

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

DHRP 4-29-73

## 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 Stanton Family Cemetery

other names/site number DHR File No. 14-52

### 2. Location

street & number East side of State Route 677, 0.4 miles north of junction  not for publication  
with State Route 676.

city or town Diana Mills  vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Buckingham code 029 zip code 23004

### 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.)

John C. Miller  
Signature of certifying official/Title

3/12/93  
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or 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 or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the  
National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register
- removed from the National  
Register.
- other. (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

<b>Ownership of Property</b> (Check as many boxes as apply)	<b>Category of Property</b> (Check only one box)	<b>Number of Resources within Property</b> (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	0	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	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)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other STONE/Slate, fieldstone, marble

**Narrative Description**

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

Stanton Family Cemetery  
Name of Property

Buckingham, Virginia  
County and State

### 3. 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.

#### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

#### Period of Significance

1853-1941

#### Significant Dates

N/A

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

N/A

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Library of Congress/National Archives

Stanton Family Cemetery

Name of Property

Buckingham, Virginia

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 1 acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

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

3	1	7	7	2	9	7	6	0	4	1	7	0	6	3	0
Zone	Easting								Zone	Easting					
4	1	7	7	2	9	7	4	0	4	1	7	0	6	7	5

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 Julie Gronlund, Historian

organization Land and Community Associates date 28 December 1992

street & number P.O. Box 92, 601 East Market Street telephone 804-295-3880

city or town Charlottesville state VA zip code 22902

**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 Sidney Trent Stanton, Jr., Estate c/o Edith M. Stanton, Administrator

street & number 60 Grove Street, #6513 telephone 617-237-2761

city or town Wellesley state MA zip code 02181

**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 a benefit 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co.,

### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Stanton Family Cemetery, located in the northeastern section of Buckingham County about five miles from the James River, is an exceptionally well-preserved, African-American, rural cemetery. This family cemetery is notable for its approximately thirty-six graves, most marked with slate head and footstones. These irregularly shaped slabs of local Buckingham slate mark the graves of at least four generations of the Stanton family. It retains a high degree of integrity and exemplifies the types of family cemeteries that predated the establishment of church-associated and public burial grounds in many rural Virginia communities.

### DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The Stanton Family Cemetery is located in the northeastern section of Buckingham County about five miles south of the James River on a 90.24-acre tract of land in the ownership of Stanton family members. The approximately 4,400-square-foot cemetery is located about 30 feet east of State Route 677 on nearly level ground with good drainage. The cemetery is located in a decidedly rural setting of field and forest and sits approximately 1,500 feet northwest of the Stanton family house site of which only the foundation survives. The house site is not included in the boundaries of the current nomination because it lacks integrity—neglect and vandalism during the 1940s left few remnants at the site.

Recently cleared of volunteer vegetation, the cemetery has little ground cover. Young mixed hard and softwood trees, probably between fifteen and twenty years old, edge the cemetery; a few pines of similar age have grown up between some of the rows of slate grave markers. No indication of intentional planting exists either along the cemetery's perimeter or at any individual gravesites. No known early-twentieth-century photographs depict the cemetery in an earlier period. No fence surrounds the cemetery, and there is no indication or oral tradition that an earlier wooden or metal fence or wall ever existed. Analysis of aerial photographs taken in the 1930s indicate that the site and its immediate environs have experienced little change.

The Stanton Family Cemetery, approximately sixty-eight by sixty-five feet, contains at least thirty-six burials and is large for a rural African-American family cemetery. Its layout features six rows spaced from one to five feet apart and varying in size from two to nine irregularly spaced graves. Most graves have both head and footstones and two children's graves are identified by their small size. All are oriented on an east-west axis—an old tradition particularly pervasive in African-American cemeteries. The cemetery was overgrown with vegetation for many years and some markers have become partially dislodged or are leaning, but there has been little disturbance of the cemetery. Despite the absence of a fence or extant adjacent family residence, there are no indications of vandalism.

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

In rural agricultural areas, people typically were buried on their farms in small, individual, family cemeteries that spanned several generations and contained ten or fewer marked graves. Until recently, public cemeteries were rare in rural areas in this part of Virginia and churchyard cemeteries were not used widely until the late nineteenth century. Because African-Americans were less likely to own land on which to establish family cemeteries, those cemeteries that were established frequently contained the graves of members of the extended family. It is not known whether individuals outside the extended Stanton family have been interred in the cemetery, but given the family's involvement in community affairs, it is possible they provided burial space for neighbors who did not own land.

It is possible that members of the Trent family, another antebellum free black family who lived nearby and who married into the Stanton family, may have been buried in the Stanton Family Cemetery. Both a site visit to the Trent cemetery and oral history indicate that the Trent cemetery is postbellum and considerably smaller. Unlike the Stanton cemetery, it is in a poor state of preservation.

African-American cemeteries in Buckingham County—both family and church—contain a mixture of slate markers, commercially produced marble and granite gravestones, metal funeral home markers, and less frequently, concrete gravemarkers. The Stanton Family Cemetery retains twenty-one, rough-cut, plain, slate markers. One is lightly engraved, but oral history and the writing style indicate that it is a recent inscription. Most of the slate gravemarkers are irregular, rectangular slabs about eighteen by ten inches and one inch thick, but there is considerable variety among the markers. Many bear the unmistakable tablet-like form often associated with traditional markers while others are cruder slabs that vary little from a form that could be used for paving, as a shallow step or as a thin foundation slab. Some markers have been finished to have a fairly smooth surface while others retain a substantial degree of texture. Fieldstones mark eight graves and marble military gravestones mark the graves of three World War I veterans. The availability of Buckingham slate probably accounts for the absence of the hand-made concrete markers often associated with early-twentieth-century African-American cemeteries. The use of slate has ensured the survival of an unusual number of markers, and no markers have been replaced with commercial or non-slate varieties.

Slate was quarried in Buckingham County as early as 1796. Local residents took advantage of this natural resource for many construction needs, but especially for roofing and paving.<sup>1</sup> Its durability and availability made it an appropriate material for gravemarkers. Although a material conducive to carving, as the numerous intricately carved gravestones of New England demonstrate, those found in African-American cemeteries in Buckingham County today seldom bear inscriptions. The lack of appropriate tools for carving slate may have been a deterrent to some. It is most likely, however, that a largely uneducated rural population was unable to inscribe the markers themselves. Commercially carved slate markers dating from the late nineteenth century are found in white

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

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cemeteries in this area, but not African-American cemeteries. African-American cemeteries outside the Buckingham area rarely or never made use of slate for gravestones.

Information concerning all family members buried in the Stanton cemetery remains unknown because the slate gravestones are uninscribed. Local residents indicate that although the identities of the individual burials were passed to later generations, much of this knowledge has been lost over the years. Family members can identify some of the graves. It is likely that there are several unknown burial places which either were never marked or where the markers have been lost.

The only major element that postdates the period of significance is a carefully finished commemorative slab of Buckingham slate dedicated to the memory of Daniel and Nancy Stanton that has been erected at the cemetery entrance. The smooth fifteen- by fifty-two-inch horizontal slab bears inscribed dates associated with the birth of Daniel Stanton and his male descendants, Sidney Trent Stanton and Sidney Trent Stanton, Jr. The commemorative marker is clearly evident as a product of its own time: its use of indigenous material makes it compatible and its horizontal orientation allows the marker to have a major presence without violating the low-rise scale of the cemetery and without competing with the vertical orientation of most of the original markers.

The cemetery is a rare known example of its type. Although many African-American cemeteries undoubtedly were developed in rural Virginia, the locations of many have been forgotten as African-American populations have moved out of state or to more urban areas. This cemetery is even more significant as an example of an antebellum African-American cemetery established not on a plantation but by free blacks on their own land. Its substantial size reflects the economic and social standing of the Stanton family in Buckingham County. As such it is a rare resource and a significant example of vernacular cemetery design that reveals important information about rural burial practices and a significant cultural group about which little is known.

### ENDNOTES

1. Eugene A. Maloney, *A History of Buckingham County*, (Buckingham, Va.: Buckingham County Bicentennial Commission, 1976), p. 81.

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1853 the Stanton family of Buckingham County, Virginia, headed by Nancy and Daniel Stanton, purchased 46.5 acres of land, thus becoming one of the few free black landholders in the region. Their social and economic status in the county continued to grow as they moved into more prominent occupations, purchased additional land, and acquired material possessions. Nancy Stanton, who purchased the original holdings, became the first known individual interred in the Stanton Family Cemetery when she died of bilious colic in 1853.

