

VLR-4/18/89
NRHP-11/02/89

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 *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cove Presbyterian Church
other names/site number Cove Meeting House, Rich Cove
002-0705 other DHR#: 002-5038-0024 (Covesville HD)

2. Location

street & number U.S. Route 29 not for publication
city, town Covesville vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Albemarle code 003 zip code 22931

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	1 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	1	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		2	1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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 of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Structure/Church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Religion/Religious Structure/Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Builder's Gothic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Tin

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Cove Presbyterian Church, a rectangular one-room, single story brick building, has been in use by members of the Cove Presbytery since its construction in 1809, and subsequent 1880 renovation. This is one of the earliest constructed Presbyterian churches extant in Albemarle County. The written record indicates that the original calling for a minister by the congregation dates to 1747. Services were later held in a log structure said to have been constructed in 1769 in the immediate vicinity of the present structure. The building is located to the east of U.S. Route 29 and Cove Creek, in Covesville, a small rural community near the southern edge of Albemarle County. Somewhat concealed from Route 29, the church is sited at the base of the Fan Mountains. The building is oriented with its gable entrance facing the mountain to the east. A small cemetery on the upward slope is separated from the church by the semi-circular driveway which loops around the church. A very simply designed brick structure, it has no added exterior ornamentation. Its design is not attributed to a specific architect, but was more likely the result of the combined efforts of one or more builders who followed a formulaic plan--incorporating a gable-end entrance, double alleys, raised altar platform, a blank west end, and corner stairways leading to an overhanging balcony. Stylistically, its window details and interior decoration place it in the category of Gothic Revival.

The architectural history of Cove Church can be considered as having two phases. This is suggested by the dates painted over the entrance--(phase one), 1809 original construction; and (phase two), 1880 renovation. The first phase marked the construction of a permanent house of worship to replace the log meeting house. A blue print of the plan exists which gives the construction date of 1809; and provides clues to the arrangement and function of spaces in the Presbyterian church in general. Members of the congregation were clearly segregated by race and sex; women were seated to the south of the large central communion table, men to the north, and Blacks were relegated to the gallery. Black members were, in fact, given separate entrances flanking the central door, the latter presumably used only by white members. A "pen for negroes" may have been located on the ground floor or balcony, a fact which is not clear from the drawing.

The perfectly symmetrical plan is dominated by a U-shaped communion table in the center, which does not exist today. At the west end, a raised pulpit is depicted, on either side of which are "amen corners" with benches. Two small wood burning stoves provided heat on either side. The very clear delineation of space and the equal position of men and women reflects the egalitarian nature of the Presbyterian church [at least as far as sex was concerned], for the time. By contrast, the Anglican church made greater distinctions in the seating of its members based on their social status and wealth. This plan was common enough to be considered a formula and can

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1747-1880

Significant Dates

1769

1809

1880

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The history of Cove Church from 1747 to the present is significant as it typifies the manner in which Presbyterianism was established in the Valley of Virginia and east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Cove Church, like a handful of other congregations in this region, was formed as a result of the wave of Scotch-Irish immigration into the state of Virginia. Much of the land was unsettled frontier prior to 1726, particularly Albemarle County which was not established until 1744. Struggling to establish a foothold, members of the Cove Church began meeting in their homes, as did other groups, until a log meeting house could be built and ministers called to preach.⁴ The transformation from an impermanent log structure to a larger, more permanent brick structure was common to many Presbyterian groups in Pennsylvania and Virginia. It symbolized the gradual establishment and permanency of the newly formed settlement. The fact that it took sixty-two years for the Cove Church to evolve from its first meeting in someone's home to the construction of a permanent brick church in 1809, is testimony to the dedication of its members.

