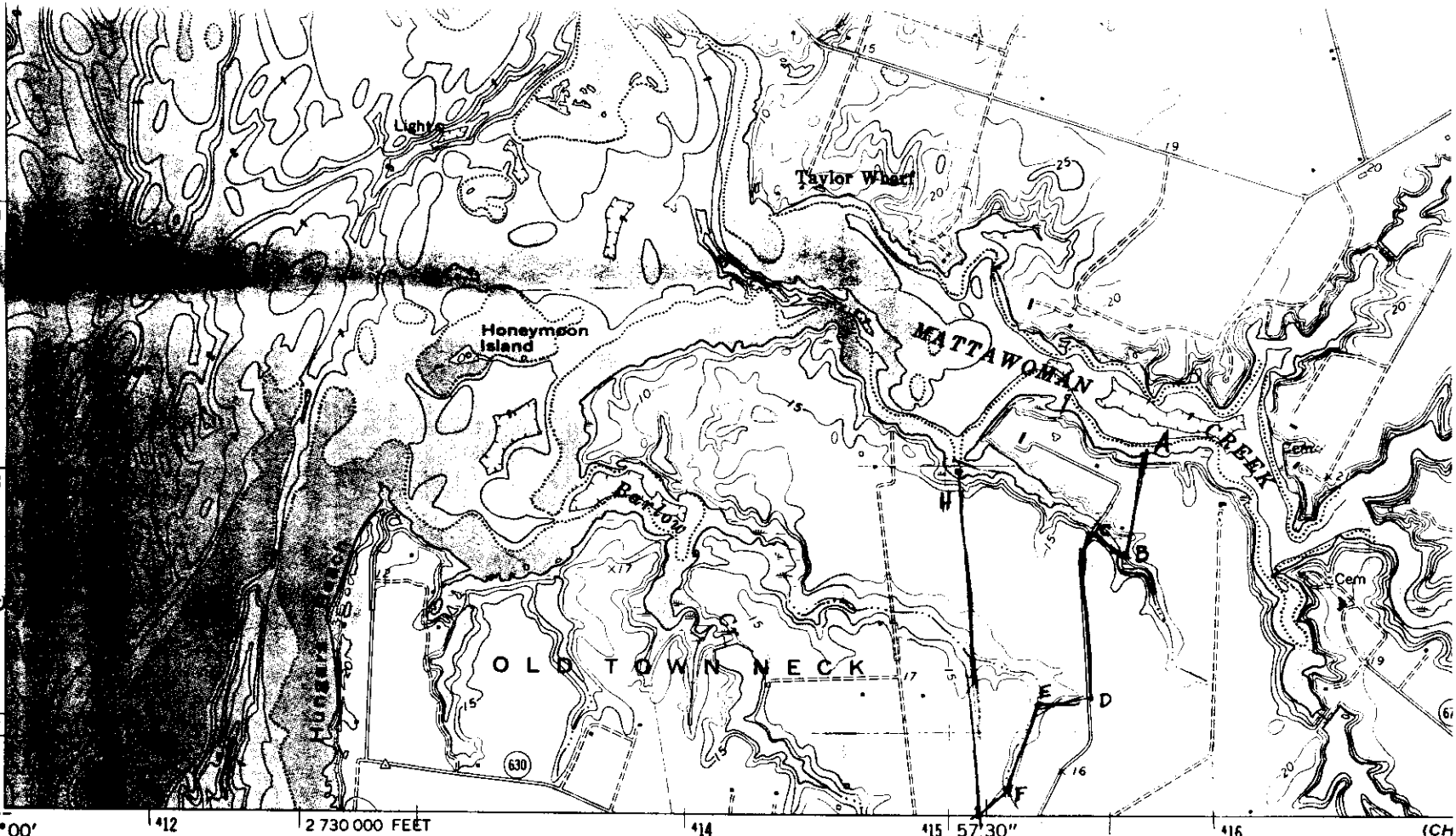
MAP 1 of 2  
OAK GROVE  
NORTHAMPTON CO. VA.



NOT TO SCALE

MAP 2 of 2  
OAK GROVE, NORTHAMPTON CO. VA.

5



Oak Grove

A 18/415760/413840

B 18/415680/4137660

C 18/415560/4137740

D 18/415540/4137140

E 18/415340/413710

F 18/415320/413660

G 18/415100/413670

H 18/415070/4137990

Produced by the United States Geological Survey and the National Ocean Service

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1968  
Supersedes Army Map Service map dated 1943

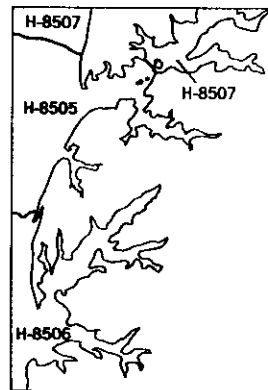
Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Service from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial photographs  
Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation) shown by light solid line

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American Datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18 shown in blue

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 10 meters south and 30 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

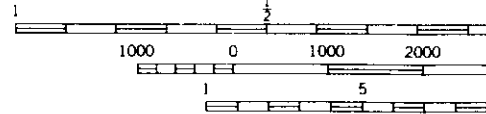
Short dashed blue lines indicate elliptical bay outlines visible on aerial photographs

NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE  
HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX



HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY  
INFORMATION

SURVEY NUMBER	SURVEY DATE	SURVEY SCALE	SURVEY LINE SPACING (NAUT. MILES)



CONTOUR 1  
NATIONAL GEODETIC  
BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTER  
0.5 METER CONTOURS  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

BASE MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL BATHYMETRIC SURVEY DATA COMP ORGANIZATION (IHO) SPECIAL F AND/OR STANDARDS USE  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP