



**VIRGINIA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

File no. 76-316
Negative no(s). 5182

SURVEY FORM

Historic name Groves House	Common name Kerr House
County/Town/City Prince William County	
Street address or route number 18905 Fuller Heights Road, Triangle, Va. 22172	
USGS Quad Quantico Quad	Date or period c1840
Original owner Henly Groves	Architect/builder/craftsmen
Original use Residence	
Present owner Ethel D. Kerr	Source of name
Present owner address 9030 Manordale La., Ellicott City, Md. 21043	Source of date Architectural evidence; land tax lists.
Present use Not in use	Stories 1½ stories on a high basement.
Acreage 17.14 acres	Foundation and wall const'n Stone and brick foundation; frame and log walls.
	Roof type Shingle-covered gable roof.

State condition of structure and environs House and grounds are neglected, house vandalized and open.

State potential threats to structure Arson, vandalism, development.
Note any archaeological interest

Should be investigated for possible register potential? yes ___ no ___

Architectural description (Note significant features of plan, structural system and interior and exterior decoration, taking care to point out aspects not visible or clear from photographs. Explain nature and period of all alterations and additions. List any outbuildings and their approximate ages, cemeteries, etc.)

A one-and-one-half story frame house on a high stone and brick basement, the Groves House was probably constructed in about 1840, perhaps on an earlier foundation. Three dormers (probably 20th century additions) pierce both sides of the shingle-covered gable roof. A two-story porch (a recent addition) spans the house's front or northwest side. Supported by square columns, the porch has a brick verandah and shelters the basement entrance of this basically hall-parlor plan house. Two large exterior brick end chimneys laid in 3, 4, and 5-course American bond served fireplaces at the house's three different levels. An open porch with steps leading to the house's first floor runs partly across the rear. A small, log building sits perpendicular to the house's south end. The building, a one-story gable-roofed structure containing the kitchen,, measures 12' x 12' and rests on a modern brick foundation. It is connected to the main house by a low-gable-roofed addition. According to one source this building was the old smokehouse, though that is doubtful.

The house's exterior covering is a combination of wide, beaded weatherboards (front) and plain weatherboards (sides and rear). Beneath the steeply-pitched gable roof is a box cornice. The rake is plain, and there are single cornerboards. Architrave trim surrounds the 6/6 replacement sliding sash windows and doors.

A stone foundation with a water table at 2'8" from the ground supports the high brick basement. The brick walls, partly rebuilt in places, varies in thickness from c22' at the rear to c14' at the front and sides. The window (and door?) openings at the basement level feature segmental arches. The heavy board and basement-level batten door on the northwest side (probably the main entrance) is surmounted by a single-light overhead. Heavy wrought iron strap hinges held the door in place. Wide architrave trim surrounds the doorway.

Interior inspected? Yes (continued next page)

Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)

The estate on which this house was built consisted of two tracts of land on Little Creek, one totaling 164 acres and the other 15 acres, that Henly Groves purchased around 1824-26 from Thomas Triplett and his wife Margaret. Land tax books in 1840 for the first time show an improvement worth \$180 on the property. Groves also owned property in Dumfries and may have resided there from 1832 to 1838 or 39, when it is supposed that his house there was destroyed by fire. Groves' will of 1850 leaves everything he owned to his wife, Mary, and his children, William H., Margaret E., John W., Mary C., and Jane R. At Groves' death in 1865, he was buried in the public cemetery Triangle where Groves two wives and some of their children are also buried. William H. Groves acquired the property from his sisters, co-heirs, and in 1900 transferred it to the W.H. Keys, in exchange for Keys' caring for Groves until his death. The tract, 191 acres was described in the transfer as being adjacent to Graham Park. In 1903, R.B. Abel purchased 28 3/4 acres of the Groves estate from W.H. and Annie Keys. The deed's attached plat shows a house in the center of the tract. In 1940, Abel sold the property to James Edwin Kerr. The present owner, Ethel D. Kerr, is the widow of James E. Kerr.

Tradition and the WPA guide to Prince William County have associated this house with Richard Ennis, Sr., a Dumfries saddle maker. According to the guidebook, p. 95, the site of the old Ennis House was east of Triangle and north of the "Government Road" (Fuller Road). A graveyard near the Ennis house site contained the graves of Mary and Sarah, two of Ennis' wives, and that of C.B. Brawner, d.1817. According to the same guidebook, the site of the Luckett house and another old graveyard were in the same area as the Ennis house.

Sources and bibliography

Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.)