The second half of the eighteenth century was a period of change and reorganization for the Presbyterian church in the south. Beginning in 1741, the church was effected by the Great Awakening, the religious revival then centered in the New England colonies. Presbyterians divided in half over the revival, those opposing it formed the Old Side, and those who favored revival became the New Side. The Old Side remained conservative in their views on acceptance of ministers to the faith, relying only on those who had been trained at established colleges. The New Side was more flexible in their acceptance of ministers less formally trained, in particular, those trained at the "Log College" in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania.⁵ The flexibility of the New Side ministry allowed them to expand more rapidly into remote regions, thus as of 1758, there were six New Side meeting houses east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and only three in the Valley of Virginia.⁶ In 1755, the Hanover Presbytery was formed for the New Side, incorporating almost all of Virginia and extending into the Carolinas. It was the first presbytery to be established in any of the Southern Colonies.⁷

Cove Church was one of several New Side churches represented by Hanover Presbytery. Other churches within Albemarle County included Dee Ess (D.S.) begun in 1741, dissolved in 1811, located near the juncture of Ivy Creek and U.S. Highway 250; and North Garden, begun in 1756, dissolved in 1945, located several miles north of Cove

9. Major Bibliographical References

Albemarle County

Deed Book 1, 8, 17, 78

Beard, Delemo L. Rev. "Origin and Early History of Presbyterianism in Virginia"
Ph.D. Thesis. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1932. Microfilm at University
of Virginia.

Blueprint of Cove Church Floor Plan, Cove Presbyterian Church Collection. #38-501.
Alderman Library, Manuscripts Room, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Burnet, Isabella Neff. "Some Old Albemarle Churches of West Hanover Presbytery"
Papers of the Albemarle County Historical Society II (1941-1942): 17-35.

Ewell, Frances. The History of Cove Pres. Church. Charlottesville, VA, 1966. Typescript.
Alderman Library, Rare Book Room, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

See continuation sheet 4

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3.5 Acres

UTM References

A 17 700970 4194420
Zone Easting Northing

B _____
Zone Easting Northing

C _____

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point at the property's SE corner being the intersection of the Southern Railway and an access road /No number assigned/; thence extending approximately 242' NW following the north side of said access road to NE corner of intersection with old Route 29; thence extending 373' following east side of Old Route 29; thence approximately

See continuation sheet 5

Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses the church, church hall and cemetery and is delimited by public roads and the railroad on the west, south, and east respectively, and a drainage ditch on the north.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Holbrook Perdue

organization _____

date January 23, 1989

street & number 44 University Circle #1

telephone 804 979-3136

city or town Charlottesville, VA

state VA zip code 22903

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be found as far north as Pennsylvania.¹

Built on a site sloping down to the road, the church is set on a 3½ foot deep stone foundation. The stones are irregular courses and quarry faced, with regularly spaced air vents. The structure is brick frame, has mortise and tenon floor joists, and plaster walls on the interior. The exterior brick walls are three course American bond with dark glazed headers. Three large pointed arch windows--nine-over-nine double hung--dominate the north and south facades, their arches accentuated by two rows of gauged bricks. Chimneys for venting the wood stoves were also placed on the north and south sides. The three-bay facade to the east has one central entrance, but may have employed three entrances during phase one, as indicated in the plan. The pointed arch openings which flank the central door are now plastered in but have the same details as the side lights. A similarly scaled pointed arch window is positioned directly over the door. The most detailed brickwork occurs on either side of this window in the matching panels of inset, stepped brick. Identical panels are repeated on the rear west facade, being the only detail on that side. The paired panelled doors have a six-light transom overhead surmounted by a brick segmental arch. The steeply pitched gable roof is covered with a standing seam tin roof which was completed during the second phase; it is not certain whether this was the original material or not. In fact, the roof may not have been so steeply pitched, nor the interior ceiling as high and sculptured as it exists today.

The Session Book of Cove Church recorded the 1880 incident which marked the second phase of its architectural history. "On the 12th. of June 1880 there passed over the Cove neighborhood a terrific storm of wind and rain amounting to a tornado, doing great damage to the crops, forests, & orchards. Cove Church was blown down & made almost a complete wreck [sic]. The work of rebuilding was commenced as soon as arrangement could be made for it. And it was as far completed as to enable us to use it January 23d. 1881--that being the fourth sabbath. It is estimated the entire cost will be when completed about fourteen hundred dollars."²

The clearest evidence of repairs made in 1880 is an alteration in the brick course at the approximate level of the eaves, where the bonding pattern changes from three course to five course American bond. Original bricks appear to have been used in the repair work. The roof was entirely reconstructed and tie rods used to secure the structure in both directions. Decorative brackets at the corners of the eaves appear to be additions in the second phase. Changes made to the outside were more subtle than on the inside, which may suggest why the members commemorated the event for posterity with a decorative panel over the door which reads "Built 1809/Rebuilt 1880".

