

## Department of Historic Resources

For Immediate Release

December 29, 2009

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### STATE APPROVES 16 NEW HISTORIC RESOURCES FOR LISTING ON THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

*–Listings cover landmarks in the counties of Botetourt, Campbell, Fauquier, Floyd, Henrico, King and Queen, Mathews, Nottaway, Smyth, Washington and Westmoreland; and the cities/towns of Charlottesville, Portsmouth, Richlands, Saltville, Staunton, and Winchester–*

RICHMOND – A former mill village where workers produced cloth for military uniforms, a Civil War battlefield associated with the Confederacy's major source of salt production, and the place where a signer of the Declaration of Independence was born and raised were among the 16 new listings approved for the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Department of Historic Resources in December.

The Woolen Mills Historic District encompasses a village central to **Charlottesville's** history since a mill opened there in 1829. Located at the foot of Monticello Mountain, along the Rivanna River, Woolen Mills developed into one of the city's and the region's most noteworthy industries, producing cloth for military uniforms from the late 19th century through the 1950s. Although many of the company mill town's early factories are now vanished, its brick mill buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries remain, as do brick and frame houses in a range of styles built during the mid-19th through the early 20th centuries for or by mill employees.

Home to generations of families who worked in its mills, the village was annexed by Charlottesville in 1968. The historic district's period of significance begins with 1847, the date of the earliest company-built housing, and ends in 1962, the year the mills closed. Today's historic district today still evokes a late 19th-century industrial village.

The 2,737-acre Saltville Battlefields Historic District in **Saltville**, and including portions of both **Smyth** and **Washington** counties, comprises the two battlefields on which Confederate and Union forces during the autumn of 1864 contested control of the Confederacy's most important source of salt, an essential commodity.

The district also encompasses the remains of the extraction, processing, and transportation facilities associated with the saltworks operations and an extensive system of well preserved field fortifications built in 1863 and 1864 to defend the saltworks.

Three important architectural properties associated with the battles also survive including the home of William A. Stuart (brother of the Confederate cavalry general J.E.B. Stuart), which served as the headquarters for Union Gen. George Stoneman and his officers during the battle.

Newington, the birthplace and boyhood home of Carter Braxton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, contains a rare combination of archaeological and surviving landscape elements derived from this former 18<sup>th</sup>-century plantation in **King and Queen County**. After a fire destroyed the original Newington mansion, a new dwelling was built on the original foundations, but it also burned in the first decade of the 20th century. While a stone building is the only aboveground 18th-century structure remaining, the location of the plantation mansion, two outbuilding foundations, and two cellars have been identified, among other ruins.

Newington's existing landscape components include a cemetery, historic road cut and trace, and the terraces of a falling garden. The archaeological research potential of Newington is extraordinary and includes, beyond the colonial-era remains, remarkably well preserved Native American deposits associated mostly with the Woodland period (1200 BC – AD 1600).

In addition to the Woolen Mills Historic District, the following properties were approved for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) from the capital region of the Department of Historic Resources (DHR), covering central and Southside Virginia:

- Caryswood, in **Campbell County**, is an early example of the Italianate architectural residential style that was just becoming popular in the U.S. prior to the Civil War. The house was constructed in 1855, possibly by local builder James Womach, for military officer and politician Robert Chancellor Saunders and his wife Caryetta Davis. Caryswood remained in the Saunders' family home for over a century, and maintains a great deal of its original historic fabric, character, and setting. The property also includes a mid-19th century stable, unusual for the techniques used in its construction at that time.
- Curles Neck Farm, in **Henrico County**, is situated at the heart of the James River's Curles Neck peninsula, one of the earliest European-settled sites in Virginia. The farm's legacy extends back to the Curles Neck Plantation, among the oldest, largest and most productive of the James River plantations. Today's 156-acre farm, under continuous cultivation since circa 1630, features a ca.-1896 high-style Colonial-Revival mansion built in the long-standing tradition of the great Virginia plantation homes and 17 farm-related historic structures, including barns and an evolved Victorian Italianate store and farm office, as well as dwellings for farm laborers in the Craftsman architectural style.
- Millbrook is a well-preserved example of the style of farmsteads that were settled in **Nottoway County** and the Southside region during the 19th century. The ca-1840 main house features Federal and Greek Revival architectural elements and retains its

original fireplace mantels, stairways, and floors. The 110-acre property also includes a grouping of restored and reconstructed 19th-century agricultural outbuildings—a dairy, smokehouse, kitchen, and hay barn—and known and potential archaeological resources that are important to telling the story of the area’s 19th-century settlement and development.

Recently listed resources from the department’s Northern Virginia region, covering the Shenandoah Valley as well, include the following:

