

VLR-9/20/77 NRHP-1/31/78

141-5

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
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

Methodist Meeting House; St. Philip's Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON

Bedford Historic Meeting House (Preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

153 West Main Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bedford

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth (M. Caldwell Butler)

STATE

Virginia

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

51

COUNTY

(In City)

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Bedford Historical Society ~~e/o Mr. Basil D. Murray, President~~

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 602
~~406 Avenel Avenue~~

CITY, TOWN

Bedford

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 24523

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bedford County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Bedford

STATE

Virginia

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.

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Bedford Historic Meeting House, Bedford, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

ITEM NUMBER 6

PAGE

1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1968, 1971, 1973, 1974 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Richmond, Virginia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" 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

Built as Bedford's first Methodist Church, the Bedford Historic Meeting House is a diminutive, temple-form structure measuring 30 feet wide by 58 feet deep. Flemish bond is employed on all but the rear wall, which is laid in American bond. The base of the building has been stuccoed in recent decades in a crude attempt to counteract a problem of rising damp. In the center of the rear wall is a small appendage which houses a large niche serving as the church's apse. Covering the building is a shallow, pedimented gable roof ornamented with shallow Greek moldings. The roof is supported by a king-post truss system and originally was covered with wood shingles. Sections of these shingles were preserved under the later sheet-metal roof. Directly above the pediment is a square belfry with pilastered corners and a louvred rectangular opening on each face. A stubby, tapered spire, formerly topped by a ball finial, rises from the belfry roof.

The church's facade is divided into three bays with twelve-over-twelve windows hung with louvred blinds flanking the center doorway. The doorway has double doors, each with five horizontal panels. Above the first-floor openings are three twelve-light windows; the end ones are pivoted and the center one has horizontally sliding sash. On each side of the church are two triple-hung windows with six panes per sash. On the south wall is a small door built as a slaves' entrance. All the openings are topped by rectangular lintels with turned corner blocks. A modern chimney is also on the south wall. The rear wall was formerly hidden by a late nineteenth-century, two-story frame annex, but this was destroyed by fire in 1977; the fire also damaged, but did not destroy, the church's roof.

The interior of the church is plain. Its main elaboration is the apse enframed by an elliptical architrave supported on paneled Tuscan pilasters. Opposite the apse is a simple gallery reached by a narrow winding stair in the southwest corner. Most of the original boxed wooden benches remain, but they were scarred when the ceiling fell during the fire. The church is currently undergoing restoration.

CL

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 checked="" 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 1838

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bedford Historic Meeting House was erected in 1838 as the community's first Methodist church. Now the headquarters of the Bedford Historical Society, the simple but handsomely proportioned Greek Revival structure survives as the oldest religious edifice in the town.

Methodism arose in the Bedford area in the late eighteenth century. Bishop Asbury, founder of American Methodism, preached in the Bedford courthouse in 1794 and again in 1800. By 1838 the local congregation had prospered sufficiently to have its own meeting house. The structure it erected is in the temple-form, Greek Revival style which was popular among Protestant denominations in the region. With its pedimented roof and square, pilastered belfry the Church is architecturally akin to antebellum churches in Fincastle, Christiansburg, Floyd, as well as Bedford. The Bedford church is interesting because its side door, used by slaves to reach the gallery, is preserved.

By 1886 the congregation had outgrown the little church and left it for a larger one. Leading Bedford citizens, interested in the welfare of former slaves, were instrumental in having the building purchased by the Episcopalians to be used as a house of worship for the Negroes of that faith. Accordingly, in 1886, the building was reconsecrated as St. Philip's Episcopal Church. As there were no schools provided for Negroes at the time, a frame annex was placed on the rear of the building to serve as a day school for the children of the congregation. This remained in use until segregated public schools were established in the state. Scott Wood, the rector responsible for the founding of the school, later became a principal of St. Paul's Polytechnic Institute, a training school for Negroes in Lawrenceville, Virginia.

St. Philip's congregation merged with Bedford's white Episcopalians in 1968 and the church was acquired by a group of individuals interested in the building's preservation. This group became the nucleus of the Bedford Historical Society, formed in 1969. Renamed the Bedford Historic Meeting House, the building has since been used as the society's meeting place and for special community events. In 1977 a fire destroyed the frame annex and damaged the church roof. Restoration is underway.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Parker, Lula Jeter. The History of Bedford County, Virginia. Bedford, Virginia, 1954.