The major alteration made on the interior was the elimination of the north gallery steps which were replaced by a small closet, and the opening filled in. A thin, panelled partition wall was installed across the rear of the church to create a vestibule which also served to direct church members to the left or right. Interesting details which date from the latter nineteenth century are the altar screen and wood braces spanning the ceiling. Gothic revival in detail, the altar screen is applied to the wall, it has two lancet shaped cut-outs with a semicircular arch in the center, and two clover-like foils. Crossing the entire expanse of the ceiling are three wooden cross braces and large pendants typical of the Gothic Revival, at the roof's apex.

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

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Immediately below the braces are the tie rods (one longitudinal, two cross) which support the pewter lamps. The sanctuary has panelled wainscoting throughout and a heavy chair rail moulding. The floorboards are six inch wide hardwood, their interstices filled with plaster.

In the second half of the twentieth century a small room was excavated on the north side of the building to install a heating/air conditioning system. A door was cut into the stone foundation, and the room lined with concrete up to the crawl space. In 1968, Cove Presbyterian Hall was completed to the northeast of the church. Also brick and one story, many of the church's details were echoed in the new construction, most notably the stepped brickwork.

8. Statement of Significance (continued)

Church. Despite the presbytery's mission to bring new ministers to the area, the paucity of ministers and the increasing number of settlements meant that calls for ministers had to be made jointly, and ministers shared. The first call put out by Cove Church, was also made on behalf of Mountain Plains and Rockfish churches.

"Whereas it is agreed or proposed that ye Inhabitants of Ivy Creek and ye Mountain Plains congregation joyn together with ye congregation of Rockfish, to call and invite ye Rev. Samuel Black, Now Residing in ye bounds of ye Donegal Presbytery of Penn. to be our minister, and Pastor to administer ye ordinance of ye Gospel among us all. We whose names are hereunto affixed do promise and oblige ourselves to pay yearly and every year ye several sums annexed to our names for ye outward support and encouragement of ye said Mr. Samuel Black during his abode and continuance among us, for ye one half of his Labors in ye Administration of Gospel Ordinances to us in an orderly way according to ye rules and Practice of our Orthodox Reformed Presbyterian Church: As witness our hands."

/Signed by 57 person/

Ivy Creek March 29, 1747

Samuel Black preached at Cove and other churches in the area until 1759. He was followed by a succession of ministers who were again, rotated between Cove and other nearby settlements. They included Revs. Samuel Davies, John Todd, John Brown, John Martin, and Henry Patillo.

In 1769, Samuel Leak became the first permanent minister at the Cove Meeting House. He served until 1775, and was followed by William Irvin from 1775 to 1800. The Cove settlement remained active in these years, hosting meetings of the Hanover Presbytery in 1771, 1793, 1794, 1799, 1800, and 1803.⁸ James Robinson served as Cove's pastor from 1801-1820 during the period of construction of the new church. Robinson also formed the Cove Librarian Society which continued until 1828 with the purpose of supplying religious literature to the membership. Robinson was apparently well liked by the church and worked hard towards involving slaves in the congregation, teaching them at the Cove Meeting House.

Issac Paul, pastor from 1825 to 1833, continued the mission of enabling all classes of people access to the Presbyterian church, and was also interested in the

