

# Department of Historic Resources

**For Immediate Release**

March 22, 2010

Contact: **Randy Jones**

Department of Historic Resources

(540) 578-3031

[Randy.Jones@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Randy.Jones@dhr.virginia.gov)

## **STATE APPROVES 13 NEW HISTORIC RESOURCES FOR LISTING ON THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER**

**–Listings cover landmarks in the counties of Albemarle, Campbell, Gloucester, Loudoun, Prince Edward, Russell, and Scott; and the cities/towns of Charlottesville, Martinsville, Newport News, Norfolk, and Winchester–**

RICHMOND – An evangelical “bush meeting” tabernacle, two rural train depots, and a school building that figured in the struggle to integrate Virginia’s classrooms were among the 13 new listings added to the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) last week.

The Purcellville Tabernacle/Fireman’s Field, built in 1903, traces its history back to 1878 with the formation of the Prohibition and Evangelical Association of **Loudoun County**. The tabernacle, a one-story, eight-sided, 3000-seat auditorium, is one of the few remaining historic structures in Virginia built to accommodate summertime religious and reform revivals. Surrounded by a large park-like area that offered the perfect venue for religious festivals, as well as gatherings for speeches, fairs, and sporting events, the Purcellville Tabernacle is located in a town that thrived after the arrival of the railroad in the 1870s. Purportedly the largest single building to accommodate the public in Loudoun County prior to construction of Dulles Airport, the tabernacle’s visiting speakers have included William Jennings Bryan and evangelist “Billy” Sunday.

Located near the tabernacle is the Purcellville Train Station, constructed in 1904, which today retains much of its original construction material and configuration. A significant shipping point for the region’s farm products when rail was extended to Purcellville in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the station offered passenger and freight service. After passenger rail was discontinued in 1951, and freight in 1967, the station closed. In 1969, its tracks, laid on the original Washington and Old Dominion roadbed, were removed for a linear park. Owned now by the Town of Purcellville, the depot is used as a community meeting and exhibition space, and a public rest stop along the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park.

A rare survivor of the passenger train era in Virginia’s southwestern region, Dungannon Depot was constructed circa 1910 in **Scott County** on the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway line. After passenger trains stopped serving the area in 1955, the building stood vacant. In order to save, preserve, and reuse it, in 1978 the depot was relocated a quarter mile from its original site to the Town of Dungannon. There it has been carefully

maintained, providing municipal office space. The depot's architecture and craftsmanship surpasses many of the extant railroad stations along the C.C. & O., which ran from Kentucky to South Carolina.

The Worsham School is significant for its association with the struggle to desegregate **Prince Edward County's** public schools, when the county closed its schools rather than integrate them. Worsham, a brick building initially opened in 1927 as an all-white public school, became one of four county schools leased by the Prince Edward Free School system, a privately organized but Kennedy-era federally supported organization that schooled African-American students in the county. The free schools operated for one year, until 1964, when the county, responding to a court order, reopened all its public schools to all children regardless of race.

In addition to Worsham School, the department added the following other site from DHR's capital region, covering central and Southside Virginia, to the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR).

- The **Daughters of Zion Cemetery** is named for the African American mutual aid society that purchased the land and established the cemetery in 1873. An alternative burying ground for blacks to Charlottesville's segregated, mostly white municipal Oakwood Cemetery, Daughters of Zion Cemetery is one of the few sites in the city today directly linked to one of the Reconstruction-era aid societies. These societies played a vital role in developing black communities after the Civil War, in Charlottesville and elsewhere around Virginia. The period of significance for the cemetery extends from 1873 to around 1933 when the Daughters of Zion disbanded and a majority of the two-acre cemetery's 300 burials had occurred.

From the department's Northern Virginia region, which covers the Shenandoah Valley, the following landmark also was added to the VLR, along with Purcellville's tabernacle and train station:

- The George Washington Hotel, built in 1924, served a steady stream of guests who arrived to **Winchester** by passenger train during the hotel's early decades of operation. The Washington was the first southern hotel in the chain of "Colonial Hotels" managed by the American Hotel Corporation. Combining elements of Colonial Revival and Neoclassical Revival architecture, the five-story building, one of Winchester's tallest, and the city's first fire-proof hotel, features a grand entrance, a lobby, ballroom, and dining room. Located in the Winchester Historic District, the hotel underwent a complete rehabilitation to restore it to its former grandeur before reopening in May, 2008.

In addition to the Dungannon Depot, the following two landmarks in DHR's Roanoke region, covering southwest Virginia, also were approved for listing:

- **Russell County's** Pucketts Hole Bridge, constructed in 1889, is likely the oldest remaining public bridge in the Bristol District, which encompasses more than 7,400

miles of roads in 12 counties, according to records of the Virginia Department of Transportation. The steel Pratt through-truss structure, formerly known as Blackford Bridge, is an unusually old example of this type of bridge to have survived with its original design and materials still intact. The bridge once spanned the Clinch River, serving as a key link between the mountain towns of Blackford and Honaker, but in 1946 it was relocated -- a common practice with bridges at that time -- from Blackford to Pucketts Hole.