W.P.A. Virginia Historic Building Inventory. Virginia State Library.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	63,06,1,0	4,13,23,1,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Bedford Historic Meeting House is located on the S side of West Main Street at number 153; between Bridge Street on the E and Crenshaw Street on the W.

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

August 1977

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

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 in the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REGISTER

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE SEP 20 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

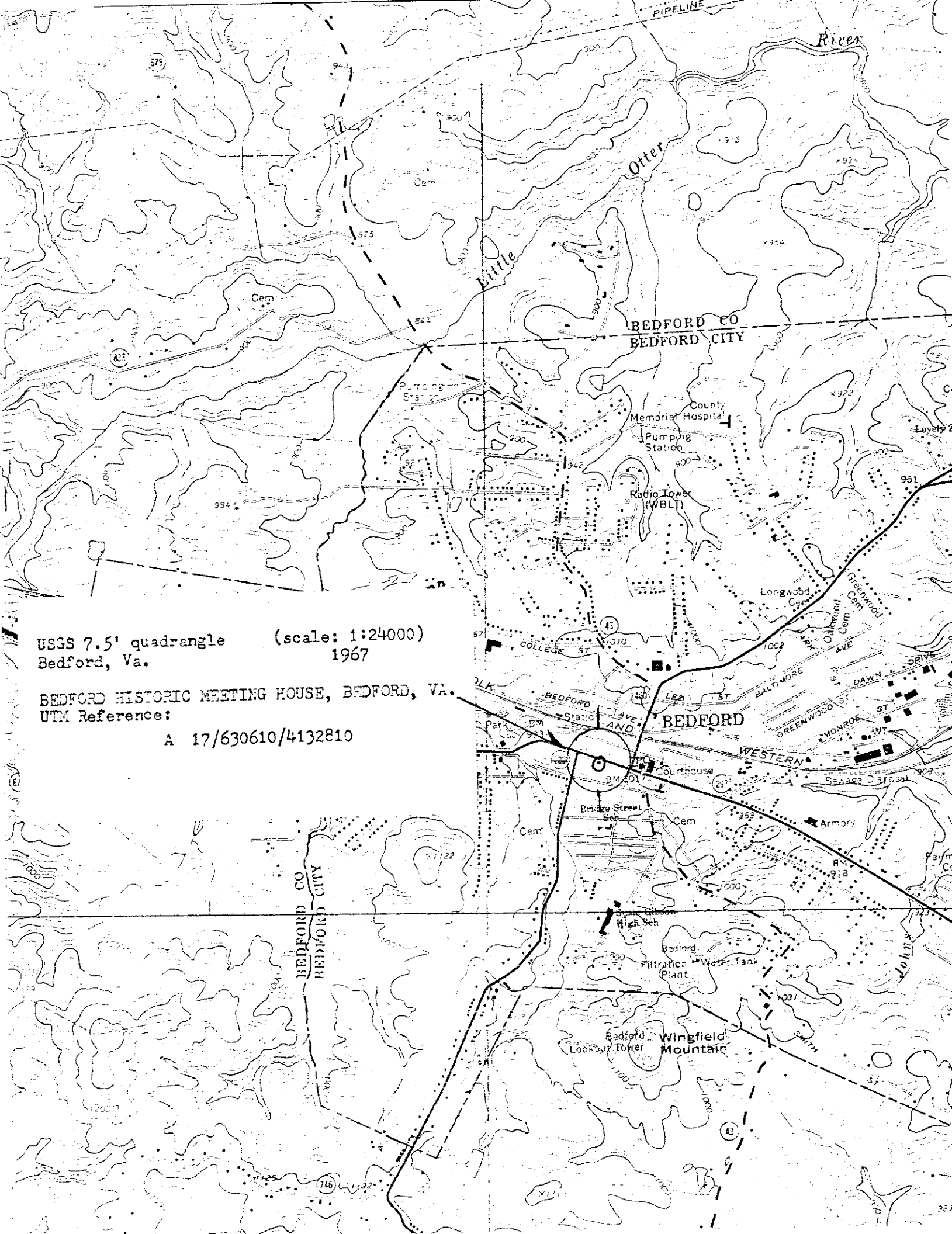
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

