



## PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

What in the

**DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 042-5792**

AE Site individually recorded in March 2016 as # 44HN0416

### Purpose of Evaluation

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

#### Background information:

The efforts to preserve and recognize the importance of the Hickory Hill Slave and African American Cemetery date back almost 30 years (1989). Descendants of former slaves living in the Ashland-Hanover community including three neighborhoods known as New Town, Middle Town and Jamestown around the periphery of Hickory Hill and South Wales plantations were concerned that the above cemetery might be desecrated by building over graves or the graves removed. An August 1988 newspaper article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch about a proposed \$1.2 billion dollar “development” project by Gulfstream of Virginia on the 3,300 acre Hickory Hill Plantation (including upscale housing for 15,000 new residents, 8.5 million square feet of office parks, light industry and shopping centers, an 18 hole golf course, estate lots an equestrian village and trails, lakes and marina on the Pamunkey River)<sup>1</sup> The refusal of the Gulfstream of Virginia President to acknowledge the existence of this “alleged black cemetery” during a meeting and subsequent comments reported in the RTD and Herald-Progress galvanized us to do research and elicit scholarly opinions about the significance of the burials at the site.

Calder Loth at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources who had worked with the original Hickory Hill application, Lee Shepherd of the Virginia Historical Society Library who had worked with the Wickham family papers, and Ed Chappell archeologist at Colonial Williamsburg who had evaluated the architecture at Hickory Hill were consulted and provided invaluable assistance in our efforts to fully understand and then, educate the public about the importance of the slaves who lived and worked on Hickory Hill. I was then a post-doctoral research associate on the African Diaspora Research Project at Michigan State University as well as a visiting professor of Sociology at the University of Richmond. Consequently, Cathy Floyd a senior sociology major at UR did brilliant research using William Fanning Wickham’s list of slaves.<sup>2</sup> In 1993, Ruth Simms Hamilton, the director of the ADRP at Michigan State published “Cemeteries of as Loci of Diasporan Memory: The Case of Hickory Hill” as the lead article in the international publication in *Conexoes*. This enabled us to synthesize comparative research about slave cemeteries and solicit expert perspectives about the importance of preserving the slave cemetery at Hickory Hill as well as publicizing it.

Gulfstream went bankrupt due to the Savings and Loan crisis of 1989 and the threat seemingly disappeared. In 2007 during Governor Tim Kane’s administration the 501-C3 organization “Citizen’s for Hanover’s Future” successfully lobbied Hanover County Delegate Frank Hargrove to sponsor an initiative for the state to buy the property for a state park. The Wickham heirs declined the offer and subsequently sold approximately half of the plantation (including the cemetery) to Rogers-Chenault.

We let the ball drop and time elapsed. Just over three years ago I met Jean Folly for the first time after an event by Hanover County Black Heritage Society. She informed me that she and George Winston were concerned

---

<sup>1</sup> Gilligan, Gregory, “\$1billion Project eyed in Hanover” Richmond Times-Dispatch August 31, 1988, pp. 1 and 8.

<sup>2</sup> Floyd, Cathy, “An Interpretation of the Hickory Hill Slave Genealogies,” University of Richmond, Department of Sociology unpublished Individual Studies Paper, December 18, 1991.

that access to the cemetery was blocked by a cable with a lock on it. This initiated attempting to work with the new developers. After the dedication of the Janie Porter Barrett School for Negro Girls I met Marc Warner on October 28, 2015 who has encouraged and advised us about nominating the Hickory Hill Cemetery. Since contacting Todd Rogers, he and Terry Cave, the project manager, have been extremely supportive of our renewed efforts to make sure all of the burials are protected, maintain the access road and provide access. At our request, Rogers-Chenault commissioned Dutton + Associates to conduct a second expensive delineation that did not discover any burials outside the fenced-in area as reported in January 2017. Rogers-Chenault then approved us moving forward with this nomination.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X

## 1. General Property Information

Property name: Hickory Hill Slave and African American Cemetery

Property address: Access to and bounded by Providence Church Road/Wickham Lane on the west.

City or Town: Ashland (outside Town of Ashland boundary, but church has Ashland postal address

Zip code: 23005

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Hanover County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building \_\_\_\_\_ Site X Structure \_\_\_\_\_ Object \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 2.419 Acres (The cemetery is located on an 746 acre preservation lot)

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban \_\_\_\_\_ Suburban \_\_\_\_\_ Town \_\_\_\_\_ Village \_\_\_\_\_ Hamlet \_\_\_\_\_ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

The graveyard lies east of Ashland and west of Hanover Courthouse in Hanover County in the Atlantic Coastal Plain Physiographic Province on the approximately 180 – 195 foot contours above Mean Average Sea Level (MASL). The graveyard lies on the Ashland 7.5 Minute USGS Quadrangle sheet. The cemetery is located on upland interior topography in the Pamunkey River watershed. The project area is roughly bounded by Providence Church Road on the west, route 798 on the south, the C&O (CSX) railroad line on the east and northeast in route 646 on the northwest. Shop Branch Creek (unnamed on USGS, but labeled on the 1978 plat) drains the project into the Pamunkey River.