- The Calverton Historic District, in southeastern **Fauquier County**, arose circa 1852 as a rural village strategically located on a spur branch of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad that connected to Warrenton. Historically known as Warrenton Junction, Calverton also served the area’s farm families as a commercial and social center. Losses of buildings during the Civil War and a fire in 1944 destroyed the village’s antebellum architecture except for a portion of one building. Today, the village is dominated by houses, commercial buildings, and a church that date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Built in 1948, the Triangle Diner, located in **Winchester** on its original lot, has preserved most the Moderne architectural features that are representative of the stainless steel prefabricated diners of the post-War II era. It was manufactured by Jerry O’Mahony, Inc. of Elizabeth, New Jersey--one of the most significant diner manufacturing companies of all time and the company that inspired copycat diner designs throughout the 1950s. The Triangle Diner is the older of only two stainless-steel O’Mahony diners known to exist in Virginia.
- The Western State Hospital Dairy Barn and Milk House, located in **Staunton**, were constructed in the 1930s to serve the hospital and to provide patients at the facility meaningful farm labor—part of a therapeutic mental health treatment during the era. The dairy barn and milk house are the only remaining buildings associated with the hospital’s institutionalized subsistence farming operations, which employed nearly half the hospital’s patients and produced up to 66,000 gallons of milk per year for patients. The barn’s vernacular style incorporates a gambrel roof and picturesque cupolas with cow motif weathervanes. The milk house was constructed of concrete block in 1946. The register listing of the barn and milk house results from a boundary increase to Western State Hospital complex, originally listed on the state and national registers in 1969, and previously expanded in 2006 and 2007.

In addition to Saltville Battlefields Historic District, the following landmarks in the Roanoke region, covering southwest Virginia, were approved for listing in the VLR:

- The Gala Archaeological Site in **Botetourt County** was occupied by Native Americans from circa 3000-1000 B.C. to ca. 900-1607. Archaeological resources at the site include intact remains ranging in function from mortuary to architectural to subsistence as well as community refuse. The site has the potential to provide scholars invaluable information about Native American funerary practices, settlement

patterns, ethnic diversity, and other information about the people who inhabited the upper James River portion of southwestern Virginia.

- Oakdale, an 80-acre farm in **Floyd County**, features a ca-1890 Queen Anne house, a large barn, and general store, and an early 20<sup>th</sup> century granary and garage. Oakdale was the home of Oscar and Ruth Huff, who operated the general store in addition to managing their large farm. The Huff Store, unusual for its brick construction and located just west of the Floyd-Franklin county line, served the High Peak community.
- Tazewell Avenue Historic District, in **Richlands** (Tazewell Co.), arose primarily as a residential area, with some attendant commercial development, along the western side of the Clinch River during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Richlands grew into an important trading center. The residences within the district housed families with diverse income levels, giving rise to modestly-scaled brick and frame dwellings representing a range of popular architectural styles.

In addition to Newington, the following landmarks from DHR's Tidewater region were also approved for listing on the state register:

- Donk's Theatre, in **Mathews County**, built during 1946-47, operated as a motion picture theatre until 1970. It reopened in 1975 as a live country music theatre and continues as such today, hosting many well known stars. Built by county entrepreneur W.C. "Donk" Dunton, who established several other neighboring businesses, the theatre, with Art Deco touches, exemplifies the kind of simple and inexpensive theater construction found in many rural communities during the post WWII years when cinema ruled the entertainment world.
- Panorama, in **Westmoreland County**, is an outstanding example of a Colonial Revival-style home designed by the nationally known architect Joseph Evans Sperry. The house was built in 1932 for Charles E. Stuart, who was born and raised nearby at Stratford Hall, the birthplace and boyhood home of Robert E. Lee. After Stuart sold Stratford Hall to the Robert E. Lee Association in 1929, he immediately began planning a Colonial Revival house on the 133 acres of land he and his wife had purchased. Stuart was a member of the Virginia State House of Delegates in 1930-34 and again in 1936-37. Today the house at Panorama retains its Sperry-designed character and features.
- The Portsmouth Community Library was built in 1945 to serve Portsmouth's African American citizens, who comprised about half of the city's population. While the city founded its library system in 1914, the Portsmouth Community Library was the first freestanding building in Portsmouth to provide library services for African Americans, using African American staff. Despite the building's small size (900 square feet) and shortage of resources, it was significant as a center for the black community and as a source of pride. The library operated within the doctrine of racial segregation but worked against it by providing information to African Americans. In the late 1950s, the library became the centerpiece of a federal civil rights lawsuit,

which resulted in the provision of better library service for all residents. The building has been relocated twice, and in its present location will eventually house a museum of black history.

- The Sibley's and James Store Historic District, in **Mathews County**, features three store buildings--two of which were connected at some point—that have played a role in the development of the county between circa 1810 and 1959. Old Thomas James Store, circa 1810 and later repositioned on the property during the 19th century, is an excellent and rare example of an early 1800s rural commercial building. Sibley's General Store, established 1899, is the only example from its era of a vernacular Victorian commercial building in downtown Mathews. The other store, which dates to around 1840, is now attached to the rear of the Sibley's building. The property on which the stores sit has hosted a general store operation for at least 190 years, ending in 2003.

These new Virginia Landmark Register listings, approved by the two boards of the Department of Historic Resources during a joint quarterly meeting December 17, will be forwarded by Virginia's State Historic Preservation Officer— Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, director of the Department of Historic Resources—to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as well.

Listing a property on 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 register does provide an owner the opportunity to pursue state or federal tax credit rehabilitation improvements to his or her property. Tax credit projects must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. An owner of a register-listed landmark may also donate a preservation easement on the property to the Commonwealth of Virginia in return for state tax credits.

Virginia is a national leader among the 50 states in registering historic sites and districts. The state is also a national leader for the number of tax credit rehabilitation projects proposed and completed each year. Together the register and tax credit rehabilitation programs have played a significant role in promoting the preservation of the Commonwealth's historic sites and in spurring economic revitalization in many Virginia towns and communities.

The nomination forms, which provide detailed information about each of the above listings, can be accessed on the DHR website at the following address:  
[http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/homepage\\_features/board\\_activities.htm](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/homepage_features/board_activities.htm)

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