

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES  
PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY

The following constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of eligibility for the nomination potential of a property to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This does **NOT** mean that a property is being nominated to the registers at this time. Rather it is being evaluated to determine if it qualifies for such listings. Applicants will be notified of the staff and the Board's recommendations.

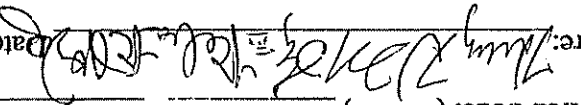
Please type and use 8 1/2" X 11" paper, if additional space is needed. Note: All submitted materials become the property of the Department and cannot be returned.

1. **Historic Name of Property** (if not known, use current name or address):  
Baiae (also Mobjack Farm and Rokeley)

2. **Location:**  
Street or Route: 6606 Baiae Lane  
County or City: Schley, VA 23154

3. **Legal Owner(s) of Property:** (Include names and addresses of all owners.)  
 Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. (Circle One)  
Henry H. McVey III and Reba R. McVey  
Firm and/or Address: P.O. Box 8

City / State / Zip Code: Ware Neck, VA 23178

Daytime Telephone: Area Code: ( 804 ) 694 - 0992  
Owner's Signature:   
Date: 12/16/86

Signature required for processing all applications.

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: David A. Brown and Thane H. Harpole

Daytime Telephone: Area Code: ( 804 ) 815 - 4467



## 5. General Description

Baiae sits within well-maintained grounds overlooking a wide expanse of the Ware River and the Mobjack Bay. The house is approached down a long and straight tree-lined driveway leading directly to the north entrance, gardens and outbuildings. The property contains 4 structures, including the main house, garage, pumpnhouse/shed and windmill, and in-ground pool.

The main house is a two-story frame structure raised over an English basement. Its location on low-lying Ware Neck within 100 feet of the Ware River, necessitated this form of raised construction. Some of the basement still contains lath and plaster attached with cut nails to the sawn and hand-adzed framing. It is unclear if this finish was used to help soundproof and insulate the upper rooms or if the basement served other functions, but the cellar is largely intact and free of modern obstructions. The brick walls of the cellar are laid in common bond, and show evidence of frequent patching and mortar repointing. The exterior of the house is covered in beaded and plain weatherboards, with a simple cornice. The plain boards are relatively modern repairs. The house is situated roughly east-west, parallel to the river on the south. It began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as a typical I-plan house with exterior chimneys on the east and west ends, and a central hall and two principal rooms on both floors. Both chimneys have had extensive repairs. The wide double-door with fanlight appears to be original. A graceful north porch entrance, built upon tall brick piers, was added in the late 1990s replacing a dilapidated porch built in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A substantial addition was built on the south side of the structure in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This addition included a large room on both upper floors as well as a basement expansion, with a chimney in the middle of the south wall providing heat to both rooms. A sketch of the house on the 1851 plat shows the house with three chimneys, so at least part of this addition was complete at this time. Based on the sketch and architectural details within the addition, the second story of this addition was added sometime in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the house acquired multiple enclosed and open porches on the south side, taking advantage of the wide river views. When Mr. and Mrs. McVey purchased the house in 1994 they refurbished and expanded a porch on the west side of the house.

On the interior, the house retains many 19<sup>th</sup>-century features, including much of the flooring, door and window surrounds, and mantels. The stairway appears to have been moved within the hall in order to accommodate the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century south addition. Recent changes made by the McVey's include the addition of historically appropriate crown molding and some of the baseboard molding. One of the windows in the kitchen, a small addition on the west side, contains the scratched inscription "Miss Mammie Byrd Fox, Ware Neck, Virginia." The Fox family owned the property from 1884 until 1910. Three other structures grace the grounds of the Baiae property, including a small pumpnhouse/shed with a metal windmill, a garage/guest house, and an in-ground pool. The pumpnhouse and windmill likely date to the late 19<sup>th</sup> or first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with modern repairs. This structure fits well within the historic landscape of the property and contributes to its eligibility. The garage/guest house is a non-contributing modern structure. The in-ground pool was built in 2001 and is also non-contributing.

In addition to the standing structures, the Baiae property has had a number of past structures and activity areas that contribute to the history of the property. The 1851 plat depicts several buildings on the property which are no longer standing, including two small structures with single chimneys, a small structure with a lean-to that may be a barn, and a very small square structure with a pyramidal roof that likely represents a smokehouse or well house. All of these structures have likely left archaeological evidence that would contribute greatly to our understanding of 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmsteads. A cursory monitoring of the pool installation in 2001 revealed the presence of several intact cultural features. Some of these were partially disturbed by the pool, but their presence suggests a high potential for archaeological resources, particularly in the west yard, where the 1851 plat indicates several structures.