- Constructed in 1929, the Martinsville Novelty Corporation Factory operated until 1995, manufacturing small items of furniture such as end tables and cabinets. Today, the building is one of only a handful of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century furniture factories still standing within Martinsville's city limits, recalling this significant sector of its industrial history. During the factory's period of significance, from 1929 to 1960, Martinsville was one of the nation's leading centers for manufacturing moderately priced furniture. The building is also a fine example of a utilitarian purpose-built factory that retains the integrity of its historic setting, design, materials, and workmanship.
- The **Altavista Downtown Historic District** encompasses the commercial core of this Campbell County town, chartered in 1912. Altavista arose soon after the regional Virginian Railway extended an east-west line to intersect with the Southern Railway, a major east coast line. Realizing the commercial opportunity posed by this rail junction, two brothers, John Edward Lane Jr. and Henry Lee Lane, then under contract to build the Virginian line, purchased 2,000 acres of surrounding farmland and established the Altavista Land and Improvement Company. The Lanes were instrumental in planning Altavista and investing in the construction of many of the town's early buildings, such as the First National Bank. They also obtained the first charter for a post office and founded a cedar chest factory in town. Today the Altavista downtown district features a concentration of historic commercial, governmental, and religious buildings that reflect architectural styles representative of their respective periods from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through to the 1960s.

The following landmarks from DHR's Tidewater region were also approved for listing on the state register:

- Located on the Ware River in **Gloucester County's** Ware Neck, Hockley is a 41-plus acre property that contains the core of an 1840s estate, as well as significant early 18<sup>th</sup>- through mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century archaeological resources of plantation history and a Woodland Period Native American component that needs further investigation. In addition to the main house, Hockley also features a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century ice house, and agricultural buildings from the early 1930s. Hockley is notable for the successive owners who resided there from 1897 to 2009. These people include Fannie Johnson Taliaferro, an early proponent of historic preservation and a pioneering member of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (now Preservation Virginia); Dr. Laban Lacy Rice, a nationally published writer, renowned educator, and respected astronomer, who

was also President of Cumberland College (now Cumberland University) and founder of both Castle Heights Military Academy for boys and Camp Nakawana, America's largest camp for girls in the 1940s; Lt. Gen. William H. Tunner, who was responsible for planning and implementing the three largest air transport operations in history, including the Berlin Airlift of 1948-49; and Tunner's wife, Margaret Ann Hamilton Tunner, who was an early member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs). Hockley's period of historical significance extends from circa 1700 through to 1960, two years after it was acquired by the Tunners.

- The Noland Company Building in **Newport News** is significant for its association with the region's commercial history. Built in 1920, the building originally housed the Granby Phonograph Corporation. In 1938, the plumbing-supplies wholesaler Noland Company, founded by self-made businessman and civic leader Lloyd U. Noland Sr., purchased the building and converted it for headquarters, showrooms, and warehouse. The Noland Company grew from a small Tidewater plumbing supplier to an international wholesale distributor of a wide variety of construction materials during the time it occupied the building, which ended in 1996 when the company relocated to another nearby site.
- St. Peter's Episcopal Church in **Norfolk** embodies many of the architectural, utilitarian, and aesthetic principles found in Richard Upjohn's popular 19<sup>th</sup>-century pattern book for designing and constructing Gothic Revival-styled churches and houses. It was through Upjohn's book that Gothic Revival emerged as a major architectural style during the 19th century. St. Peter's expresses the style in its arched stained-glass windows, arched doors, arched chancel, and vernacular interior and exterior designs. The church, built in 1886, is one of six parish churches descended from historic St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church (listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places), which has been a focal point of the Elizabeth River Parish since the 18th century.

In addition to the historic sites listed above, the two boards of the Department of Historic Resources, during their joint quarterly meeting March 18, also approved a special document that recognizes the work of the architect Marshall Swain Wells (1900-1974).

- Marshall Swain Wells is noted primarily for his upscale residential designs in **Charlottesville** and **Albemarle County**, although he designed houses and other buildings elsewhere in Virginia, including Richmond, Alexandria, Farmington, and Yorktown. During his four decades of practice, Wells used his skills in new, mostly Colonial Revival, design to offer a balanced and thoughtful approach to the expansion, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic houses. The special document that was approved by DHR provides the overarching historical significance of Wells' work in order to streamline individually listing in the future on the state and national landmark registers the houses and churches Wells designed that are concentrated in Charlottesville and Albemarle County.

These new listings in the Virginia Landmark Register 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.

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)

###