

VLR-3/17/81 NRHP-7/8/82

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Loudoun Agricultural and Mechanical Institute

and/or common Institute Farm (Preferred)

2. Location

street & number Route 650 N/A not for publication

city, town Aldie X vicinity of congressional district Tenth (Frank R. Wolf)

state Virginia code 51 county Loudoun code 107

3. Classification

|   |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use                            |  |
| district  | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                 | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial    | <input type="checkbox"/> park                        |
| structure                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | work in progress                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> educational   | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence           |
| site  | Public Acquisition                          | Accessible  | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                   |
| object  | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government    | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation              |
|   | N/A   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: clubhouse |

4. Owner of Property

name The Institute Corporation, c/o David B. Sharp, President

street & number RFD I

city, town Middleburg N/A vicinity of state Virginia 22117

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Loudoun County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Leesburg state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date 1971, 1973, 1980 federal  state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

## 7. Description

|   |                                       |   |   |            |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|------------|
| <b>Condition</b>                              |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                              | <b>Check one</b>                                  |            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site | N/A        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good                 | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input type="checkbox"/> altered              | <input type="checkbox"/> moved                    | date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair                 | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   |   |            |

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Institute Farm at Aldie is located at the foot of a small hill in a heavily wooded area off Route 650 in Loudoun County. The rectangular, 3½-story main structure was erected in stucco-covered stone ca. 1854. The main entrance formerly was situated on the rear (south) elevation and originally fronted a formal multi-terraced garden. The first-story entrances are positioned asymmetrically within a recessed one-story porch which has decorative sawn trim and plain square posts. Three entrances pierce the south wall. The main entrance has a multi-paned glass transom topped by a lintel-type head with turned corner blocks; two auxiliary entrances have lintel-type heads without transoms. A similarly executed entry providing access to the director's office is found on the flanking east wall of the porch. The present main (north) elevation contains an asymmetrically positioned doorway covered by a ca. 1975 gable-roofed porch. The west entrance to the caretaker's apartment has a screened porch, also a 20th-century addition. Twin basement entrances are on the east elevation. Fenestration consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows on the basement story, 9/9 hung sash on the first story, and 6/6 hung sash on the second story. All windows originally had lintel-type heads with turned corner blocks. The gable roof, covered with standing-seam sheet metal, is broken by gabled dormers on both the north and south elevations. The dormers have 6/6 hung-sash windows. All elevations but the north one have decorative sawn trim along the eaves. Three chimneys project from the roof.

The interior floor plan of the Institute building has not been altered greatly since the structure served as a school. A lateral stair hall with a closed-well stair ascends to the second floor. A large meeting room is located to the east of the hall and leads to the director's office. The office has a built-in cupboard topped by projecting segmental wooden arches on molded wood piers. All the first-floor rooms have openings framed by molded wood trim.

The second and attic floors contain small sleeping chambers that are entered from main halls that run east and west. The chambers are plain and have molded wooden architrave trim around all the openings. Small cast-iron wood burning stoves were installed in the rooms ca. 1920 and replaced earlier models.

Flanking the main Institute building to the east and south are a number of log structures that date from 1917 to 1971. The cabins are used by beagle and basset clubs during their various events. Eleven of the thirteen cabins consist of single pens with square notch construction and plaster chinking. The front gables are covered with wooden shingles and the rear walls with either rough stone or cement. The remaining two cabins, called the "squaw cabins," are of board-and-batten and were erected in the 1920s at some distance from the main building. They have since been moved in line with the log structures.

The woods around the estate remain undisturbed with hemlocks planted near the main building and cabins. A modern open pavilion recently was built on a hill to the north of the Institute building.

RCC

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The nominated property for Institute Farm consists of sixteen acres. This acreage includes the main Institute building, the cabins, and the terraced south lawn. It is a fraction of the 507 acres presently owned by the Institute Corporation and a fraction of the 117 acres owned by the Loudoun County Agricultural Institute and sold to James Gulick in 1846. The nominated acreage includes sections of the dog trails used since 1916 by the National Beagle Club of America.

# 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic    | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> architecture           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education   | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-     | <input type="checkbox"/> communications         | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)         |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   |  |

Specific dates 1854 Builder/Architect unknown

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Institute Farm near Aldie is a picturesque reminder of the establishment of the first agricultural school in the Commonwealth and of one of the first schools of scientific agronomy in the United States. The stone-and-stucco building was erected ca. 1854 for the Loudoun County Agricultural Institute and Chemical Academy. From the late 18th century, Loudoun's citizens had pioneered in agricultural experimentation, and the school's founders included a number of prominent landholders and scientists. Once part of the Oak Hill estate of President James Monroe, the property has since 1916 achieved national notice as the headquarters of the National Beagle Club of America whose activities complement Northern Virginia's abiding interest in horsemanship and fox hunting.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Loudoun Agricultural and Mechanical Institute, the organization that built the academy building, followed in the footsteps of Loudoun resident John A. Binns, a pioneer in scientific farming experiments during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Binns carried on a vigorous campaign for the use of gypsum in farming to stimulate greater soil productivity. Binns also advocated deep plowing and the cultivation of red clover in crop rotation. Other early Loudoun citizens who were leaders in agricultural experimentation included Stephen McCormick, who developed one of the best-known deep plows of the period, and John Balthrop, who invented a "double shovel" plow to cultivate corn.

