

SEPT 21 1976

Virginia Landmarks Register

43-20

Form No. 10-500 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Varina Plantation

AND/OR COMMON  
Varina Plantation**2 LOCATION**STREET & NUMBER 1 mile SSW of Fair Hill; approximately 250 feet N of James River;  
200 feet S of southern end of Varina Road; 2.4 miles SE of inter-  
section of Varina Road and Kingsland Road.

CITY, TOWN

Varina

☒ VICINITY OF

Third (David E. Satterfield, III)

STATE

Virginia

CODE  
51

COUNTY

Henrico

CODE  
087**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" 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
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Varina on the James, Inc.

c/o Mrs. Irene S. Stoneman, President  
and Mr. W. N. Stoneman, Jr.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Varina Farm, Route 14

CITY, TOWN

Richmond,

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 23231

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Henrico County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE  
Virginia**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2)** (See continuation sheet #1)

TITLE (1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE 1969

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE  
D.C.

## **DESCRIPTION**

### **CONDITION**

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### **CHECK ONE**

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### **CHECK ONE**

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### **DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Varina Farm is a flat, open tract of land situated on the James River near Dutch Gap, about ten miles south of Richmond. Some of the land has been flooded because of gravel operations, however most of it remains a prosperous working farm. The dwelling house is a two-story, common-bond brick structure connected by a long hyphen to a kitchen at the east and was built in 1853. It is five bays long with six-over-six sash and white wooden sills and lintels, except on the ground story of the river front where all of the window openings have French doors set into them. A one-story, decastyle Ionic porch, rebuilt after a 1941 tornado, stretches the length of the river front and is returned halfway along the west end. A one-story tetrastyle Ionic portico shelters the land front. The house is covered by a high hipped roof which, with the modillion cornice, is a replacement of the original low hipped roof with eaves parapet which was destroyed in the 1941 storm. Four tall interior end chimneys surmount the whole.

The hyphen is a six-bay, one-story brick structure. The bay system on the north side is delineated by plain brick pilasters. The south side was formerly an open arcade supported on square wooden Doric piers but has now been enclosed.

The kitchen is two stories high and four bays long. It is set at right angles to the main block. It has a low hipped roof, two interior end chimneys, white wooden lintels, and is built of brick laid in five-course American bond.

The main block has a double-pile central passage plan with the stairs in the passage and a double parlor at the west. Opening off the east rooms are a block of three small service rooms (set north to south) in the first section of the hyphen, with a single original file of rooms and the modern enclosed passage forming the remainder of the connection to the kitchen. The latter has two rooms and no passage on each floor.

The interior of the house contains a variety of decorative treatments reflecting alterations made at several times during the building's existence. Both parlors have light-grey marble mantels with incised panels and undulating soffits. These may be twentieth-century features. In addition, the fireplaces are treated with early twentieth-century tiled surrounds and brass fireframes. The sliding door between the two parlors has a ramped lintel; otherwise plain architrave-type door and window frames are employed throughout the house.

In the passage is a rounded, open-string, Greek-Revival stair with sawn brackets, a molded railing, a heavy turned newel, and two turned balusters to a tread.

The southeast (dining) room was also redecorated early in the twentieth century. It has a tiled surround and hearth, iron grate, and a wooden Neo-Grec mantel.

In the northeast (bed-) room is the only original mantel in the house. It is a plain wooden Greek-Revival style mantel with symmetrically molded pilasters which support a plain shelf. An early twentieth-century tiled surround and mantel and iron grate are used here, as well.

(See continuation sheet #2)

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET #2

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DESCRIPTION:

West of the house is a large antebellum, five-course-American-bond brick barn. It is five bays long, one-and-one-half stories high, and has a low gable roof, an exterior end chimney, and brick sheds at either end. The brick barn is located in the midst of numerous modern farm buildings.

Most of the Varina land has been surface examined by archaeologists, and evidence of a colonial structure has been found approximately 650 feet northeast of the main house. This may be the site of any one of a number of buildings believed to have been erected in the area in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, including the first Henrico County Courthouse, the Varina Church, the glebe house of Varina Parish, and Cocke's Ordinary. Varina was also the site of a terminus for a ferry across the James in the early eighteenth century.

The 820 acres of Varina Plantation that are being nominated constitute the eastern portion of the entire 2200-acre farm and represent the section of the tract most closely associated with the historical resources of the area.

# **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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

## SPECIFIC DATES

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Varina ranks among the Commonwealth's most historic plantations. Still a prosperous working farm, the broad, level fields are associated with personages and events dating back to the earliest years of settlement. At Varina were laid the foundations of Virginia's economic development, the tobacco industry, the industry which has remained the keystone of the state's economy to the present day.

Tobacco had been used by Englishmen since the 1570s when Sir Francis Drake returned with a quantity of the leaves captured in the West Indies. One of the Virginia colony's early settlers, John Rolfe, had such an appreciation for the mild tobacco of the Spanish colonies, that upon his arrival in Jamestown in 1610, he decided to cultivate a small patch of it for his own use. Realizing that tobacco was indigenous to Virginia soil and climate, he hit on the idea that the plant could become a profitable commodity and thus could bring a measure of prosperity to the struggling colony. By 1612 Rolfe was successfully growing tobacco of the Spanish variety at Jamestown. He soon began growing commercially viable crops at his up-river plantation, and by 1617 his experiments had proven to be so successful and had caught on so well that Virginia was able to ship 20,000 pounds of tobacco to England that year and twice that amount the following year. The quantities steadily increased. Rolfe named his plantation Verinas, or Varina, because the tobacco he grew there was so similar to the Spanish Verinas tobacco much enjoyed by Englishmen up to that time.

