

Department of Historic Resources

For Immediate Release

December 22, 2011

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STATE ADDS 10 HISTORIC SITES TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

—New listings cover sites in the counties of Amherst (2), Arlington, Bland, Fauquier, and Prince George; and the cities of Hampton, Lynchburg, Norfolk, and Waynesboro—

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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 the seas to the skies to space, the rise of the United States as a superpower during the 20th century is reflected in three of the 10 new sites recently added to the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Department of Historic Resources.

The three sites are the NASA-Langley Research Center Historic District in **Hampton**, the USS *Wisconsin* battleship in **Norfolk**, and the former General Electric Specialty Control Plant in **Waynesboro**.

Established in 1917, during World War I, originally as the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory and the nation's first civilian aeronautics laboratory, the NASA-Langley Research Center has played an important role in the American aerospace story.

Researchers there have examined complex and groundbreaking issues associated with flight and space travel. Collaborative research conducted in the facility's numerous wind tunnels and laboratories as well as the testing of aircraft, spacecraft, and flight simulators at the NASA Langley Research Center have led to advances in American aeronautical and space research and technology.

The newly-listed NASA Langley Research Center Historic District, composed of separate East and West areas, includes 149 existing buildings and structures where researchers advanced the fields of aeronautics and space flight. The district's period of significance begins in 1917, the date of the earliest surviving facility, and ends with the conclusion of the Apollo space program in 1972.

(Photo: Historic Library of Congress image of a wind tunnel with model aircraft:
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/va/va1700/va1794/photos/192365pv.jpg>)

(Photos: DHR nomination images of NASA-LaRC Historic District:
<http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Hampton/114-5313.NASALaRC.photos.html>.)

The USS *Wisconsin*, now owned by the City of Norfolk and operated as a museum vessel by Nauticus, the National Maritime Center, is an *Iowa*-class battleship, the largest class of battleships the U.S. ever built. The 887-foot vessel was launched on December 7, 1943 (the second anniversary of Pearl Harbor), and commissioned in April 1944. Armed with massive 16-inch, 50-caliber three-gun turrets, the ship could travel at a maximum speed of 33 knots. Because of their fast speed and large numbers of anti-air batteries, the *Iowa*-class ships escorted and screened aircraft carriers from Japanese air strikes during World War II.

The *Wisconsin* also saw service in the Korean War and the Persian Gulf War. By the end of the Gulf War, however, naval planners determined that the expense of maintaining the *Iowa*-class vessels outweighed their benefits, and decommissioned the *Wisconsin* in 1991.

Although they underwent extensive alterations during the 1980s, all four of the *Iowa*-class vessels remain as a testimony to American naval engineering prowess in the first half of the 20th century. As an *Iowa*-class ship, the *Wisconsin* is one of the last four battleships built by the U.S. Navy, which laid down the ship's keel at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in January 1941.

(Photos: DHR nomination images of USS *Wisconsin*:

<http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Norfolk/122-5414.ussWisconsinPhotos.html>)

The General Electric Specialty Control Plant was constructed in 1953-55, with an expansion in 1960, and covers over 25 acres along the South River in Waynesboro. The plant, which resulted from GE decentralizing its northeast U.S. operations, was conceived and created for the engineering, design, and manufacture of cutting-edge electronics.

Specialty Control Plant staff were responsible for the development of breakthrough technologies in areas ranging from America's military to space travel to computers. The plant also manufactured equipment for commercial and military aircraft, relays that enabled communication between space vehicles and their command centers, and early computer equipment, among other electronic products.

The plant is notable as well for its former vice-president Dr. Louis T. Rader, a leader in the development of the earliest computers and computer equipment. In the late 1950s, Rader used his influence as a widely respected business executive to help end Virginia's policy of "massive resistance" to school desegregation. He toured the state as an advocate for reopening Virginia's public schools, asserting that the state was risking economic prosperity by closing public schools to avoid integration. He even threatened to close Virginia's GE plants if the policy persisted.

(Photos: DHR nomination images of GE Specialty Control Plant:

http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Waynesboro/136-5055_GEPlant.photos.html.)

In addition to these three properties, seven other sites in Virginia were added to the Virginia Landmarks Register.

In central and Southside Virginia, the area covered by DHR's Capital Regional Preservation Office (located at DHR headquarters in Richmond), the following four sites were approved for listing in the VLR:

