

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Listed On:
VLR 01/15/1995
NRHP 03/29/1995

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Falling Creek Ironworks Archaeological Site

other names/site number 44CF7

2. Location

street & number [REDACTED] not for publication

city or town Richmond vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Chesterfield code 041 zip code 23297

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Julie G. Hamik 2.1.95
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain): _____	_____	_____

Falling Creek Ironworks Archaeological Site (44CF7)

Chesterfield, Virginia

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing Site

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Falling Creek Ironworks Archaeological Site (44CF7) Chesterfield, Virginia
Name of Property County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Archaeology/Hist.-Non-Aboriginal
Exploration/Settlement

Industry

Engineering

Period of Significance

Virginia Company period (1607-1624)

Significant Dates

1619-1622

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American - English

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Department of Historic Resource
Richmond, VA; College of William and Mary,
Williamsburg, VA

Falling Creek Ironworks Archaeological Site (44CF7)
Name of Property

Chesterfield, Virginia
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas F. Higgins III, Project Archaeologist
College of William and Mary
organization Center for Archaeological Research date April 19, 1994
street & number 327 Richmond Rd. telephone 804-221-2580
city or town Williamsburg state VA zip code 23187

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Pacy Oreltsky
c/o Property Capital Group, P.O. Box 32456
street & number Suite 203, 106 Old Court Road telephone _____
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21208

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain benefits in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**Falling Creek Ironworks Archaeological Site (44CF7)
Chesterfield County, Virginia**

(7) Narrative Description

Summary Description

The Falling Creek Ironworks archaeological site (44CF7) is located in Chesterfield County, Virginia [REDACTED]. The site encompasses approximately 3.5 acres. The main part of the site, presently covered in woods and understory vegetation, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]. Howard A. MacCord, Sr., who investigated the site in 1963, noted that it

lies in a narrow valley with steep hills abutting on the creek [REDACTED]. On the west, the creek winds through a still more narrow valley before tumbling over two rough ledges of granitic rock which form the fall line [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] (MacCord 1964:2).

The property on which 44CF7 is located is privately owned and is currently vacant. The site measures 650 ft. east/west by 255 ft. north/south. The [REDACTED] boundary of the site is located at the upper falls [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] are intact archaeological deposits associated with the Falling Creek Ironworks.

The Falling Creek Ironworks is recognized as the first successful, integrated iron production facility in English North America. The exploitation of natural commodities was a principal objective of the Virginia Company of London from the earliest period of their Virginia venture. Despite difficulties in establishing the ironworks, a party of workers succeeded in completing a portion of the facility in 1620 and produced a sample of iron prior to the arrival of three replacements later that year (Kingsbury 1906:472; 1933:240). In addition to the three replacement workers, by late June 1621 a fourth individual, John Berkeley (along with his son, Maurice, and three family servants), was dispatched to Virginia as Master of the ironworks with 20 men skilled in ironworking. Berkeley's party specifically included workers to "be employed upon the Furnace" and "upon the Forge," explicit evidence for an integrated operation producing both cast and wrought iron (Kingsbury 1906a:472).

The production of iron was abruptly halted by the Powhatan/English conflict of 1622. A total of 27 persons were slain at the ironworks, including John Berkeley (Kingsbury

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1933:565). The slaughter of the inhabitants of the Falling Creek settlement was compounded by the thorough destruction of the facility by the Native Americans (Beverley 1947:54-55; Stith 1965:218). While considerable interest existed in reestablishing the operation through the end of the Virginia Company period, the level of destruction effectively terminated this apparently successful endeavor.

Archaeological Description

Historical data for 44CF7 is augmented by a relatively intact archaeological record. Research has shown that the site contains important archaeological resources, i.e., slag and charcoal deposits, foundations, and artifacts, that can potentially contribute to a better understanding of the early development of the iron industry in Virginia and the nation.

The first contemporary reconnaissance of the Falling Creek Ironworks site was undertaken by R. A. Brock in 1876 (Brock 1885). He identified a location (44CF7) [REDACTED], the ruins of which still exist [REDACTED] opposite the site area. Brock recovered "several small pieces of furnace cinder, presumptive relics of the ironworks of 1622" and observed that the "exact original site" had been covered by "repeated washings of the soil" (1885:79). Of particular significance is the fact that Brock (1885:79-80) distinguished the location of the Virginia Company ironworks from the site of Archibald Cary's eighteenth-century forge [REDACTED], the latter being manifested by extensive deposits of "slag or cinder" that covered an area of approximately one acre to a depth of 2 ft. Brock (1885:80) also identified a possible ore (limonite) mining site at a nearby tract, known locally as "Iron Bottom, where may be found plentifully what is known as bog iron on the surface."

