

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: VIRGINIA	
COUNTY: CHESAPEAKE (in city)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	3/28/73

1. NAME

COMMON:
SITE OF GREAT BRIDGE BATTLE

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
On both sides of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal between Oak Grove and Great Bridge.

CITY OR TOWN:
Chesapeake

STATE:
Virginia

CODE 51	COUNTY: Chesapeake (in city)	CODE 550
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Vacant</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. D. D. Atkinson

STREET AND NUMBER:
c/o Atlantic Yacht Basin, Great Bridge

CITY OR TOWN:
Chesapeake

STATE:
Virginia

CODE:
51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Municipal Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Chesapeake

STATE:
Virginia

CODE:
51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Richmond

STATE:
Virginia

CODE:
51

STATE: VIRGINIA

COUNTY: CHESAPEAKE (in city)

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ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of the Battle of Great Bridge is located on both sides of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal within the present corporate limits of Chesapeake. Route 168 cuts through the area on a north-south axis and runs over the site of the colonial bridge and causeway for which the battle was named. To the west of the site of the causeway lay a small island on which the 1781 star-shaped British fort was located, an area now probably destroyed by the canal. North of the Great Bridge is a knoll believed to be the site of Lord Dunmore's 1775 fort, where archaeological remains may be intact. It was from this fort that British soldiers marched south across the Great Bridge to confront American patriots entrenched on dry ground beyond. Although many modern intrusions disturb the area adjacent to the Great Bridge, the battlefield retains its original marshland character.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

B. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1775

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>History</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The strategic importance of the "Great Bridge" across the South Branch of Elizabeth River led the British to fortify the position in 1775, and again in 1781 when their troops, under General Benedict Arnold, occupied Norfolk and Portsmouth. The bridge itself was but the central portion of a causeway which carried traffic over approximately 360 yards of marsh and open water. It was a vital link in the land route to Norfolk. The Village of Great Bridge had thriven as a transshipping point for the naval-stores and wooden-wares trade of the Great Dismal Swamp.

During the autumn of 1775, Governor Dunmore's troops made several forays into the countryside of Norfolk and Princess Anne County for the purpose of capturing rebel cannon, and generally to "show the flag." There was considerable loyalist sympathy in the extreme south-east portion of Virginia during the last months before the Declaration of Independence. The accuracy of the Governor's intelligence information attests to the fact that many persons -- and not only the numerous Scott merchants -- had, as yet, been unable to overcome the allegiances of a life-time.

The brief but, for the British, sanguinary Battle of Great Bridge was fought on December 9, 1775. Witnesses to this, the first pitched battle of the Revolution in Virginia, observed: "the vast effusion of blood on the bridge, and in the fort," as well as the "many bodies carried out of the fort to be interred." The casualties were British or Loyalist, Patriot losses being limited to the wounding of one man. Crown forces abandoned the fort at Great Bridge and other entrenchments. Their position at Norfolk was no longer tenable: the land route to the borough was open, Dunmore's regulars had suffered serious losses, and, perhaps most important, the Loyalists were thoroughly demoralized. Many of the latter fled the region as the Governor's forces withdrew to ships in Norfolk Harbor.

Governor Dunmore maintained a semblance of Royal authority in the Old Dominion during the winter and spring of 1776. His efforts, given the weakened British military position, were arrogant. He publically portrayed the Virginians as savages, and continually attempted to incite the servile population to revolt. The destructive New Year's Day bombardment of Norfolk was a prelude to numerous predatory expeditions against the plantations and shipping of Lower Tidewater. These efforts were self-defeating in that they alienated many additional Virginians from their allegiance to the Crown. The final withdrawal of British forces from the Chesapeake coincided with the publication in Virginia of the Declaration of Independence.

The British returned to Virginia in force late in the War for

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8.

Independence. Great Bridge was fortified again. The Queen's Rangers -- a leading Loyalist unit -- was stationed at the newly established position. Their commanding officer, John Graves Simcoe, served the Crown with distinction during the War. He would later be appointed the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

The Great Bridge battlefield site is significant as a landmark to Virginia's role in the American Revolution, for in this marshy location took place the first armed conflict between British soldiers and the colony's patriot forces. Archaeological excavation in the area of Dunmore's fort might provide important information regarding the fort's exact location and the activity that took place there. British soldiers are believed to be buried in the marsh, and the wet conditions here are conducive to the preservation of remains.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Noel Hume, Ivor, 1775 Another Part of the Field, New York, 1966.
 Riley, M.M., "Great Bridge, Va., A Composite of Details from Three British Maps of 1781,---," map, copy in VHLC files.
 Simcoe, John G., History of the ... Queen Rangers, (New York: new ed.: 1844).
Williamsburg Gazette (Pinkney), December 13, 20, 30, 1775.
 Wingo, Elizabeth B., The Battle of Great Bridge, Chesapeake, Va., 1964.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	36 ° 43 ' 45 "	76 ° 14 ' 35 "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	36 ° 43 ' 45 "	76 ° 14 ' 08 "				
SE	36 ° 43 ' 10 "	76 ° 14 ' 08 "				
SW	36 ° 43 ' 10 "	76 ° 14 ' 35 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 130 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION STAFF