Located on the original family estate, the Stanton Family Cemetery once served as the burial ground for the extended Stanton family. Because the farmstead, consisting of approximately 91.5 acres of land acquired in the nineteenth century by Nancy Stanton, her son, and her grandson, has remained in the family, the cemetery survived twentieth-century growth with little change. The decline of the house and other buildings came after the family moved from the property in the 1930s, making the cemetery the rare surviving resource that represents a significant component of antebellum life and remains representative of the family's distinct cultural role in Buckingham County and Virginia.

Many African-American cemeteries, both free and slave, have been lost to development, forestation, vandalism, neglect, and agriculture. This cemetery, however, appears to exist in its original state. The simple slate markers occupy their original positions, no apparent vandalism has taken place, and the surrounding landscape retains its rural character. The cemetery's size, association with African-American history, and integrity of materials, feeling, setting, and location make it a significant and rare resource at the local level and a rare resource at the state level.

### JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

The Stanton Family Cemetery qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with African-American history. The Stanton family, traced as free blacks as early as 1820, represent the rural free black community in Buckingham County and in the state and region. Family members included farmers, blacksmiths, carpenters, boatmen, soldiers, and quarrymen. Their economic and social development throughout the nineteenth century represents that of rural, southern free blacks.

The Stanton Family Cemetery qualifies under Criterion Consideration D because of its age and because it is a rare surviving resource representative of free blacks in Virginia. Antebellum resources for free blacks are uncommon and the Stanton Family Cemetery retains a high degree of integrity. It is the best representation of a free black cemetery in Buckingham County and symbolizes the significant contributions made by free blacks to the region.

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Almost all African-Americans whose family lived in Virginia prior to the Civil War may claim a slave as an ancestor. In fact, prior to the American Revolution, only 2,000 free blacks resided in Virginia, and it is likely that many of those were the descendants of slaves.<sup>1</sup> The revolution instilled a new libertarian spirit in Americans and enabled many slaves to obtain freedom through military service or from owners influenced by the new revolutionary spirit.

These early manumissions led to the establishment of a new class of free blacks in Virginia and set the stage for the future emancipation of slaves. In 1790, 12,866 free blacks lived in Virginia; this number had increased to 58,042 by 1860.<sup>2</sup> Freedom came from various sources. Some slaves were released by benevolent owners, others escaped, and still others were purchased by free family members and/or friends.

No evidence indicating the source of Nancy and Daniel Stanton's families' freedom has been discovered; however, John Stanton (born 1778) of Buckingham County, whose relationship to Nancy and Daniel Stanton has not yet been determined, is listed in the *Records of the Assistant Commission for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands 1865-1869: Report on Prominent Whites and Freedmen-March-May 1867*, indicating members of the Stanton family gained freedom soon after the revolutionary war.<sup>3</sup>

Incomplete 1840 census records showed only 139 free blacks residing in Buckingham County compared with 11,441 slaves.<sup>4</sup> At that time Daniel Stanton was a farmer, an esteemed occupation for free blacks during the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Only 35 percent of free blacks rented or owned land, while the remainder worked for others as servants or manual laborers.<sup>6</sup> While poor whites experienced a similar lifestyle, the ability of blacks to prosper was particularly hindered by legislation designed to maintain their subordinate position in society. Laws passed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries restricted the ability of owners to free slaves, required freed slaves to leave the state, and prevented free blacks from competing with white laborers by restricting the type of work they could perform legally.<sup>7</sup>

Members of the Stanton family, however, overcame these obstacles and created a prosperous life for themselves in Buckingham County. Based on an examination of census and property tax records, Nancy and Daniel Stanton's achievements probably resembled those of other successful free black farmers in Buckingham County. An individual normally started out as a farm laborer, helping large landowners work their estates and managing a small plot of land for personal use. Although little is known of their wages, free black workers probably received a combination of clothing, food, currency, and farm implements, along with a knowledge of agriculture, which later enabled some to increase their economic position in society.<sup>8</sup>

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

Those industrious and fortunate enough to acquire sufficient cash and/or goods advanced from manual labor to tenant farming. Tenant farmers rented tracts of land from landholders, worked the property, and reaped the benefits of their labor. In this manner, many free black farmers acquired material wealth including farm implements, livestock, furniture, and other domestic items. Unless individuals were able to purchase a substantial amount of land, usually more than twenty-five acres, land ownership often did not provide them with significant advantages over tenancy.<sup>9</sup>

