

# Department of Historic Resources

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## **STATE ADDS 9 HISTORIC SITES TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER**

**—New listings cover historic sites in the counties of Albemarle (2), Halifax (2), and Rockingham, and the cities of Fredericksburg and Roanoke (3)—**

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

RICHMOND – Among the nine historic properties recently approved for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Department of Historic Resources are the building where George Washington’s brother-in-law operated a store in Fredericksburg, a historic district that arose around a ferry, mill, and tavern on the Staunton River in Halifax County, and a former railroad freight station in Roanoke that now serves as a museum.

The Fielding Lewis Store in **Fredericksburg** is named after its original proprietor, whose second wife, Betty Washington, was sister of the future Revolutionary War hero and President. The Georgian-style brick building, with corners constructed of large sandstone blocks (called quoins), was purpose built in 1749 by prominent landowner and shipper John Lewis, the father of Fielding.

The elder Lewis constructed the building during a period when consumer buying habits were changing as town shops began replacing the trade of goods conducted by traveling peddlers or at plantations. Retailing rum, wine, linen, buttons, gloves, sugar, coffee, stockings, glass tumblers, and other items, the Lewis store would have attracted middle-class customers seeking goods previously available mostly to wealthier people.

In a 1754 letter, George Washington instructed his mother, who resided in Fredericksburg, to purchase hose, thread, and other items in “Mr. Lewis’ Store,” according to the nomination form that earned the Fielding Lewis Store a listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register, the state’s official list of historically significant sites, buildings, and structures.

The building is among a very small group of Virginia stores built before 1750 and may be one of only three brick stores in Virginia dating from the period. In 1808 a second story was added to the building, and in 1823 it was converted to a residence, ending its life as a retail shop.

Located in the Fredericksburg Historic District, the store building was carefully rehabilitated and preserved by the Historic Fredericksburg Foundation between 2000 and 2006, saving it from further disintegration and possible collapse. The foundation has since donated a preservation easement on the building to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR).

The Collins Ferry Historic District arose on the Staunton River beginning in the early 1800s when William Collins established a ferry, mill, and tavern, during an era when tobacco ruled Southside Virginia’s economy. Covering about 768 acres of forest and farmland in the northern part of the county, the district includes 18 historic buildings or sites, divided between two distinct farmsteads that were once tobacco plantations.

Collins built his plantation house, known as Collins Ferry, around 1810. Today it is one of the county's best-preserved Federal-style plantation homes. McHaney Hubbard built his Greek Revival-style plantation house in 1856. Additionally, the district contains tobacco barns and other agricultural buildings, two cemeteries, a quarry site, the mill and ferry sites, and the ruins of a slave quarters. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the ferry ceased operation.

Long identified with **Roanoke**'s economic growth since establishing its corporate headquarters in the city in 1882, the Norfolk & Western Railway (now Norfolk-Southern) built the N&W Railway Freight Station between 1916 and 1918. When opened, the freight station replaced several older depots to handle N&W's growing freight traffic. The station also included an annex for its freight accounting and billing staff.

In 1964, the station ceased operation as a hub for freight. Today the N&W Railway Freight Station houses the Virginia Museum of Transportation.

The **City of Roanoke** is also the location of two other new listings in the state landmarks register:

- Built around 1947 in the “iced-box” style originated by Texaco, Carlin's Amoco Station was remodeled in 1953 by the American Oil Company (Amoco) into a “stylized-box” design by adding Streamlined Moderne features such as rounded corners and vertical strips of glass block backlit by green neon tubing. The building represents the aggressive effort oil companies took, beginning in the 1930s, to market and sell their products through service stations that promoted individual corporate identity and brands. Based on a company prototype, Carlin's Amoco conveyed a sense of efficiency, cleanliness, and dependable service. The building also illustrates the rise of automobile-related services and goods during the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century along one of Roanoke's main thoroughfares (U.S. 11/Williamson Rd.).
- Constructed around 1936 on a six-acre parcel that was once part of the Daniel Barnhart Farm, which dates to the early 1800s, the Tayloe Rogers House in Roanoke incorporates hand-hewn logs dating to that early period. The resulting Rustic Colonial-Revival design thus reflects the Colonial Revival style popularized by the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in the 1920s and an appreciation for the local building materials and traditions used in construction of the nearby Blue Ridge Parkway and the Rustic Park Service style of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

In addition to the Collins Ferry Historic District, the following three sites from central and Southside Virginia, the area served by DHR's Capital Regional Preservation Office, were added to the state register:

- Also located in **Halifax County**, the Richard Thornton House was built by Dr. Richard Thornton not long after he purchased his property in 1818. The Federal-style house has a unique floor plan that allowed it to function as both Thornton's residence and medical office and as a place of lodging for travelers. At the time of his death in 1860, Thornton, among the most senior and wealthiest doctors in the county, had mentored many younger doctors in the area. The property includes associated historic outbuildings and a cemetery.
- Situated in the shadow of Blue Ridge Mountains in **Albemarle County**, the Crozet Historic District began in 1876 as a railroad stop that gave rise to a crossroads village along the prominent Three Notch'd Road. A prosperous fruit and orchard industry in the area transformed the village into a thriving community at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Crozet's historic buildings mostly date from 1900 through 1930, reflecting its expansion from a community centered on a train depot and crossroads into a regional hub for packing, storage, and shipping of orchard products.
- Also located in **Albemarle County**, the Gothic Revival-style St. James Church, constructed in 1896, is a remarkably well preserved building. Never altered by the later installation of plumbing or electricity, the church's notable features include arched windows and transom, wainscoting, and original pews. Long associated with the locally prominent Garth family, many of whose family members are buried in the

church's two cemeteries, St. James Church is still owned and maintained by Garth family descendants through the Trustees of St. James Church.

In addition to the Fielding Lewis Store, the following historic district was added to the VLR from the region covered by DHR's Northern Regional Preservation Office:

- Nestled in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in **Rockingham County**, the Timberville Historic District encompasses the commercial center of this town that grew from a village that arose along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River during the latter 1700s. The arrival of a rail line in 1868 spurred the community's development and by 1884 the town was incorporated. The advent of the automobile also fueled its expansion during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The district's 200 contributing buildings reveal a variety of commercial and residential architecture, reflecting many popular and once-common styles.

All nine of these new VLR properties were approved for listing in the state register by the Board of Historic Resources during its September 20 quarterly meeting. At that meeting, DHR's State Review Board also approved forwarding these listings 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 registers – either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district – provides an owner the opportunity to pursue historic rehabilitation tax credit improvements to the building. 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 states in the U.S. in listing historic sites and districts in the National Register of Historic Places. The state is also a national leader for the number of federal 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 and tourism in many towns and communities.

The nomination forms for each of the properties above provide detailed information about each historic site and can be accessed on the DHR website at the following address, where photographs are also available: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/boardPage.html>.

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