

VLP - 3/19/97
NRHP - 5/23/97

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Green Falls

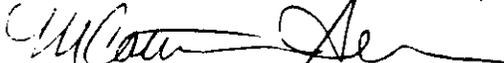
other names/site number Johnston's Tavern; Turner's Store; Wright's Corner [Fork]; Dolly Wright's Corner
DHR File No. 16-34

2. Location

street & number Intersection of S.R. 627 and S.R. 623 not for publication N/A
city or town Bowling Green vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Caroline code 033 Zip 22427

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 4/17/97

Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet. other (explain): _____
 determined eligible for the _____
National Register Signature of Keeper
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register Date of Action _____

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Green Falls
Caroline County, Virginia

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 Colonial/Southern Colonial _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick _____
roof Wood shingle _____
walls Wood weatherboard _____

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

 Architecture _____

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Period of Significance Ca. 1710-1932

Significant Dates Ca. 1710-1730; 1808; 1932

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 361.5

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18 296780	4204260	2	18 297200	4204000
3	18 297650	4203320	4	18 297630	4202560

See continuation sheet.

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sandra Burke

Organization: Mary Washington College date 8 Dec. 1993

street & number: 7578 NE Bergman Rd. telephone _____

city or town Bainbridge Island state WA zip code 998110

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Herbert Ridgeway Collins

street & number 3510 N. Pershing Dr. telephone (703) 525-6876

city or town Arlington state VA zip code 22201

=====
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Summary Description:

Green Falls is sited on a rise at the intersection of two historic roads in rural Caroline County surrounded by 361.5 acres of open tilled fields and wooded land. The house yard is enclosed by white painted board fencing and landscaped with mature hardwood trees and boxwood. The Colonial-period frame dwelling consists of a single-pile, two-story, central block on a raised basement with a one-story wing to either side. It is considered to have been built for Richard Johnston sometime after he received a land grant in 1710 in this location; it is likely, however, that the actual building date falls sometime during the second or third quarter of the 18th century. Its massive brick exterior end chimneys and architectural integrity are its outstanding characteristics. Associated with the earliest period of the house is a contributing 18th-century meat house and a well-delineated, but unexcavated kitchen dependency archaeological site. Other contributing buildings include a late-19th century carriage house and an early 20th-century barn. A modern tool shed is non-contributing.

Architectural Analysis:

Green Falls is a rural Colonial-period dwelling consisting of a two-story, three-bay, central block measuring 24' x 20'-6", flanked by matching single-story wings, approximately 16' X 24'. Its raised basement and brick exterior end chimneys at the two-story section are laid in Flemish bond. When beaded weatherboarding was replaced in 1957, the framing indicated that the center and north sections were built concurrently. Recent examination of attic roof framing supports this conjecture. The south parlor wing was believed to have been added in 1808. This date is inscribed on a brick in its foundation wall. An exterior brick closet foundation remnant suggests that the south chimney was an exterior end chimney when built. This supports the conclusion that the south wing was built subsequent to the earlier two sections.

The building frame is pit-sawn with pegged mortise-and-tenon joinery. Close scrutiny of a portion of the original joined frame, saved when a window was removed in 1957, confirms this. The steeply pitched gable roofs are composed of hewn and pit-sawn pine rafters and collar ties, open mortised and pegged. The roof sheathing is random width, split-edged, pit-sawn boards with wrought-iron nails. The false plates have boxed exteriors with shaped corner boards. All roofs are clad in fish-scale cedar shingles.

All door openings and all window openings save one are in their original locations. Nine-over-six double-hung windows are symmetrically spaced at the first-floor level and six-over-six at the second. These windows are 1957 replicas of the original windows, which were saved and are stored on the site. The attic levels have older casements. Three-over-three double-hung windows in the basement give access to dirt-floored crawl spaces under the north and south wings. One door is a 40" wide double vertical panel Greek-Revival style. It was taken from the first floor principal entrance in 1932, and its width may indicate that this entrance was originally fitted with double doors. A front-gabled porch was added here in 1932.

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A shed-roofed porch from 1917 shelters the rear and basement entrances. The exterior doors are wooden six-panel with simple profiled moldings. Principal windows have operating paneled wooded shutters.