Topography on the project is gently rolling. The uplands are relatively dissected with drainage going into the above stream, a tributary of the Pamunkey River.

Source: Lyle, Browning RPA; "Hickory Hill, Slave, and African-American Cemetery Delineation, Hanover County, Virginia" 2007.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): NA

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: \_\_\_\_\_

If the builder is known, please list here: NA

Date of construction (can be approximate): NA

#### **Narrative Description:**

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

The following information is taken from the "Hickory Hill Slave and African-American Cemetery Delineation, Hanover County, Virginia by Lyle E. Browning, RPA. Browning and Associates, LTD. 2009

"Visual examination of the slave and African-American cemetery at Hickory Hill identified 149 features consistent with graves. Most were not marked. To marked graves had types marble tablet types with the names, birth and death dates with the fraternal Association of the Grand United Order of Damon. The Knights of Damon were the Jim Crow mirror organizations for the African-American community in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were apparently in association with the on Fellows Lodge.

The survey boundaries and locations of graves on the overall property map clearly show the location and distributions of graves within the graveyard. It is highly likely that a large number of unmarked graves exist on the northern half of the graveyard where the *ad hoc* marker was found. These should be the oldest interments in the graveyard as nearly all appear to have infilled to nearly ground level.

We would recommend to be absolutely safe, that's an additional 100 foot buffer around the outside of the boundary be designated as part of the graveyard to ensure that all the graves are within its limits. As the area will not be disturbed, further work is not recommended.

"Hickory Hill Slave and African American Cemetery Delineation Hanover County, Virginia"

Survey and report by Lyle Browning, RP, principal investigator Browning and Associates, LTD 2007 Page 9

#### **RESULTS**

In addition to vinca, ornamental vegetation observed was Yucca and Iris. A wooden fence around part of the graveyard was shown by a single remnant corner post. Inside the limits of the graveyard, two concrete posts showed the location of what we interpreted as a former gate. Near it to the west was a granite plinth typical of a corner marker.

We flagged that the locations of obvious graves and those depressions that were consistent with graves using wire flags. We also observed several humps that were consistent with vaults. Balzer then surveyed the locations by transit and located them onto their maps. We noted 149 graves in the graveyard. We also placed survey tape around the perimeter of the graveyard as tightly as we could reasonably estimate the limits. The northeastern side of the graveyard was problematical in that we observed graves north and east of the granite plinth and the concrete gateposts. One had an *ad hoc* marker in a reddish slate inscribed with what appeared to be a first name is James. In that area we pushed the limits out to the approach road. We also looked be on the road and into the

cutover timber to determine if graves were present. While vinca had grown into one cutover area, there were no discernible indications of graves.

Inside the graveyard, there were two marble markers. The two names were:

<u>Individual's Name</u>	<u>Marker Type</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Death Date</u>	<u>Age</u>
Tarrer, Barbara	Marble Tablet	1874/08/20	1928/05/29	53
Lewis, Bernard	Marble Tablet	1905/03/18	1926/04/25	21

Tarrer's marker had G.U.O. K of D Hanover Lodge 20 and Lewis had Knights of Damon inscribed on each. The Knights of Damon were an African-American fraternal order that also had a burial society that later became a civil rights group due to court actions taken.

In addition, there were three metal markers. These had glass plates over a typewritten card. In one, the first name was legible while the last name had been obliterated by weather.

<u>Individual's Name</u>	<u>Marker Type</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Death Date</u>	<u>Age</u>
*washed out, James	Metal with paper	ca: 1913	1946/05/29	~33

We noted three graves with objects in association. It has been noted that African-American burial, mourning and remembrance procedures often have beverage bottles, drinking glasses and similar items in association with graves. We noted one grave with an amber beer bottle at the foot, another with a quart Mason jar at the foot and a third with a galvanized bucket in the center. Whether the bottle is anything more than a casual discard by later hunters is open to interpretation, but the Mason jar and bucket are consistent with documented African-American ethno-historical and archaeologically observed practices.<sup>3</sup>

We correlated the location of the cemetery with the 1878 plat and noted that it was adjacent to a set of houses labeled as "quarters". This would be a standard practice for the slaves to have been buried near to their quarters and later tenant houses. The later African-American burials are presumed to be the descendants of slaves from the plantation. .