Nearly half a century later, the site of the Falling Creek Ironworks became subjected to indiscriminate digging that continued sporadically for 30 years. In 1925, Roger C. Bensley, developer of the nearby "Bensley Village" community and owner of the site at that time, "unearthed" apparent industrial remains that he interpreted to be elements of the ironworks complex (Gregory 1957:20-21). These remains were variably described as being between 4 and 11 ft. below the surface of the ground in association with considerable quantities of charcoal, "blast furnace slag," and metallic objects. Bensley apparently observed both undisturbed deposits and structural remains including a "charcoal pit ... about fifty feet in diameter," portions of "the foundation and a part of the walls of the original ironworks," and the remains of a timber frame wharf adjacent to Falling Creek (Gregory 1957:20, 47; *Richmond News Leader* 1925). Digging again in 1942, Bensley "uncovered relatively nearby" the remains of what he referred to as the "hide-out or barricade to protect the workmen ... in the event of Indian attack" (Gregory 1957:21). This "barricade" was described as "built in the general form of a cart wheel with a central room and corridors leading off like spokes of a wheel from a hub" (Gregory 1957:21). Bensley's last episode of digging occurred in 1955 when "he was running a bulldozer doing

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some landscaping" at the ironworks site (Gregory 1957:21). At that time, he observed "a part of the blast furnace ... and that the inside was circular in shape" (Gregory 1957:21). "A great many pieces...of ancient and original iron works materials" including "rounded billets or pigs" were recovered at that time and distributed to "his acquaintances" (Gregory 1957:21).

Tangible evidence of the Falling Creek Ironworks has also been observed in areas away from 44CF7. Gregory (1957:41-43) suggested that the granite and sandstone used for the construction of the nearby turnpike bridge over Falling Creek and a culvert at Grindall Creek (1828-1829) were salvaged from the remains of the early seventeenth-century blast furnace. Recent inspection of the bridge by staff members of the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) revealed the occasional presence of granite blocks coated with an iron residue indicating that Gregory's suggestion may be correct. According to Howard A. MacCord, Sr. (personal communication 1990), similar remains can be observed in the stonework of the Amphill Mill ruins on the north side of the creek. Though no direct historical evidence is available to indicate that the furnace remains were salvaged in the early nineteenth century, the reuse of available construction material is a reasonable expectation.

While Bensley's activities certainly affected the integrity of the ironworks site, they did serve to positively identify the presence of industrial remains associated with the operation of a furnace on the south bank of Falling Creek. Several metallurgical assays of specimens recovered from the site revealed that the iron had been in a molten state, which required a furnace temperature of at least 1,500° C (Gregory 1957:17-19). These analyses served to confirm the distinction observed earlier by Brock between the remains of Archibald Cary's forge on the north bank of Falling Creek and the furnace remains on the south bank.

The indiscriminate digging by Bensley is best summarized in a letter from Bensley to archaeologist Roland Wells Robbins in 1952: "this property had a very interesting past and I derive quite a lot of pleasure plundering and digging and dreaming of how it once was" (Roger Bensley to Roland Wells Robbins, 27 July 1952). In 1951, Robbins visited the Falling Creek site at the request of the American Iron and Steel Institute to take a "quick look." Robbins was then excavating the remains of the Saugus Ironworks in Massachusetts for the First Ironworks Association, a project funded by the American Iron and Steel Institute. Both groups were aware of the early Falling Creek site and concerned about their claim that the Saugus facility was the "first" ironworks site in colonial America. Robbins was asked to investigate the site to determine whether evidence existed that would confirm that the Falling Creek site actually operated before its destruction during the 1622 conflict.

Robbins recorded his Falling Creek visit in his Saugus daily log for 1951, providing an interesting sketch map of the site (Robbins 1951:38A). He reported that he located evidence of an old dam and deserted canal that ran along the north side of the river from the early dam to the gristmill ruins. Robbins observed that the stream banks from the dam upstream [REDACTED]

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were steeply sloped and that the area "permits no working area for casting, etc." (Robbins 1951:38B). He continued his observations by recording that "the general area where the ruins of the grist mill stand [are] most desirable for blast furnace operations. Here, either side of Falling Creek provides ideal elevations for a furnace bridge, as well as working area" (Robbins 1951:38B). Robbins further favored this area, he said, because it provided navigable waters that terminate at the falls. He also calculated that a dam at the "cascades" would provide a good head of water to power the furnace. The area between the James River and the railroad trestle could be ruled out, Robbins determined, because it provided no elevations for the furnace bridge and was prone to flooding.

