

## Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the property for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the property could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

<b>General Property Information</b>	For Staff Use Only DHR ID #: 140-0111
Property Name(s): <u>William A. Hassinger House aka. The Grove</u>	
Property Date(s): <u>1906</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post    Open to Public? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Limited <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Property Address: <u>335 Cummings St.</u> City: <u>Abingdon</u> Zip: <u>24210</u>	
County or Ind. City: <u>Washinton County</u> USGS Quad(s): <u>Abingdon</u>	

<b>Physical Character of General Surroundings</b>
Acreage: _____ Setting (choose one): <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Corridor
Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features: <b>There are no notable landscaping elements, i.e. stone wall, but one of the trees near the house is thought to be the oldest tree in town.</b>
Secondary Resource Description (Briefly describe any other structures (or archaeological sites) that may contribute to the significance of the property: <b>There are no surviving outbuildings.</b>
Ownership Category: <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-Local <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal

<b>Individual Resource Information</b>
What was the historical use of this resource? Examples include: Dwelling, Grist Mill, Bridge, Store, Tobacco Barn, etc... <u>Single dwelling</u>
What is the current use? (if other than the historical use) <u>Town visitor's center</u>
Architectural style or elements of styles: <u>Late Victorian – Queen Anne</u>
Architect, builder, or original owner: <u>Hassinger, William A. – original owner</u>
# of stories <u>2.5</u> Condition: <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Rebuilt <input type="checkbox"/> Renovated
Are there any known threats to this property? <u>No</u>

**Resource Component Information**

Please answer the following questions regarding the individual components of the resource. If the component does not exist, answer “n/a.” If you feel uncomfortable in answering the question, please leave the space blank. Photographs of the features can also help our staff identify specific feature components. Usually, priority is given to describing features on the primary (front) facade of the structure.

**Foundation:** Describe the foundation that supports the structure. Examples include piers, continuous brick, poured concrete.  
Continuous stone - coursed ashlar

**Structure:** Describe the primary structural component of the resource. Include primary material used. Examples include log, frame (sawn lumber), and brick. Also include the treatment, such as a particular brick bond or type of framing, if known.  
Frame

**Walls:** Describe the exterior wall covering such as beaded weatherboard or asbestos shingles.  
Weatherboards- some wavy-edged; and wood shingles- fish-scale and diamond-shaped

**Windows:** Describe the number, material, and form of the primary windows. This includes the number of panes per sash, what the sashes are made of, and how the sashes operate (are they hinged or do they slide vertically) Have the windows been replaced?  
One-over-one wood double-hung sash

**Porch:** Briefly describe the primary (front) porch. List the primary material, shape of the porch roof, and other defining details.  
Wrap-around porch with Tuscan columns

**Roof:** Describe the roof, listing the shape and the covering material.  
Complex hip roof

**Chimney(s):** List the number of chimneys and the materials used. Include the brick bond pattern if possible.  
Internal brick chimneys

**Architectural Description of Individual Resource:** *(Please describe architectural patterns, types, features, additions, remodelings, or other alterations. A sketch of the current floor plan would be appreciated)*

The imposing Hassinger House in Abingdon is rare in its style (Queen Anne), its relationship to the Hassinger Lumber operation of Konnarock, and the heritage of public service and philanthropy of the Hassinger family members who resided there over the years. Being on top of a hill overlooking Cummings Street, the main artery in/out of Abingdon from/to I-81 Exit 17, gives the property tremendous prominence/presence. However, in white it is often overlooked, but once returned to its original colors through paint analysis – as planned, it will immediately seize the attention of the pedestrians and motorists passing by.

There are a few other Victorians across Abingdon, including some in the residential area immediately adjacent to the house. The Hassinger House lies on the eastern edge of an older residential area of surviving older homes of the period and later, but it is in comparatively good condition with few alterations. The house immediately west of the structure is said to have been built at the same time as the Hassinger House by the same builder (probably William A. Hassinger.) The Hassinger House property is now bordered on the south by Abingdon Veterans Memorial Park and partially on the north by a small strip commercial development. Beyond the house to the east and across Cummings Street is a strip mall/fast food infested area that continues south to I-81. There is also a fast food infested area to the south of Veterans Memorial Park that begins about ¼ mile from the south side of the house.

**Significance Statement:** Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the property. (Detailed family genealogies are not necessary.) Please list all sources of information. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Normally, only information contained on this form will be posted for consideration by the State Review Board.