In addition to their innovations and inventions, Loudoun's antebellum farmers succeeded in the establishment of a county agricultural society. In 1825-26 the Agricultural Society of Loudoun, Fauquier, Prince William and Fairfax was founded to serve the needs of Northern Virginia farmers. In March 1842 the Agricultural Society of Loudoun was organized and subsequently sponsored the county fair. An outgrowth of the Agricultural Society was the Loudoun County Agricultural Academy and Chemical Institute founded in 1854 by Benjamin Hyde Benton, Harmon Bitzer, and James Gulick, who erected the present 3½-story, stone-and-stucco edifice on land that once formed part of James Monroe's Oak Hill estate. An ad in the Leesburg Washingtonian of September 1854 described the scope of activities at the Institute:

In this institution thorough instruction is given in all the branches of mathematics and science useful to the farmer and the man of business. The students are not taught the theory only, but they are instructed in the practical application of their studies to the everyday affairs of life. They are made acquainted with the phenomena of nature, taught the properties of soils, the requirements of plants, the composition of minerals, the utility of different kinds of rocks, laws of mechanical forces, calculations of the cost... Agricultural chemistry is thoroughly taught, and illustrated by thousands of interesting experiments in the lecture room, in the laboratory, and on the

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Head, James W. History and Comprehensive Description of Loudoun Co., Va. Park View Press, 1908.

Poland, Charles Preston, Jr. From Frontier to Suburbia. Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1976.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 16 acres

Quadrangle name Lincoln, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 8 | 2 | 6       | 9 | 7 | 2 | 0        | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 8 | 2 | 6       | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0        | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

C 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 8 | 2 | 6       | 9 | 7 | 3 | 0        | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

D 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 8 | 2 | 6       | 9 | 5 | 3 | 0        | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

E 

|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point on NW side of State Route 650, about 5800' N of intersection of said route with State Route 734 and on S side of Institute Farm Drive; thence about 950' NW along S side of said drive, then curving SW along said side for about 600' to end of drive; thence about 300' SW to 480' contour; thence following said contour about 1150' SE to NW side of 650; thence about 800' NE along said side to point of origin.

state N/A code county N/A code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date March 1981

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *H. Bryan Mitchell*

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director  
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date MAY 10 1982

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory--Nomination Form**

Institute Farm, Loudoun County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 8,9

Page 1



8. SIGNIFICANCE

farm... The buildings are new and commodious...the location has all the advantages of purity of water, salubrity of atmosphere and beauty of scenery.<sup>1</sup>

A precursor of the agricultural colleges that would be established under federal auspices with the passage of the Morrill Act by Congress in 1862, the Loudoun Agricultural Institute was formally incorporated in the 1855-56 session of the General Assembly but was not taxed for its new buildings by the county until 1857.

Despite its forward-looking character, the Institute failed to thrive and in 1860 folded. The property was acquired by James H. Gulick, who put the land and buildings up for sale. An ad for the property dated, January 1, 1861, noted:

Buildings new, large and commodious, well calculated for a boarding school, a shoe or other factory or a private residence. It has a young orchard of between 400 to 500 choice fruit trees and almost every other convenience that makes a place desirable.<sup>2</sup>

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Gulick was unable to sell. During the war an intense cavalry battle was fought in the vicinity of Snickersville Pike, and a marker erected in 1889 at the Institute commemorates the battle. After Gulick's death in 1867, the Institute Farm's 117 acres again were offered for sale along with Gulick's 375-acre farm tract. The property was acquired by Isabella Turner, whose estate sold the property to the Institute Corporation in 1916. The former agricultural institution then became the headquarters for the National Beagle Club of America.

The men who incorporated this club were all masters of show packs of beagles, many of which were located in the northeast. The interest in hunting in the northern Virginia area made the Aldie vicinity of Loudoun a particularly hospitable site for such an organization. Following their acquisition of the property, the National Beagle Club built a number of rustic-style log cabins to house their members during the annual beagle trials. The cabins are used today for both beagle and basset club events. The club continues to use the old Institute building for administrative offices, club rooms, and a member's dormitory.

MTP/RCC

<sup>1</sup>Washingtonian, September 29, 1854.

<sup>2</sup>Eugene M. Scheel, "The Oldest Agricultural Institute," Loudoun Times-Mirror, December 8, 1977, p.4.

