

Department of Historic Resources

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STATE ADDS 16 HISTORIC SITES TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

—New listings cover historic sites in the counties of Fairfax, Prince Edward, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, and Stafford, and the cities of Alexandria, Charlottesville, Colonial Heights, Falls Church, Franklin (Southampton Co.) Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and Winchester, and at the University of Richmond—

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—VLR listings will be forwarded for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places—

RICHMOND – The story of education for African Americans and women in Virginia factors into five of the sixteen sites the Department of Historic Resources recently listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register, the state’s official list of historically important places. The sites include a Farmville church, two Tidewater schools, a house in Falls Church, and a building at the University of Richmond.

The First Baptist Church in **Farmville**, founded 1867, emerged as a center for the local black community under the leadership of its pastor, the Reverend L. Francis Griffin, when it sought to desegregate Prince Edward County’s public schools during the 1950s and 1960s. Within weeks of an April 1951 student strike at the all-black Robert Russa Moton High School, Griffin successfully led efforts at the church to get youth, parents, and community leaders to support an important lawsuit of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).

That federal suit filed in May 1951 as *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County, Virginia* was consolidated with four others into the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case that resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court outlawing public school segregation.

Rev. Griffin also pushed to get a privately funded and administered school opened in September 1963 to serve the county’s black students, after Prince Edward County closed its public schools beginning in September 1959 to avoid integration. In September 1964 the county integrated its schools after the Supreme Court ruled against it in *Griffin v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*.

Schools in **Stafford County** and in Franklin (**Southampton County**) also have stories to tell from the era of segregation.

The Stafford Training School was built in 1939 during the Great Depression by the Public Works Administration after African Americans formed a “county league” to donate money to purchase the land for the school, the only black high school in Stafford County during segregation.

In 1960 students from the school were the first in the area to try integrating all-white Stafford County High School. That attempt failed, but it was followed successfully in 1961 and 1962. The training school building, used continually since 1939, was restored in 2005 and today’s property retains a circa-1940 baseball field.

Hayden High School in **Franklin** was built in 1953 to replace an overcrowded and all-black high school building from 1906 that was in poor condition. For proponents of school segregation, a fiercely contested issue

in Virginia and elsewhere in the U.S. at the time, the new school building represented a modern “separate but equal” educational facility. In 1970, the school was desegregated as a junior high.

The Henderson House in **Falls Church** was the home of influential civil rights advocates Edwin Bancroft “E.B.” Henderson and his wife, Mary Ellen Meriwether Henderson. E.B. Henderson was the nation’s first certified African-American male physical education instructor. He also co-founded the Colored Citizen’s Protective League, which by 1915 became the first rural branch in the nation of the NAACP.

Mary Ellen Henderson was a teacher and school principal in Falls Church, where she led efforts that improved schools for black students. She introduced a disparity study comparing Virginia’s all-black, all-white schools, influencing construction of a new school facility in the city. She also served on an oversight committee for integrating schools, following the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

A Craftsman bungalow from around 1913, the Henderson House is one of the few remaining in the area from early 20th century.

Built in 1913, North Court Hall at the **University of Richmond** resulted from the decision in 1906 of then-Richmond College to broaden its educational offerings for women, who were first admitted to the college in 1898. The decision inspired college leaders to secure a new location for the school so it could create a separate women’s college.

In 1914, the college moved from the City of Richmond to a new park-like campus six miles away where its leaders opened a re-envisioned Richmond College along with Westhampton College for women. Together in 1920, the colleges were accredited as the University of Richmond.

Located in the heart of today’s UR campus, North Court served as the main building for Westhampton College, where women could find higher educational opportunities in an era when colleges primarily catered to men.

North Court exemplifies the Collegiate Gothic architectural style. Its exterior walls are composed of brick with slate tiles covering its multiple gabled roofs. Enclosing a courtyard, the building also features a parapet and projecting pediments. Originally North Court housed all the spaces needed for a self-contained women’s college including a dormitory, dining room, kitchen, administrative offices, reading room, chapel, and classrooms.

In advance of the 100th anniversary in 2014 marking its move to its present-day location, the University of Richmond and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources have partnered to list, in addition to North Court Hall, two other buildings in the Virginia Landmarks Register, Ryland Hall and Cannon Memorial Chapel.

Ryland Hall, also completed in 1913, anchored the new Richmond College campus. It also features character-defining Gothic Revival architectural elements and consists of two parallel wings, Robert Ryland and Charles Ryland halls, set apart by a covered connecting passageway.

Cannon Memorial Chapel, constructed in 1929, was designed in the Late Gothic Revival style by Charles M. Robinson, a prominent Virginia architect who designed many of Virginia’s public schools as well as buildings at today’s James Madison University and the College of William and Mary.

Recalling the university’s character as denominational institution, Cannon Memorial Chapel features a large interior nave with a soaring vaulted ceiling, arched stain glass windows along its clearstory, and a rose window above its entrance. The exterior is constructed of brick and stone and cast concrete pinnacles.