Robbins stated that he "carefully" looked at the conjectured furnace site area located on Bensley's property, but notes that he found no slag or other evidence. He reported that he found metal waste, metal, brick, and refractory brick, 20 to 25 ft. west of the gristmill ruins, and noted that "this evidence indicates that forge activity took place in this area some time ago" (Robbins 1951:38C). He estimated this site, probably Archibald Cary's forge, as approximately 40 ft. square [REDACTED] Robbins ended his report by recommending that further work be concentrated on "the area [REDACTED]" (Robbins 1951:38C).

Robbins returned his attention to the Falling Creek site in early 1961, as he neared the end of a five-year project for Sleepy Hollow Restorations at the Phillipsburg Manor Upper Mills site in North Tarrytown, New York. As Robbins began to consider his next project, he wrote to Jamestown curator J. Paul Hudson: "I now want to concentrate on seeing if we can get something going on the Falling Creek site" (Roland Wells Robbins to J. Paul Hudson, 3 January 1961). He went on to request information from Hudson on digging that had occurred at the site since he had last visited and proposed a "walking and probing survey" to determine "what there was to work with" (Roland Wells Robbins to J. Paul Hudson, 3 January 1961). Hudson responded to Robbins by suggesting that he should write to Frederick Pease of the Chesterfield County Historical Society and to state Senator Lloyd C. Bird, to propose his plan and find out who owned the property. He also suggested that Robbins contact John D. Capron of the Lynchburg Foundry Company about possibly funding the work. Hudson ended the letter with the following endorsement, "I don't know of any other archaeologist in America more capable than you to excavate the site of a Colonial period ironworks. Your experience at John Winthrop, Saugus, Sterling, and elsewhere makes you the only logical choice" (J. Paul Hudson to Roland Wells Robbins, 3 January 1961).

While Robbins spent most of 1961 "renewing" major excavations at Sterling Furnace in New York, he again wrote to Hudson concerning Falling Creek late in the year. In January of 1962, Robbins wrote to Frederick Pease, who responded enthusiastically to Robbins' recommendation for a survey of the site and invited him to visit the site in the near future. Pease wrote Robbins, "anything you can do about restoring the furnace on Falling Creek will meet

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with much approval with the people of Chesterfield" (Frederick H. Pease to Roland Wells Robbins, 6 January 1962). In a subsequent letter to Hudson, Robbins noted that Pease did not mention financial support for the project, but felt that this was not unexpected as Robbins had not specifically discussed costs. Robbins explained that his normal fee was \$100 per day plus expenses, and that the survey that he had in mind would "run under one-thousand dollars" (Robbins to Hudson, 17 January 1962). Robbins continued the letter: "the Falling Creek furnace is a very controversial subject; did it or didn't it exist; if it existed, did it produce? How much? The survey that I want to conduct would probably answer the question whether the site that Mr. Pease, the late Roger Bensley, and others believe to be the site of the 1622 furnace, is just that" (Robbins to Hudson, 17 January 1962).

Robbins continued his correspondence with both Hudson and Pease during January and February attempting to arrange funding for the project through a variety of sources including federal and state government agencies, the county government, and the county historical society. His ongoing discussions with Pease resulted in his return visit to the site in February of 1962. Robbins notes that while he had planned to take transit readings and make tests, the weather was very bad causing him to limit his work. He summarized his 1962 field investigation and thoughts on the Falling Creek site in a March letter to J. Paul Hudson:

The area containing a deposit of charcoal and slag is located below the roadway [REDACTED]. The iron works evidence extends [REDACTED] at the base of a knoll. Erosion is, and has been cutting away the northerly slope of the knoll. This has been created by a marsh at the top of the knoll which drains from the northerly slope. While I inspected the top of the knoll for evidence of charcoal, ore, and flux materials, none of these materials were noted. This could have been suitably situated for the charging bridge, although it seemed quite high. The small pond there must not be ruled out as a possible source of water for the furnace waterwheel. To eliminate the knoll as the site of the charging bridge, leaves but one area to be considered. This would be westerly of the possible site of the furnace and below the site of the road [REDACTED]. Maybe I shouldn't say below the roadway, as it would appear that the area was cut down from its original height, grading it to the lower area which, fortunately, was built up. Some 40' or so to the northerly side of the ironworks evidence exists of a partially filled canal [probably the ravine noted on MacCord's map]. This canal originates just to the northwest of the site and runs easterly for 250' to 300,' emptying into the tidal waters. In places it is only 7'-8' wide at the present bottom. This would have given good protection for small boats when the waters of Falling Creek were flooded. If this canal is of early vintage, then the land to the southerly side of the canal over to where the ironworks evidence exists would have been tied in together. This is not the case today. It appears as though it has been both washed out and taken out in

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places. If this is true, and the furnace units occupied some of the areas, basic foundations were destroyed.