In most cases, ownership of property among free blacks occurred through purchase rather than through inheritance or gift. Nancy Stanton purchased the family's first acreage in 1853 from Hull C. Hill, a prominent white man. Although families often bought the land upon which they had been tenant farmers, property records demonstrate that no house stood on the land purchased by Nancy Stanton, thereby indicating the family may not have occupied the property prior to its acquisition.<sup>10</sup> By 1860, only about ten black families claimed land ownership in Buckingham County, the majority holding fewer than 100 acres. The heads of these families included Schuyler Stanton, Sidney Stanton, Patsy Stanton, Warner Stanton, and Thomas Trent.<sup>11</sup>

Much remains unknown about the lives of Nancy and Daniel Stanton. Not until 1850 did the census record individual members of the family which included Nancy, Daniel, and five of their children—Mary (b. 1823), Schuyler (1826-1882), Sidney (b. 1830), Saphronia (b. 1832), and Sarah (b. 1836). One daughter, Judith Ann (b. 1829), had married William Wheeler and no longer lived with her parents. Because the family did not own land prior to 1853, Nancy and Daniel Stanton's property and agricultural data are difficult to document.<sup>12</sup>

Nancy and Daniel Stanton, born in 1801 and 1790 respectively, were the first Stantons buried in the family cemetery.<sup>13</sup> While Daniel Stanton's death was not recorded, Nancy Stanton's daughter Sarah filed a death certificate noting that Nancy died of bilious colic on 6 October 1853.<sup>14</sup> Oral tradition indicated that Daniel Stanton survived his wife, although his date of death remains unknown.

Conflicting census and property tax records indicate that Daniel Stanton may legally have been a slave. Data from 1820 to 1860 record an adult slave living on the property, while compiled records list him as a free black in 1850.<sup>15</sup> After Nancy Stanton's death, records continue to show one slave and no free black males over the age of sixteen living on the Nancy Stanton estate, and she may have willed Daniel to their children.<sup>16</sup>

The practice of one family member owning another was not uncommon among African-Americans in the early to mid-nineteenth century. A Virginia law passed in 1806 prohibited freed slaves from remaining in Virginia for more than twelve months following their manumission.<sup>17</sup> Family members often purchased their kin to give them the life, albeit not the legal status, of freedmen.<sup>18</sup> Jason Stanton, a free black from Buckingham County whose relationship to Daniel and Nancy has

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham, Co., VA

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not yet been determined, definitely owned slaves in 1830, indicating that the Stanton family followed this practice.<sup>19</sup>

Census data after 1850 outline more fully the lives of Nancy and Daniel Stanton's children, particularly the males, Schuyler and Sidney. Both Schuyler and Sidney became boatmen and Schuyler, the elder son, not only owned his own packet boat but prior to 1860 purchased 37.75 acres of land independent of his parents.<sup>20</sup> Schuyler's and Sidney's occupation, considered more lucrative and prominent than their father's, demonstrated the Stanton family's continued economic and social growth within the community.<sup>21</sup>

"Boatman" became an occupation in Buckingham County around 1840 when the James River and Kanawha Company opened a canal along the James River to link Richmond and Lynchburg. The canal provided a means for Buckingham farmers and businesses to transport their products to markets throughout the state. The canal also became important during the Civil War as a means of dispatching soldiers and materials to Richmond. In 1863, however, the Union army began its attack on the canal, and it never regained its former role as a vital element in Buckingham County's economy. The railroad arrived in 1879, truly ending the canal's influence.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to being a boatman, Schuyler Stanton farmed his land. In 1860 he owned 20 acres of improved and 30 acres of unimproved land which produced 100 bushels of Indian corn, 50 bushels of oats, and 400 pounds of tobacco. He also owned one horse, two oxen, and four swine, and produced 50 pounds of butter.<sup>23</sup> While modest, these figures describe a farm used for more than subsistence agriculture. The production of this quantity of tobacco alone indicates that Schuyler Stanton participated in some commercial farming. Few free blacks were commercial farmers, and of those who were, even fewer worked outside of the farm. Nevertheless, given the fact that he hired James White, believed to be his brother-in-law, to work his farm, it appears Schuyler Stanton's status and income as a boatman may have surpassed even his standing as a farmer and property owner.<sup>24</sup>

Thomas Trent, whose daughter Nancy married Sidney Stanton, enjoyed a status similar to that of Schuyler Stanton as a property owner and shoemaker in Buckingham.<sup>25</sup> In 1860 Trent's farm, a small 10-acre tract, produced 80 bushels of corn, 200 bushels of oats, 3 bushels of peas and beans, 30 bushels of potatoes, and an impressive 1,100 pounds of tobacco. In addition he owned two horses, one cow, and eleven swine and produced twenty-five pounds of butter.<sup>26</sup> Like Schuyler Stanton, Thomas Trent's position as a shoemaker indicated he enjoyed income beyond that of most free black farmers.

