

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service VLR-0/16/82 NRHP 4/7/83  
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Mirador

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number --- N/A not for publication

city, town Greenwood X vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Virginia code 51 county Albemarle County code 003

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. James Scott

street & number Mirador Farm

city, town Greenwood N/A vicinity of state Virginia 22943

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Albemarle County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Charlottesville state Virginia 22901

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
title Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1968  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state DC

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Mirador, which stands near the foot of the Blue Ridge mountains on a prominent knoll, is a much-recognized landmark to travelers on the road along Route 250 in western Albemarle County. Built in 1842, the house was renovated and remodeled by New York architect, William Adams Delano during the 1920s. Federal details from the original construction exist in the exterior's fine brickwork and window treatment. The interior reflects the 1920s remodeling in such details as the central spiral stair and Georgian-Revival woodwork. The combination of these different elements form one of Virginia's most handsome country houses.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The house is a square brick structure rising two stories above a raised basement. The Flemish-bond dwelling was originally built in 1842 and altered in the 1920s by the architect William Adams Delano. The wide entablature is capped by a dentil cornice which outlines the deep overhanging eaves. The deck-on-hip roof has a standing-seam metal covering and is capped by a Chinese lattice balustrade. Four interior end chimneys project above the side (east and west) elevations.

A portico with paired Tuscan columns shelters the facade's (south) double entrance doors framed by fanlight and sidelights. A ca. 1890s photograph reveals the original appearance of the facade. Delano replaced a Chinese lattice balustrade on the porch's second story with a wrought-iron railing. He also removed a second-story door with fanlight and sidelights, which was similar to the main entrance below and replaced it with a single window. Pictures taken during the Chiswell Dabney Langhorne ownership depict a railing consisting of heavy turned balusters stretched across the facade on either side of the portico. Although no pictures have been located to document the original appearance of the rear (north) elevation, recollections of Alice Wimm and Angus McDonald indicated that it was similar to the facade having a porch and railing that extended across the entire elevation. During the 1920s Delano extended the house to the rear approximately fifteen feet creating a new rear facade. This expansion is shown by a change in brickwork along the side and rear elevations as well as the basement plan which shows the location of earlier chimney footings. The architect moved the rear chimneys back to balance the enlarged design. He also added the popular swan's neck pediment over the rear entrance and the wrought-iron railing over the arcaded basement story. The arcade extends out from the sides of the house connecting it with two small cottages.

Single-story wings on the east and west elevations were added by C.D. Langhorne in 1897. Albemarle tax records for 1898 show a \$2,000 rise in the value of the house with the notation "\$2,000 addition to building."<sup>1</sup>

Fenestration on the facade and side elevations consists of windows set in two tiers separated by stuccoed rectangular inset panels. The 6/6 double-hung sash are encased in wooden lintels with corner blocks and black louvred shutters. The rear elevation differs slightly with triple sash windows in the first story and double-hung windows above.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 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 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1842, 1920s

