

Department of Historic Resources

For Immediate Release

July 1, 2015

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STATE ADDS SIX HISTORIC SITES TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

—New listings cover sites in the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, and Pittsylvania (Town of Chatham), and the cities of Chesapeake, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg—

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—Boundary increases also approved for four previously-listed historic districts in Danville, Hopewell, Town of Halifax (Halifax Co.), and on Tangier Island (Accomack Co.)—

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

—Photo of four properties embedded at end of this release—

RICHMOND – A bus station in Petersburg connected with the Civil Rights Movement, an early 20th-century railroad depot in Pittsylvania County, a state park that originated in federal conservation efforts during the 1930s, and the site of a British fort in the Chesapeake Bay where escaped slaves were trained as Colonial Marines during the War of 1812 are among six sites recently added to the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

The Trailways Bus Station in downtown **Petersburg** was the site of civil rights protests and sit-ins that occurred during 1960 and 1961. As one of the stops on the historic Freedom Ride civil rights campaign, the bus station witnessed events that were a critical part of the Civil Rights Movement in Petersburg and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Constructed in 1946 and to date the only mid-20th century, unaltered Trailways bus station in the Streamlined Moderne style documented by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), the building retains the architectural features that marked racial segregation. With separate bathrooms, water fountains, and waiting areas, it was specifically designed to convey and enforce the requirement that there be strict separation of the races to the extent possible as then set forth under Virginia law. Privately owned today, plans are now underway to repurpose the building as a retail or restaurant space, while retaining the building's historic plan and design.

The Chatham Southern Railway Depot, in the Town of Chatham in **Pittsylvania County**, was erected between 1918 and 1919. The depot is a well-known landmark, owing in part to the importance of the railroad in the post-1850 history of the town and region. As the central transportation hub of Chatham and the surrounding area, the

depot played a pivotal role in the area's economic development through the 1950s. Local businesses relied heavily on the railroad as the volume of local production shipped out of the depot grew throughout the first half of the 20th century. The depot served passengers including businessmen, soldiers (particularly during World War II), and the boarding students and faculty of the girls school Chatham Hall, established in 1894, and the all-male Hargrave Military Academy, established in 1909.

The depot is a strong example of the Railroad Style with Colonial Revival influence. After nearly a half century in service, the depot closed to passengers in 1965, although freight service continued until 1975 when the station was retired from railroad use altogether. Since 2001 the depot has been owned by the Pittsylvania County Historical Society. The building is leased by Pittsylvania County, and operated by the County Public Library System for historic research, educational seminars, and civic functions.

Pocahontas State Park Historic District in **Chesterfield County** – originally known as Swift Creek Recreational Demonstration Area (RDA) – was a project of the New Deal-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The historic district encompasses the park's initial acquisition, design, and construction by the CCC through the National Park Service's donation of the park in 1946 to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Swift Creek RDA was one of just two RDAs developed in Virginia and one of 46 created across the U.S. The RDAs were the brainchild of the National Park Service as part of the larger Federal Emergency Land Relief Program begun in 1934 to address problems in areas of extensive soil erosion and related issues.

Renamed Pocahontas State Park and Pocahontas State Forest, after it was donated to the Commonwealth, and operated jointly by Virginia State Parks and the Virginia Department of Forestry, the area became the state's largest park. It now encompasses over 7,900 acres and three small lakes. Architecturally, Pocahontas State Park is notable among Virginia's state parks for having the largest number of surviving buildings constructed during the CCC period. The majority of buildings were built in a rustic architectural style that emphasized simplicity in design and use of native building materials.

In 1989, the park implemented a new master plan that included expansion of the park facilities to attract and accommodate the growing numbers of visitors from nearby Richmond and Chesterfield County. Pocahontas State Park is important in Virginia as the only state park specifically designed for use by large groups.

On **Accomack County's** Tangier Island, a previously-listed historic district for the island has been extended with a boundary increase to include an area, now under water, where the British established Fort Albion in 1814. At Fort Albion self-emancipated African Americans, who had escaped slavery to join British forces, were trained as Colonial Marines in the British navy. Now an underwater archaeological site, Fort Albion was

recently designated by the National Park Service as a place on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom due to its direct association with the emancipation of thousands of enslaved African Americans during the War of 1812.