The cemetery is also within a National Register of historic places (NRHP) property. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) file on Hickory Hill has a map delineating the NRHP boundary and it does include the cemetery (annotated on to Figure 4 herein). Also, there is an extensive discussion of the graveyard with a rather vague map of the location, but which does include the area we demarcated. This was done in relation to her previous development template did not take the cemetery into account. This survey should therefore alleviate those concerns to the extent possible.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

NA

<sup>3</sup> A 1989 photo of a wooden arbor made by a husband for his wife's grave with living descendant George Henry Winston is attached. (photo by Julia Zimmerman) DRD

#### 4. Property's History and Significance (Ethnic Heritage/African American Social History)

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The legacy of the most notable Virginia families (Littlepage, Carter, and Wickham) who owned South Wales and surrounding lands that would be incorporated into the 3,000 plus acres known as Hickory Hill<sup>4</sup> is augmented by an event that occurred during the Civil War. Most of those families' history is widely known. In the midst of the Civil war General Robert E. Lee's son, Gen. William Henry Fitzhugh "Rooney" Lee who was married to Charlotte Georgiana Wickham (a half-sister of William and Edward Wickham) was captured at Hickory Hill while recuperating from a war injury suffered two weeks earlier at the battle of Brandy Station, June 9, 1863.

However, it was the labor of the enslaved men, women and children who generated the wealth of the families that owned Shirley (at least 140 Shirley slaves were sent to Hickory Hill as dowry from two Carter sisters Anne Butler Carter and Lucy Nelson Carter). Subsequently, on their double marriage December 9, 1819 at Shirley these enslaved individuals were transferred to William Fanning Wickham and Edward Fanning Wickham along with the approximately 3,000 acres of South Wales when it was divided between the two Wickham brothers. Thus, the Hickory Hill Slave and African-American Cemetery is virtually the only tangible evidence of the existence of and contributions made by the slaves who spent their lives in bondage on the plantations. Given that aside from some rocks that served as plinths (not dated), those remains are indicated only by depressions in the wooded area. Although only two readable grave markers of the post slave era remain (see below), we used oral histories to compile a list of 16 additional burials made since emancipation. Due to the fact that Volume 4 of the Wickham's diaries for the years 1847-1849 is missing, the lack of known recorded burials following emancipation, and our very sparse oral history information, it would be safe to assume that a substantial number of additional burials have occurred in the cemetery. Furthermore, via personal communication with Lois Wickham back in 1989 and Dr. Hill Carter (current owner and resident of South Wales) in 2016, James Littlepage the first known American owner of South Wales who freed his slaves in his will before the American Revolution, may have used the same cemetery. There is no known slave cemetery on the present South Wales plantation.

Historically, what makes the slave cemetery more significant in its own right is that the meticulous list of names recorded by William F. Wickham in his "Plantation Diaries." Between 1828 and 1864 in eight volumes Wickham that constitute one of the best known documented list of names, dates of death, frequently kinship and in the case for those who came from Shirley, Wickham provided estimates of the ages for the 146 in the first list of the 146 slaves. In fact, Cathy Qureshi (nee) Floyd while a student at the University of Richmond in 1980 discerned that Hickory Hill owner William F. Wickham used parallel "slash marks" (//) to denote separate families in all eight volumes. Based on this insight, she then prepared eight family genealogies<sup>5</sup>.

[Nota Bene: Since 1989 a number of testimonials by descendants as well as members of the Wickham (Hickory Hill) and Carter (South Wales) families affirming burial of slaves at this cemetery. Please see the attached Excel spread sheet that lists all the slaves recorded by William Fanning Wickham who died between 1829 and 1864 along with names (except for babies who died before names were bestowed upon them, for a majority of deaths,

---

<sup>4</sup> In searching for how Hickory Hill became the name for the portion of South Wales plantation that Ann Butler Carter inherited from her father Robert Carter (bequeathed to him by her grandfather Charles Carter), we found that in 1820 William F. Wickham acquired an "inholding" of 315 acres surrounded by South Wales from the heirs of former Governor of Virginia, William Smith who died in the Richmond Theater fire of 1911. Governor Smith's house on that land was called Hickory Hill. Source: Ancient

<sup>5</sup> Floyd, Cathy, "An Interpretation of the Hickory Hill Plantation Genealogies" Individual Studies unpublished paper, Department of Sociology, University of Richmond, December 18, 1991.

dates of death and for those who came from Shirley approximate age at death (some identified by blue print – identification is still in process.)

