

# Department of Historic Resources

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## STATE APPROVES 15 NEW HISTORIC SITES FOR LISTING IN THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

**—Listings cover sites in the counties of Albemarle, Arlington, Augusta, Fairfax, Frederick, Loudoun, Mathews, Nelson, Prince William, and Washington, and the cities of Bristol, Danville, and Lynchburg—**

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**—VLR listings will be forwarded to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places—**

RICHMOND – From westward expansion via canals and tunnels to World War II espionage, historic districts associated with ambitious projects of national scope were among the 15 new sites approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register last week by the Department of Historic Resources.

The Great Falls Park Historic District, in **Fairfax County**, encompasses part of the Potomac Canal, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century engineering achievement spearheaded by George Washington, and recognized in 1982 as a National Historic Landmark.

The Great Falls canal contributed to the large system of sluices and skirting canals along the upper Potomac River that were intended to make the river navigable for commercial boat traffic and secure a trade route to the Ohio River, a longstanding—but ultimately unrealized—dream of Washington's. In addition to its canals and locks, the district also contains the remnants of the canal town Matildaville, which existed from circa 1791 to about 1830.

The landform at the core of Great Falls Park Historic District is a terrace, once known as Great Falls Glade. It served as a portage and hunting-fishing ground for Native Americans circa 6000 BC to 900 AD, and in 1751 was the site of a mill built by William Fairfax. From 1906 to circa 1952, a popular amusement park on the Glade attracted visitors who arrived by car or trolley line.

Prince William Forest Park Historic District, consisting of over 10,000 acres in **Prince William County**, was designated in 1935—during the Great Depression and the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt—as the Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area (RDA). The first Civilian Conservation Corps company constructed and set up camp in the park. As a national model for Roosevelt's "New Deal" RDA

program, Chopawamsic was also the first RDA to create camps specifically for African Americans during the era of segregation. Today the park has the largest collection of CCC-built structures in the National Park system.

Prince William Forest Park is also nationally significant as the site where the Office of Strategic Service, the precursor to the CIA, began training and developing in 1942 the first U.S. intelligence agency. Prior to its history with the federal government, the park district was the location of the Prince William County Poorhouse, established in 1794, and the Cabin Branch Pyrite mine, which began operation in 1889. Today's park district also contains important prehistoric archaeological resources dating back to circa 3800 BC, including large Native American camp sites and quarries, and historic colonial-era archaeological resources as well.

Both Great Falls Park and Prince William Forest Park are administered by the National Park Service.

Covering approximately 16,200 acres in western **Albemarle County** and a small corner of **Nelson** and southeastern **Augusta** counties, the Greenwood-Afton Rural Historic District was first settled by Europeans with the arrival of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Scots-Irish immigrants from the Shenandoah Valley. Early settlement developed along wagon roads and turnpikes that passed through gaps in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

During the second-quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, French-born military engineer Claudius Crozet, known as the "Pathfinder of the Blue Ridge," directed the building of four railroad tunnels through the mountains, including one that was the longest in the U.S. when it opened in 1858. The advent of rail transport dramatically boosted agriculture and trade in the Greenwood-Afton district, giving rise to one of Virginia's most successful early commercial orchard industries.

Today the Greenwood-Afton Rural Historic District is dominated by large farmsteads, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and early-20th-century estates. It also includes the mid-19th-century villages of Greenwood Depot and Afton, as well as the early-20th-century historically African-American communities of New Town and Free Town. Greenwood's legacy as a seasonal playground for the wealthy is reflected in the area's large number of estates and "Country Houses" designed by prominent architects.

In addition to the Greenwood-Afton Rural Historic District, the department added the following other sites to the state register from DHR's Capital region, covering central and Southside Virginia:

- Diamond Hill Baptist Church, **Lynchburg**'s second oldest African American church and a pivotal local player in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Under the leadership of Rev. Virgil Wood, pastor there from 1958 to 1963 and a friend of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the church was an important meeting place where leaders and activists planned campaigns for registering and turning out voters, integrating the city's schools, desegregating local lunch counters, and protesting discriminatory

hiring practices, among similar activities. Built in 1886 in a Late-Gothic Revival-style, later remodeled in 1903, and expanded in 1993, Diamond Hill Church represents the growth and influence of black churches during the Reconstruction Era after the Civil War.

- Virginia University of Lynchburg, the oldest institution of higher education in **Lynchburg**, and the first associated with African American education. It was incorporated as Lynchburg Baptist Seminary in 1888, when construction began on the first building, Hayes Hall, which housed classrooms until it was demolished in 1988. Today's campus features three historic buildings: Graham Hall (ca.1917), Humbles Hall (ca. 1921), and the Mary Jane Cachelin Memorial Science and Library Building (1946). The school retains the integrity of its historic location, association, setting, feeling, design, materials, and workmanship, and is significant for its association with the self-help movement that African Americans initiated in the decades following the Civil War.

In addition to the Great Falls Park and Prince William Forest Park historic districts, other new state register listings from the DHR's Northern region include the following:

- Crednal, in **Loudoun County**, an evolved house that incorporates a circa 1785 stone dwelling into a circa 1814 Federal-style brick house that enlarged the original dwelling. Among the prominent early Virginia families associated with the property were the Carters of Sabine Hall in Richmond County, and most notably John Armistead Carter, who purchased the property in 1841 and represented Loudoun in the state legislature for more than three decades. Carter, a strong Unionist, voted against Virginia seceding from the Union during the 1861 Virginia Convention that met on the eve of the Civil War. Today's 76-acre property features a Carter family cemetery that dates to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and a second cemetery that likely served Crednal's enslaved population. The main house was enlarged after the Civil War (ca. 1870), and again in 1993 with the addition of a circa-1840 house that was saved from demolition in Greene County and relocated to Crednal, which lies in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains.
- High Banks, in **Frederick County**, which was constructed circa 1753 of local limestone by Thomas and Margaret Helm. The well-preserved two-story Georgian-style residence combines an English house plan with Germanic building techniques that characterize buildings in the northern Shenandoah Valley during its era of initial European settlement, when Virginia's western frontier was predominantly German. Alterations were made to the house in 1858, and more recently in 1978 and 2000 when architecturally compatible additions replaced a 19th-century wing destroyed by fire in 1920. Situated on rolling land located along Opequon Creek, the High Banks property also features a post-Civil War bank barn and an 18th-century icehouse pit, both constructed of stone.