The story of "**The Grove**", aka "**The Hassinger House**" actually begins in northwest Pennsylvania, high on the Allegheny plateau, in the Pennsylvania county of Forest in 1880, when Martin Luther Hassinger purchased a small saw mill at Lamonaville in Forest County, Pennsylvania, and began the Hassinger family's long involvement in the lumber and building supply business that eventually ended in the Abingdon-Bristol area of southwest Virginia. Martin Luther Hassinger, a tanner by trade, was big hearted and after signing notes for friends had been "stripped clean as a picked bird" in the Panic of the 1870s.

Martin Hassinger then entered the logging and lumbering business by purchasing hemlock logs that had been stripped of bark from a leather company and sawing them at his small mill. When the oil boom triggered by Edwin Drake's 1859 drilling of the world's first successful commercial oil well hit northeast Pennsylvania, the Hassinger operation expanded to include the construction of oil derricks. The business prospered over the next 20 years (+/-) as three mills were constructed and two narrow-gauge engines and log trains were put into operation. In 1904, the leather company supplying the hemlock logs recognized that it was losing revenue and stopped delivering cut timber to the mills. With this major source of timber gone, Martin Hassinger gave up the business.

Martin Luther Hassinger's three sons – L. C. (Luther C.), Will (William A.) and John (John Harvey) – however, decided to find a new source of timber and continue in the lumber business. They looked at timber in West Virginia, and considered going west to Oregon and Washington. Eventually L. C. was sent by his father to southwest Virginia to look over the timber in that area, which was virtually untouched and uncut.

At the time, a fellow Pennsylvanian by the name of Clark was operating a one-horse sawmill in Washington County, Virginia under the name of the ***Konnarock Land and Lumber Company***. Liking what he saw, L. C. returned with his father, who ended up buying out Clark and his 6,000 acres of forest, as well as, the timber rights to another 14,000 acres, for a total of 20,000 acres. Shortly afterward, the family (Martin Luther Hassinger, the father and Luther C., William A., and John H. Hassinger, sons), also purchased 24 acres of the ***Cummings Grove*** property in Abingdon that was soon to be the location of The Grove.

In 1905, Martin's son, Luther Hassinger, moved the family lumber operations from Lamonaville to Konnarock, VA in the White Top Mountain area of Washington County, Virginia and organized the ***Hassinger Lumber Company***. The youngest brother, John Hassinger, remained at the Lamonaville operation to close out the saw-mill operation there. The town of Konnarock was established around the Hassinger's lumber operations, with a company-operated lodge, store, and school.

At this time, the company also extended the ***Virginia Carolina Railroad*** from Damascus, Virginia up to Konnarock. The ***Virginia Carolina Railroad*** was acquired by the ***Norfolk and Western Railroad*** in 1912. [Note: the Virginia Creeper Trail, established in 1987, follows the route of the abandoned rail line from Abingdon, Virginia to the North Carolina state line.]

Owning White Top mountain and over 30,000 acres, the ***Hassinger Lumber Company*** became one of the largest timber producers in the eastern United States, at one time helping make Washington County the largest exporter of timber in the country. At the height of operations, the company employed over 400 workers. Operations were suspended in 1926 and the property sold in 1928. It is estimated that during its twenty-two years of operation, the Hassinger firm cut from fifteen to eighteen million board feet of lumber annually or almost 400 million feet from its one mill. In addition, the ***Hassinger Lumber Company*** shipped approximately sixty thousand cords of tanbark, seventy thousand cords of chemical and pulp wood, and thousands of chestnut poles and mine props. The Hassinger family sold their timber

holdings to the U. S. Forest Service when it began buying cut-over land between 1926 and 1930 to establish what has become the Jefferson National Forest.

Not surprisingly, William A. Hassinger and his wife, Almeda, preferred living in Abingdon rather than suffer the mill town life of Konnarock. They built The Grove in 1906 - 1909 on the eastern edge of the *Cummings Grove* property in Abingdon, recently purchased by the family. Will was a master builder and prided himself on using only the finest materials in the construction of this house. The majority of the lumber for this structure came from the beautiful white pine and hardwood logs cut from Whitetop Mountain and sawn in the family mill in Konnarock. The joists and framing are likely made from native hemlock. In 1913, when Will's interest in the lumber business waned, he sold the house to his brother John H. Hassenger and also sold his interest in the Konnarock saw mill business to his two brothers. Just before 1914, Will and Almeda moved to Middleburg, Pennsylvania where they purchased two large farms.

