

Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Property Information	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #: 041-0037
Property Name(s): <u>Adkisson Farm</u>	
Property Date(s): <u>Ca. 1829; late 1840s; 1959</u> X Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post Open to Public? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Limited X No	
Property Address: <u>7229 Newbill School Road</u> City: <u>Mount Laurel</u> Zip: <u>24534</u>	
County or Ind. City: <u>Halifax County</u> USGS Quad(s): <u>Scottsburg, VA</u>	

Physical Character of General Surroundings	
Acreage: <u>2.2</u> Setting (choose one): <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban X Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor	
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features: The parcel is relatively level, mostly cleared pasture, with some wooded areas. The yard around the house has ornamental plantings including a tall old holly tree.	
Secondary Resource Description (Briefly describe any other structures (or archaeological sites) that may contribute to the significance of the property: described under Architectural Description below	
Ownership Category: X Private <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	

Individual Resource Information	
What was the historical use of this resource? Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc... <u>Farm; single dwelling; school; store and post office</u>	
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) <u>Single dwelling</u>	
Architectural style or elements of styles: <u>Greek Revival</u>	
Architect, builder, or original owner: <u>Mr. Clark (kitchen interior, 2nd quarter 20th century)</u>	
# of stories <u>2</u> Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent X Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Rebuilt <input type="checkbox"/> Renovated	
Are there any known threats to this property? <u>None known</u>	

Resource Component Information

Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer “n/a.” If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.

Foundation: Describe the foundation that supports the structure. Examples include piers, continuous brick, poured concrete. Continuous stone.

Structure: Describe the primary structural component of the resource. Include primary material used. Examples include log, frame (sawn lumber), and brick. Also include the treatment, such as a particular brick bond or type of framing, if known. Log (notching unknown); heavy timber frame.

Walls: Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles. Modern cementitious wood fiber siding.

Windows: Describe the number, material, and form of the primary windows. This includes the number of panes per sash, what the sashes are made of, and how the sashes operate (are they hinged or do they slide vertically) Have the windows been replaced? 6/6 wood sash.

Porch: Briefly describe the primary (front) porch. List the primary material, shape of the porch roof, and other defining details. Modern one-story porch.

Roof: Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material. Gable roofs with modern metal roofing.

Chimney(s): List the number of chimneys and the materials used. Include the brick bond pattern if possible. Three chimneys and a stove flue, all brick. Two of the chimneys are American bond and appear to be antebellum.

Architectural Description of Individual Resource: *(Please describe architectural patterns, types, features, additions, remodelings, or other alterations. A sketch of the current floor plan would be appreciated.)*

The Adkisson Farm, located at 7229 Newbill School Road in northeast Halifax County, is a complex of historic domestic and farm buildings dating from the antebellum period to the early twentieth century. The farmhouse is a classic example of the regional front house/back house form with two-story front and back units joined by a one-story hyphen built in 1959. The back house, which is believed to date to 1829, is log; the front, frame section is believed to date to the late 1840s. The house has gable roofs with modern corrugated metal roofing, modern cementitious wood siding, and historic-period exterior brick chimneys and six-over-six windows. The front entry, sheltered by a modern porch with fluted columns, features a Greek Revival fluted surround with blank corner blocks and a blank center tablet in the lintel. Most alterations are to the rear and include one-story wings and a large deck. The front entry of the front house opens into a wide stair hall with fluted Greek Revival trim (also found in other rooms) and a stair with a newel with a faceted and drilled cap. The interior retains most of its historic mantels, which are of simple Greek Revival form with vestigial Federal influence; two-panel, five-panel, and batten doors (at least one reported to hang on HL hinges); and beaded picture rails. Distinctive features include “peaked” baseboards in the front house parlor, which slope upward from the corners to under the windows; a barred outside parlor entry; and in the room above a wall of presses with six paneled doors bearing plane marks. The rear kitchen was planned by Doris Robertson Adkisson and built by carpenter Oliver Clark in the late 1940s (perhaps 1946) and has cabinets built by Clark which retain their original chrome-finish hinges, although the pulls are modern.