- The Church of the Sacred Heart Parish located in **Prince George County**, now the remaining landmark of New Bohemia, a community first settled in 1887 by Czech immigrants who were mostly farmers. Using European methods of fertilization and crop rotation, they restored devastated farmlands after the Civil War. The old Parish Hall and adjacent cemetery date from 1906-08 and are associated with the earliest church on the site, constructed in 1906, soon after land was deeded to the Diocese of Richmond. Serving as the center of the Czech community, the church complex offered a meeting place and social hall for celebrating Czech music, dances, and heritage. Worship services there were conducted in the Czech language until the mid-20th century. Today's church was completed in 1951. Most of the homes, farms, and other structures of New Bohemia were destroyed by highway construction and developments around the community during the latter 20th century. (Photos: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Countries/PrinceGeorge/074-5021.SacredHeart.photos.html>.)
- The Clifford-New Glasgow Historic District centers on the oldest existing settlement in **Amherst County**. With buildings dating from circa 1772, the district is important for its early role as a regional commercial center. It developed at the crossroads of the stage road between Charlottesville and Lynchburg and an east-west road running between the James River and crossing over the Blue Ridge Mountains to Lexington. The village had several taverns, retail stores, and the services of a saddler, a blacksmith, and a tobacco weigh station. It also prospered during the first half of the 20th century as a motorists' stop along U.S. Route 29 (the old stage road) with several gas stations, convenience stores, and an auto repair garage. In the mid-20th century after the Route 29 bypass was constructed, many of the village's businesses moved or closed. The district's period of significance extends from circa 1772 to 1961, during the time when Clifford served as a commercial center for stage coaches, then automobiles. Its buildings reflect much of that heritage. (Photos: http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Countries/Amherst/005-5042_CliffordHD.photos.html.)
- **Lynchburg's Fifth Street Historic District**, located southwest of the city's central business area, arose as a significant African American commercial area during the latter 19th and early 20th centuries. In the early 19th century the area developed as a gateway to the west with several taverns and commercial establishments located there. During the late 19th century, the Fifth Street corridor hosted high-end residential neighborhoods for Lynchburg's white population while at the same time it was the primary scene of commerce for the area's African American community. The corridor also developed as a major automobile sales and service district of gas stations and service garages, tire and auto parts stores, and automobile showrooms. The Fifth Street Historic District has a period of significance ranging from 1800 to 1964, beginning with the date of construction for the oldest standing resource in the district and concluding with the end of significant commercial expansion. (Photos: http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Lynchburg/118-5318_5thStreetHD.photos.html.)

- Built in 1896, Macedonia Methodist Church is an excellent example of a vernacular country church with a bell tower, arched windows and entries, and the use of unpainted chestnut beadboard paneling in the interior. Macedonia was one of nine churches constructed between 1850 and 1910 in **Amherst County** in a mostly traditional form, although the decorative elements of each building varied. Only six of the churches remain and Macedonia is the best-preserved frame-built example of the Gothic Revival church style. Centrally located within a secluded community called Coffeytown, the church was built on a low, cleared lot along Coffeytown Road across from a creek and has a triple rail fence bounding all but the front of the property. The church replaced an earlier 1875 log church on the property. (Photos: http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Amherst/005-5159_Macedonia.photos.html.)

In addition to the GE Specialty Control Plant in the Shenandoah Valley, in Northern Virginia, the area covered by DHR's Northern Regional Preservation Office (located in Stephens City), the following two sites were added to the VLR:

- Dominion Hills in **Arlington County** is important as a planned mid-20th-century residential neighborhood. It consists exclusively of two-story Colonial Revival-style houses constructed between 1945 and 1948. Initially platted in 1942 by two independent builders, the subdivision did not take shape until shortly before the end of World War II due to a shortage of necessary building materials and supplies created by the war. In April 1945 two development companies, working separately yet in concert as merchant builders, commenced construction with one builder developing Dominion Hills. The builders used repetition of form, style, materials, and setting to create a cohesive suburb. As result, unlike many neighborhoods in Arlington County that display a variety of architectural styles from different periods of construction, Dominion Hills exhibits a singular architectural style with only a handful of models of minimal variation. Dominion Hills demonstrates the merchant builders' principles of mass production, standardization, and large-scale development that is infrequent in Arlington County yet is reflective of post-war development in the U.S. The neighborhood is one of only three merchant-builder neighborhoods in the county. (Photos: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Arlington/000-4212.DomHillsd.photos.html>.)
- Old Denton, a two-story brick dwelling in **Fauquier County**, was built circa 1860 by James H. Hathaway, who constructed the house in front of his father-in-law's ca.-1820 vernacular brick dwelling. These two dwellings, along with a ca.-1860 meat house, form the historic core of the 58-acre property. Additional development occurred in the first half of the 20th century when the Young family constructed a stable and tenant house to the west of the main dwelling. The Greek Revival and Italianate styles of Old Denton's main dwelling shows the continuing influence of architectural pattern books in late-antebellum Virginia. Old Denton today retains its historic integrity of materials, design, setting, and craftsmanship. (Photos: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Fauquier/030-0570.OldDenton.photos.html>.)

In western Virginia, a 27-county region covered by DHR's Western Regional Preservation office (located at Roanoke College in Salem), the following site was added to the state register:

- Updyke Farm consists of 362 acres in mountainous Bland County and a house built circa 1910 for Junius Marcellus Updyke. Together the main house and associated outbuildings provide an outstanding example of early-20th century vernacular domestic and agricultural architecture in Southwest Virginia. The farm includes an unusual two-story smokehouse, and an intact collection of early-20th-century agricultural outbuildings as well as a family cemetery. (Photos: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Bland/010-5027.UpdykeFarm.photos.html>.)

DHR's Board of Historic Resources approved these 10 new sites for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register during its quarterly meeting on December 15. These new state listings will be forwarded by DHR to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Listing a property in 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 for a 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 places 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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