As I studied the elevation of the [redacted] water and the head it would provide for a waterwheel for a furnace located at the site of the charcoal and slag, it seemed doubtful it would operate even a breastwheel. Also, to run a flume from the stream, just above tide head, to a waterwheel located here presents problems. It would have had to been [sic] a suspended flume, which is not good considering the danger of the flood waters which would harass the uprights. Between the stream water above the tide head, and the possible site of the wheel, protrudes a natural outcrop of ledge which extends into the stream. As its top is higher than the headwaters [redacted], and there is no evidence of the ledge having been cut thru, then the flume would have had to go around the ledge. However, if the land was once level over to the canal, a straight flume could have been used.

It is my opinion, based on the limited inspection I made, that if any evidence of a blast furnace and its supporting units are to be found at the controversial site, they will be located below and possibly to the southerly side of the present roadway [redacted]. If the furnace stood between the roadway and the canal, remnants may be found. While this site should be carefully tested before other areas should be given consideration, I would not rule out the northerly side of the stream, nor possibly, other sites to the southerly side of the creek (Roland Wells Robbins to J. Paul Hudson, 1 March 1962).

Robbins ends the letter with the observation that grading was taking place on the property along Route 1, probably indicating that development was imminent. He recommended that the furnace site not be purchased until a survey was completed to determine the "potential of the site" (Robbins to Hudson, 1 March 1962).

Following his 1962 visit to the Falling Creek site, Robbins continued his attempts to obtain funds for a survey and excavation project, writing to both J. Paul Hudson at Jamestown about federal and state funding and Mr. Marcus Elcan of the Lynchburg Foundry Company about private donations. He also stayed in touch with Mr. Frederick Pease, who informed him that the property was for sale by the firm of Rucker and Richardson in Richmond. They would sell a 300 ft. wide strip along the river, an 8-acre tract, for approximately \$20,000. Robbins corresponded with Thurlow G. Gregory in the fall of 1962 after reading his article in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, noting that while he was not "close to the [redacted] controversy, naturally I have been very much interested in it" (Robbins to Thurlow G. Gregory, 21 September 1962). Gregory responded by challenging Robbins' use of the word controversy, stating that "I do not concede that there is a controversy.... I accept the

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Virginia Company of London as being the final authority upon that matter" (Gregory to Robbins, 24 September 1962).

In 1963, Frederick Pease wrote to Robbins to report that he had worked on an excavation of the Falling Creek site conducted by Howard A. MacCord, Sr., of the Virginia State Library (Pease to Robbins, 19 August 1963). This more extensive formal archaeological testing was carried out by MacCord and the Archeological Society of Virginia in July 1963 (MacCord 1964). A total of 13 trenches was exposed by a "traxcavator" and hand excavation in the low-lying area [REDACTED] Falling Creek. Excavation of these trenches revealed the presence of industrial deposits (slag, charcoal) covering an area approximately 75 ft. in diameter immediately adjacent to the access road. A discrete charcoal deposit was also observed nearby on the south side of the road, possibly corresponding to the "charcoal pit" discovered by Bensley. Excavation of the industrial deposits resulted in the identification of possible structural remains, though continued digging appropriately was halted and the remains covered. The industrial debris and the possible structural remains, however, suggested that the "main blast furnace ... will be found under the existing road" immediately to the south (MacCord 1964:12). The location of the principal structural remains under the existing road would be consistent with the report that Bensley "encountered iron ore and slag as he dug a road to his new swimming pool in 1925," and with the observations made by Robbins (*Richmond News Leader* 1925). MacCord also identified three "groups" of notches that were carved into the rocks at the falls of Falling Creek to the west, possibly used to support the ironwork's dam, and flume trestle are represented by extant rock cuts at the falls on the western half of the site. Finally, reexamination of the archaeological assemblage recovered by MacCord (curated by the DHR, Richmond) revealed the presence of a previously unidentified fragment of iron "pig," further confirmation of the presence of a furnace producing cast-iron from ore at 44CF7.

Following his 1963 excavations, MacCord and Roland Robbins carried on a brief correspondence concerning the ironworks that resulted in Robbins' third and final visit to the site, with MacCord, in 1968. At this point, the site area seems to have been cleared of all vegetation, probably as part of the apartment complex's recreation area.

To better understand the archaeological character and potential of the Falling Creek Ironworks, DHR staff conducted a brief on-site reconnaissance in February 1990. Accompanied by Howard A. MacCord, Sr., six auger tests were excavated along the road [REDACTED] in the approximate area where MacCord had recovered evidence of the ironworks in 1963. Though only limited slag was revealed, an extensive charcoal deposit corresponding to that observed by Bensley and MacCord was identified. That deposit, [REDACTED], was found to be up to 2 ft. thick and extended nearly 3 ft. below modern grade. A sample of the charcoal was submitted for radiocarbon analysis and an uncorrected date of 390 +/- 70 years B.P. was obtained (A.D. 1490-1630, Beta-35886). Though

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"late" radiocarbon dates need to be interpreted with caution, the range reasonably excludes any association of the charcoal with Archibald Cary's forge operation during the eighteenth century.