Judith Ann Stanton Wheeler also prospered in her adult life. Married to William Wheeler, she had three sons—Schuyler, John, and William. By 1870 the Wheeler homestead consisted of 100 acres of land valued at \$400, farming implements and machinery valued at \$15, and a horse valued at

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

<sup>25</sup> Oral tradition indicates that Judith Ann Stanton Wheeler was buried in the Stanton Family Cemetery, and her husband William Wheeler may also have been interred there.

In 1874 Sidney T. Stanton inherited the land purchased by Nancy Stanton, which he may have managed since his mother's and father's deaths. He and his son Sidney "Trent" Stanton, Jr., virtually doubled the Stanton family's original holdings by 1888, bringing the total acreage to ninety-one. Throughout this period the cemetery, located on Sidney Stanton's estate, acted as the family burial grounds. Oral tradition indicates that members of the Stanton and Wheeler families were interred in the cemetery.

Sidney and most of his siblings remained in Buckingham County throughout the nineteenth century, and Sidney and Schuyler retained a professional as well as personal relationship. Both were boatmen and they owned property close, if not adjacent, to one another. The latter event probably occurred before 1860 when Schuyler purchased 37 3/4 acres from William Snoddy. This land was located sixteen miles east of the courthouse, as was the Nancy Stanton estate which presumably was occupied by Sidney.<sup>28</sup>

The Civil War undoubtedly had a significant impact on the Stanton family. During the war, skilled black laborers, both slave and free, received considerable recognition due to the dearth of skilled white labor. As boatmen, Schuyler and Sidney probably were called upon to support the Confederacy and transport supplies and troops between Richmond and Lynchburg. Yet the Civil War only temporarily increased employment opportunities for skilled blacks in the South, and the canal eventually suffered attacks from the northern army from which it never recovered.

Toward the end of the war in 1864, the Confederate Congress passed an act making all free male blacks between the ages of eighteen and fifty liable for "service in war manufactories, in erecting defensive works, and in military hospitals."<sup>29</sup> Over forty-eight free blacks from Buckingham County subsequently served the Confederate cause.<sup>30</sup> Two members of the Stanton family, John (aged twenty-six) and J.P. (aged thirty-two), were sent to work at High Bridge, a railroad trestle across a deep ravine near Farmville, Virginia, where four forts were built.<sup>31</sup> Only the seventy-two African-Americans from Buckingham who joined Union forces witnessed fighting. Few blacks, free or slave, experienced combat in the Confederate forces; southern whites feared African-Americans did not support their cause and instead placed them in positions as fortification builders, hospital workers, and body servants.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the destruction of the canal and the certain emotional and social effects of the war, the Stanton family's way of life appears to have changed little following the war. Sidney Stanton continued to farm his land and became a carpenter. His son, Trent, continued the family tradition of skilled labor and became the first in a line of Stantons to work for the LeSueur-Richmond Slate Corporation in Buckingham.

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Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

The Marshall District of Buckingham County, where the Stanton family lived, possessed the largest slate quarries in the area. First discovered in 1724 on a tract of land near what subsequently would be named the Slate River, Buckingham's first quarry opened in the 1780s, and the industry came to play a major role in Buckingham County's economy.<sup>33</sup> The industry grew slowly prior to 1865, but the end of the Civil War brought prosperity to slate manufacturers. The LeSueur-Richmond Slate Corporation entered the industry in 1876 to take advantage of slate's growing importance, and runs the sole remaining quarry in Buckingham County today.

Quarrymen worked in slate pits and manually split slate from the quarry walls. Large piles of rubbish, called "deadmen," formed and were lifted out of the quarry on pans pulled by conveyor lines operated by steam engines.<sup>34</sup> Family members recall that Trent Stanton highly preferred working in the quarry to managing his farm and hired unemployed neighbors to work the land.