- Old Town Hall and School, in **Prince William County**, which has served the Haymarket community for more than 120 years. The building was constructed in 1883, after the town's incorporation in 1882. Although it ceased functioning as a school around 1900, it continued in its role as Haymarket's town hall and community meeting place until 2001. The building is a testimony to the civic and social pride of the residents who rebuilt their community after the destruction and setbacks the area experienced during the Civil War. Still owned by the Town of Haymarket, the building currently houses a museum of local history.
- The eponymously titled William Virts House, the original portion of which was constructed circa 1798 by Virts. He immigrated with his family from Pennsylvania into western **Loudoun County**, as part of a settlement pattern that saw the arrival of British Quakers, German Lutherans and Scots Irish into the Catoctin Creek watershed. The property also includes a circa 1813 stone springhouse and circa 1840 frame shed on a stone foundation.
- The Earle M. Winslow House in **Arlington County**, an excellent example of the Streamline Moderne architectural style. Constructed in 1940, the single-family dwelling is one of nine extant Streamline Moderne-style houses in Arlington. Along with its eight counterparts, the Winslow House contrasts sharply with the substantial number of Colonial Revival-style and ranch houses constructed in the residential communities that rapidly arose in the county during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when the federal government expanded its workforce. Earle M. Winslow, an economist who was with the U.S. Tariff Commission, traveled extensively throughout Europe, where he became familiar with modernistic architecture and the Streamline Moderne.

The following landmark from DHR's Tidewater region was also approved for listing in the VLR:

- The Lane Hotel building, dating to circa 1840 and situated across from the **Mathews County** Courthouse in the village of Mathews. It has served along with its affiliated buildings as a tavern, hotel, and storehouse. In 1916 during the early automobile age, to attract new customers the building was likely repositioned on its lot and renovated to present a more imposing edifice. Until 1918, the hotel offered lodging and dining to steamboat travelers, salesmen, and auto-tourists. In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, it housed a residence and then a day care center. Reopened now as The White Dog Inn, today the building serves as a bed and breakfast and café.

In the DHR Western region, the following landmarks were approved:

- The locally important Baker-St. John House, situated near Abingdon in **Washington County**. Constructed circa 1866 as a home for Dr. John Alexander Preston Baker, it has a rich social history related to the Baker and St. John families. The house holds a prominent place in the architectural heritage of Washington County. Although a one-story addition was constructed on the rear of the dwelling in the late 20th century, the house possesses a high level of architectural integrity and detailed woodwork that

reflects vernacular interpretations of the lingering Greek Revival and the romantic revival styles that were popular during the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- East Hill Cemetery, established in 1857 and straddling the border between Tennessee and Virginia in **Bristol**. Originally known as City Cemetery and closely associated with city's early history, the cemetery contains the graves Britol's founders, enslaved African-Americans, more than 179 Civil War soldiers (including those who died during the war as well as its veterans), Revolutionary War hero Gen. Even Shelby, and many other people who made contributions to Bristol and the nation. Although still in use today, over 80% of its burials are from before 1961 and more than 18% are from before 1900. Hence, the period of significance for the landmark spans from circa 1857 to 1960.
- The Schoolfield Welfare Building, located in **Danville** and completed in 1917. It was constructed by Dan River, Inc., textile mills in support of the company's progressive welfare policies that aimed to better the lives of its mostly female workforce. The Welfare Building offered millworkers a meeting space, child care facilities, and a second-floor clinic. Combining Mission and Classical Revival architectural styles, the Welfare Building is among the buildings that remain from the Schoolfield mill complex. The listing also includes a children's log playhouse constructed in 1938 in the Rustic style for a kindergarten that operated in the Welfare Building. In 2008, the Schoolfield Preservation Foundation purchased the playhouse and building, which it plans to rehabilitate for use as a museum and rental office space.
- Spring Valley Rural Historic District, comprising approximately 4,220 acres in northeast **Grayson County**. The district was settled by European Americans beginning in the latter 18<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of the Bourne, Hale, and Vaughan families. By 1800, log and timber frame houses with various agricultural outbuildings were built along the valley floor and terraces of the surrounding hillsides. By 1880, two general stores, a post office, a school, and a church and cemetery, supplemented by grist and saw mills, blacksmiths, tanners, and carpenters, were established in the core of Spring Valley, originally called Knob Fork. The arrival of the railroad in Fries six miles to the east, in 1903, solidified the community through the mid-20th century. With original land grants intact and few modern intrusions, the picturesque valley illustrates the evolution of farming and commercial agricultural practices in this remote corner of southwestern Virginia.

These new sites, approved by DHR's two boards for listing in the Virginia Landmark Register, will be forwarded by Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, director of the Department of Historic Resources and Virginia's State Historic Preservation Officer, to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

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 either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district does provide an owner the opportunity to pursue tax credit rehabilitation improvements to his or her property.

Such 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 conservation 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/registers/boardPage.html>.

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