



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 071-5552

Purpose of Evaluation

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

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

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

1. General Property Information

Property name: Walton-Carter Farm

Property address: 501 Deerfield Drive

City or Town: Ringgold, VA

Zip code: 24586

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

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

Building X Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: approximately 60 acres

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 property is located in rolling topography watered by branches and creeks that flow into the Dan River. Historically the farm and its surroundings were devoted to tobacco cultivation, although tobacco is not as common as it once was and portions of this farm and surrounding farms have grown up in woods.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Period Cottage (Tudor Revival-influenced; main house)

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

If the builder is known, please list here: unknown

Date of construction (can be approximate): Ca. 1890 (oldest farm buildings)

#### **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 core area of the Walton Farm includes approximately ten historic resources dating from ca. 1890 to the 1950s. The largest of these resources is a two-and-a-half-story frame building that served as a community packhouse providing leaf tobacco storage and processing facilities to the farm's tenants and surrounding farmers. The building has a gable roof with decorative rafter ends in the eaves, weatherboard siding with traces of white paint, an original shed-roofed front drive through, and a stone basement level. Other than wire-nailed window shutters, only cut nails have been observed in the construction, which lends support to the ca. 1891 date of construction suggested by tradition and tax records (ca. 1891 would be on the late side for cut nails but the building's rural context may partly explain their use). A notable exterior/interior feature is the windows, which (where they survive) consist of six-pane sashes that pivot on center pintels, somewhat like later steel-framed hopper and awning windows. The sashes have crescent-shaped cast iron handles.

In outer appearance the packhouse is similar to the rural tobacco factories that preceded it, for example the 1850s Brooklyn Tobacco Factory a few miles away in Halifax County. The similarity extends to the interior, which has a front office and hand-operated lift with large work areas behind. The ceilings have exposed structure whereas the walls are sheathed with beaded tongue-and-groove boards. Large removable wood racks for hanging tobacco leaves exist on all three levels; on the first floor their uprights fit into sockets in ceiling-mounted boards. The basement level has a clay-floored ordering room where leaves were hung for moistening with ambient moisture from the ground. Also in the basement is a pile of an estimated 20,000 tobacco sticks; a wall surface with what appears to be ca. 1950s newspaper wallpaper; and a small, formerly partitioned-off room with a stove where workers in the unheated building could warm themselves. Areas of the interior are covered with graffiti in chalk, pencil, and carved. Names, initials, and cyphering predominate; no dates have yet been observed.

Near the packhouse is the main dwelling, a story-and-a-half house with a side-gable roof and brick-veneer exterior built in 1950. The house is a type commonly known as a Period Cottage in nearby North Carolina; its principal stylistic influence is Tudor Revival, represented by a gabled front porch with a segmental-arched opening. Near the house stand a contemporaneous garage with novelty weatherboard siding; a tool house known as "the cottage"; a 1970s cinder-block smokehouse; and a trailer. Beyond are a two-level ca. 1890s weatherboard-sided building that served as a tool shed and wagon shelter with a basement used for tobacco processing; a hen house and slatted corncrib (both apparently twentieth century); and a poured concrete mount for a salt block. At the periphery of the

complex stand three v-notched log tobacco barns, at least two of which are constructed with cut nails suggesting a ca. 1890s date. The barns were designed for flue curing, with tier poles for hanging the leaf and fire boxes and exhaust vents for the wood-fired heat source (the barns were later converted to oil heat). Additional tobacco barns once stood on the place, and in 1944 two tenant houses stood a short distance east of the community packhouse. A large chicken house, built before 1966, stands across Deerfield Drive from the area proposed for designation.

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.

See above.

#### 4. Property's History and Significance

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.

##### *Draft Statement of Significance*

The Walton Farm, located in the Ringgold vicinity of southeastern Pittsylvania County, Virginia, represents a relatively complete tobacco farm dating from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The farm's highlight is a large frame building that served as a community packhouse for area farmers. Tradition dates the packhouse to the early 1890s, a period when then-owner John T. Walton was assembling holdings of over 1,000 acres. The largely intact building features a hand-operated lift, tobacco racks, a clay-floored ordering room, a front office, and pivoting windows. The current primary dwelling on the property is a brick-veneered Tudor Revival-influenced house built in 1950. The farm includes three flue-cure tobacco barns of log, a tool and wagon shed, a corncrib, a henhouse, and other agricultural and domestic outbuildings. The Walton Farm is potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the Agriculture area of significance for its resources associated with tobacco cultivation, foremost among them the community packhouse. The farm is also potentially eligible under Criterion C in the Architecture area of significance for its diversity of building types, periods, and methods of construction. The Walton Farm is potentially eligible at the local level of significance.

##### *Historic Context*

John T. Walton (1856-1934) and his first wife, Eliza Walton (1854-1928), lived and farmed on the headwaters of Double Creek, a branch of the Dan River, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A 1930s Supreme Court of Virginia case involving the farm included the following statements: "John T. Walton, when he married his first wife, was a man without means. His wife inherited a small estate. By hard work and careful management, with the active assistance of his first wife, he managed to accumulate approximately one thousand acres of valuable tobacco land." According to county tax records, in 1889 and 1890 Walton's Double Creek home tract of nearly 300 acres had buildings valued at \$600 (Walton also owned another tract of just over 400 acres). In 1891 the Double Creek acreage increased to 890 acres, raising the total to over 1,000 acres, and the value of buildings on the home tract increased to \$2,500. This is interpreted to reflect the construction of the community packhouse in 1890 and/or 1891, a date that is consistent with tradition and architectural evidence.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A deed for the additional acreage has not been located, and therefore it is currently unclear whether the added acreage included valuable buildings that could explain the increase in building value between 1890 and 1891, although for the reasons given the increase is interpreted to reflect the packhouse construction. The value of buildings on a slightly smaller (743 acres) home tract was \$1,500 in 1900. Mary Ethel Hanks Carter, a later owner whose association with the farm began in the second quarter of the twentieth century, stated in a 1988 interview that the community packhouse was built "a few years after World War I," but she also noted that she was not certain of dates.