Sidney Stanton had transferred the family land, including the cemetery, to his son in 1902 and lived there with his son's family until his death.<sup>35</sup> The farm appears to have been a typical diversified family farm of the general farming era. Nancy L. Stanton Burke, Trent and Znada Stanton's third child, described growing up on the family farm. The family had cows, pigs, chickens, two horses, and a mule. Since her father worked in the slate quarry, he hired a laborer named Henry Jackson to help run the farm. The farm produced corn and wheat which were ground at a nearby gristmill along the creek at Diana Mills and also had apple, pear, peach, and plum orchards.<sup>36</sup>

The family lived in a two-story house with a slate roof and several additions. Like many early-twentieth-century rural properties, the farm had several outbuildings including a detached kitchen, smokehouse, privy, barn, shed, and chicken house, all of which had slate roofs. A fence surrounded the yard area and boxwood trees flanked the fence's gate.<sup>37</sup> Today only stone foundations for the house and barn, a well pit, road trace, and two boxwood trees remain visible.

Nancy Burke's younger sister, Edith M. Stanton Ingram, also recalled living on the farm and described a prosperous farmstead with an eight-room house and a variety of livestock, agricultural products, and other plant materials. The homestead became a refuge for the extended family as Trent and Znada's generosity led family members to the farm in times of trouble, illness, and death. In locally made caskets, perhaps made by Trent Stanton who practiced carpentry in addition to being a quarryman and farmer, bodies of the dead rested in the family's front parlor prior to being buried in the nearby family cemetery.<sup>38</sup>

The family played an active role in the community, helping raise money for school equipment, providing shelter for Horace Turner, a homeless man, and "giving freely of their worldly possessions." They attended Baptist Union Baptist Church where Alexander Trent, Trent Stanton's cousin, acted as pastor for many years. Trent Stanton's grandfather, Thomas Trent, had earlier donated the land on which the church and school were built. A baseball diamond on the

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Stanton property also provided Buckingham residents with a recreation area where baseball teams from surrounding communities came to compete.<sup>39</sup>

Trent and Znada Stanton reared fourteen children on their Buckingham farm. Believed to be the first formally educated generation of Stantons, they sent their children to local schools at Diana Mills, Chestnut Grove, and Dillwyn. Trent's death in 1929 as the result of injuries received during an explosion in the quarry and Znada's subsequent illness resulted in the younger children being sent to relatives in the North where they continued their education.<sup>40</sup> Many of their older children already had left Buckingham to take advantage of greater opportunities in the North, following a trend that began after the Civil War and accelerated in the twentieth century.

The decline of the homestead also began with Trent Stanton's death and Znada Stanton's illness. Their son Godfrey remained in Buckingham on the family property until about 1939 when he moved and left the house vacant. Vandals gradually dismantled the house and outbuildings but fortunately left the cemetery which was recently rediscovered unharmed by family members.

Family members recall that Sidney Trent Stanton (d. circa 1910), Sidney Trent Stanton, Jr. (d. 1929), William Stanton (d. 1899 before his first birthday), Bertha Stanton (d. 1918), Harriet Stanton Scott (d. 1941), Ada Stanton Randolph and her husband Willie Randolph (d. 1936), and several members of the Clark family (Ella Stanton married James Clark in 1880) were buried in the family cemetery. Death certificates and oral history indicate that other interments included Nancy Stanton (d. 1853), Daniel Stanton, Mary Stanton (d. 1865 at the age of eleven), Judith Ann Stanton Wheeler, William Wheeler (d. 1874), Schuyler Stanton (d. 1882), Nancy Trent Stanton (d. 1890), Ariannah Stanton Randolph (d. 1923) and her husband James Randolph (d. 1921), Ella Stanton Clark (d. 1923) and her husband James Clark (d. 1933), Thomas Eans (Znada Fleming Stanton's second husband, d. 1934), John Jackson (Hallie Clark Jackson's husband, d. 1938), and other members of the immediate and extended family.<sup>41</sup> Of the thirty-six marked gravesites, family members have compiled a list of twenty-three interments. Because of the size of the family and indications that the Stanton farmstead acted as the central location for family burials into the twentieth century, many marked and unmarked graves may remain unidentified. The last interment occurred in 1941 when Harriet Stanton Scott was buried and her gravesite marked with a funeral home marker.

### ENDNOTES

1. Luther Porter Jackson, "The Early Strivings of the Negro in Virginia," *The Journal of Negro History* XXV, no. 1 (1940): 26.
2. Luther Porter Jackson, "The Virginia Free Negro Farmer and Property Owner, 1830-1860," *The Journal of Negro History* XXIV, no. 4: 390.

