

VLR-6/20/89 NRHP-1/10/91

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Riner Historic District other names/site number 60-44

2. Location

properties east and west of Main Street and north and south of Franklin Street street & number comprising the village of Riner city, town Riner state Virginia code VA county Montgomery code 121 zip code 24149

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private public-local public-State public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s) district site structure object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing: Prehistoric and Historic Resources of Montgomery County

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 19 Nov 1990 Director, Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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):

Horizontal lines for certification details

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling  
Domestic: secondary structures  
Commerce: financial institution  
Commerce: department store  
Religion: religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling  
Religion: religious structure  
Vacant/not in use

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th century: Greek Revival  
Other: late 19th- and early 20th-c. commercial  
Other: center-passage-plan dwellings

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: limestone  
walls Wood: weatherboard  
Brick  
roof Metal: tin  
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The village of Riner stands today just to the east of U.S. Route 8, which bypassed the community in the 1920s. The town centered on the intersection of VA Routes 669 (Franklin Street) and 671 (Main Street). The roads carry little other than local traffic. Concrete sidewalks are located along the west side of Main Street, and on the north and south sides of Franklin Street for several hundred feet. Three important buildings in the village are located at the principal intersection. The first building is the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1908 (60-44-3), a three-bay frame nave-plan church of simple detailing, with its adjacent two-story three-bay center-passage parsonage surrounded by an old iron fence (60-44-2). The second building is the 1912-1913 one-story brick Bank of Riner (60-44-4), which features a corbelled parapet on the two principal walls and a corner entry facing the intersection. The third building is the Jonathan E. Hall House/Store (60-44-8). The original section of the structure is a mid-nineteenth-century, three-bay, two-story, center-passage house with asymmetrical fenestration. The original two-story porch sheltered the entrance with sidelights, but was replaced in the late nineteenth century with a wide one-story porch. A Greek Revival mantel is found in the south room, while an open-stringer stair with a turned newel rises in the passage. Before the turn of the century a store was added to the house, close to the Franklin Street edge of the property. The second story of the store conforms to the lateral gable roof format of the house, but the store projects to the rear as a long one-story gabled wing. Concrete steps giving access to the porch are set diagonally to the intersection, allowing cars to pull up easily to a now-vanished corner gas pump.

The fourth corner of the intersection is occupied by the lawn of one of the town's principal dwellings, the Kinsey-Lawrence House (60-44-7). The house sits well back from Franklin Street, but closer to Main Street. The house as redone in 1908-9, is a double-pile, hip-roofed, three-bay, frame, center-passage house. It has two-over-two sash windows and an entrance with a transom and sidelights in the center of its three-bay facade on each floor. The porch, supported by large, tapered,

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  
1850-1920s  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
N/A

Architect/Builder  
Kinsey, John M. - builder

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Riner Historic District is significant under criterion C as an example of an important rural cluster of buildings collectively and individually exhibiting elements of vernacular architectural forms and ornaments characteristic of the region from 1850 to 1920s. The village began as an unplanned, apparently spontaneous crossroads community, in contrast to some of the more planned speculative developments elsewhere in the county. In this it resembles the Prices Fork Historic District (60-224). Riner was a commercial, religious, and milling center for the large rural community of rolling hills in southwestern Montgomery County and the principal stop between the town of Floyd to the south and Christiansburg to the north. The alterations made to a few buildings have in no case compromised the integrity of the significant form and materials of the structures or their interrelationships. Outbuildings and subsidiary structures, including garages and a windmill, contribute to the overall interpretation of the principal structures within the period of significance. Noncontributing buildings, principally modern residences and trailers, do not detract from the district's overall integrity by visually overwhelming the forms and materials that make up its historic fabric.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Riner was formed sometime between 1827 and 1853 and was first known as "Five Points," (Crozet) because of the intersection of five roads. According to tradition a nearby sawmill precipitated the formation of the village, and a steam-driven sawmill was in operation just to the north of the main crossroads before 1853. The village, later known as Auburn, did not grow considerably until after the Civil War. The Christiansburg and Floyd Turnpike had been built through the village in the mid-1850s, to give access to the newly opened railroad depot in Christiansburg to the north. By the post-war

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Lawrence, Virginia Deal. "Memories of Riner." Mountainside Magazine. Blacksburg, Virginia: Vol 1, No. 4, (1981) p. 26-29.