**Builder/Architect** 1920s Renovation Architect: William

Adams Delano

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The beautiful Albemarle County estate Mirador was the childhood home of the late Viscountess Astor, formerly Nancy Witcher Langhorne, the first woman member of Parliament. Lady Astor moved with her family to Mirador in 1892 at the age of twelve and lived there until her second marriage to Waldorf Astor, later Viscount Astor, in 1906 when she moved to England. She returned frequently to Mirador during the years she served in the House of Commons and always maintained great pride in her Virginia origins. While a member of Parliament, Lady Astor was a strong advocate of international peace and of improved social conditions in Britain. The spirit and vitality which she exuded throughout her life was characteristic of the entire Langhorne family, especially of her father Chiswell Dabney Langhorne and of her four sisters. Lady Astor's beautiful sister Irene achieved widespread attention while still living at Mirador when her future husband, the illustrator Charles Dana Gibson, made her the prototype of the famous standard of looks and fashion: the "Gibson Girl." Constructed in 1842, Mirador, in its original form, was a refined example of an Albemarle County federal-style plantation house. During the 1920s, when the house was occupied by Lady Astor's neice, Nancy Tree and her husband, Ronald Tree, Mirador underwent an extensive remodeling by the fashionable New York architect William Adams Delano of the firm of Delano and Aldrich, who transformed the house into a Georgian Revival mansion, creating one of Virginia's most gracious country homes of the period.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The original "mansion house" at Mirador was built in 1842 for James M. Bowen, a prosperous miller. This date is supported by the county tax assessment for that year which showed a \$4,000.00 increase in the value of the property, an increase reflecting the construction of the house. Bowen purchased the property from William Ramsey in 1825. The records of the Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia reveal that Ramsey was operating a mill on his 863 acres as early as 1806 and occupied a large dwelling there by 1822. He called the place Millburne which is situated northwest of Mirador. Bowen bought 374 acres of Ramsey's land and because of its panoramic vistas of the Blue Ridge he named it El Mirador, a Spanish term for marvelous view. It was this scenic quality and rolling open space, perfect for hunting and riding, that attracted prosperous people such as the Langhornes to the Greenwood vicinity in the late 19th century.

Chiswell Dabney Langhorne, better known as "Chilly," lost his fortune during the Civil War but working first as a tobacco auctioneer and later as a railroad contractor, he rebuilt his wealth and was able to acquire El Mirador (which he shortened to Mirador) and transform it into one of Piedmont Virginia's leading social centers. Langhorne's dynamic personality was acknowledged at the time of his death by the Richmond Times Dispatch which stated that no other man in Virginia not engaged in politics had a wider reputation. His five beautiful daughters inherited this magnetism. The Langhornes and

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #4)

Albemarle County Deed Book 32, p. 162.  
 Albemarle County Land Tax Books, 1815-1850; 1892-1898.  
 Astor, Nancy. "Astor Story." 1951. Virginia Historical Society. Astor Papers.  
 Baylor, Ellen Carter. "Common Place Book." Virginia Historical Society. Baylor Papers.  
 Collis, Maurice. Nancy Astor. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1960.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 32 acres  
 Quadrangle name Waynesboro East, VA Quadrangle scale 1:24000

**UMT References**

A	17	696920	4212480	B	17	697140	4212170
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	17	696800	4211990	D	17	696640	4212250
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Boundary Justification: The boundaries of the Mirador nomination include thirty-two acres. This contains the broad, terraced lawn with the main house, cottages, and stable, as well as the circular drive providing access from Route 250. The nominated property is bordered on the south by Route 250, on the west by Route 691, on the north by a farm road, and on the east by a line through the pasture just east of the pond. (See Continuation Sheet #4)

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff  
 organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date September, 1982  
 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 by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature H. Bryan Mitchell  
 H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director  
 title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date SEP 16 1983

**For NPS use only**  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
 date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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MIRADOR, ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #1

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1980 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The interior of Mirador best reflects the 1920s alterations. Cross halls create an arrangement of four rooms located in the corners. The plan is not dissimilar to the house at the turn-of-the-century as remembered by Alice Winn, who wrote that a long hall ran through the middle of the house, "leading off the hall as you entered were two sitting rooms. The front one opened into the long dining room which, with its pantry, ran the width of the house. On the left of the front door was a guest bedroom...The staircase rose from the left side of the front hall, and just before you came to it, a small passage, led to my grandparents' wing - a large bedroom, bathroom, and sitting room, which balanced the dining room wing."<sup>2</sup>

Since the 1920s renovation the focal point of the interior has been the flying spiral stair located at the center of the house, at the intersection of the hallways. The stair is decorated with a wrought-iron handrail carried by two slender balusters per tread. A geometric patterned marble floor further ornaments the halls. Openings in the halls have architrave trim below cushioned friezes; the compositions crowned by cornices.