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Significance (continued)

welfare of the poor. The Cove Church continued to contribute to the community when William Pinkerton, pastor from 1842 to 1852, ran a Male Academy for neighborhood children. In the 1880's, the Male and Female Academy was established on a lot adjoining the church to the south. The same dedication to education was exhibited on a state-wide level. The Presbyterians founded several institutions for higher education which included Hampden-Sydney College [1776] and Washington and Lee University [1797], then called Liberty Hall.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Cove Church has remained active, and is a vital part of the small community of Covesville. In its earliest years, the Cove Church was a frontier church, located in a sparsely populated settlement. The dedication and tenacity of its first members assured its survival during a period when there was no permanent building to worship in, nor full-time minister to preach. The experience of these members in the second half of the eighteenth century was typical of many other settlements throughout Virginia. They began by building simple vernacular log structures inspired by the homes they built for themselves--a building type which was an exigency of life on the frontier. In many instances, churches did not survive the changes and dissolved their congregations or merged with others. Those young congregations that did survive were helped by the statewide organization of the Presbyterian church, specifically the establishment of the Hanover Presbytery in 1755. Although the presbytery could not always supply ministers or financial support, it provided a wider group of support for the scattered congregations, including Cove Church. In all phases of its architectural history, beginning with the eighteenth century log structure, the church members reflected their modest means and intentions in simple, unadorned structures. This was due, in part, to budgetary constraints, but was primarily due to their efforts to focus on the Word of God rather than the outward manifestation of it. Therefore, style and decoration were unimportant and unnecessary to connote the religious spirit of the congregation.

(Footnotes, Sections 7 & 8)

¹ Yvonne Milspaw, "Plain Walls and Little Angels; Pioneer Churches in Central Pennsylvania" Pioneer America 12 (May 1980), no. 2. The plan for St. Peter's Church in Middletown, Pennsylvania founded in 1767, is nearly identical to that of Cove Church. p. 82.

² Session Book of Cove Church, p. 71.

³ Ernest Trice Thompson, Presbyterians in the South; 1607-1861 (2 vols) Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963, v. 1, p. 45.

⁴ The home of George Douglass was used by the Cove settlement until 1769, when the log structure was completed. Delemo Beard, "Origin and Early History of Presbyterianism in Virginia," Ph.D. Thesis. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1932. p. 240.

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& 9

⁵The Log College was operated by William Tennent. Graduates of this college predominantly followed other Scotch-Irish pioneers into the South.

⁶Howard McKnight Wilson, The Lexington Presbyterian Heritage: The Presbytery of Lexington and its Churches in the Synod of Virginia. Verona, VA: McClure Printing Company, 1971. p. 40.

⁷In 1829, West Hanover Presbytery was formed from Hanover Presbytery incorporating most of Piedmont Virginia, and including Albemarle County. William H. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical, (2 vols.) Philadelphia, 1850-55. vol. 2, p. 432.

⁸The meeting in 1771 was the first held in the newly constructed log meeting house [held October 17, 1771]. Delamo Beard, "Origin and Early History of Presbyterianism," p. 241; Frances Ewell, The History of Cove Presbyterian Church, Typescript, 1966. p. 3.

(Major Bibliographical References, continued)

Hart, Virginia B. & Mrs. R.A. Hammer, Historian. "A Short History of Old Cove Church in Alb. Co. Va." Unpublished manuscript. 5pp. n.d.

Loving, Boyce. "Covesville Church is one of Oldest in Albemarle Area" The Daily Progress. Part I, no date; part II, 17 December 1955.

Lynn, M. Tabb & Charles M. Watts. "Cove Presbyterian Church" Studies in Vernacular Architecture SVA-45. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1978. School of Architecture.

Milspaw, Yvonne. "Plain Walls and Little Angels; Pioneer Churches in Central Pennsylvania." Pioneer America 12 (May 1980), no. 2: pp. 77-96.

Session Books. Cove Presbyterian Church 1801-1901. 3 volumes.

Thompson, Ernest Trice. Presbyterians in the South; 1607-1861 (2 vols.) Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963.

Wilson, Howard McKnight. The Lexington Presbyterian Heritage; The Presbytery of Lexington and its Churches in the Synod of Virginia. Verano, VA: McClure Printing Company, 1971.