Behind the house is a one-story American-bond brick kitchen and slave dwelling (1853) of conventional two-room form with a gable roof, end chimneys, and a window-door-door-window façade. The batten

doors are studded with nails for decoration and reinforcement, and on one door the nails form a band of diamond shapes. The partially restored interior features a simple mantel in one room and a cooking fireplace with cranes and decorative pot hooks in the other. Nearby are two tall nineteenth-century (probably antebellum) outbuildings, a smokehouse and a dairy, with batten doors and weatherboard siding. East of these are chicken houses, a stock and hay barn, and a carriage house, all from the first half of the twentieth century (the accretive carriage house may incorporate earlier fabric; the barn may date to ca. 1920). The barn has a gambrel roof with a hay bonnet over the end of a hay rail (the hay fork hangs inside) and multiple doors and windows in the lower level. In the mid-twentieth century the barn was used as a cow barn. The carriage house was altered in recent years by the enclosure of formerly open-fronted machinery bays to the left and right of the central two-story section. The upper level of the carriage house was used as a granary. In a field are the collapsed remains of the former Mount Laurel Post Office, a frame building of gable-fronted country store form. Former buildings include a corncrib and, in the woods behind the house, an icehouse, the pit of which was later used for refuse. A brick flower house may have stood in the yard near the house. Also of note is the holly tree in the yard of the house, at over sixty feet tall thought to be one of the tallest of the species in Virginia. The holly is said to have been planted when the Liberty Hall School was in operation on the premises, said to be before 1845.

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the property. (Detailed family genealogies are not necessary.) Please list all sources of information. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Normally, only information contained on this form will be posted for consideration by the State Review Board.

Draft Statement of Significance Summary

The Adkisson Farm constitutes a significant assemblage of domestic and agricultural architecture in rural Halifax County, Virginia. The farmhouse, with a log core possibly dating to ca. 1829, evolved into an expression of the distinctive front house/back house form: two two-story sections linked by a one-story hyphen. The house was acquired by the Adkisson family in the antebellum period and is said to have been used as the Liberty Hall girl's school during the Civil War. In the twentieth century it belonged to agribusinessman William S. Adkisson Jr., who was active in local and national farm organizations, and his wife, Doris Robertson Adkisson, an educator and state home economics agent. In addition to the house, which has Greek Revival mantels and trim, there are an 1853 detached brick kitchen of standard two-room form; antebellum smokehouse and dairy; and a carriage house and gambrel-roofed barn from the first half of the twentieth century. The Adkisson Farm is potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for its relatively intact complement of domestic and farm buildings spanning a hundred or more years of development, and under Criterion B in the agricultural area of significance for its association with prominent agribusinessman William S. Adkisson Jr. The resource is potentially eligible at the local level of significance.

Historic Context

Research conducted for *An Architectural History of Halifax County, Virginia* (2016) proposes a date of ca. 1829 for construction of the earliest section of the house. According to one account, Clement Mayo Adkisson (b. ca. 1809) purchased the property from Henry E. Coleman in 1839; another account states the purchase occurred in another fashion about 1835. Either way, Clem Adkisson's purchase established an Adkisson family association that continued into the modern era. According to an undated *News & Record* article by Ruth Daniel Ford, based on an interview with later owner William S. Adkisson Jr., the log part of the house was used as the Liberty Hall school prior to 1845, the front frame section was built in 1845-48, and the brick kitchen was built in 1953. Clement Adkisson operated a store at Mt. Laurel, apparently on the farm; his 1859-61 account book is in the Virginia Tech special collections.

Clement married Mary Webb Sydnor in 1849 and their son, William S. Adkisson Sr. (b. 1857), owned the farm at the end of the nineteenth century. An 1893 business directory lists William as a general merchant and postmaster of the Mount Laurel Post Office, which was presumably located in the store building which remains in ruinous condition on the property. At the time the store and post office would have been one of the hubs of the diffuse Mount Laurel community, which included a hotel and an Episcopal Church. At some point the store moved to its current location at the main Mount Laurel crossroads.

William Adkisson's son, William S. Adkisson Jr. (1907-2002), has been described by local historian M. W. Lewis as "one of the leading citizens of the community [and] one of the largest land owners in Halifax Co. at the time of his death." William Jr. graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in 1929 and took a teaching job in Halifax County. He left teaching in 1935 to farm and subsequently became active in numerous local, state, and regional organizations. He was president of the Halifax Farm Bureau in 1946 and, the same year, was an incorporator of the Flue-Cured Tobacco Stabilization Corporation, an organization of tobacco growers from Virginia to Florida that developed into the U.S. Tobacco Cooperative Inc. Adkisson was also an insurance agent and tree farmer (his daughter Jane Belt considers him an "early conservationist" for his tree replanting practices). W. B. Barbour, a South Boston physician and publicist who was instrumental in organizing the National Tobacco Festivals held in South Boston from 1935 to 1941, included Adkisson among the community's "Present Day Builders" in his book "*Halifacts*" (1941). Adkisson was also the author of a history of his church, Hunting Creek Baptist Church. His daughters Mary Pritchard and Jane Belt recall that he was a tireless advocate for rural electrification in the 1930s, traveling around the region to convince farm families of the benefits of electricity.