The southwest sitting room or music room contains woodwork from the federal period originally located at Soldier's Joy in Nelson County. Executed in the early 19th century under the direction of James Oldham, a skilled workman for Thomas Jefferson at Monticello and the University of Virginia, the trim is among the finest examples of the period found in rural Virginia. The federal mantel is a profusion of reeding and gaugework in the frieze, bedmolding, and stepped shelf, supported by fluted and reeded pilasters. Encircling the room is a molded cornice with meander and a wainscot composed of raised panels below a chair rail with meander. The openings have shouldered surrounds topped by a cornice with meander.

The trim throughout the rest of the house dates to the 1920s and is a reproduction of Georgian forms. Across the hall from the music room is the southeast sitting room. The ornamentation in this room is restrained with an Adam-style mantel and semicircular arched openings with keystones in the corners set against walls framed by molding strips producing the effect of recessed paneling.

Both the dining room and library located in the east and west wings, respectively, have raised paneled walls and Italian marble mantels which Delano located in Italy. The paneling is repeated in the northwest room, or bedroom. Decorating the fireplace in the bedroom is a simple shouldered surround supporting a high frieze and narrow shelf.

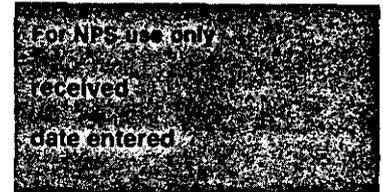
(See Continuation Sheet #2)

EXP. 10/31/84

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet #2

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

A delicate molded cornice surrounds the room. Opposite this room in the northeast corner of the house is an informal sitting room decorated only with a deep baseboard, molded cornice, and fireplace with architrave surround. Four bedrooms which are similar to the first-floor rooms but simpler are located in the second story. Throughout the building six raised panel doors are used.

Scattered across the grounds are picturesque outbuildings which contribute to Mirador's rural park-type setting. C.D. Langhorne built the broad stone arch with Mirador carved in a central tablet located south of the main house. At the time he purchased Mirador the property included a barn, dairy, smokehouse, and brick cottage. This cottage is located immediately west of the main house. The Trees added the two brick cottages which connect with the basement arcade and another cottage north of the house. Delano designed a Colonial Revival stable for the property which is located south of the house near the arch. The single-story building is constructed of Flemish-bond brick with diamond-shaped brick vents in its attic story. A semicircular arched door pierces the cross gable on the north elevation. An octagonal cupola with weathervane crowns the roof. The manicured terraced lawn intersected by a circular drive is well shaded by large trees and landscaped with boxwood and ornamental shrubbery.

MPM

<sup>1</sup>Albemarle County Land Tax Books, 1892-1898.

<sup>2</sup>Alice Winn, Always A Virginian. (Privately printed by the author, 1973.)

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

their home attracted admirers as well as celebrated individuals from all over the east coast. The addition of the one-story wings in 1897, made Mirador even more conducive to hospitality and entertainment.

During the 1890s the Langhorne name became a household word through the influence of Irene, the second of the five Langhorne daughters. Her universally acknowledged beauty made her much sought after as a "belle" for cotillions and balls from New Orleans to New York City. Irene's great beauty was popularized by the artist Charles Dana Gibson who drew her portrait for the covers of fashionable magazines, making her the model for the nationally known "Gibson Girl." Irene and Charles Gibson were later married and spent much of their time at Mirador, retiring at a nearby farm.

Although Irene was well known during her lifetime, Mirador is most often identified as the girlhood home of Nancy Langhorne, later Viscountess Astor. She lived intermittently at Mirador from the age of twelve until her marriage to Waldorf Astor, heir to the American Astor fortune, in 1906, even through her first marriage to Robert Shaw which lasted only four years. Although the Astors settled in England at Cliveden, she frequently visited her father's home and remained intensely interested in the area, especially the missionary work carried out in the Blue Ridge mountains by her lifetime friend, The Reverend Frederick W. Neve.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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Continuation sheet #3

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

Lady Astor first gained international attention in 1919. Upon the death of Lord Astor, her father-in-law, her husband inherited the peerage in the House of Lords which required him to relinquish his seat in the House of Commons. Lady Astor thus ran for her husband's seat from Plymouth and won, carrying along with her election the honor of being the first woman member of Parliament. For the next twenty-five years she battled relentlessly for such domestic reforms as temperance, compulsory public education, women's rights, and improved social conditions for children such as day nurseries, clinics, and recreational centers. She was less successful in her attempts during the 1920s and '30s to promote world peace. Although she was one of the world's richest women she is best remembered for her courage and spirit expressed through her stinging wit and keen sense of humor.