First recorded death:

Old Tom Bunn*	Male	9 Jan 1829	~55
---------------	------	------------	-----

Last recorded death:

Warrington	son of Tamar	male	29 Jan 1864
------------	--------------	------	-------------

Warrington is number 138 of the recorded deaths.

“It’s a connection. We are connected and we live to stay connected. If we don’t know where we came from, we don’t know where we are going.” (George Henry Winston, Oral history recorded September 12, 2017)

“Having the cemetery registered nationally is important to me because my ancestors were apart of that historical era. Many stories were shared with my family by my maternal great-grandmother, Betty Pemberton. I have passed these stories on to others. I think it's important for not just my family members to have access to the cemetery, but students and others to be able to see and better understand the events that took place there. The importance of the souls buried there should be remembered, valued and shared with everyone.” Jean W. Folly, September 12, 20017.

Excerpts from three previous letters of support for preservation of the cemetery are provided below:

“There is the need to preserve the cemeteries of African-Americans, especially those who died in slavery. The imperative for the preservation lays in the moral significance of the memorials these cemeteries and gravesites represent. Historically, the preservation of the cemeteries enshrines the culture and *esprit de corps* of the people who helped to make a nation great, notwithstanding the exclusion of them as equal citizens. The community needs to acknowledge and respect the rights, if not in life, surely in death to rest beneath the sod where they labored. Death for the slave was a “right of passage” to freedom. (Personal communication from Rev. Levy M. Armwood, Jr., October 19, 1993. Then pastor of Providence Baptist Church -- on land once part of former Hickory Hill Plantation.)

According to Virginia Commonwealth University, Professor Emeritus of History Philip J. Schwarz “The gravesites of African-Americans have enormous symbolic importance above and beyond the genetic relationship of the deceased to living descendants. Any single grave of an African-American represents a monument to the past of a people whose history has too often either been under emphasized or distorted... Any obliteration of such a site is really another kind of destruction of Black history. It is also a denial of black Americans’ African roots since so many West African ethnic groups regarding deceased ancestors and still very much present in the living community. (Personal communication from Philip J. Schwarz – January 4, 1989)

“The Hickory Hill burial complex is therefore extremely important, first and foremost, because, as a place where family and friends are buried, it represents sacred ground for many families in the Ashland area and stands as an obvious heritage of historical association. It is important as well to all Virginians, and to all persons interested in ethnic studies, and to the plantation era more generally. Because of its rural location in a wooded, relatively isolated area, it has survived more or less in undisturbed condition. To the experienced eye, the historic burials suggest important elements of West African influence, in for example, the random burial patterns and the use of cedar trees as head and foot markers. The presence of both historical and contemporary burials suggests something of the dynamic process of transformation and adaptation experienced by African–American communities as they interacted increasingly with Euro-American in particular with the white Christian community. In short, the Hickory Hill Cemetery is a unique historical significance, not only for Virginians but

for Southern history more generally. We hope therefore that you will give a special protection and thereby preserve it for future generations. (Excerpt of letter to John Hodges, Division of Planning, Hanover County from Sylvia R. Frey, Associate Professor of History, Tulane University and Post Doctoral Fellow National Museum of American History and Spencer R. Crew, Supervisor/Curator Division of Community Life, National Museum of American History – April 24, 1989<sup>6</sup>.)

---

<sup>6</sup> Sylvia Frey and distinguished anthropologist Teresa Singleton, also a fellow at the NMAH specializing in African-American cemeteries, accompanied Betty Burleigh and George Winston to the cemetery in the spring of 1989.  
Department of Historic Resources

**5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply):

Private:  X  Public\Local \_\_\_\_\_ Public\State \_\_\_\_\_ Public\Federal \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title:  Rogers-Chenault, Inc. Todd. D. Rogers   
organization:  Rogers-Chenault, Inc   
street & number:  9245 /Shady Grove Road, Ste. 200   
city or town:  Mechanicsville  state:  Virginia  zip code:  23116   
e-mail:  toddr@R-Ci.net  telephone:  (804) 569-1534

Legal Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Permission was sent to the V

*•• 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)

name/title:  D. Reber Dunkel, Ph.D.   
organization:  Descendants and Friends of Hickory Hill Slave and African-American Cemetery   
street & number:  2060 Dutch Ridge Road   
city or town:  Guysville  state:  Ohio  zip code:  45735   
e-mail:  ddunkel@rmc.edu  telephone:  (804) 994-8092

**6. 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.

name/title:  Cecil R. "Rhu" Harris, Jr./County Administrator,   
locality:  Hanover   
street & number:  7516 County Complex Road   
city or town:  Hanover  state:  VA  zip code:  23069   
telephone:  (804) 365-6005