

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 14 1977
DATE ENTERED:

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Wirtland

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

1.9 miles SSE of the intersection of State Routes 3 and 638; .2 mile W of Route 638.

STREET & NUMBER

Soft coal seam on VA 638

CITY, TOWN

Oak Grove

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First (Thomas N. Downing)

STATE

Virginia

CODE
51

COUNTY
Westmoreland

CODE
193

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

c/o Carl F. Flemer, Jr.

NAME

Ingleside Plantation Nurseries, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Oak Grove

VICINITY OF

STATE
Virginia 22443

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Westmoreland County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Montross

STATE
Virginia 22520

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2)

(See continuation Sheet # 1)

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1958

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE
D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Wirtland, a handsome Gothic Revival villa in the style of Andrew Jackson Downing, was completed in 1850. The house, set on a low terrace amidst a romantically landscaped park, is approached along a winding drive intended to present the building from a variety of picturesque angles. The park is informally planted with specimen evergreen and deciduous trees. In front of the house is a broad, green lawn.

The cruciform brick structure is two stories tall and is covered with stucco scored in imitation of masonry. The main block is five bays long and has six-over-nine sash on the first floor and six-over-six sash on the second. All of the windows have louvered blinds and the whole is covered with a gable roof with deeply projecting eaves and bargeboards. The latter are cusped and are embellished with pendants perpendicular to the roof planes. Two interior chimneys with coupled square stacks surmount the central block, with a triple stack used on the ell.

Projecting from the west facade is a central porch tower. The ground floor contains an open portico, with a Tudor-arch and hood mold in each face, and with a black-and-white checkered marble floor. In the second story is a triple window, each opening having a Tudor-arched head, and the whole united by continuous mold. A striking Gothic-style balcony, with four pendants with acorn finials and five-lobed cusped spandrels further enlivens the tower facade. Bargeboards like those on the main block are used on the tower.

The two-bay ell is decorated in a manner similar to the main block, and has a demi-octagonal, two-story projection at the rear. Full-length, one-story porches with Tudor arches shelter either side of the ell.

The plan of Wirtland consists of a two-room main block with a central passage; the latter leads to a cross-passage, in the ell, containing the stair. Behind the cross-passage are three rooms grouped around the central chimney, with a small vestibule in the projecting bay.

The parlor (south room) and the dining (north) room are decorated in a similar fashion. Both have plaster cornices and light-grey marble mantels with chamfered pilasters supporting cambered-soffit friezes with triangular spandrel panels carved with oak leaves and acorns. A plaster cornice encircles both rooms. Both had lozenge-shaped plaster ceiling medallions, but that in the dining room has fallen.

In the entrance hall, there is also a plaster cornice and lozenge-shaped ceiling medallion. The stair hall, with which it connects, has a niche with a corbel-stopped hood mold in the south wall. This is dramatically set on axis with the front entrance so that, from the exterior, the visitor sees the niche enframed in three nearer hood-molded arches. The open-string stair has a molded rail, a spool-turned newel, two slender balusters (turned in the same manner) to a tread, and sawn brackets. Vertically fluted sheathing decorates the spandrel.

The southeast room of the ell has a plain dark-grey, Greek-Revival style marble mantel and a plaster ceiling medallion in the shape of an eight-pointed star. The northeast and northwest rooms are unembellished.

The house survives in an excellent state of preservation.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1850

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wirtland exemplifies the mid-nineteenth-century ideal of an American villa. With its romantically landscaped park and carefully crafted Gothic Revival mansion, the estate conforms precisely to the definition of a villa as stated by the noted architectural theorist Andrew Jackson Downing. In his Architecture of Country Houses (1850) Downing described the villa as "the most refined home of America -- the home of the most leisurely and educated class of citizen." Further elaborating, Downing said "Amid the serenity and peace of sylvan scenes, surrounded by the perennial freshness of nature, enriched without and within by objects of universal beauty and interest . . . it is in such houses that we should look for the happiest social and moral development of our people." Commenting on the architecture of a villa Downing wrote: "In the fine outlines of the whole edifice, whether dignified, graceful or picturesque, in the spacious or varied verandas, arcades, and windows, in the select forms of windows, chimney-tops, cornices, the artistic knowledge and feeling has full play. . . "Downing felt that villas could be designed in various historic styles, but his personal preference was for the Gothic. It was through his promotion of this style by the publication, in his several books, of house designs by noted architects that buildings in the style came to be erected from New England to California.