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3. Ethnic History of the Stanton Family as compiled by Renee Ingram.
4. Charles W. White, *The Hidden and Forgotten: Buckingham County* (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Press, 1985), 36.
5. 1850 United States Census.
6. Luther Porter Jackson, *Free Negro Labor and Property Holdings in Virginia, 1830-1860* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1942), 135.
7. Eugene A. Maloney, *A History Buckingham County* (Berryville, Virginia: Virginia Book Company, 1976), 42. White, *Hidden and Forgotten*, 31.
8. Jackson, "Virginia Free Negro Farmer," 394-398.
9. Ibid, 398-406.
10. Buckingham County, 1860 Land Tax Records.
11. 1860 United States Census.
12. The task is even more formidable given that Buckingham County's courthouse and its records burned in 1869.
13. 1850 United States Census.
14. Nancy Stanton's Death Certificate.
15. Buckingham County, Personal Property Tax Records, 1820-1850. 1850 United States Census.
16. Buckingham County, 1854 List of Taxable Persons. John Salmon, Historian, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, notes, December 1992.
17. Jackson, "Virginia Free Negro Farmer," 391.
18. Maloney, *History of Buckingham County*, 42.
19. White, *Hidden and Forgotten*, 33.
20. 1860 Agricultural Census.

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21. Jackson, *Free Negro Labor*, 134.
22. Maloney, *History of Buckingham County*, 83-86.
23. 1860 Agricultural Census.
24. Jackson, *Virginia Free Negro Farmer*, 429. 1860 United States Census.
25. Jackson, *Virginia Free Negro Farmer*, 436.
26. 1860 Agricultural Census.
27. 1870 Agricultural Census.
28. Buckingham County Land Tax Records, 1860.
29. James H. Brewer, *The Confederate Negro: Virginia's Craftsmen and Military Laborers, 1861-1865* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1969), 11.
30. White, *Hidden and Forgotten*, 52-55.
31. Bureau of Conscription, Registry of Free Negroes Enrolled in Detail, National Archives Old Military Branch. John Salmon, notes, December 1992.
32. Maloney, *History of Buckingham County*, 49.
33. Ibid. 81.
34. Doris Amos, telephone interview with Julie Gronlund, 23 October 1992.
35. Deed between Sidney T. Stanton and Sidney T. Stanton, Jr., 1902.
36. Nancy L. Stanton Burke, interview with Renee Ingram, 26 September 1992.
37. Burke, Interview, 1992. Edith M. Stanton Ingram, Written Notes, October 1992.
38. Ingram, Notes, 1992.
39. Ingram, Notes, 1992.
40. Ingram, Notes, 1992.

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41. Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health, Division of Vital Records, Death Certificates for Nancy Stanton, Mary Stanton, William Wheeler, Schuyler Stanton, Sophronia White, Nannie Stanton, Schuyler Wheeler, Bertha Stanton, James Randolph, R. Ann (Ariannah) Randoll (Randolph), Ella Clarke (Clark), James Clark, Thomas Eans, Willie C. Randolph, John Jackson, Unice Lee Clark, and Hattie Scott.

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National Archives, Cartographic Division. Aerial Photograph of Buckingham County, February 1937.

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points:

- A: 17/729830/4170680
- B: 17/729840/4170635
- C: 17/729760/4170630
- D: 17/729740/4170675

Route 677 bounds the site to the west. The northern, southern, and eastern borders occur approximately one hundred feet beyond the outermost gravemarker in each direction.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The site's current boundaries include the cleared portion of the cemetery plus an additional one hundred feet to the cemetery's northern, southern, and eastern limits. This additional one hundred feet accounts for the probability that some markers may be buried or may not have survived or that interments occurred on the cemetery's perimeter with no gravemarkers laid. Route 677 bounds the site to the west.