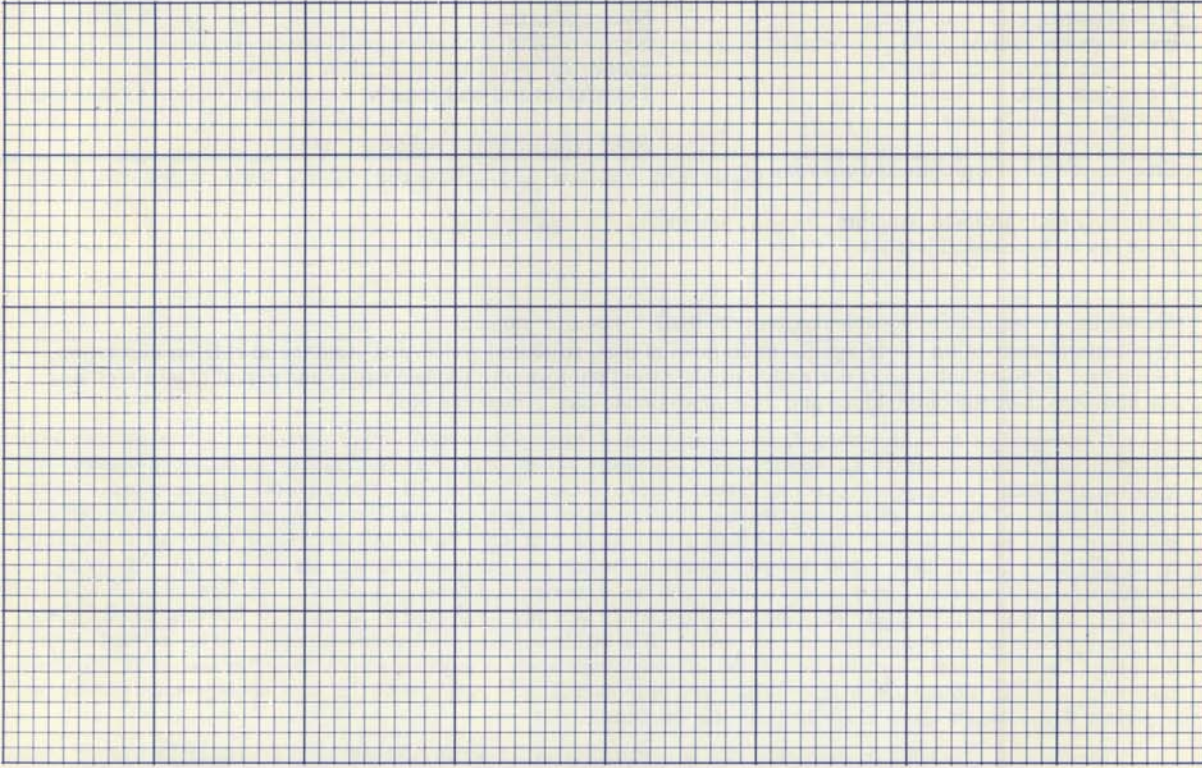
WPA, Writers Project, Prince William, The Story of Its People and Its Places (c1941), p.95-99.

Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.)

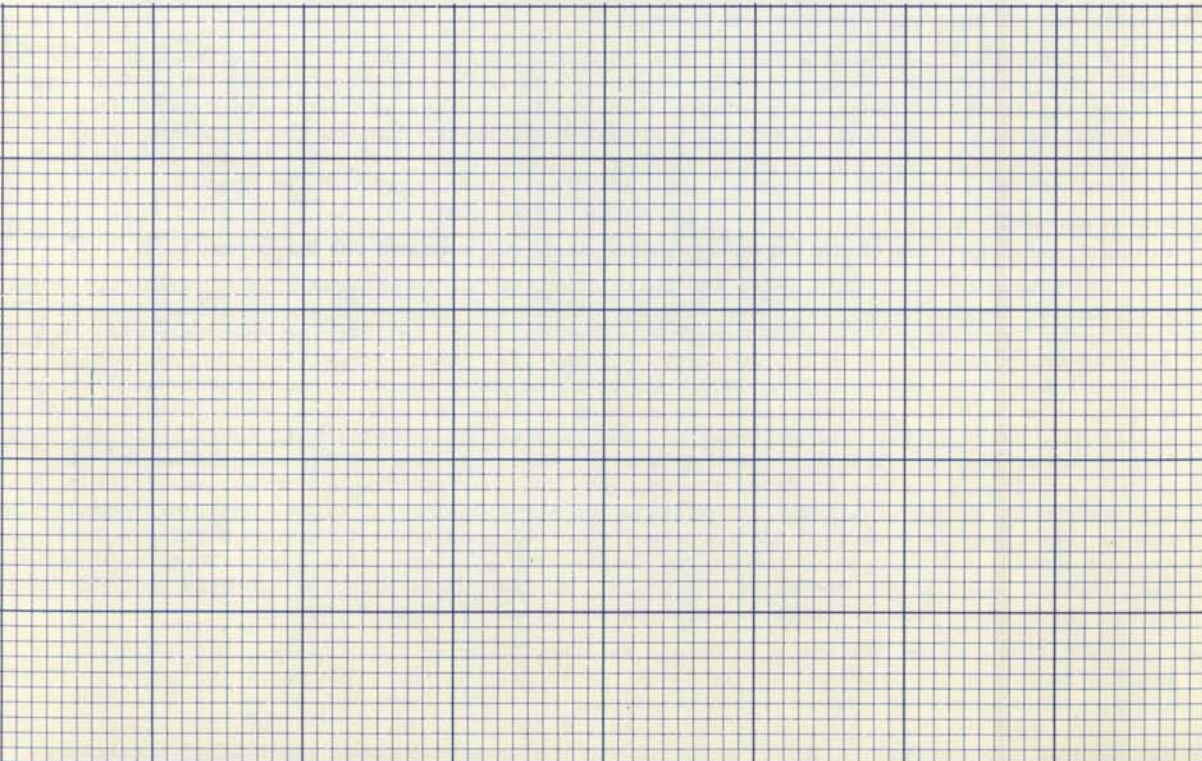
Land tax information from Don Wilson, P.W. Va. Librarian. Deed check also done by Wilson.