In 1946 Adkisson married Doris Robertson, a graduate of Longwood College with a master in home economics from the University of Tennessee. Prior to her marriage Robertson served as a home economics agent for the state of Virginia, her region including Halifax County and Lynchburg among other areas. She later taught school and was active in a number of community organizations.

One tradition claims that the Liberty Hall school operated in the house during the Civil War period, having relocated to Mount Laurel from Richmond, presumably to safeguard the students. The school is believed to have had an Episcopal affiliation. Detailed information on the school has not yet come to light, although about 1860 a schoolmaster named Pike Powers is known to have operated a school for boys at Mount Laurel. Halifax County school historian Thomas Barksdale has noted, "Hostilities in 1861 virtually closed our schools, and after the war, until the inauguration of the public free-school system, only a few private schools maintained a precarious existence." Barksdale described two female academies founded about 1840 which operated into the 1850s, Black Walnut Female Seminary and Spring Hill Academy (Barksdale did not mention a Liberty Hall school).

Sources

Adkisson, William S., Jr. *History of Hunting Creek Baptist Church, Dan River Baptist Association, 1775-1963*. Ca. 1965.

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Barbour, W. B., comp. "*Halifacts*" Danville, Va.: J. T. Townes Printing, 1941.

Barksdale, Thomas E. "Progress of Education in the County of Halifax from its Formation." In *Virginia School Report, 1885*. Richmond: Rush U. Derr, 1885.

Belt, Jane A. Personal communication with the author, January 2017.

Brock, Robert Alonzo. *History of Virginia from Settlement of Jamestown to Close of the Civil War*. Richmond: H. H. Hardesty, 1888.

Chataigne, J. H., comp. *Chataigne's Virginia Gazetteer and Classified Business Directory, 1893-94*. Richmond: J. H. Chataigne, 1893.

DeRamus, Philippa. Personal communication with the author, December 2016 and January 2017.

Ford, Ruth Daniel. Article on William S. Adkisson Jr. and the Mount Laurel community. *News & Record* (South Boston, Va.).

Halifax County Historical Society Architectural Committee. *An Architectural History of Halifax County, Virginia*. South Boston, Va.: Halifax County Historical Society, 2016.

Lewis, M. W. "A Brief History of Mount Laurel." Article at the Old Halifax website (<http://www.oldhalifax.com/county/MtLaurelHistoryAdkisson.htm>), accessed January 5, 2017. (The article is older than the website.)

"Mount Laurel." Article at the Old Halifax website (<http://www.oldhalifax.com/county/MtLaurelHistoryAdkisson.htm>), accessed January 5, 2017. Information in the article was derived from Edmunds, Pocahontas Wight. *A History of Halifax*. Reprint (volumes 1 and 2) by Halifax County Historical Society, 2008.

Pezzoni, J. Daniel. "An Architectural History of Halifax County, Virginia." Manuscript prepared for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the Halifax County Historical Society, 2008.

Pritchard, Mary A. Personal communication with the author, January 2017.

U.S. Tobacco Cooperative Inc. website (<http://www.ustobaccofarmer.com/>), accessed January 5, 2017.

The Virginia Farm Bureau News, February 1946.

Legal Owner(s) of the Property (For more than one owner, please use a separate sheet.)

Mr. Mrs. Dr.
Miss Ms. Hon.

_____ (Name) _____ (Firm)

_____ (Address) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip Code)

_____ (Email Address) _____ (Daytime telephone including area code)

Owner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: ()

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

Mr. Mrs. Dr.
Miss Ms. Hon.

J. Daniel Pezzoni Landmark Preservation Associates
_____ (Name) _____ (Firm)

6 Houston St. Lexington VA 24450
_____ (Address) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip Code)

gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net (540) 464-5315
_____ (Email Address) _____ (Daytime telephone including area code)

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. Mrs. Dr.
Miss Ms. Hon.

James M. Halasz County Administrator
_____ (Name) _____ (Position)

Halifax County PO Box 699
_____ (Locality) _____ (Address)

Halifax VA 24558 (434) 476-3300
_____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip Code) _____ (Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

I am seeking an evaluation of my property because I am interested in preserving Virginia's history, much of which is being lost or destroyed. My home was built by a Virginia landowner, used as a girls school during the Civil War, and added on to during tobacco's heyday in this region. The home reflects that history as well as its southern roots of beams with an original log structure and an outdoor stand alone kitchen building with quarters. The home and outbuildings are situated on a former stage coach route alongside other fine examples of tobacco's influence in this county. I feel the historical designation will be an example to others that remembering and honoring our past helps us build a better future.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes No

Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes No

Adkisson Farm

041-0037

January 2017

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