

Department of Historic Resources

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STATE APPROVES 5 NEW HISTORIC SITES FOR LISTING IN THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

—Listings cover sites in the counties of Campbell, Fairfax, Rockbridge and Wise (2 sites)—

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

RICHMOND – A two-room school house in a once-rural northern Virginia community, and a Shenandoah Valley farm associated with a man who manufactured machines that literally separated the wheat from the chaff are among the five new places recently added to the Virginia Landmarks Register by the state’s Department of Historic Resources.

Farmer and wheat fan manufacturer Henry Amole built Chapel Hill, a Federal and Greek Revival brick house located in **Rockbridge County**, around 1842. Amole manufactured wheat fans (also known as fanning mills or winnowing machines), hand-cranked devices used to separate wheat from chaff. The machines were marketed to farmers in Rockbridge and adjacent areas in the upper Shenandoah Valley, a developing grain growing region prior to the Civil War. Amole appears to have stopped manufacturing the fans by the third quarter of the 19th century. The house Amole built features unusual vernacular mantels, a finely crafted front entry surround, molded brick cornices, and a stone chimney constructed from a former outbuilding. In 1898 the property was acquired by the Rees family, who added a rear wing to the house circa 1910. Today it remains in the ownership of a Rees family descendant.

The Vale School–Community House, constructed circa 1884 as a one-room schoolhouse for residents of Oakton in **Fairfax County**, recalls an era when the county’s economy was devoted mostly to dairy and farming. The modest wood-frame building, clad in weatherboard, was enlarged in 1912 by the addition of a second classroom and served as a school for another 19 years before it closed in 1931, when the county consolidated its schools.

Comprised mostly of original materials, today’s building is the best preserved two-room schoolhouse in Fairfax County, and one of the county’s few remaining 19th-century schoolhouses standing on its original site. In 1935, the county school board granted the newly-formed Vale Home Demonstration Club, associated with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, exclusive rights to the building, which the club purchased in 1938 and converted into a community house. During this latter era, the Vale School–Community House is important for its connection to Florence Jodzies, founder of the Vale Club, who

served as an officer of the Virginia Federation of Home Demonstration Clubs, traveling and speaking throughout the Commonwealth.

Two historic downtown districts also were added to the Virginia Landmarks Register.

The Brookneal Historic District, in **Campbell County**, includes more than 100 contributing buildings in business and residential blocks within the heart of the Town of Brookneal. From its beginnings in 1802 as a port on the Staunton River, Brookneal's commerce was tied to the area's agriculture and manufacturing—derived mostly from tobacco, furniture, and textiles. During the 19th century, the town's central business district migrated away from the Staunton River and towards the Lynchburg & Durham Railroad (1890) and the Virginia Railway (1910), both of which linked the community with broader markets throughout Virginia and beyond. A fire in 1912 destroyed much of Brookneal's central business district, subsequently resulting in the construction of multi-story masonry buildings.

Brookneal became a hub for processing timber into furniture, lumber, and flooring, and during the later 20th century five tobacco warehouses operated in the town, inspecting \$10 million of tobacco annually. Timber and tobacco industries were bolstered by textile manufacturing in the mid-20th century, as the town boomed with an economic base in tobacco, textiles, and timber products. Due to changing international markets, these industrial sectors declined in the late 20th century. Today's historic district features buildings embodying early 19th-century vernacular, folk Victorian, and early 20th-century commercial, Art Deco, and Colonial Revival styles.

The St. Paul Historic District is an excellent example of the small commercial towns that developed in **Wise County** and surrounding areas of Southwest Virginia in conjunction with the growth of the coal mining industry from the late-19th through the mid-20th centuries. By 1884, the present town was envisioned in the small cove it now occupies, comprised of relatively mild slopes suitable for building, along the Clinch River. Located at one of only two practical points of access for railroads through the mountains that surround Wise County, St. Paul grew and thrived into the mid-20th century as a railroad junction and hub for local commerce serving nearby coal towns to the north and west. The town's most active development occurred during the 1920s and 30s, prior to the decline of the coal industry beginning in the 1950s. The district's architecture is distinguished by early 20th-century styles, some with sophisticated masonry and elaborate ornamentation, ranging from Commercial Style to Classical Revival and Beaux Arts.

Also in **Wise County**, Sunnydale Farm, near the Town of Pound, was approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register by the department's Board of Historic Resources during its March 17 quarterly meeting.

Established circa 1846, Sunnydale comprises historic domestic, agricultural, industrial, and funerary resources associated with the Branham and Kelly families. It is also important for its association with Chant Kelly, who emerged in the early 1920s as a

leading developer of Pound. Kelly built multiple commercial buildings, provided electrical, telephone, and fire prevention services, and served as Pound's postmaster for 12 years starting in 1922 and as president of the town's chamber of commerce. For these and other efforts, Kelly was honored in period press accounts and later eulogized as the "Father of Pound." The Sunnydale property retains a circa 1919 Craftsman bungalow farmhouse and the ruins of a log tenant house adjoined by a complex of stone piles, some of rectangular cairn-like form, that are of unknown provenance and former function. Other contributing resources include a circa 1919 blacksmith shop, a family cemetery, and coal mine openings dating mostly to the 1940s-50s, with one opening that may be from the 19th century.

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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