Baiae epitomizes the type of organic vernacular growth that occurred often in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as older homes were expanded and adapted to changing needs and conditions. Though not defined by one particular style or period, the additions to the house blend well and create a harmonious architectural expression of the many families who have lived there. Baiae's expansion is part of a larger national trend of building 'vacation cottages' which begins in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This trend is seen in numerous properties in Gloucester County, where owners from northern states, or inland cities such as Richmond, acquire waterfront properties and use them as seasonal retreats or retirement homes. Amanda Jerrard and George Munford, between 1860 and the 1884, are two examples of this type of owner. Baiae is also part of the larger historic community of Ware Neck, comprised of numerous historic farms, homes and other structures. This community, with its roots in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, contains many historic houses from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that have undergone similar changes as Baiae. Baiae is a vital part of the Ware Neck community and recognition of its historic value will contribute towards the preservation of this important historic landscape.

Briefly note any significant events, personages and/or families associated with the property. (Detailed family genealogies are not necessary.) Please list all sources of information. Only material contained on the form will be forwarded to the members of the State Review Board. Additional information may be submitted on typed, consecutively numbered 8 1/2" x 11" sheets as necessary.

The 4.61 acres currently surrounding the Batae house are part of an 800 acre tract first patented by Thomas Boswell in 1652, although his homestead was likely located to the west on Basses Creek (Mason 1965:1-10, Montague 1952:69). The loss of Gloucester County's court records due to arson in 1821 and again during the siege of Richmond in 1865 makes the identification of any 17th-century site occupants nearly impossible. Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that by 1752, the property was owned by John Boswell, grandson of the original patentee (Montague 1952:73). The land first appears in the county records of 1782 as 334 acres, part of the estate of John Williams. The property descended to his son, John Williams, in 1789 and was sold to Gilderoy Chandler in 1803. By 1810 the property had been reduced in size to 160 acres and was a moderately sized estate of twenty-five persons, including seven children and fourteen slaves (1810 U.S. Census). The property increased in size to 240 acres following a resurvey prior to its sale to Henry L. Nuttall in 1819 (GLTR 1820). Nuttall likely built or significantly enlarged the home currently being nominated. The building value of \$350 listed in 1820, jumps to \$2000 by 1822, indicating the construction of a sizable building or buildings. After 1840 the building value slowly dropped to \$1000, \$500 having been taken off in 1847 for "buildings gone down" (GLTR 1847). U.S. Census records indicate a similar trend of financial success and decline during Nuttall's ownership, including corresponding increases in the number of slaves from 22 in 1820, to 60 in 1830, and then a decrease to eight in 1840 (1810, 1820, 1830, and 1840 U.S. Census of Gloucester County). The property passed to Nuttall's widow after his death and was sold by her new husband to John Philip Taliaferro in 1851 (GLTR 1851). A plat of that year records the first reference to the property's name, Mobjack farm (SPB 2/31). Taliaferro, a first cousin to downriver neighbors Warner and Alexander Taliaferro, owned the property for only a short time, but near the end of his tenure he invested heavily in the renovation of the main house, increasing its tax value to \$4000 in 1857. The 251.75-acre parcel was transferred to Amanda Jerrard of New York City in 1860, but she did not own the property long. Her nephew, Maj. John Ellis lived there as a farmer until he was killed in the Civil War. The 251.75 acre property was later sold to Colonel George Wythe Munnford in 1868. By this point the farm had been known as Mobjack, Batae, and Rokeley at different times. The property's building value dropped to \$2000 in 1874, but that may have more to do with county-wide re-assessments than significant changes to the buildings. Munnford was already in his sixties when he retired and moved his extended family to Batae. He had spent many years in public service, including a term in the House of Delegates and as Secretary of the Commonwealth during the Civil War. He and his wife lived at Batae with nine of their children or grandchildren, along with seven African-American domestic servants and farmers (1870 U.S. Census of Gloucester County). George's widow, Elizabeth, sold the property, again known as "Batae," to James Fox in 1884 (DB 11/84). At the end of the nineteenth century the property was situated within a small community with a nearby church, a "school lot," and a store (SPB 4/15). The property was reduced to 85 acres and sold to Augustus Drewry and his wife Rosa in 1910 and to W.W. Calvert in 1919 (DB 34/173-4, 43/169). The property was further subdivided after it passed out of the Calvert family in 1963 (DB 132/84). J. Brown Farinholt divided most of the waterfront into lots just above five acres. The house and surrounding core of the farm was sold to John P. Scotton in 1968 and two years later became the home of Richard and Katherine Kent (DB 148/137, 148/140). The Kents sold "Parcel 3" of the Batae farm to the present owners, Henry and Reba McVey on April 18th, 1994 (PB 472/948). The property was reduced to 4.61 acres after a survey conducted just prior to the sale (CPB 22/922).