The plans published by Downing, as well as those in other pattern books of the period, are usually so precise and well-described that with them a local builder could turn out a quite sophisticated structure without the benefit of an architect. This fact makes it difficult to ascertain whether or not many of the romantic houses of the mid-nineteenth century are custom-designed by architects or are interpretations of published plans by local builders. Such is the case with Wirtland. Although it is an unusually sophisticated house of its type no architect has yet been associated with it.

Wirtland was erected c. 1850 by Dr. William Wirt, Jr. (1817-1898), son of the noted jurist, statesman, and biographer of Patrick Henry. Dr. Wirt was a resident of Baltimore at the time of his marriage, in 1845, to Elizabeth Payne the only daughter of Daniel Payne of Bleak Hall, Westmoreland County, Virginia. Wirt decided to settle in Westmoreland County so that he could assist his wife in managing her landholdings there. He did not choose to live on her property, however; instead he purchased land for his estate from James C. Jett. Writing to his mother in June, 1850 Wirt made reference to his new house then being erected. He stated his wish to live near the site in order to superintend its construction and the "laying out of the grounds, planting and shrubbery." In August of 1850 he wrote that he planned to move into Wirtland, as he referred to it, the last week of that month.

Following Dr. Wirt's death in 1898 Wirtland was operated for several years as a female boarding school (Wirtland Seminary) by Wirt's son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. William Dabney Wirt. In recent years the estate was owned by Mr. and Mrs.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Catalogue of Wirtland Seminary. Oak Grove, Virginia, c. 1907-1914.
 Downing, A. J. The Architecture of Country Houses. New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1969.
 Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, (1851-53). p. 309.
 Westmoreland County Land Books, 1851-61.
William Wirt Papers. Reel 22, Virginia Historical Society.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 15 acres

UTM REFERENCES

QUADRANGLE NAME: Rollins Fork, Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE: 1:24000

E- 18/323920/4225020

A | 1, 8 | | 3 | 2, 4 | 0, 4, 0 | | 4, 2 | 2, 5 | 0, 6, 0 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 C | 1, 8 | | 3 | 2, 4 | 1, 1, 0 | | 4, 2 | 2, 4 | 6, 1, 0 |

B | 1, 8 | | 3 | 2, 4 | 2, 1, 0 | | 4, 4 | 2, 4 | 8, 2, 0 |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 D | 1, 8 | | 3 | 2, 3 | 9, 1, 0 | | 4, 4 | 2, 4 | 7, 3, 0 |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries are drawn to follow the field line on the south, the woods on the east, and the 150-foot contour line on the west and north. These boundaries incorporate the landscaped park around the house.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

December 1976

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE XX

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

TITLE

Junius R. Fishburne, Jr. Executive Director
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

DEC 21 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 14 1977

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Wirtland, Westmoreland County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET # 1

ITEM NUMBER 7,6, 8 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1969, 1970, 1976 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Richmond Virginia

SIGNIFICANCE

8. Burton Slocum who undertook extensive repairs on the house. Today the property is owned by Ingleside Plantation Nurseries, Inc. with the house and park maintained as a private residence for members of the Flemer family, proprietors of the nursery.

The house stands in excellent condition and ranks among the state's outstanding examples of Gothic Revival domestic architecture. Its park, with its many original trees, is a rare survival of Victorian landscaping.

CCL & MTP

7. DESCRIPTION

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION : The boundaries incorporate the house and the Victorian landscaped park surrounding it.

U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Rollins Fork, Va. 1968

WIRTLAND, Westmoreland County, Virginia

UTM References:

A-18/324040/4225060 B-18/324210/4224820

C-18/324110/4224610 D-18/323910/4224730

E-18/323920/4225020