The area covered by the boundary increase is also important for its association with the history of Methodism on Tangier Island and for early 20th-century military ordnance testing. The period of significance for the expanded district spans from around 1808 to 1921, beginning with the first religious camp meetings at the submerged site and ending with a significant military ordnance test associated with early aeronautics.

In addition to Fort Albion and the Trailways Bus Station, two other newly-listed sites in the Virginia Landmarks Register are related to African American history but in the realm of education during the 20th century.

The Cornland School in the **City of Chesapeake** is a one-room schoolhouse built in 1903 that served African American students in the Pleasant Grove School District in the former Norfolk County (now part of the City of Chesapeake) during the era of segregation. Cornland replaced a circa-1868 school that stood on the same site. In 1952 the school closed and its students were transferred to a newly-constructed but racially segregated elementary school. The Cornland school building today is one of the oldest one-room schools still standing in Chesapeake and one of the last remaining African-American elementary schools from the days of segregation.

In **Hanover County**, the Virginia Industrial Home School for Colored Girls – most recently known as the Barrett Learning Center – arose in 1915 in response to an early 20th-century juvenile reform movement in the U.S., especially for African American girls. The complex was the third such school for black girls in the U.S. and survived its predecessors in Maryland and Missouri. The property is important for its association with Janie Porter Barrett, the first African American woman to head a training school. She advocated a pioneering rehabilitation philosophy that was adopted throughout the U.S. and around the world.

Today's complex of mid-20th-century buildings was designed by Merrill C. Lee, a well-known Richmond architect. Lee's design for the Barrett Juvenile Correctional Center reflects the trend towards architectural modernism in school design embraced by school systems across the country during the mid-20th century. Lee's design also complements the progressive pedagogy established by Barrett in 1915. The period of significance for the complex is from 1915 when the school was established to 1965 when the facility was racially integrated.

Another site newly approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register by DHR's Board of Historic Resources during its quarterly meeting on June 18 is the Violet Bank Historic District in **Colonial Heights**. The district has two periods of significance, 1815 and 1908-1956. In 1815, Violet Bank, a Federal-style house,

was constructed on a large tract in then-rural Chesterfield County. Suburban development led to the former farm being subdivided, and starting in 1908 development of the Violet Bank neighborhood was under way. By 1956 the final build-out of the district occurred during the post-World War II building boom.

The Violet Bank Historic District stands out as containing one of the earliest planned suburbs in Colonial Heights. The entire Colonial Heights Extended subdivision and more than half of the Riverside Park subdivision comprise the Violet Bank Historic District. They were planned on farmland originally associated with the Violet Bank dwelling, previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The original subdivision plats in this district are important examples of early 20th-century suburban design. Their neatly delineated plans, divided into blocks and further subdivided into lots of uniform size, are prototypical of early-20th century suburbanization. The neighborhood also features a highly intact group of Kit Houses that were factory produced and shipped to site for construction. The collection features houses offered by Aladdin (Bay City, Michigan), Gordon-Van Tine (Davenport, Iowa) and Sears, Roebuck and Company (Chicago, Illinois).

In addition to the expansion of the Tangier Island Historic District, the following three previously-listed historic districts saw boundary increases:

- The Downtown Hopewell Historic District boundary extension reflects the city's prolonged period of commercial, industrial, and governmental development from World War I through World War II as well as the emerging importance of the automobile and vehicular traffic during the post-WWII period. The boundary increase tells the story of the city's commercial development up to the mid-1960s, when postwar economic prosperity finally began to slow. The district extension emphasizes the significance of personal automobiles in shaping postwar commercial development and, eventually, suburbanization patterns that pulled investment away from traditional downtown areas.
- The Mountain Road Historic District boundary increase extends the original historic district one mile further west along U.S. 360 in the **Town of Halifax**. The district depicts the gradual evolution of this rural Southside area from large tracts of farmland owned by prominent county leaders in the early 19th century to a mid-20th century community. The Mountain Road Historic District continues to serve as a premier residential neighborhood and institutional center for the town, a county seat. Comprised primarily of residential properties ranging in date from 1837 to the mid-1960s, the district expansion area is similar to the original district, characterized by large lots with well-designed and constructed homes set back from the road and surrounded by mature landscaping, evoking park-like setting. The residences are strongly connected to the road itself, historically significant as a main artery leading into the courthouse town. The period of significance for the district stretches from 1837, the year the earliest extant house was built, through 1965, when the most recent contributing resources were erected. The distinctive architectural