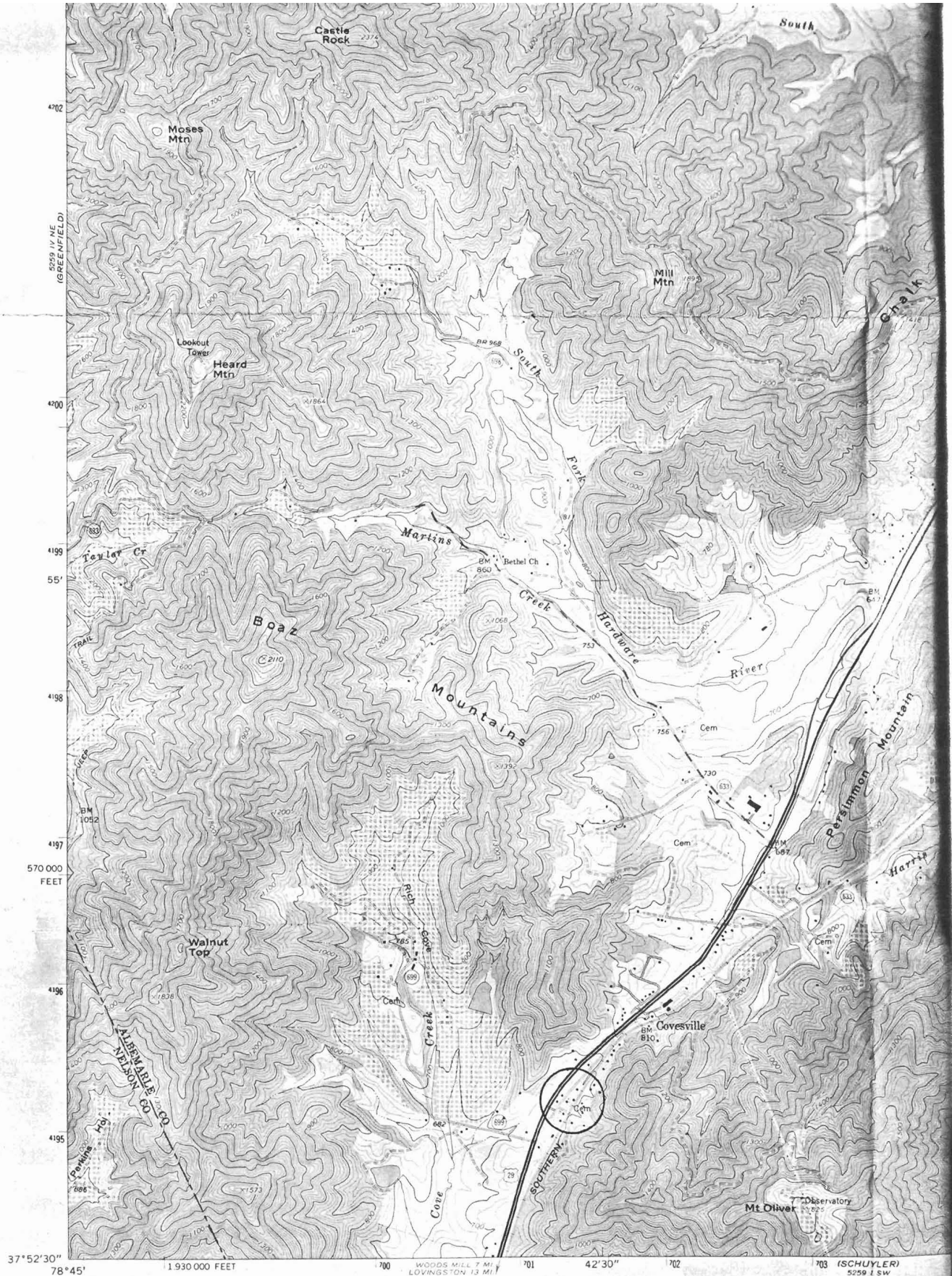
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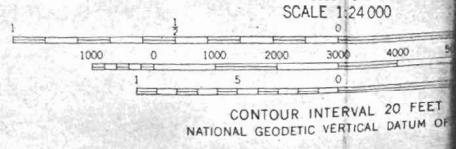
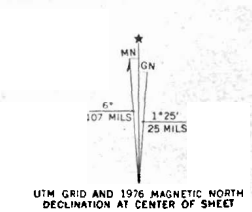
Verbal Boundary Description (continued)

195' SE to west side of Southern Railway; thence approximately 343' SW to point of origin.



LOVINGSTON
 5559 1/4 SE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and USC&GS
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1967
 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 17, shown in blue
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
 Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1976. This information not



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA. A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE.