

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
VLR-7/18/78 NRHP-a/20/78

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Redfield  
AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 3 miles SE of Oak Level; approximately 400' N of State Route 683;  
2200' W of branch of Birch Creek; 1.3 miles NW of intersection of  
State Routes 683 and 680.

CITY, TOWN Oak Level  
STATE Virginia  
VICINITY OF Fifth (W. C. Daniel)  
COUNTY Halifax  
CODE 51  
CODE 083

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. & Mrs. Robert Edmunds  
STREET & NUMBER 405 Sunset Drive  
CITY, TOWN Greensboro STATE North Carolina 27408  
VICINITY OF

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Halifax County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Halifax STATE Virginia

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)

TITLE (1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory  
DATE 1958  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress  
CITY, TOWN Washington STATE D. C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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

Redfield, a Classical Villa-style residence, sits majestically on a spacious lawn along State Route 683 in Halifax County. Erected circa 1855-1857, the brick dwelling is a two-story, central-hall-plan house covered by a low-hipped roof.

Set on a low stone foundation, the front (south) elevation is laid in brick stretchers. The four-bay facade is dominated by a two-story pavilion. On the first story, the pavilion contains a flat-roof portico set on a stone podium. The portico is supported by square brick piers which flank paired Grecian-Doric columns. The frieze is decorated by scroll-sawn brackets which support a molded cornice. The portico shelters a transom-light double doorway with complementing side lights. The original paneled doors continue to serve the house. The second story of the pavilion contains paired 6/9 hung-sash windows, framed with simple wooden architraves and capped by cast-iron hood molds with corbel stops. The pavilion is covered by a pedimented gable roof, and scroll brackets embellish the eaves course. Eight-over-twelve hung-sash windows, framed by a simple wooden architrave, flank the pavilion on both the first and second stories. Wooden louvered blinds, not original to the house, are used throughout.

The main house is flanked by brick, one-story wings of two bays. An arched passageway connects the wings to the main house. The arch is supported by brick piers similar to those found on the main portico. The interior of the passageway is finished in scored stucco. Fenestration found on the wing is similar to that on the main house.

The rear (north) elevation contains a central two-story wing covered by a pedimented gable roof. The wing is two bays wide and one bay deep. The fenestration consists of 9/9 hung-sash windows framed by simple wooden architraves. A rear first-floor entrance has been added to the east wall of the wing. The wing is flanked by one bay of first- and second-story windows.

The west elevation consists of four bays, the side wing occupying two bays. The fenestration duplicates that found on the rear (north) elevation.

The east elevation resembles the west, with the exception of the northernmost bay, which contains an entrance to an open colonnade. The colonnade leads to a detached rear kitchen, and both are replacements of the original structures removed in the present century.

The interior of Redfield contains salient architectural features. Dominating the hall is a central, single-run, open-well stair which ascends to the second floor. The stair features a carved end step, carved paneled spandrels, turned walnut baluster, and a finely molded walnut handrail. The doorways in the hall have simple architrave trim with deeply turned corner blocks. Openings throughout the house are similarly treated. Each of the western rooms consists of a double parlor separated by sliding paneled double-doors framed by a simple architrave with corner blocks. The marble mantel in the front parlor maintains a simple architrave. The rear parlor mantel is a replacement. The mantel in the east parlor of the first floor has pilasters supporting a plain architrave and frieze with scroll brackets supporting a mantel shelf. A similar treatment occurs in the wings and in the principal rooms on the second floor. It should be noted that the front (west) parlor originally contained a scroll-bracket-supported coffered and ornamental stucco ceiling which was removed in a 1963 restoration. The dining room, located on the first

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 1855-57

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Situated on River Road in Halifax County, Redfield is a notable example of a Classical Villa-style residence. Erected between 1855-1857, the house originally served as the plantation home of the prosperous planter and distinguished Halifax citizen John R. Edmunds.

John R. Edmunds was born in 1812, the son of Henry Edmunds of Elm Hill in Halifax County. In 1848 Edmunds purchased from his father and uncle 1110 acres on Birch Creek, the land on which he would build Redfield. Edmunds began construction of Redfield in 1855, completing the house by 1857.

At the time Redfield was built, Edmunds had enjoyed financial success as a grain farmer. Indeed, Redfield was constructed with money made from the sale of grain to Russia during the Crimean War. Edmunds's success as a planter enabled him to become active in community interests. From its inception in 1848, he was a director of the Richmond and Danville Railroad. He was chairman of the "Books and Accounts Committee" of the Railroad and was undoubtedly instrumental in the construction of that important transportation link from Richmond through Danville and eventually to Greensboro, North Carolina. This railroad subsequently became the Southern Railway. His endeavors probably included lobbying efforts for support from the Virginia General Assembly. From 1860-68 Edmunds was president of the Virginia Agricultural Society. The Virginia Agricultural Society was most interested in pursuing new and scientific farming methods and encouraging revitalization of the Virginia soil which was so depleted by long years of tobacco culture. The shift from a slave-oriented tobacco economy to more diversified agricultural efforts, including wheat, was an important result of work by this organization. As a recognition of his prominence in county affairs, he was elected to serve three terms in the Virginia House of Delegates and was a delegate to the 1851 Constitutional Convention. In addition he served as chairman of a committee sent to petition President Grant concerning Virginia's voting on their new Constitution following Reconstruction. Although Edmunds was a staunch conservative, he pleaded for unity among Virginians and urged his fellow citizens to accept the Fourteenth Amendment as the law of the land. Such activities required a substantial and commodious house, a need fulfilled by Redfield.

At the time Redfield was built, the villa-type house had become a popular form in American domestic architecture. A. J. Downing in his The Architecture of Country Houses (New York, 1850) notes the following on villas: "More strictly speaking, what we mean by a villa, in the United States, is the country house of a person of competence or wealth sufficient to build and maintain it with some taste and elegance...The villa, or country house proper, then, is the most refined home of America--the home of its most leisurely and educated class of citizens."

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Carrington, Wirt Johnson. A History of Halifax County, Va. Richmond, 1924.  
 Clark, Malcolm C. The First Quarter Century of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, 1847-1871  
 George Washington University M.A. Thesis, 1959.  
 Downing, A. J. The Architecture of Country Houses. New York, 1850.  
 Halifax County Deed Book 52 p. 229 (1847).  
Deed Book 55 p. 78 (1853).  
Deed Book 58 p. 553 (1860). (See Continuation Sheet #2)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 38 acres

UTM REFERENCES

E - 17 671710 4063480

A	1, 7	6, 7, 1, 9, 0, 0	4, 0, 6, 3, 4, 0, 0
	ZONE EASTING	NORTHING	
C	1, 7	6, 7, 1, 4, 3, 0	4, 0, 6, 3, 0, 7, 0

B	1, 7	6, 7, 1, 9, 0, 0	4, 0, 6, 2, 9, 6, 0
	ZONE EASTING	NORTHING	
D	1, 7	6, 7, 1, 4, 2, 0	4, 0, 6, 3, 2, 6, 0

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The acreage comprising Redfield is bounded by a line beginning at a point on N side of State Route 683 at edge of tree line, approximately 3400' NW of crossing of said route over N branch of Birch Creek; thence extending N 500' along tree line and curving NE along said tree line for about 1200' to south edge of lake; thence extending approximately 600' E along said lake shore to feeder Creek and tree line; thence extending approximately 1500' S, following tree line to N side of State Route 683; thence extending approximately 1500' W along N side of said route to point of origin.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

June 1978

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER'S SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUL 18 1978

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Redfield, Halifax County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6, 7 & 8 PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1971 1978 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

floor of the wing, retains its original mantel and trim.

A plank and log granary lies to the northeast of the house and dates to the late 19th century.

RCC

The register boundary is derived from the original Edmunds estate and includes 38 acres. This acreage encompasses the main house, one outbuilding, a small pond, and property leading to and viewed from the road. The boundary follows State Route 683 on the south, the tree lines on the east and west, and the southern edge of the small lake north of the house.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

While Edmunds did not borrow directly from Downing for his villa's design, Redfield may have been inspired in both style and plan by Design XXIII, "A Small Villa in the Classical Manner", designed by Alexander Jackson Davis of New York and published in Downing's Country Houses.

Unlike Edmunds's neighbor, Thomas Bruce, who was simultaneously erecting a villa on River Road in the "Tudor Style", Edmunds's choice of a classical style suggests a degree of conservatism in the builder's architectural taste. Redfield was built at a time when European influences had become the "modern" American architectural idiom. Redfield looks more to the Classical Revival than to current architectural trends. This sense of conservatism is especially evident in the house's monumental central stair which may have been inspired by a Georgian precedent.

An inventory taken at the time of Edmunds's death in 1873 suggests that Edmunds continued to prosper after the Civil War. His furnishings included sideboards, silverware, porcelain, rugs, and chandeliers. The house went out of the Edmunds family, to be reclaimed and restored in 1963 by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Edmunds, the former of whom is a direct descendant of the original builder.

MTP/RCC

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Halifax County Land Tax Books 1846-1864.

Halifax County Will Book 30, pp. 513-515.

Will Book 31, pp. 89 ff.

Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Richmond and Danville  
Railroad Co. Richmond, Va., 1848.

Pulliam, David L. Constitutional Convention of Virginia. Richmond, Va., 1901.

Richmond Dispatch, 12 May 1873.

Richmond Whig, 8 & 10 May 1873.

Speech of John R. Edmunds of Halifax Before the Conservative State Convention.

April 28, 1869. (Rare Books, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.).