The plan of Green Falls has been altered very little. Its earliest form was that of an almost square hall with front and rear entrances, and a single-room north wing with corner stair access (evidenced by a flooring patch) to the wing's attic and a second floor over the hall. When the south parlor wing was added, this stair was replaced by a narrow open-string winder stair built into a side passage partitioned from the hall. The remainder of the hall space became the present dining room. The north wing was divided into a breakfast room and a kitchen in 1932 when the kitchen was moved from the basement. The second-floor plan incorporates a passage, a modern bath and a main chamber. A fireplace at the south passage wall was closed when the stairs were moved to this location. A finished landing area and attic bedroom above the main chamber are reached by a narrow open-string winder stair above that of the first floor. The finished attics of the north and south wings are also used as bedrooms. All of these upper-level spaces have working fireplaces.

Some of the early interior finish of the house remains, but most dates from the mid-19th century. Most of the original split lath and plaster of the first floor was replaced in 1932 but some survives in the south parlor wing and in the upper levels. There are plain moldings throughout the house and all were installed previous to the plaster finish. The 8'-high baseboards have a beaded edge as do the chair rails. The two six-panel doors in the main passage date to the 19th century. The six-panel door between the dining and breakfast rooms exhibits earlier stylistic features and is like those of the second floor. The original wide-board pine flooring lies beneath carpet and linoleum in the north wing, beneath the narrow pine boards of the dining room and side passage, and is exposed on the upper floors. The mid-19th century mantels of the first floor are plain, except for a recent Federal-style replacement in the dining room. That of the breakfast room is of naturally finished pine and has a unique wooden piece securing it to the plastered chimney. The hand-carved Federal-style mantel of the second floor main chamber is the most elaborate in the house, and interruption of wall moldings indicate it to be an early replacement. This may be consistent with the theory that the upper floors were upgraded after the house ceased to be a tavern and became a store with living space upstairs. The attic bedrooms over the north and south wings have plain mantels like those of the first floor. The mantels for the attic spaces above the main chamber are Federal style.

Several buildings and a site contribute to the significance of Green Falls. A meat house is located behind the dwelling and is believed to have been built sometime in the second or third quarter of the 18th century. Measuring 12'3" square, the meat house has a pit-sawn pine frame of closely spaced studs and a pyramidal roof system. The ceiling joists show evidence of having been used for hanging foodstuffs. The most notable feature of this building is its original batten and studded door on substantial wrought-iron strap hinges. A late-19th-century carriage house is a pine-framed building measuring 22'4"x16'3". Its sill, siding, doors and shingled roof were replaced in 1965. A barn measuring 25'7"x18'5", in a field behind the house, was built

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in 1917. All of the buildings are well maintained. The location of a contributing kitchen dependency site is determined by brick foundation remnants still in place under the lawn near the meat house. Kitchen artifacts continue to surface in this area. A non-contributing 1960s tool shed stands in the house yard.

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8. Statement of Significance

Green Falls is considered by some historians to be the earliest surviving 18th-century frame dwelling in Caroline County. This claim cannot be substantiated through documentation because nearly all of Caroline County's colonial records were destroyed during the Civil War. Physical evidence suggests that its architectural form has changed very little since its last substantive addition in 1808. Green Falls retains the form, scale, and proportion of the modest rural Virginia plantation house of the colonial period. Its surviving original fabric is consistent with its alleged early construction date, and this fabric has not been compromised by later repairs and replacements. Green Falls continues to stand in its historic agricultural surroundings which showcases a worthy example of the 18th century rural landscape. It is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria C as an outstanding example of this building type.

Historical Background

According to Caroline County historian, T. E. Campbell, Green Falls was built on a land grant to Richard Johnston of 2,765 acres on the north side of the Mattaponi River.¹ Ralph E. Fall, another Virginia historian, asserts that the building functioned as Johnston's Tavern, and he considers that it is the earliest surviving frame dwelling in the county.² The property lies at the intersection of what was the earliest route from Fredericksburg to Richmond, then called the Old State Road, and the road to Burk's Bridge on the Mattaponi, a short distance away. Both roads were heavily traveled, as these were all the routes to the first courthouse of Caroline County at Kidd's Fork, a half mile south. Certain verification of the building date for Green Falls cannot be ascertained as virtually all of Caroline's colonial records were burned in the evacuation fire in Richmond in April of 1865. However, physical evidence certainly suggests that Green Falls dates from the colonial period, probably the second or third quarter of the 18th century. It can also be conjectured that because of the strategic location at a major intersection on a main road through the county, there could have been an earlier structure that predated the Green Falls dwelling that stands today.