ORGANIZATION: VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION DATE: December, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.
 Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Director
 Title Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date

JAN 5 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

3/28/73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SOUTH NORFOLK (JUNC. U.S. 460) 8.0 MI.
2.0 MI. TO U.S. 13

7.7 MI. TO U.S. 6
KEMPVILLE 6.2
12°30'

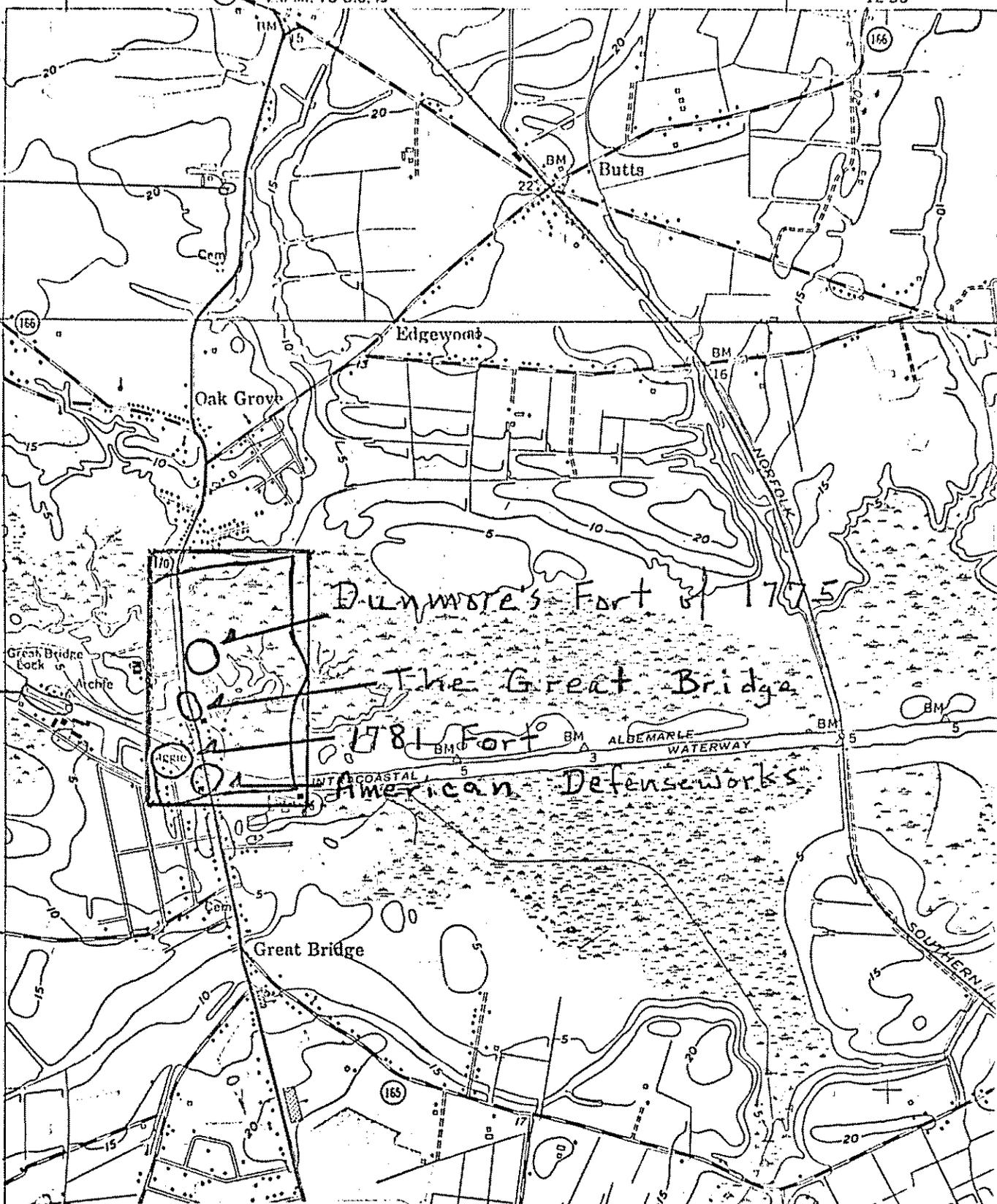
26°15'
36°45'