The land-based reconnaissance was supplemented by an underwater exploration. Underwater archaeologists from the DHR examined the large pool at the base of the falls adjacent to the Amphill Mill ruins in an effort to identify any remains of the "tools thrown into the river" by the Indians during the 1622 uprising (Hening 1969:135). Little siltation was observed in the pool due to the continuous scouring of that area by [REDACTED] Falling Creek. At the southern base of the falls, a large stone was observed that exhibited an "L-shaped" notch used to support a dam post, similar to those still in situ above water. The stone, however, appeared to be resting on an iron bar with characteristics suggesting a "pig" of cast iron. The iron bar was left in situ for future recordation and retrieval.

The various episodes of exploration at 44CF7 have demonstrated the presence of undisturbed deposits associated with the Falling Creek Ironworks. Unfortunately, only limited information was obtained under controlled scientific conditions. Existing data also addresses only the industrial component of a much larger community that existed in the vicinity of Falling Creek prior to the uprising of 1622. The location of the residential area has not been determined nor has the presence of suitable limonite deposits at "Iron Bottom" been confirmed. The ironworks site therefore exists as a discrete entity as yet unevaluated in relation to its associated archaeological context.

In the fall of 1993, staff members from the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research (WMCAR) conducted archaeological investigations at Site 44CF7 (Higgins et al. 1994). This investigation was undertaken for the DHR as part of their long-term effort to identify and evaluate Virginia Company-period (1607-1624) sites. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the site's eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This work sought to verify archaeological resources reportedly associated with the seventeenth-century ironworks (MacCord 1964), to assess the present integrity of the site, and to define the entire site area through additional survey and testing in an attempt to identify potentially related components, such as workers' housing.

In view of the high level of work on 44CF7 in the past, the 1993 WMCAR study sought to minimize additional impact to the site yet provide comprehensive systematic coverage of the site core area (44CF7) and several areas peripheral to the site with potential for associated resources. The testing plan utilized a reference baseline and grid transects established at the beginning of the investigation. A combined total of 171 shovel tests were dug at intervals of 30 ft. (9.14 m) or less at three locations. Forty-seven of the shovel tests were dug in Survey Area A, [REDACTED] 27 shovel tests in Survey Area B, [REDACTED] 97 shovel tests in Survey Area C, [REDACTED], and 44CF7 and its

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immediate environs. Subsequently, the shovel test results were plotted on a site plan to identify areas of artifact concentration.

A combined total of two 7 x 7 ft. (2.13 x 2.13 m) test units, one 5 x 5 ft. (1.52 x 1.52 m) test unit, and three 2.5 x 2.5 ft. (76 x 76 cm) test units were hand-excavated at 44CF7. No test units were excavated in Survey Areas A and B. The placement of the test units at 44CF7 was based on positive shovel test and the approximate locations of previously identified features and deposits (MacCord 1964). Soil layers were excavated by natural boundaries and removed to subsoil. Upon exposure of the subsoil, the units were cleaned and inspected for cultural deposits/features. All features, including the cut features in the rock ledges along the falls, were documented by measured drawings and by black-and-white and color photography. In general, features were not excavated; however, features/deposits which could not be identified in plan were tested to determine their age and function. Elevations were recorded from a temporary datum located .5 ft. (15 cm) above ground surface at the southwest corner of each unit. Each temporary datum was then tied into a permanent datum represented by a 1.0 ft. (30 cm) iron pipe at the base of the rock cliff on the western half of the site. The permanent datum is located at coordinate 1005.5N-962E. Artifacts were collected according to soil layer/level.

To date, no evidence for worker's housing has been found; however, testing by WMCAR revealed a light scatter of charcoal and slag over a floodplain that measured approximately 300 ft. east-west x 100 ft. north-south. This low density scatter generally consisted of small pieces mixed in alluvial deposits. In contrast, virtually pure layers of charcoal and slag were found near the southern boundary of the site. A thick deposit of slag was identified, and the charcoal layer. Together, these remains extended over an area of approximately 145 ft. east-west x 45 ft. north-south.

The charcoal and slag layers are the same deposits identified by MacCord in 1963. While no artifacts were recovered from these deposits during the current survey, they yielded several wrought-iron tools, spikes, and brick bats during the earlier investigation (MacCord 1964:9-12). Several of the bricks were coated with slag suggesting that the furnace or auxiliary forge may have been brick lined. Traces of crushed oyster shell found beneath the slag during that investigation possibly represent mortar for the furnace brickwork or flux added during the smelting process (MacCord 1964:7).

