

Department of Historic Resources

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STATE ADDS NINE HISTORIC SITES TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

**—New listings cover sites in the counties of Fairfax, Hanover, Orange, Prince Edward and Surry,
and the cities of Norfolk, Roanoke and Winchester—**

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—Two previously-listed historic districts in Richmond and Roanoke expanded—

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

RICHMOND – Virginia history from the Colonial to the post-World War II eras is represented in nine sites the Virginia Department of Historic Resources recently approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register, the state's official list of important historic places.

The sites include a now-vanished fort constructed in Winchester under the supervision of George Washington, the boyhood home of early-20th century black educator and leader Robert Russa Moton, a rare-surviving slave cabin and plantation house located in a state park in Surry County, a subdivision containing architecturally significant modern houses in Fairfax County, and two residential historic districts in the City of Roanoke.

Located on a residential lot in the **Winchester** Historic District, the Fort Loudoun Site is a half-acre portion of the larger site where a young Colonel Washington designed and constructed a fort as commander of the Virginia Regiment, in 1758.

Fort Loudoun served as a command center and primary supply depot for Washington and the Virginia troops during the French and Indian (also known as the Seven Years') War. It was built as the first and most prominent of a string of military forts and outposts erected to protect Virginia's backcountry settlers from raids made by the French and their Native American allies, beginning as early as 1754. While never directly attacked, troops at Fort Loudoun were garrisoned there at least until the end of open hostilities in 1763. They also joined British forces during military campaigns between 1758 and 1760.

Since its day, residential and road construction has disturbed much of the Fort Loudoun site over the centuries, although limited and intensive archaeological excavations of the site have revealed well-preserved features related to the fort and the activities of the soldiers there. The half-acre portion of the site now listed in the state register and bounded by a private lot in Winchester

retains a high level of integrity and contains archaeology revealing a substantial section of one of the fort's defensive bastions, a well, and a barracks.

The Robert Russa Moton Boyhood Home is located on a former plantation and farmstead known as Pleasant Shade in rural **Prince Edward County**, about 10 miles east of Farmville. Covering 246 acres today, the property contains a main house and a now-dilapidated kitchen-quarter building where Moton lived as a boy.

One of the most prominent African-American educators in the U.S. during the first decades of the 20th century, and president of the Tuskegee Institute after the death of Booker T. Washington, Moton (1867-1940) lived at Pleasant Shade from 1869 to 1880. His boyhood there shaped his conservative vision of race relations in America and in the South.

The Pleasant Shade property, with existing portions dating back to 1746, is also important for its direct association with the April 6, 1865, Battle of Sailor's Creek, the last major Civil War battle in Virginia before Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox.

Located in Chippokes Plantation State Park in **Surry County**, Walnut Valley consists of a circa 1770 plantation house, an 1816 slave quarter and an associated archaeological site within a nearly 263-acre property that has remained largely intact since the late-18th century.

A rarity today, the well-constructed slave quarter is particularly interesting as it reflects reforms that led to improved living conditions for some slaves during the first-half of the 19th century. Basic amenities in the Walnut Valley cabin, such as windows, a wood floor, and a masonry chimney, had previously not been standard features of slave dwellings in Virginia. Such reforms were motivated by humanitarian and religious sentiments as well as by plantation owners' financial interest in protecting the health of the enslaved, usually their most valuable assets in a slave economy.

Prominently situated along the main drive to the plantation house, the Walnut Valley slave quarters also demonstrates an emphasis on presenting a plantation that reflected the wealth, good taste, and status of the owners. Along with the main house and slave quarter, Walnut Valley also includes many agricultural and domestic outbuildings. The site's archaeology has the potential to contribute in the future to research on the life ways of slaves on a Tidewater plantation.

The Hollin Hills Historic District encompasses a 326-acre residential **Fairfax County** neighborhood that took shape between 1949 and 1971 under developer-builder Robert Davenport and modern architect-planner Charles Goodman. Hollin Hills drew national and international attention as the first planned subdivision to combine novel land planning, modern house and landscape designs, and an innovative merchandising plan that required the lots and house models to be sold separately.