7. Reason for Request:

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in interest for Gloucester County's history on the part of its inhabitants. In addition to celebrations of the county's recent 350th anniversary (2001), several large-scale historic projects have recently been undertaken including improvements to the visitor facilities at local museums, steps towards establishing an effective historic ordinance to protect the county's heritage, and increased heritage tourism to house museums, archaeological sites, and historic bed and breakfasts. Henry and Reba McVey, owners of Batae, are active leaders in the historic preservation movement in Gloucester County. As a former board member of the Rosewell Foundation, ten year member of the Richmond Commission on Architectural Review, and current member of the county's planning commission, Mr. McVey, along with his wife, is dedicated not just to the preservation of their unique home, but to the history of Gloucester County as well. They believe that nominating their property to the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register will help preserve their home for future generations.

8. Photographs:

At least **FOUR** black-and-white exterior photographs (north, south, east and west elevations) and **FOUR** black-and-white interior photographs must be provided. Also required are photographs of other buildings on the property and views of the general setting. The inclusion of photographs is essential to the completion of this application. **Without photographs, the application cannot be considered and will be returned.** Photographs **MUST** be labeled on the reverse side **IN PENCIL** and **ARE NOT TO BE MOUNTED OR AFFIXED** in any way.

9. Maps:

Please include two (2) maps showing the location of the property:  
- A **USGS or county map** with name of county/city printed on map with name of property indicating its location, and  
- A **sketch map** showing the primary resource, outbuildings, potential and/or known archaeological sites, highways and main roads noting street and route numbers and other features that are important in conveying the significance of the total property. Please include a "North" arrow.

This form **cannot** be processed without the **two (2) maps**.

10.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits?  
Yes  No

11. Additional Comments:

Bibliography:  
- Ludwell Montague, "Landholdings in Ware Neck: 1642-1860" The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography Vol. 60 #1 (Jan. 1952), 64-88.  
- Mason, Polly Cary, Records of Colonial Gloucester County, Virginia, 2 vols. Chesapeake Book Company, Berryville, Virginia, 1965 [reprint].  
- National Archives. Records of the Bureau of the Third-Eight Censuses (1810-1860), Virginia.  
- Gloucester County Deed Books (DB)  
- Gloucester County Land Tax Records (GCLTR)  
- Gloucester County Surveyor's Plat Book (SPB)  
- Gloucester County Will Book (WB)

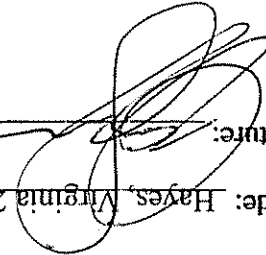
12. Applicant Information (Individual completing form) **Required**

Name: David A. Brown and Thane H. Harpole, DATA Investigations LLC

Daytime Telephone: Area Code: ( 804 ) 694 - 4775

Address: 3267 Kings Creek Road

City/State/Zip Code: Hayes, Virginia 23072

Applicant's Signature:  Date: 2-7-2002

Departmental policy requires that the following officials of local jurisdiction be notified prior to any consideration of eligibility by the State Review Board. Please provide the NAMES and ADDRESSES of those currently serving, as applicable. This information must be provided before this form can be processed.

Mayor of the city or town:

N/A

Chairman of the board of supervisors (for county and town properties):

Louise Theberge

P.O. Box 1207

Gloucester, VA 23061

City or town manager or county administrator:

William Whitley

P. O. Box 329

Gloucester, VA 23061

Director of city or town planning department:

Jay Scudder

P. O. Box 329

Gloucester, VA 23061

Chairman of city or county planning commission:

Dr. Eric Weisel

11461 Old Paradise Road

Glenns, VA 23149

City council member or county supervisor in whose district the property is located:

Burton M. Bland (Ware District)

P.O. Box 1265

Gloucester, VA 23061