Analyses of charcoal and slag samples provide information on the age of the deposits as well as the ironworking processes. It is known, for example, that the predominate type of wood burned for charcoal fuel was yellow pine with lesser amounts of red oak and hickory (MacCord 1964:8). The predominance of pine is unusual given that hardwoods were generally preferred because they burned hotter (Salmon 1986:15).

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Radiocarbon analyses of charcoal samples recently collected by DHR archaeologists provide a date of A.D. 1490-1630, supporting the association of the deposits with the seventeenth-century ironworks. Metallurgical assays of slag specimens indicate that these deposits were by-products of a blast furnace and distinguishes them from the remains of Archibald Cary's eighteenth-century [REDACTED] of Falling Creek (Gregory 1957:17-19).

The separate locations of the slag and charcoal deposits indicate the existence of distinct functional areas and imply a relatively high degree of integrity to this part of the site. The charcoal "was probably the stockpile of charcoal made and maintained for charging the blast furnace and was located near the uphill side of the furnace for convenience in loading the furnace from the top" (MacCord 1964:8). The slag deposit, on the other hand, was a waste pile as well as the possible location of an auxiliary forge. Similar deposits have been documented on other ironworks sites, i.e., Saugus, and are usually separated by furnaces and related structures. The research by MacCord and the WMCAR indicate that the main furnace may be located beneath the road just west of the WMCAR's Test Units 6 and 7. Although no clear evidence of a structure was found during the current research, a large chunk of slag was identified that may be associated with the building remains described by MacCord (1964:9).

The site chosen for the ironworks and the manner in which the facility was constructed were similar to other colonial furnaces (Hartley 1957; Salmon 1986; Troup, Barnes, and Barka 1978; Sanford, personal communication 1993). The success of this venture was in large measure dependent upon the skill of the ironworks master and his workers. The availability of natural resources also factored into its success including an adequate water source; close proximity to suitable limonite deposits, and abundant timber for the production of charcoal. Site 44CF7 was located relatively close to an ore source, a tract known locally as Iron Bottom. However, the archaeological evidence indicates that this tract is located outside of the surveyed areas. Stone and timber were also available on the 100 acres "surrendered for use of the Iron Works" by property owner, John Blower (Hatch 1957:59). Ironmaster of the Falling Creek works, John Berkeley, and Sir Edwin Sandys, representative of the Virginia Company, considered the Falling Creek site to be ideally suited for the facility (Hartley 1957:36-37).

Stone construction at 44CF7 is not clear from the archaeological evidence; however, furnaces were usually built of stone blocks with lesser amounts of bricks. The typical furnace stack measured about 25 ft. square at its base and tapered toward the top; it usually stood 30 ft. high and often was constructed in the side of a hill. Crossing a wooden bridge from the hilltop to the top of the stack, workmen (known as fillers) charged or fueled the furnace with alternating layers of charcoal and ore. As noted above, the charcoal and slag identified at 44CF7 are the remains of fuel and waste piles associated with this operation.

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Site 44CF7's furnace was probably situated under the present location of the access road or immediately adjacent to it on the north. In addition, auxiliary structures such as a refining furnace, chafery, and sheds may have been close by (Hatch and Gregory 1962:269; Noël Hume 1975:177-178). Traces of at least one of these structures may have been found (MacCord 1964:9).

Site 44CF7 was much better suited for a furnace and auxiliary structures in terms of its elevation, working space, and access to navigable water than the creek's banks above (west of) the falls (Robbins 1951). [REDACTED]. The presence of postholes or sockets cut into the stones at the falls are evidence of a dam and possibly a flume that may have been associated with 44CF7. These structures would have been essential components of the ironworks, providing the necessary flow and volume of water to operate the furnace(s).

Historical data suggests that 44CF7 was intended to be an integrated works to include a blast furnace, a refinery furnace, and a chafery. While the establishment of the ironworks was slow, iron was apparently being produced on the site by 1620. It is possible that only part of the facility had been completed at that time. Soon after Berkeley's arrival in the summer of 1621, he indicated that increased iron production would be achieved by the spring of 1622 (Kingsbury 1933:548). This information coupled with the archaeological results raise some question as to the size of the operation at the time of Berkeley's arrival. The principal work area, for example, appears to have been relatively small for a typical complex of furnaces and related structures. It is possible that at least some of the auxiliary structures for the main furnace were still in the planning stages or under construction at the time the site was destroyed in 1622 (Hartley 1957:41-42).

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(8) Narrative Statement of Significance

Site 44CF7 is significant in that it can address important archaeological and historical issues concerning iron production in colonial America. Historical and technological details pertaining to the establishment and operation of this facility have been extensively documented, and the site's archaeological potential has been demonstrated (Gregory 1957, 1960; Hatch and Gregory 1962; MacCord 1964; Higgins et al. 1994). Analyses of the site's historical data, its physiographic setting, and its archaeological remains, indicate that 44CF7 has local, regional, and national significance.