AMSON,
B, HOUSE
131-1

AMSON,
M, HOUSE
131-16

BRIDGE
131-35

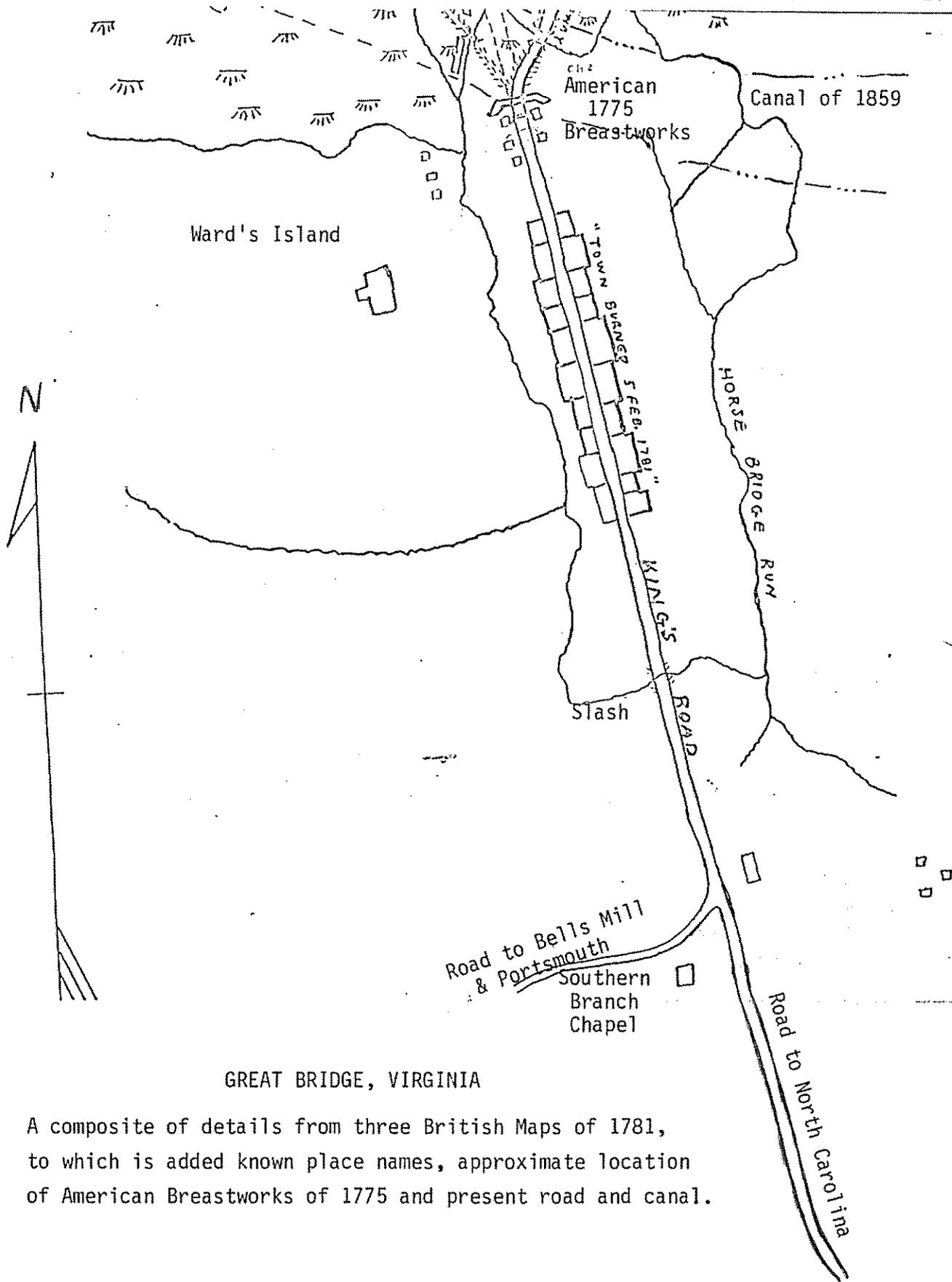
DEEP CREEK (JUNC. U.S. 17) 7.3 MI.
CAMDEN MILLS 1.9 MI.



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Fentress, Va. 1954

SITE OF GREAT BRIDGE BATTLE

LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
NW36°43'45"	76°14'35"
NE36°43'45"	76°14'08"
SE36°43'10"	76°14'08"
SW36°43'10"	76°14'35"



GREAT BRIDGE, VIRGINIA

A composite of details from three British Maps of 1781, to which is added known place names, approximate location of American Breastworks of 1775 and present road and canal.

Road to
Kemp's Landing and
Norfolk

British
1775
Fort

The Great Bridge

Southern Branch

Costen's Island or
Bridgetown

19 Jan.
1781
British
Fort

Little Bridge

Marsh

American 1775
Breastworks

Canal of 1859

Ward's Island

Scale 1" = 200'

N



PRESENT
ROAD
SOUTH BRANCH
COSTEN'S ISLAND
BRIDGETOWN
LITTLE BRIDGE
AMERICAN 1775
BREASTWORKS
KING'S
HORSE BRIDGE RUN

"TOWN BURNED 5 FEB. 1781"

HORSE BRIDGE RUN