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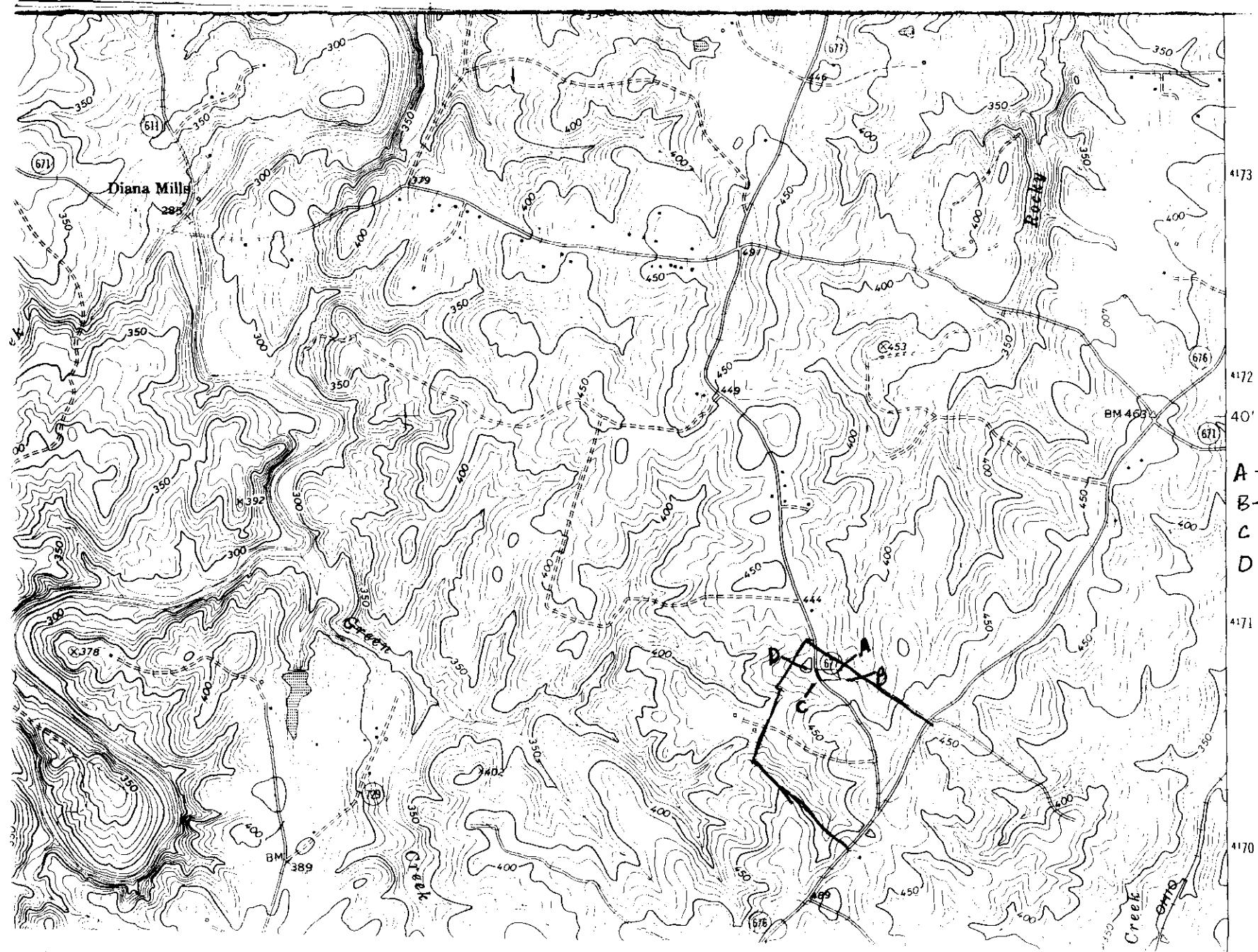
Stanton Family Cemetery, Buckingham Co., VA

### PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

1. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 11998  
Buckingham County, Virginia  
Land and Community Associates, Photographer  
March 1992  
Virginia State Library, Richmond  
Slate marker, view to east
2. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 11998  
March 1992  
General view of cemetery facing southeast
3. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 11998  
March 1992  
General view of cemetery from roadway, facing southeast
4. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 11998  
March 1992  
Fieldstone marker, view to east
5. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 12419  
October 1992  
Ella Clark stone, only inscribed slate marker, view to east
6. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 12419  
October 1992  
Willie C. Randolph military marker, view to southwest
7. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 11998  
March 1992  
Memorial marker donated by LeSueur-Richmond Slate Corp., view to northeast
8. Stanton Family Cemetery, DHR File No. 14-52, Negative No. 11998  
March 1992  
General view of cemetery facing northwest

Stanton Family Cemetery  
DHR File No. 14-52  
General Site Plan Showing Location  
of Markers  
December 1992  
No Scale





A - 17/729830/4170680  
B - 17/729840/4170635  
C - 17/729760/4170630  
D - 17/729740/4170675