Records suggest that the Johnston family was associated with the property now known as Green Falls for 46 years. Philip Johnston was issued a license to operate Johnston's Tavern in the period between 1742 and 1747.³ The date of 1742 coincides with the beginning of a new major branch of the stage coach route through this area.⁴ South of the house stood a rise called Stable Hill, where travelers exchanged or rested their horses while spending the night.⁵ Johnston's tavern was taken over by Thomas Johnston in 1747. He was issued a license by the county court to operate a tavern on 11 September 1747, which he operated while acting as sheriff of Caroline County.⁶ In 1756 he was forced to sell the property to settle debts which he incurred when, in sympathy, he failed to collect taxes from distressed Caroline County farmers who were away fighting in the French and Indian War.⁷ Green Falls is one of three extant 18th-century taverns in Caroline County and was very similar in plan to Hubbard's Tavern, licensed in 1745. Hubbard's Tavern at

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Sparta, and one at Villeboro are now in ruins.⁸

The mid-18th century saw what was to become a series of owners and a variety of uses for Green Falls. Lewis Turner converted the tavern to a store after he purchased it from Thomas Johnston in 1756. Tax records seem to indicate that Robert Wright II acquired the property sometime around 1800, and it was likely he who made the additions to the initial building core around 1808. It appears from the tax records of 1813 that Robert Wright had his principal residence in the house, with a notation stating that the parcel was "where he [Robert] lives."⁹ A survey of the property in 1856 shows that the house was called "Turner's Store," but there is no further documentation on its operation as a store. Throughout the following 43 years, the property with acreage ranging from 177 to 764 acres with buildings valued at between \$300 and \$1100 was charged to Wright and his heirs. The property is clearly described as being near "Burk's Bridge." The valuation would indicate that the house continued to be modest in size. Wright died in 1838, according to the Wright family Bible, which records his age as 71 years; his wife Margaret died in 1855.¹⁰ Both are buried in the family cemetery at Elmwood across the road leading to Burke's Bridge.

Robert M. Wright, son of Robert Wright, appears to have inherited the house and land, with his wife Margaret receiving a life estate. During this period, records show that the property also served as a post office between 1831 and 1859.¹¹ Some increase in building valuation in the 1850s indicate upgrading of the property and possibly the addition of more agricultural buildings. Following the death of Robert M. Wright, the property devolved to his widow, Mary Dorothea "Dolley" Buckner Wright. Fourteen slaves were registered in her name in 1859 and by 1863 she was charged with 22 slaves.¹² Family stories from this period relate that during the Civil War, Union soldiers, under General Phillip H. Sheridan, camped at the farm on their march to Richmond. It is said that the general slept on the sofa in the parlor to assuage Mrs. Wright's fears for her safety and that of her seven children. The fork in the road where the house stands became known as "Dolley Wright's Corner" during her occupancy. After her death, it was called simple "Wright's Corner."

The house continued its descent through the Wright family to the present owner Herbert Ridgeway Collins, son of Dorothea Collins who inherited it in 1932. Herbert Collins has continued to acquire adjoining acreage associated with his family's earliest ownership.¹³ Mr. Collins exhibits a commendable interest in the well-being and preservation of Green Falls. He was born and raised there, and since inheriting the property, has worked knowledgeably and diligently to restore the house and grounds to their early appearance. Many 19th-century plant and tree species have been planted. He has also taken utmost care of the historic trees on the property, one of which is a mulberry tree with a circumference of 15 feet. It is believed to be among the last of the many mulberry trees planted in the early 19th century in Caroline County with the hope that raising silkworms would be profitable. The vast acreage of open fields around the house are leased and cultivated, which greatly enhances the well kept rural setting of Green Falls.