Other listings in the Virginia Landmarks Register, recently approved by the Department of Historic Resources include the following:

- **Alexandria Union Station**, built in 1905, drew inspiration from the City Beautiful urban planning movement with a design that went beyond creating a merely serviceable to an architecturally appealing station, a planned municipal gateway. The Colonial Revival-style station resulted from the consolidation—or “union”—of rail lines in Alexandria and greater DC. It is the only Colonial Revival-style public building of its era in Alexandria and the only remaining one that recalls the city’s long railroad history. The station’s passenger traffic began declining in 1932 when the George Washington Memorial Highway opened, luring commuters from trains to autos. Also that same year, the Washington-Virginia Railway, a commuter train, stopped offering connections to the station.
- Built around 1858 and mixing Federal and Greek Revival-style architectural details, **Bloomfield** is one of the last remaining late-period pre-Civil War brick farmhouses in northwestern **Fairfax County**. The two-story house was constructed for Martha Mead Carper. In 1941, the property was sold out of the Carper-Hammond families, who had owned it for about 125 years. During the Civil War, both Union and Confederate soldiers camped on the property at various times.
- Constructed in 1939, the **Charlottesville Coca-Cola Bottling Works** is one of the city’s largest and most prominent examples of Art Deco architecture. The building’s front side highlights the company’s signature logo, which is set above a recessed entrance. The company used the building as a bottling plant until 1973, and thereafter as a distribution center until it closed in 2010. Today it is being repurposed using historic rehabilitation tax credits to house offices and laboratories for a company that specializes in immunodiagnostics and biotechnology.
- **Chesterfield Highlands Historic District** is one of the largest and earliest planned suburbs in **Colonial Heights**. The city arose after the introduction of the Richmond-Petersburg Interurban Street Railway in the early 20th century, rapidly transforming "the heights" along the Appomattox River’s north bank from farmland to a suburban town. Tracing back to plans laid out in 1916, Chesterfield Highlands took shape between 1920 and 1940, when most its houses were constructed in designs influenced by the Craftsman movement and a variety of kit house styles inspired by store catalogues such as Sears and Roebuck. After World War II, between 1945 and 1954 the district continued to fill out with modest houses inspired by popular post-war styles.
- Constructed around 1791, **Green Hill** is one of the few 18th-century Georgian-Federal style homes remaining in **Virginia Beach**, the former Princess Anne County. Built by the Lovetts, a prominent founding family of the county, the original portion of the dwelling uses the “hall-and-parlor” plan, a once common house style in the Tidewater region. Green Hill was expanded in 1954 by leading regional architect Finlay Ferguson Jr.
- **Lansdowne** in **Spotsylvania County** was built around 1755 and acquired in 1772 by James Mercer, a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1779. Abutting today’s Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Battlefields National Military Park and consisting of 12 acres, Lansdowne was witness to the Civil War battles of Fredericksburg I and II, and used by Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood in 1863 to host a court martial proceeding. The house underwent expansions in early 19th century and in the 1950s but retains its original functional and ornamental building materials. The property also contains a circa 1920 board-and-batten barn, a road trace, and many historic landscape elements such as boxwoods and a terraced hillside.
- The earliest part of the **Daniel Morgan House** in **Winchester** is timber frame, constructed in 1786 for merchant George Flowerdew Norton. Later owned by Morgan, a Revolutionary War general who lived there until his death in 1802, the house underwent successive expansions around 1800, 1820, 1885, and 1915, eventually resulting in a late Georgian-style 17-room, two-and-a-half story residence. The house served as a hospital during the Civil War, and in 1865 owner Eleanor Boyd convened a group of local women there to designate June 6 as Confederate Memorial Day. They also developed plans for the city’s Confederate

cemetery. In the latter part of the 19th century, the back ell of the house was used for a school, whose students included the future Admiral Richard E. Byrd and Governor and Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr.

- Constructed in 1926, the Seaboard Air Line Railway Building is the only large scale commercial example of a late Gothic Revival style in **Norfolk**, and offers an early example of reinforced-concrete skyscraper construction in the city. It served as the purpose-built headquarters for the Seaboard Air Line Railway company for many years.
- Located in **Shenandoah County**'s village of Fisher's Hill, the Stoner-Keller House and Mill offers a well-preserved example of a mill complex, a once-vital county industry. The Stoner-Keller House (also called the Abraham Stoner House) was constructed in 1844 as the residence of Abraham, a grandson of Frederick Stoner, the mill's original builder and operator. Of the county's six existing gristmills, Stoner-Keller is the oldest. Operated from 1772 until 1958, the mill retains its large circa-1895 steel overshot water wheel and early mill stones. The 2.5-acre property also has a one-story barn and a two-story tenant house, both constructed around 1880, and the trace of a 1772 tailrace.

All 16 of these properties were approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Board of Historic Resources during its December 13 quarterly meeting. At that meeting DHR's State Review Board also approved forwarding these listings to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Listing a property in the state or national register places no restrictions on what a property owner may do with his or her property.

Designating a property to the state or national registers— either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district—provides an owner the opportunity to pursue historic rehabilitation tax credit improvements to the building. Such tax credit projects must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Virginia is a national leader among states in the U.S. in listing historic sites and districts in the National Register of Historic Places. The state is also a national leader for the number of federal tax credit rehabilitation projects proposed and completed each year.

Together the register and tax credit rehabilitation programs have played significant roles in promoting the conservation of the Commonwealth's historic places and in spurring economic revitalization and tourism in many towns and communities.

A slideshow featuring photographs of, and summary captions about each of these listings can be viewed on the DHR website through this link:

<http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/SlideShows/BoardMeetings/2012Dec/2012DecTitle.html>

The nomination forms for each of the properties also provide detailed information about each historic site and can be accessed on the DHR website here: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/boardPage.html>.

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