Criteria Assessment

Site 44CF7 meets the following two criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places:

Criterion A. The site is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, namely

- The Falling Creek Ironworks date to the Virginia Company period (1607-1624) which represents the earliest period of permanent English settlement in North America,
- The site, established during the first period of exploration and settlement along the James River, is contemporary with well-documented, seventeenth-century settlements of Martin's Hundred and Flowerdeew Hundred (Noel Hume 1883; Deetz 1993) and is related to the early development of Tidewater, Virginia, and
- the site represents the earliest initiative at iron production in Virginia, and is recognized as the first successful, integrated iron production facility in English North America.

Criterion D. The site has yielded, and may be likely to yield, information important in history, namely

- The site contains significant archaeological data that can potentially provide important information about the first iron industry in Virginia and the English New World, including iron production processes, products, and site composition and construction techniques.

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Historical Significance

The history of the Falling Creek Ironworks is better known than that of most English settlements established during the Virginia Company period. This is due in large measure to the research of Charles Hatch and Thurlow Gates Gregory (Gregory 1957, 1960; Hatch and Gregory 1962), whose combined works provide considerable historical and technological detail.

The Falling Creek Ironworks is recognized as the first successful, integrated iron production facility in English North America. The exploitation of natural commodities was a principal objective of the Virginia Company of London from the earliest period of their Virginia venture. Samples of iron ore were returned to England with Captain Christopher Newport in 1608 and again later that year. The latter material, possibly obtained from the Falling Creek area, was apparently processed into iron with considerable success. Archaeological and historical evidence suggests that limited forge experimentation was also conducted in Virginia during the Virginia Company period (Cotter 1958:11).

The onset of Sir Edwin Sandys' term as treasurer of the Virginia Company in London in 1618 resulted in a renewed commitment to industrial development, particularly to iron production. In cooperation with Southampton Hundred plantation, an expedition of 80 persons under the command of a Captain Blewett was dispatched "wth all manner of prouisions for the settinge vp of an Iron Worke in Virginia" (Kingsbury 1906:587-588). Unfortunately, the high mortality rate resulted in the death of Blewett and his principal associates upon their arrival. The importance of the iron-making venture, however, is reflected by the subsequent provision in 1619 of a 150 person relief supply "to set vp three Iron workes; prooffe hauing been made of the extraordinary goodnesse of that iron" (Kingsbury 1933:115-118). It should be recognized that the "three Iron workes" almost certainly represented the Company's intent of a single three-component facility of blast furnace, refinery, and chafery (forge?) rather than three separate plants (Hatch and Gregory 1962:269). The relief supply would be placed upon a site for the facility that probably had been selected by Blewett's party because there was "excellent water and good oare" (Kingsbury 1933:128-129).

Despite the death at sea of "the Chiefe men for the Iron worke," the relief supply apparently succeeded in completing a portion of the ironworks in 1620 and producing a sample of iron prior to the arrival of three replacements later that year (Kingsbury 1906:472, 1933:240). In addition to the three replacement workers, a fourth individual, John Berkeley (along with his son, Maurice, and three family servants), was dispatched to Virginia by late June 1621 as Master of the ironworks with 20 men skilled in ironworking. Berkeley's party specifically included workers to "be employed upon the Furnace" and "upon the Forge," explicit evidence for an integrated operation producing both cast and wrought iron (Kingsbury 1906a:472). Correspondence received in England from Berkeley indicated his considerable satisfaction with

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the location of the facility at "The falling Creeke" and that increased production would be achieved by spring of 1622 (Kingsbury 1933:548).

The continued development of the ironworks by Berkeley's party was also linked to a shipbuilding venture proposed by the Virginia Company to commence during the spring of 1622. In August 1621, the governor and Council were directed to begin cutting timber during the winter in anticipation of the arrival of a "Shipwright with a ginge of thirty or fortie Carpenters and boatwrights" the following spring (Kingsbury 1933:496-497). The colonists were particularly directed to choose the site to be timbered with "respect vnto the nearness of the iron works, and of the Saw Mills" (Kingsbury 1933:496-497). This comment suggests that the Falling Creek Ironworks may have also included a sawmill, or that such a facility was located nearby.