Names and addresses of persons interviewed Roger Endert, 2805 Mintwood Ct., Woodbridge, Va. 22192;
Margaret Pishock, 19115 Oakmont Ave., Triangle, Va.

Plan (Indicate locations of rooms, doorways, windows, alterations, etc.)



Site plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies and significant topographical features.)



Name, address and title of recorder

Frances Jones, Architectural
Historian - Surveyor, NVPDE

Date

SEP 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET
GROVES HOUSE

Architectural description (continued)

The two rooms at the basement level were probably most recently used as the dining room (south) and living room (north). Each has a working fireplace. The fireplace in the north room has a cut-out moulded shelf, supported by reeded jambs on moulded blocks. There is an architrave surround and a moulded frieze. Reproduction paneling surrounds the fireplace and fills the north wall. The wide architrave window trim with a moulded piece beneath appears to be reproduction work. A single-flight, open-string reproduction stair (partly demolished) rises along the south wall of the north room and winds at the top. It had a moulded rail, turned colonette newel, scroll stair skirting, and square balusters. Exposed hewn and pit-sawn beams, measuring approximately 4' x 8', can be seen in both rooms at this level. Both rooms have replacement pine floors. The mantel in the dining room or south room consists of a reproduction moulded shelf with no supports. The doors and trim in this room are also reproduction work. Two narrow, blocked windows on the east wall of this room flank a regular sliding sash window. The stair rises into a central hall to divide the main floor level into two bedrooms. Old pine floors can be seen at this level. The 6-panel simple-moulded doors are (were) attached with H-L hinges. Apparently old wide architrave trim surrounds the doors and replacement sash windows. Some of the partitions have been moved and a small stair constructed to accommodate a bathroom. The mantel in the north room has a moulded shelf, plain jambs, scroll brackets, an architrave surround, and a plain frieze. The mantel in the south room has a moulded cut-out shelf, plain jambs, an architrave surround and a raised hearth. The finished attic contains three small rooms. The stair is a reconstruction, but the stair walls are paneled with old, diagonally-laid single-beaded boards.

The kitchen, an old log building measuring approximately 12' square on a new brick foundation, is connected to the main house by a small addition which contains the furnace. The walls of the kitchen, which contains modern appliances, are stuccoed or plastered between the exposed logs. There are a few sheds behind the house but no barn. Outside the kitchen is a rectangular garden, enclosed on the northwest side by large boxwoods.

Setting, Condition, and Historical Significance

The Groves House sits on a hillside east of Triangle and is presently surrounded by 17 acres of open space, presumably old fields. South of the house across Fuller Heights Road is the extensive U.S. Marine Corps Base at Quantico. About a year ago the Kerr property was being offered for sale. At the time, the house, which was still in good condition, was advertised for its historical qualities--"hand hewn beams and random width pine floors....", its many fireplaces, and its kitchen, a converted smokehouse. Since then, the house has been seriously vandalized. The interior has been demolished--the doors were ripped off their hinges and smashed; the stairway has been completely wrecked; mantels pulled away from the walls and broken; and all windows and sash have been broken. Though it is possible, a restoration of the house now would be very expensive. The grounds have been neglected for quite a few years, through there are numerous boxwood bushes and other well-established plantings around the house.

In recent years, the value of this property has dramatically increased. The real estate agent who was handling the property last year when it was on the market believes that the property would be more salable without the house. He said that if the house is not burned by vandals, it will probably be bulldozed before the owner again offers the property for sale.

This house is significant because it is the only one of its kind in the Triangle area. Triangle was settled early in the County's history, its residents probably having a connection with Dumfries, the closest port town nearby which had its origins in the early 1700s. By the time the Groves House was built, Dumfries had been an incorporated town for almost 100 years. Bounding the Groves property on the north was the large plantation Graham Park, established by John Graham, founder of Dumfries and an early tobacco merchant. There is nothing remaining of Graham Park. Two other early houses in the Triangle vicinity, the Lockett house and Ennis house, mentioned in the WPA guide, are also gone.

The similarity of the Groves House with the long-demolished Merchant House, for which HABS drawings exist, suggests that the Groves House may in part have been built earlier than the suggested date of construction, 1840. An archeological survey and closer inspection of the thick-walled 20' x 34' stone and brick basement may support a 1700s date of construction for the basement.