Varina is also associated with one of Virginia's most romantic figures, the Indian princess Matoaka, better known by her nickname, Pocahontas. Pocahontas, who according to the probable legend had saved the life of Captain John Smith while he was held captive by her father, Chief Powhatan, became a captive herself. She was held as a hostage at Henrico, an early settlement just upstream from Varina. Pocahontas was instructed in Christianity while at Henrico. Shortly after her baptism, she and Rolfe fell in love and were married at Jamestown on April 5, 1614. The marriage was sanctioned by both Chief Powhatan and Sir Thomas Dale, the colonial governor, and served to improve relations between Indians and the colonists. The couple lived at Varina until 1616 when they and their infant son, Thomas, departed for a visit to England. Pocahontas died while abroad, but Rolfe returned to Varina where he continued his tobacco plantation until 1622 when he was presumably slain during the Great Indian Massacre.

In the years following the massacre, much of Varina was incorporated into the glebe lands of Henrico Parish. The original church of this parish was located in the village of Henrico, but a replacement church was located at Varina sometime prior to 1640.

(See continuation sheet # 3)

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CONTINUATION SHEET #3

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SIGNIFICANCE:

The present successor to the Henrico Parish Church is the historic St. John's Church in Richmond. One of the most noted rectors of the Varina Church was James Blair, who came to Virginia in 1685 and later founded the College of William and Mary. One of Blair's successors, who also occupied the glebe house at Varina, was Reverend William Stith, author of The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia. This important colonial history was inscribed "Varina, December 10, 1746."

A small settlement grew up at Varina after the Great Massacre. The settlement became the Henrico County seat in 1632 and remained thus until 1752 when it was moved to Richmond. The old courthouse, located near glebe house, remained standing until it was demolished around 1825. Most of the present plantation property was divided into several separately owned tracts in the mid-seventeenth century, one of which was owned by Nathaniel Bacon, the rebel. (Another part of the land remained with the Rolfe family and descended to Col. John Bolling (1676-1729), great-grandson of John Rolfe.) By the early eighteenth century most of the Varina property had been acquired by the Randolph family of Turkey Island. The Randolphs retained ownership of Varina until 1825; the last owner, Thomas Mann Randolph, was the fourteenth governor of Virginia and the husband of Thomas Jefferson's daughter Martha. Varina was purchased from Thomas Mann Randolph by Pleasant Akin in 1825. The present house on the plantation, a substantial brick dwelling in a relatively late application of the Classical Revival style, was built by Albert M. ~~Atkin~~ in 1855.

AKIN

Varina was the scene of much activity during the War Between the States. Then referred to as Akin's Landing, the farm served as the eastern depot for the exchange of war prisoners. Six thousand prisoners were exchanged there on August 3, 1862. Varina was in the midst of fighting in 1864 when Union General Benjamin Butler was advancing toward Richmond. Remnants of battle can be seen in the many bullet and cannonball holes in the house's west wall. The farm was also used as a major crossing point for Union troops; a pontoon bridge was constructed just upstream from the house. General Butler later took over Varina for his headquarters. The house was occupied by his staff and a cabin was erected in the yard to serve as Butler's official headquarters.

AKIN

Varina remained in the possession of the ~~Atkin~~ family until 1876 when it was sold to James H. Caldwell. It passed through several other owners until 1910 when it was acquired by the Stoneman family. Modern farming methods are now conducted on the property under the direction of Wilmer N. Stoneman, Jr.

In addition to its historical significance, Varina possesses archaeological potential. Prehistoric sites as well as sites associated with its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century occupation most probably exist and may yield important information relating to Virginia's early history. Some surface investigation has already been conducted by representatives of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, and fragmentary evidence of a colonial structure has been found northeast of the main house. Scenically the site is important as it is located adjacent to property in the Richmond National Battlefield Park System.

CL, MTP

GPO 832 455

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Dabney, Virginius. Virginia The New Dominion. New York, N.Y., 1971.  
Hening, William Waller. The Statutes at Large..., Volume 2 (1660-1682), p.472; Volume 3 (1684-1710) p.470.  
Herndon, Melvin. Tobacco in Colonial Virginia. Williamsburg, Va., 1957.  
Holmes, Alvahn. The Farrar's Island Family and Its English Ancestry. Baltimore, Md., 1972  
Meade, Bishop William. Old Churches, Ministers, and Families in Virginia. Baltimore, Md., 1966 (originally published in Philadelphia, 1857). (See continuation sheet #4)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 820 acres

### UTM REFERENCES

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A 1,8	2 9,5 1,2,0	4,1 4,0 8,8,0	B 1,8	2 9,5 0,8,0	4,1 3,9 3,2,0
C 1,8	2 9,2 2,0,0	4,1 3,9 3,7,0	D 1,8	2 9,2 2,4,0	4,1 4,0 9,6,0

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The 820 acres of which Varina Plantation is composed are bounded by a line beginning at a point on the north bank of the James River approximately .7 mile WSW of the intersection of Varina Road with a dirt road; thence extending 11,500 feet following north bank of the James River; thence extending 6100 feet WNW to intersection with Varina Road; thence curving NNW 1000 feet, then curving 1400 feet WSW; thence curving generally southward approximately 5000 feet to intersection with James River and 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

September 1976

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 X

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 SIGNATURE

TITLE Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE SEP 21 1976

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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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CONTINUATION SHEET

#4

ITEM NUMBER

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MAJOR BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Stoneman, Janet Chase, "A History of Varina on the James'," unpublished ms., 1957 (revised 1970), in Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission archives.

Virginia Magazine of History and Biography. Volume 2 (1894-1895), pp.182-183, 295; Volume 26 (1918), p. 254.

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PAGE

1

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1967, 1974, 1976 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond Virginia