The community packhouse, identified as “large pack house” on a 1944 survey, presumably originally served a packhouse or “packing barn” function.<sup>2</sup> As a large community packhouse the building may be without precedent in the Virginia/North Carolina bright leaf tobacco growing region, according to architectural historians familiar with the historic tobacco-related resources of the region. The existence of an office in the building suggests sophisticated record keeping, and that may indicate a commercial aspect (although the office may have been more in the nature of a farm office used by Walton to manage his farming operations as well as the packhouse). Neighboring farmers availed themselves of the building, and it may be that the packhouse functioned as a consolidated facility for Walton’s farm tenants; rather than each tenant building a packhouse, one building served all. Deeds from the 1890s record sharecropping arrangements between Walton and others. For example, in 1899 a tenant owed Walton \$587 which was to be paid with “his crop [of] corn, tobacco, wheat & oats now growing or lately grown” on Walton’s lands. It may be that Walton built the packhouse to store and process tobacco given to him as payment in various business deals and tenancy or sharecropping arrangements.

Later owner Mary Ethel Hanks Carter stated in a 1988 interview, recorded while she and interviewers from the Smithsonian Institution walked around the packhouse, “And up here [the main or first floor of the packhouse] they’d bring it [tobacco] when they’d finish so they could prepare to get it on the truck to carry it to Danville or wherever they had the auction. Or the buyers would come here and buy it in the first stages [basement level?] of this building.” Carter’s comments suggest an auction warehouse function for the building, which is interesting considering most tobacco auctioneering occurred at centralized locations like Danville and South Boston by the end of the nineteenth century. Carter’s reference to a truck may reflect her early memories of the building, since truck transport, as opposed to wagon transport, would have been an option after about 1920. Although there is as yet no evidence the building served for manufacturing tobacco products like plug tobacco or cigarettes, it is at least superficially similar to the tobacco factories of its era, though it apparently lacked the specialized equipment that would have been found in such buildings. The cycling of the tobacco through the building at various stages of its preparation is also reminiscent of period tobacco factories.

Eliza Walton died in 1928 and in 1930 John married Myrtle I. Brown, a widow and employee of the Dan River Cotton Mills. Walton’s estate passed to Myrtle after his death in 1934, resulting in a settlement dispute that was resolved in Myrtle’s favor. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, Mary Ethel Hanks Carter, who was raised by Myrtle, and Mary Ethel’s husband, Allen Carter, farmed the place. The fifteen-room Walton house burned and Allen Carter built the current residence on the same site in 1950. The Allens’ daughter Rebecca Wilson recalls the community packhouse remained in use for packing tobacco until about 1965. In his later years Allen Carter switched his focus to cattle and chickens. Large-scale chicken farming was underway in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

### *Sources*

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the following architectural historians and tobacco resource specialists: Catherine Bishir, Marvin Brown, and Ruth Little.

Carter, Ethel [Mary Ethel Hanks]. “Smithsonian Interview with Ethel Carter, September, 1988.” Subtitled “Ethel Carter and Charlotte Haransky, Ringgold, Virginia, September 22, 1988.” Transcript by Margaret McKinnon.

---

<sup>2</sup> Local historian James Osborne, writing in 2000, identifies the building as a tobacco factory where tobacco was “made into cigars, chewing tobacco, and possibly cigarettes,” although support for this identification has not been found in other sources.

Chataigne, J. H., comp. *Chataigne's Virginia Business Directory and Gazetteer, 1880-81*. Richmond, Va.: Baughman Brothers, 1880.

"Map showing Mrs. Myrtle Walton's Farm, subdivided Sept. 25-29, 1944."

Osborne, James. "Remembrances." Volume 2. 2000.

Pezzoni, J, Daniel. "Brooklyn Tobacco Factory." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Downtown Danville Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1993.

Pittsylvania County deed, tax (land book), and will records. Pittsylvania County Courthouse, Chatham, Va.

"Pittsylvania County. Va. Sketch Map." January 1, 1931. Pittsylvania County Courthouse, Chatham, Va.

Pollock, Edward. *Illustrated Sketchbook of Danville, Va.* Danville, Va.: Danville Historical Society, 1976 (reprint of 1885 publication).

Walton v. Walton, 168 Va. 418 (1937 Supreme Court of Virginia case).

Wilson, James. Personal communication, April 2018.

Wilson, Rebecca. Personal communication, April 2018.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

organization: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: \_\_\_\_\_

city or town: \_\_\_\_\_ state: \_\_\_\_\_ zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal 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)

name/title: J. Daniel Pezzoni

organization: Landmark Preservation Associates

street & number: 6 Houston St.

city or town: Lexington state: Virginia zip code: 24450

e-mail: gilespezzoni@rockbridge.net telephone: (540) 464-5315

**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: David M. Smitherman, County Administrator

locality: Pittsylvania County

street & number: PO Box 426

city or town: Chatham state: VA zip code: 24531

telephone: (434) 432-7710

# Walton Farm

Pittsylvania Co., Va.

07-5552

Draft inventory: partial, scale and placement of resources approximate

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. House           | 8. The Cottage     |
| 2. Large packhouse | 9. Trailer         |
| 3. Small packhouse | 10. Tobacco barn   |
| 4. Corncrib        | 11. Tobacco barn   |
| 5. Smokehouse      | 12. Tobacco barn   |
| 6. Hen house       | 13. Machinery shed |
| 7. Garage          |                    |