John and his wife, Mary, moved their family from Konnarock into The Grove in Abingdon in 1914. He served in the Virginia legislature as a Republican State Senator for one term beginning in 1920. John was noninated for Lt. Governor on the Republican ticket in 1921. In 1922, John ran as the Republican nominee for the U. S. House of Representatives from Virginia's 9<sup>th</sup> District, but was defeated by the Democrat nominee George C. Peery, who despite his low-key manner, was a markedly superior speaker and a more energetic campaigner, traveling to all corners of the far-flung district. Emphasizing that he was one of the Southwest's native "mountain boys" (in contrast to the Pennsylvania-born Hassinger), Peery concentrated on the economic problems that had engulfed the nation under Republican President Harding. This cumulative effort yielded a resounding victory, with George Peery defeating John Hassinger by more than 2,900 votes. In 1934, George Peery went on to become Virginia's governor. In 1924, John Hassenger ended political career as a delegate to the Republican National Convention from Virginia.

Throughout their occupancy of the Grove, the *Abingdon Virginian* Local News editor took particular interest in reporting on ladies' social events, describing afternoon teas, porch and lawn parties, and club activities at the house. Theme parties were popular and each August Mary Hassinger gave a Mother Goose party at the Grove, with guests dressed to represent different characters. John H. Hassenger died in 1948 leaving a legacy of philanthropy and public service.

In 1929, John's brother, Luther C. Hassinger, moved his family to Bristol. He and his two sons, William E. (Bill) and Martin A., went into the building supply business, buying the Bristol Builders Supply Company, a retail outlet for building materials. Luther C. Hassinger died in 1970 having added greatly to the Hassinger legacy of philanthropy and public service.

The Town of Abingdon, Virginia acquired the Grove from James A. and Bliss M. Brown in September 1981. The house now houses offices of the Town's Convention and Visitors Bureau and the District - 3 Governmental Cooperative Transportation Department.

Also please see attached file containing more history tidbits.

**Compiled the history of the Hassinger House, aka The Grove, from the references listed below:**

Book: GREEN GOLD, THE STORY OF THE HASSINGER LUMBER COMPANY OF KONNAROCK, VIRGINIA

Author: Doug McGuinn

Copyright ©: 2008

Bamboo Books, 147 Little Laurel Road Ext., Boone, NC 28607 USA

First Edition ISBN: 978-1-4276-2976-0

Pages 1-104

Book: PLACES IN TIME, VOLUME II, Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia

Author: Nanci C. King

5/5/2009

Copyright ©: 1994  
Tucker Printing, Inc.  
Marion, VA  
Pages 116-117

Websites:

<http://www.damascus.org/valley.html>

<http://www.etsu.edu/cass/Archives/Collections/afindaaid/a484.html>

[https://dwc-k.net/History\\_1880-1929.html](https://dwc-k.net/History_1880-1929.html)

<http://politicalgraveyard.com/bio/haskill-hastie.html>

[http://clerk.house.gov/member\\_info/electionInfo/1922election.pdf](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/1922election.pdf)

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=990DE3D8103EEE3ABC4153DFB767838A639EDE>

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D0DE3DF1339EF3ABC4C53DFBE668389639EDE>

<http://www.ancestry.com>

Other:

Archives of the Historical Society of Washington County, Abingdon, VA

**Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (For more than one owner, please use a separate sheet.)

Mr.  Mrs.   
Ms.  Miss  \_\_\_\_\_ Town of Abingdon  
(Name) (Firm)

133 W. Main Street / P.O. Box 789 Abingdon VA 24210  
(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Email Address) \_\_\_\_\_ (Daytime telephone including area code)

Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••*

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

Mr.  Mrs.   
Ms.  Miss  \_\_\_\_\_ James M. Cowart Town of Abingdon  
(Name) (Firm)

133 W. Main Street / P.O. Box 789 Abingdon VA 24210  
(Address) (City) (State) (Zip Code)

jcowart@abingdonva.us (276) 628-3167  
(E-mail Address) (Daytime telephone including area code)

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notification**

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the department to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr.  Mrs.  Dr.   
Miss  Ms.  Hon.  \_\_\_\_\_ City Manager  
(Name) (Position)

Town of Abingdon  
(Locality) (Address)

Abingdon VA 24210  
(City) (State) (Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.  
**It is hoped that formal designation as a historic asset will foster recognition of the property, facilitate plans for its paint restoration and promote its perpetual preservation.**

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes  No   
Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes  No