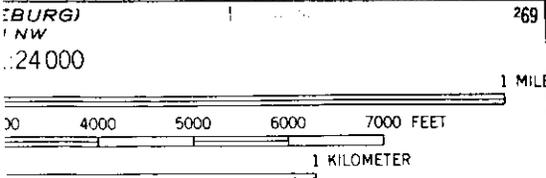
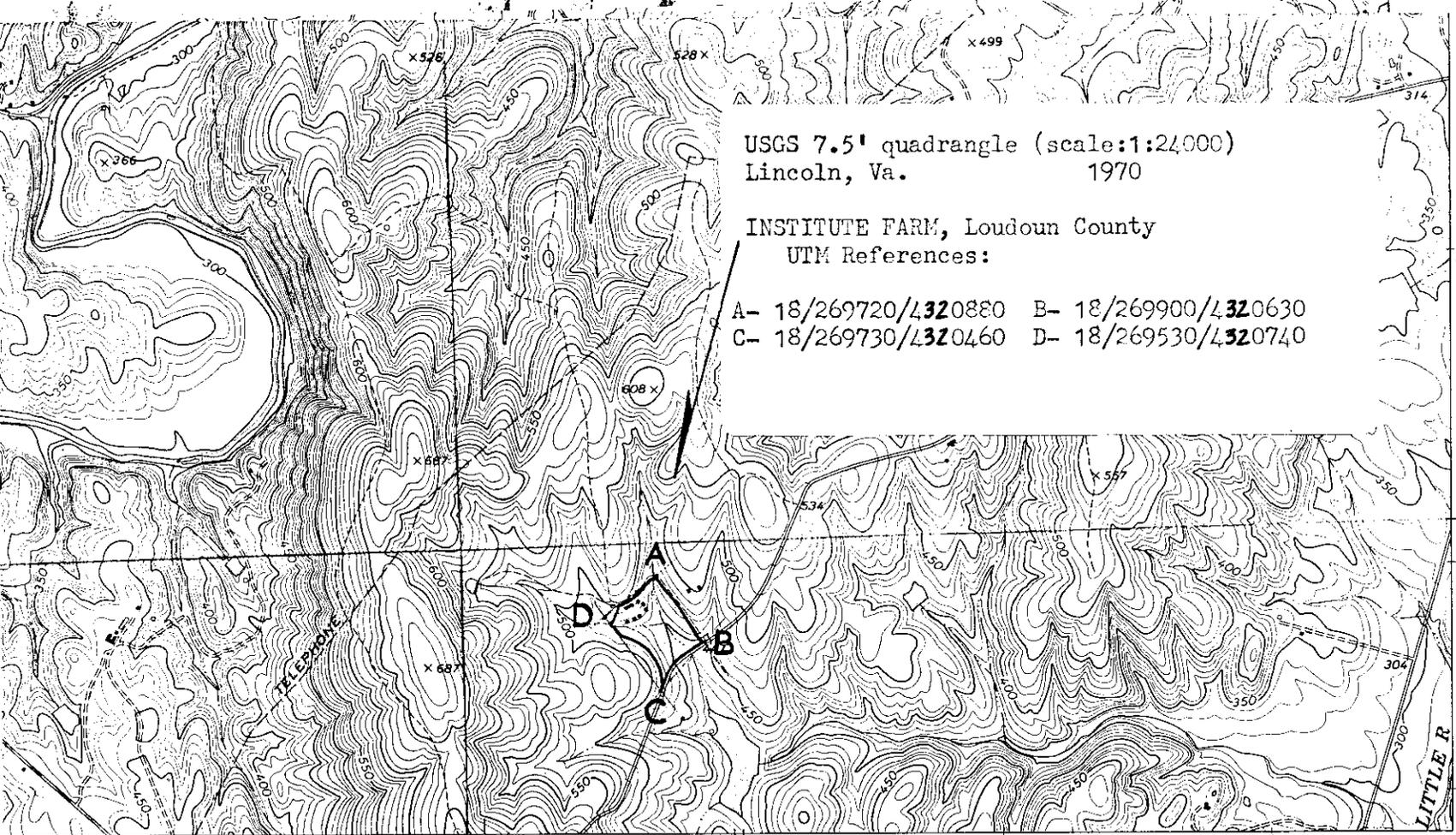
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Scheel, Eugene M. "The Oldest Agricultural Institute." Loudoun Times-Mirror, December 8, 1977. Washingtonian, Leesburg, Va., June 2, 1854; September 29, 1854; June 15, 1855.

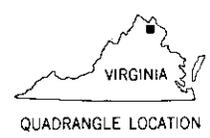
USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)  
Lincoln, Va. 1970

INSTITUTE FARM, Loudoun County  
UTM References:

A- 18/269720/L320880 B- 18/269900/L320630  
C- 18/269730/L320460 D- 18/269530/L320740



RVAL 10 FEET  
N SEA LEVEL



NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
URCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903  
AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

| ROAD CLASSIFICATION                          |  |
|--|--|
| Primary highway, all weather, hard surface   | Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface |
| Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface | Unimproved road, fair or dry weather           |
| U. S. Route                                  | State Route                                    |

LINCOLN, VA.  
N3900—W7737.5/7.5

1970

AMS 5462 II SW—SERIES V834

(ARCOLA)  
5461 NE