Houses in Hollin Hills were situated on lots in order to accentuate the site's existing slopes and woods, giving Goodman an opportunity to design eight modern house types with variations in square footage and interior amenities, comprising 15 different combinations. He created modern

designs of standardized modular units with open interiors and trim-less window walls, non-traditional house profiles, and prefabricated components.

Hollin Hills reflected Goodman's conviction that traditional house forms like the Colonial Revival-style had no place in a 20th-century development. By 1971, Hollin Hills was completed and its real estate office closed. Today, there are 475 houses, buildings, sites, and structures that contribute to the character of the Hollin Hills Historic District.

In **Roanoke**, newly-listed historic districts recognize two early 20th-century residential neighborhoods, Melrose-Rugby and Riverland.

Northwest of downtown Roanoke, the Melrose-Rugby Historic District traces back to its development as a working-class suburb that arose between 1916 and 1949 with the growth of the city. The neighborhood exemplifies traditional residential planning of the era, relying on a narrow street grid and alleyways. Elements of early modern suburban design are also evident in the district's wide and curving Rugby Avenue, which anticipates the curvilinear subdivision layout that would become prevalent after World War II. The district exhibits the full range of architectural styles and home building popular during this period, with examples of Craftsman bungalows, American Foursquares, and Cape Cod houses.

In response to Roanoke's rapid industrial growth during the late-19th and early-20th centuries along the Roanoke River and railroad lines, the Riverland Historic District was developed between 1900 and 1930 by the Highland Land Company as a suburb to provide housing for working-class citizens. Just south of a bend in the Roanoke River, the historic district features a range of popular housing styles from the early 20th century including American Foursquare and Craftsman.

Three other sites approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register by DHR's Board of Historic Resources during its quarterly meeting on June 19 are—

- Elmwood Cemetery, a 50-acre municipal cemetery established in Norfolk County (now the **City of Norfolk**) in 1853. It contains the remains of more than 400 Confederate and Union Civil War veterans. Displaying an abundance of Victorian-era funerary art, Elmwood was also the burial ground for victims of a yellow fever epidemic that swept through Hampton Roads in 1855, when it is estimated that Norfolk and Portsmouth witnessed more than four thousand deaths from the disease. The epidemic resulted in more than 100 people being interred in individual family plots at Elmwood Cemetery, and many victims being buried in unmarked mass graves, after the supply of coffins ran short in Norfolk. The cemetery contains the graves of many city, state, and nationally noted figures.
- In **Orange County**, the 77-acre Mount Sharon property features a restrained Georgian Revival-style country house designed by noted 20th-century New York architect Louis Bancel LaFarge. LaFarge's mastery of Georgian Revival design and proportion is evident in Mount Sharon, as well as his attention to fine craftsmanship and his familiarity with then-modern 1930s building technology and systems, including reinforced concrete-and-steel construction for strength and fireproofing, and central low-pressure steam heating. The

property also contains brick gateposts from a previous Mount Sharon house that was begun in 1888, a late-19th century manager's house, and a small garage and a larger chauffeur's quarters and garage built in 1937, when the main residence was completed.

- In Hanover County, the Ashland Jefferson Davis Highway Marker is one of 16 granite memorials in Virginia commissioned and erected along U.S. Rte. 1 between 1927 and 1947 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a pivotal organization in establishing and promoting the Jefferson Davis Highway nationwide. The highway, incorporating U.S. 1 in Virginia, commemorated the first and only president of the Confederate States of America with a cross-country route, and also served as a counterpoint to the Lincoln Highway, which was established during the same period, the second decade of the 20th century. A plaque on the Ashland marker states that it was erected by the Lee Chapter of the UDC.

In other actions, DHR's Board of Historic Resources approved expansion of the Main Street Banking Historic District in **Richmond**. The boundary increase captures four modern skyscraper buildings constructed between 1962 and 1965. These buildings represent pioneering efforts in this form of modern architectural design in Virginia and are evidence of how Virginia's banking industry evolved after commercial legislation was updated in the post-World War II era.

In **Roanoke**, the board approved expansion of the Downtown Roanoke Historic District, extending it along Church and Luck avenues and South Jefferson Street to encompass 19 buildings that contribute to the historic character of the district.

All of these listing, including updates and district boundary increases, will be forwarded 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 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.

Photographs and the nomination form for each of these properties can be accessed on the DHR website here: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/boardPage.html>.

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