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Endnotes

1. T. E. Campbell, *Colonial Caroline*, (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1954), 300.
2. Ralph Emmett Fall, *People, Postoffices, and Communities in Caroline County, Virginia 1727-1969*. (Rosewall, GA: W. H. Rolfe Associates, 1989), 352.
3. Campbell, *Colonial Caroline*, 411.
4. Ralph E. Fall, "Mr. J. Woodfolks Stagecoach Line, Caroline County, Virginia," *Virginia Cavalcade*, (Summer, 1977), 21-29.
5. Herbert Ridgeway Collins, from the Wright family lore as told to him by his mother, Dorothea Collins and his Aunt Mary Kate Collins.
6. John Frederick Dorman, comp., *Caroline County Order Book, 1740-1747* (Washington, 1968), 66.
7. Campbell, *Colonial Caroline*, 153-55.
8. Ibid. 411.
9. Caroline County Land Tax Books, 1813.
10. Collins, from the Wright Family Bible in his possession at Green Falls.
11. Virginius Cornick Hall, Jr., "Virginia Post Offices, 1798-1859," *Virginia Magazine of Historic and Biography* 84:49.
12. Collins. Wright Family papers.
13. Caroline County Deed Book 60: 572; Will Book 39: 83; Will Book 47: 250.

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9. Bibliography

Campbell, T. E. *Colonial Caroline*. Richmond, VA: Dietz Press, 1954.

Caroline County Chancery Order Book 9:120.

Caroline County Deed Book 60:572.

Caroline County Deed Book 99:267, 268.

Caroline County Tax Records, 1793-1843.

Caroline County Will Book 38:317.

Carline County Will Book 39:83.

Caroline County Will Book 47:250.

Collins, Herbert Ridgeway, comp. "The Wright Kindred of Green Falls, Caroline County, Virginia.

_____, Wright Family Bible.

_____. Wright Family Papers.

Dorman, John Frederick, comp. *Caroline County Court Order Book, 1740-1747*. Abstract. Washington: 1968.

_____. Interview with author, 26 November, 1993. Fredericksburg, VA.

Fall, Ralph Emmett. "Mr. J. Woolfolks Stagecoach Line, Caroline County, Virginia." *Virginia Cavalcade* (Summer, 1977):21-29.

_____. *People, Postoffices and Communities in Caroline County Virginia 1727-1969*. Rosewell, GA: W. H. Wolfe Associates, 1989.

Hall, Virginius Cornick, Jr. "Virginia Post Offices, 1798-1859." *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 84:49.

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10. Geographical Data (continued)

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A. 18 296780 4204260, following Tanyard Swamp to B. 18 297200 4204000, following Tanyard Swamp Creek to C. 18 297650 4203320 to State Route 627 and D. 18-297630 4202560, E. 18 297320 4202440 to Burke's Bridge Road and F. 18 296840 4202920, G. 18 296280 4203180, crossing Va. SR 627 to H. 18 296380 4203960.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes 361.5 acres of the land purchased with Green Falls by the Wright family in the early 19th century, therefore a strong association exists. The majority of the nominated tract consists of tilled fields, and as such maintain the historical agricultural setting of Green Falls.

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Note: The following items of information are common to all photographs:

NAME OF PROPERTY: Green Falls
LOCATION: Caroline County, Virginia
NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER: Sandra M. Burke
LOCATION OF NEGATIVES: Virginia Department of Historic Resources
DATE: March 4, 1993

View of front (west) and north elevation of dwelling, outbuildings and environs looking southeast.
Photo 1 of 19 Negative # 13696

View of front (west) elevation looking east.
Photo 2 of 19 Negative # 13696

View of rear (east) and north elevations looking southwest
Photo 3 of 19 Negative # 13697

View of north elevation looking south
Photo 4 of 19 Negative # 13696

View of South and front (west) elevations looking northeast
Photo 5 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of central block (side passage) from front entrance looking east
Photo 6 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of south wing (parlor) and looking southeast
Photo 7 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of south wing (parlor) looking north
Photo 8 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of north wing (breakfast room) mantle key
Photo 9 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of central block second floor (principal chamber) looking north
Photo 10 of 19 Negative # 13695

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View of north wing attic (chamber) looking south
Photo 11 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of central block attic (hall) looking south
Photo 12 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of central block attic (chamber) looking north
Photo 13 of 19 Negative # 13695

View of contributing meat house northeast of dwelling looking northeast
Photo 14 of 19 Negative # 13696

Closeup of contributing meat house door looking northeast
Photo 15 of 19 Negative # 13697

View of non-contributing shed and contributing barn looking southeast
Photo 16 of 19 Negative # 13696

View of contributing early 20th century carriage house look northwest
Photo 17 of 19 Negative # 13697

Original window framing fragment
Photo 18 of 19 Negative # 13697

View of north wing original roof framing looking north
Photo 19 of 19 Negative # 13697