The Mirador property remained in the Langhorne family until 1950. C.D. Langhorne gave the house to one of his daughters, Phyllis Brooks Brand, in 1912 following his retirement to the nearby farm, Misfit. In 1920, Mrs. Brand sold Mirador to her niece, Nancy Tree and husband Ronald Tree. Under their ownership Mirador remained one of central Virginia's most hospitable estates.

The Trees contracted with William Adams Delano of the New York firm Delano and Aldrich in the 1920s to complete an extensive renovation of the house. Delano, whose name appeared frequently in the Mirador guest register as early as 1910, was one of the most favored architects of country estates at the time, designing such notable houses in Albemarle County as Colle and Kenwood. He modified the exterior of Mirador and transformed the interior in the fashionable Georgian Revival-style. Using the finest materials and craftsmanship, Delano created at Mirador a most impressive country house. The new appearance of the building did not pass unnoticed and was not altogether praised. Angus McDonald, a frequent guest at Mirador, wrote Lady Astor, "Nancy (Tree) plus Billy Delano have of course made it all quite lovely, but I feel I must resent the improvements, but at night from the front of the house, except for the fact that the trees have grown, one can imagine it just as it was..."<sup>1</sup>

Vivid accounts of Mirador recorded by family and visitors exist in publications and papers. However, no more fitting tribute to the house and its inhabitants has been made than Lady Astor's in her memoirs of 1951: "When I was twelve we went to Mirador and it was the beginning of a new and wonderful life. Mirador was a lovely old Colonial house, standing in large grounds, to a child a sort of Paradise...Now when I think of those days it seems to me the sun was always shining. I have never been so happy as I was there."<sup>2</sup>

Although she occasionally enjoyed a brief retreat from her political career at Mirador, Lady Astor never returned there to live. She died at the age of eighty-four on May 2, 1964, in England. However, her family recalls that during her final years, her conversations and thoughts were preoccupied with Virginia, particularly her early life at Mirador.

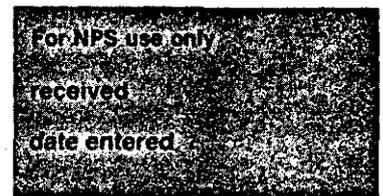
MPM

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet #4

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Nancy Lancaster Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