The production of iron was abruptly halted by the Powhatan/English conflict of 1622. Twenty-seven persons were slain at the ironworks, including John Berkeley (Kingsbury 1933:565). Beverley (1947:54) and Stith (1965:218) reported the escape of two children, indicating a total resident population of 29 persons (23 men, 2 women, and 4 children). The number of men is consistent with the skilled labor force that accompanied Berkeley to Virginia and is indicative of the level of effort needed to maintain production once the facility had been established. The slaughter of the inhabitants of the Falling Creek settlement was compounded by the thorough destruction of the facility by the Native Americans (Beverley 1947:54-55; Stith 1965:218). Though there was considerable interest in reestablishing the operation through the end of the Virginia Company period, the level of destruction effectively terminated this apparently successful endeavor. Alexander Spotswood's "Tubal Furnace" was to be the next successful iron furnace in colonial Virginia, established over a century later.

Archaeological Significance

As a Virginia Company period site, 44CF7 is in an important class of archaeological resources. No comparable ironworks, i.e., blast furnace site dating to the seventeenth century has been documented in Virginia. The results of archaeological investigations of the site by MacCord (1964) and more recently by WMCAR (1994) indicate that the site contains significant archaeological data, i.e., discrete charcoal and slag deposits, structural remains, and artifacts, that can potentially provide important information about the development of the first iron industry in Virginia and the English New World, during the early seventeenth century, and its relationship to the early development of Tidewater, Virginia.

The analysis of well-preserved deposits and features at 44CF7 integrated with historical information can contribute to our understanding of iron production processes, and site composition and serve as a comparative base for examining other ironworking operations in the local area and region. Archaeological data from 44CF7, for example, can be compared to data

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gathered from forge sites at Jamestown and other settlements during the period, as well as eighteenth-century furnace sites which have been documented in Virginia.

Site 44CF7 is of local importance historically as well as of national significance. It was established during the earliest period of exploration and settlement along the James River and is contemporary with the well-documented, seventeenth-century settlements of Martin's Hundred and Flowerdew Hundred (Noel Hume 1983; Deetz 1993). On a national level, 44CF7 represents the first initiative at producing iron in the English New World and predates the Saugus Ironworks in Massachusetts.

The type of operation undertaken at 44CF7 was begun at the Saugus Ironworks in the 1640s. The latter site was subject to extensive archaeological and historical research from 1948 to 1953, resulting in the restoration of a large industrial complex. The site consists of blast and refinery furnaces, a rolling and slitting mill, a warehouse, and the ironmaster's house (Robbins 1948-1953; Hartley 1957: facing page 113, 165-184). Additional archaeological research at 44CF7 would likely yield remains similar to those found at Saugus, including a furnace(s), auxiliary structures, and work and storage areas. Some evidence for structures at 44CF7 have already been found (MacCord 1964:9).

The research suggests that furnace-related deposits, as well as remains of auxiliary structures probably exist beneath a modern access road which is located immediately adjacent to the documented remains. Considerable activities, i.e., landscaping, and road construction has occurred on the property during the past fifty years which may have jeopardized some of these resources; however, the results of archaeological testing indicate that the most significant remains on the site are relatively intact (Higgins et al. 1994).

In summary, the site contains great potential for addressing many important archaeological and historical issues concerning iron production in Colonial America. The site meets National Register Criterion A in that it is associated with the development of the first iron industry in Virginia and the English New World, during the early seventeenth century, and its relationship to the early development of Tidewater, Virginia, and Criterion D in that it contains archaeological remains that may potentially yield information important in understanding early iron production processes.

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- Figure 2. Plan of current investigations of 44CF7 showing archaeological areas, sites, and locations
- Figure 3. Area C, plan showing 44CF7, Location 2, shovel tests, and test units
- Figure 4. Site 44CF7, distribution of slag by count
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List of Photographs

All photographs are of:

FALLING CREEK IRONWORKS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE
Chesterfield County, Virginia
VDHR File Number: 44CF7
Thomas F. Higgins III and Donald W. Linebaugh, photographers

DATE: 1994
VIEW OF: 44CF7, looking southeast from upper falls of Falling Creek, site includes falls and areas along the right bank of river

NEG. NO.:
PHOTO 1 OF 5

DATE: 1994
VIEW OF: 44CF7, looking southeast from lower falls of Falling Creek, site includes wooded area along right bank of river

NEG. NO.:
PHOTO 2 OF 5

DATE: 1993
VIEW OF: 44CF7, plan view of Test Unit 6, Layer E slag deposit

NEG. NO.:
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DATE: 1993
VIEW OF: 44CF7, plan view of Test Unit 7, Layer E charcoal layer

NEG. NO.:
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DATE: 1993
VIEW OF: 44CF7, plan view of Features 13, 14, and 15 rock cuts

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(10) Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

Site 44CF7 measures 650 ft. east/west by 255 ft. north/south. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The boundaries are illustrated in Figure 3 at a scale of 1" = 200'.

Boundary Justification

Boundary determinations were made based on the results of systematic archaeological testing by WMCAR (1993) and the locations of previously identified, extant features, and subsurface deposits (MacCord 1964; Higgins et al. 1994).