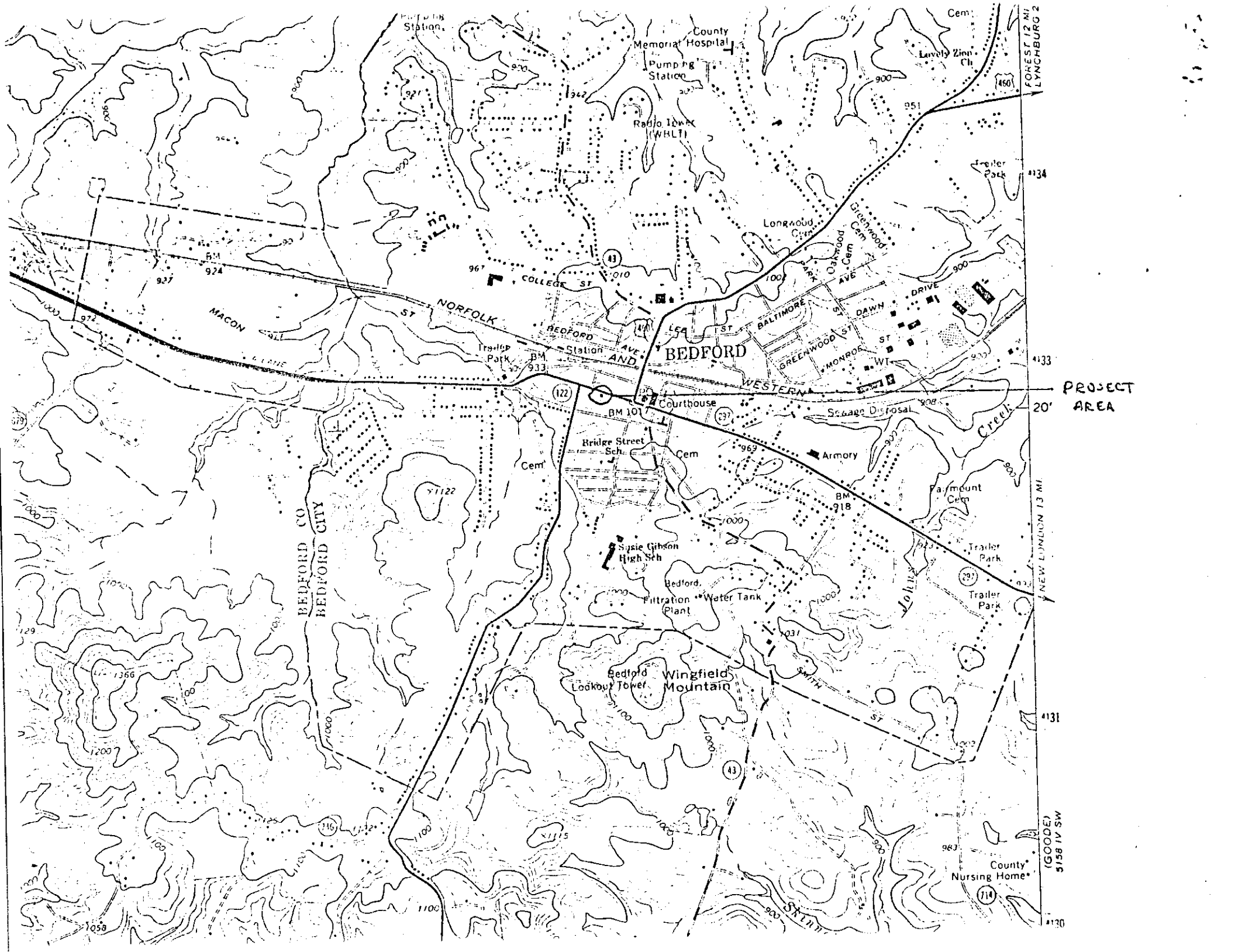
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

1/31/78



USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale: 1:24000)
Bedford, Va. 1967

BEDFORD HISTORIC MEETING HOUSE, BEDFORD, VA.
UTM Reference:
A 17/630610/4132810



FOREST 12 MI
LYNCHBURG 2

4134

4133

PROJECT
AREA
20'

NEW LONDON 13 MI

4131

5156 IV SW

0212