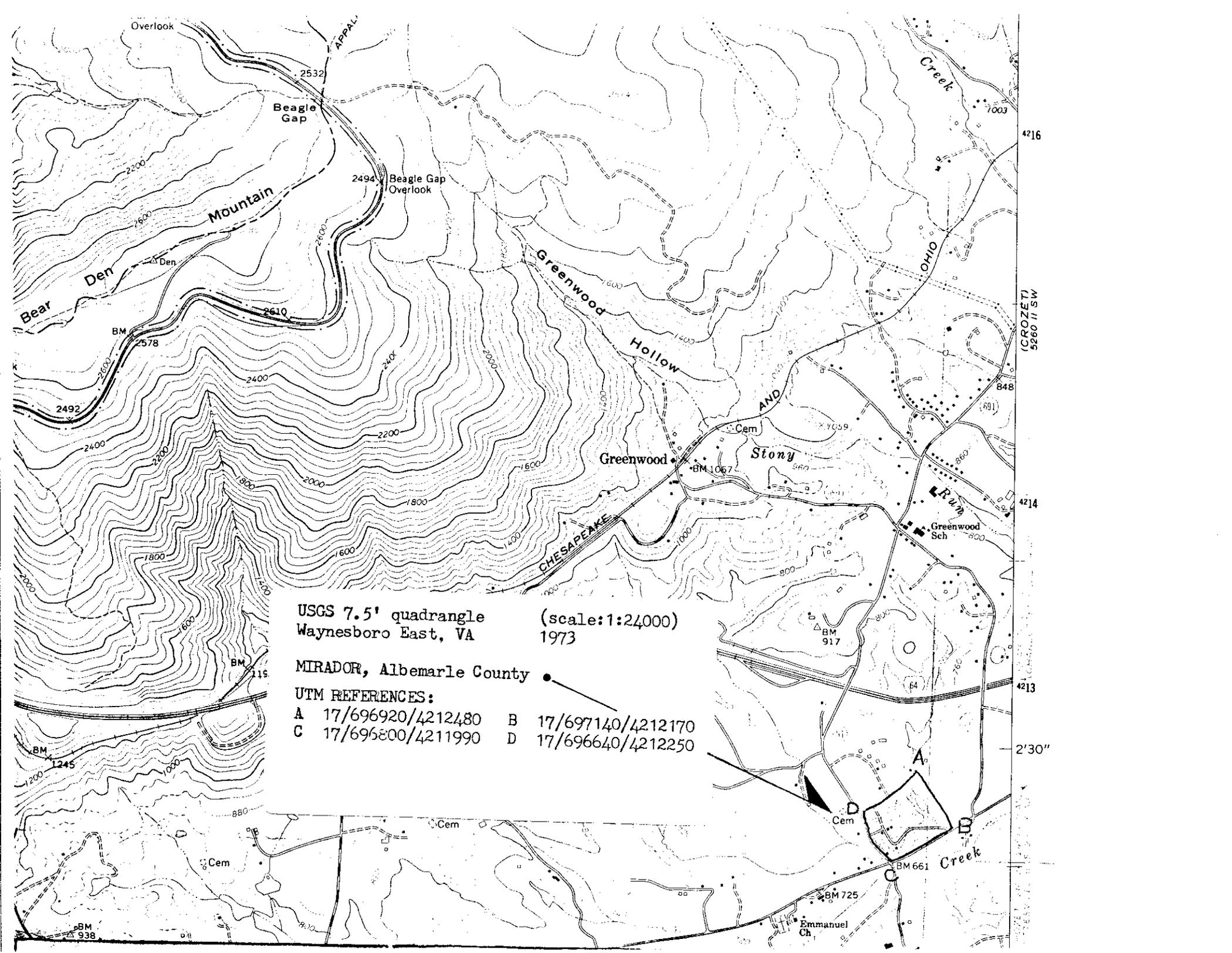
<sup>2</sup>Nancy Astor, "The Astor Story," 1951, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (continued)

Grigg, John. Nancy Astor A Lady Unashamed. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1980.  
Langhorne, Elizabeth. Nancy Astor and Her Friends. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.  
"Mirador Register Book," Virginia Historical Society. Langhorne Papers.  
Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Records, Albemarle County, Virginia.  
Papers, Nancy Lancaster. Virginia Historical Society.  
Peyton Map of Albemarle County, 1875. Virginia State Library.  
Sykes, Christopher. Nancy The Life of Lady Astor. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.  
Winn, Alice. Always A Virginian. By the Author, 1973.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the NE side of U.S. 250 at the intersection of said route and VA 691; thence extending approximately 1000' NNW along E side of VA 691; thence approximately 1200' ENE along S side of farm road; thence approximately 1200' SSE to N side of U.S. 250; thence approximately 1250' WSW along N side of U.S. 250 to point of origin.



USGS 7.5' quadrangle  
Waynesboro East, VA (scale:1:24000)  
1973

MIRADOR, Albemarle County

UTM REFERENCES:  
A 17/696920/4212480 B 17/697140/4212170  
C 17/696800/4211990 D 17/696640/4212250

4216

(CROZET)  
5260 11 SW

4214

4213

2'30"