history of the district includes the work of Dabney Cosby, Sr., a craftsman who worked under Thomas Jefferson, and who designed and built the Halifax County Courthouse in 1838-39 (individually listed), adjacent to the district; Dabney Cosby, Jr. and Howard Cosby, who owned and operated a brick factory on the north side of town.

- The **Danville Historic District Boundary Increase** covers 66 additional architectural resources and extends the story of Danville's era of growth and prosperity when the tobacco and textile industries were thriving. The original and extended district contains a broad spectrum of architectural styles popular in Danville from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. The period of significance for both the original district and the expansion area begins in 1830, the date of the Lanier House and the Old Grove Street Cemetery, and ends in 1940, when the last major wave of development ended.

All of these listings in the Virginia Landmarks Register will be forwarded to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Complete nomination forms and photographs for each of these sites can be accessed on the DHR Website at <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/boardPage.html>.

Listing a property in the state or national registers is honorific and places no restrictions on what a property owner may do with his or her property. The listing celebrates the Commonwealth's rich built environment and cultural heritage. The designation is, first and foremost, an invitation to learn about and experience authentic places where our history is most significant.

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. The tax credit program is voluntary, however, and not a requirement when owners work on their listed properties.

Virginia is a national leader among states 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 preservation of the Commonwealth's historic places and in spurring economic revitalization and tourism in many towns and communities.

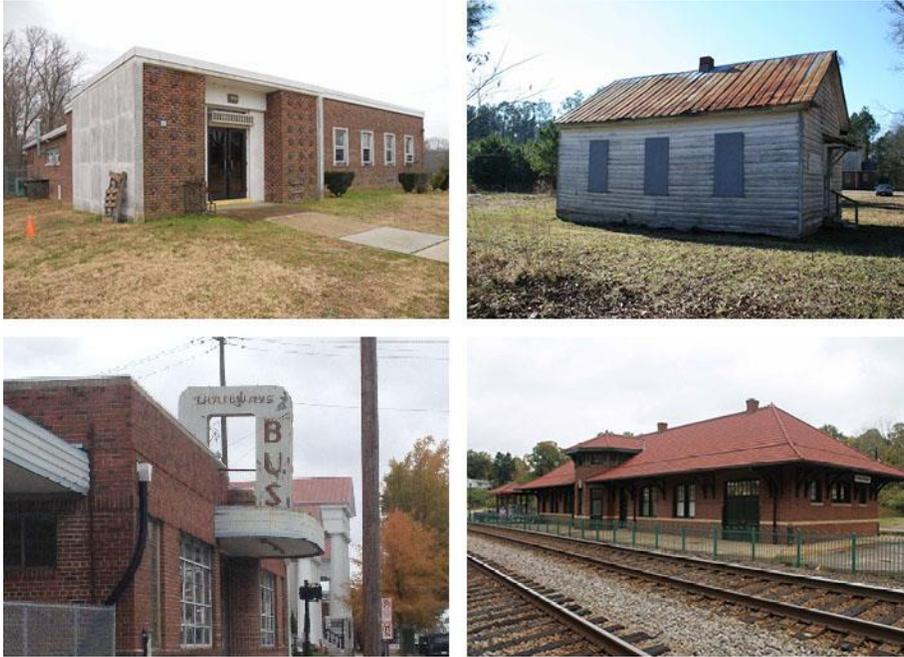


Photo shows (clockwise from top right) Cornland School in Chesapeake, Chatham Southern Railway Depot in Pittsylvania County, the Trailways Bus Station in Petersburg, and a building on the campus of the Barrett Learning Center in Hanover County.

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