Montgomery County Chancery Suit No. 965.

Rowe, Sally Thompson. Interview, 1985.

See continuation sheet

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property approximately 22 acres.

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>549720</u>	<u>4101870</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>17</u>	<u>549780</u>	<u>4102280</u>

B	<u>17</u>	<u>549700</u>	<u>4102240</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>17</u>	<u>549980</u>	<u>4102190</u>

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at point A on the east side of VA Route 671, 275 feet north of the northeast corner of the intersection of VA Route 671 and VA Route 669, proceeding east 275 feet with a farm road to point B, thence 130 feet south with the rear property line of site 60-44-1, to point C, thence east along a line corresponding with the south property line of said site 300 feet to point D, thence south 160 feet with east property line of house on north side of VA Route 669 to point E on the south side of said road,  See continuation sheet thence with southside of

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries were chosen to encompass the significant concentration of buildings making up the district. The boundaries encompass the intact historic form of the district excluding visually altered areas to the west.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Gibson Worsham date June 1988  
 organization Gibson Worsham, Architect telephone (703) 552-4730  
 street & number Route 2, Yellow Sulphur Springs state Virginia zip code 24073  
 city or town Christiansburg

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fluted posts, spans all three bays on the first floor and only the center bay on the second. The gable contains sawn and turned ornamental work. Undercut bays project on the north and south sides on the rear (added) range of rooms, while one- and two-story additions and a porch project to the rear (east). Two small contributing frame outbuildings are found to the immediate rear. A garage and large frame barn to the east and southeast respectively, both from the early twentieth century, were until recently associated with the property, as was a gable-fronted frame tenant house on the south side of Franklin Street at the eastern edge of the district.

The other dominant dwelling in the town is the late nineteenth-century frame Dr. Stone Farm (60-44-1), located north of the Bank of Riner Building at the northern boundary of the district. The two-story weatherboarded dwelling, also of the double-pile, center-passage form, is the district's most ornate structure. It features two-over-two double-hung sash windows, paired under-cut projecting gabled bays flanking the entry, and the Georgian-plan chimney placement between the rooms flanking the passage. Bays also project, as in the Kinsey-Lawrence House, from the side walls of the rooms in the rear range of the house. An ornate bracketed porch wraps around the west front and north and south sides of the house. The garage and twentieth-century windmill structure contribute to the historic integrity of the site. A collapsed barn to the east was not included in the district. The Bank of Riner was built by an owner of this house as was the Surface Mill (60-44-5) of ca. 1910, located to the east of the bank on the north side of Franklin Street. The plain two-story, five-bay, frame mill is weatherboarded. It has double doors in the central front (south) bay and one-story leanto additions at each end. To the east of the mill on the eastern edge of the district, is a frame, center-passage house of early twentieth-century date.

The Auburn United Methodist Church of 1885, a three-bay, frame, nave-plan church with a two-stage belfry, is located on the east side of Main Street halfway between the Kinsey-Lawrence House and the southern edge of the district. The weatherboarded structure has Greek Revival detailing including four engaged pilasters on the principal (west) front, cornerblocks on the windows, and beveled moldings on the box cornice. A large classical portico has been added over the remodeled center entry door. An old cast and wrought iron fence separates the

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churchyard from the property to the south, the Sam Barnett Store (60-44-10), a one-story, shed-roofed, commercial structure built in the early twentieth-century. The well preserved store has large wood-framed storefront windows and a recessed entrance. The remaining southern end of the district consists of early twentieth-century frame dwellings, except for the house at the end of the district on the east side of Main Street (60-44-11). While it appears to be a two-story, frame, center-passage dwelling, it also appears to incorporate a log single-pen house in its northern end, as a partial stone foundation and the ghost of a north end chimney confirm.

The only noncontributing buildings in the district are a modern ranch house just north of the Bank of Riner building, a modern church hall just north of the Auburn United Methodist Church, a heavily altered frame dwelling east of the Kinsey-Lawrence House, three trailers on vacant lots, and a mid twentieth-century frame store (60-44-6) on the north side of VA Route 669. Four trailers and three modern houses on the west side of Main Street have been omitted from the district.

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## RINER HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

NOTE: All resources are contributing unless marked (NC) for noncontributing. All resources are listed by DHR file number, since no addresses are available.

- |         |           |  |
|---------|-----------|--|
| 60-44-1 | Route 671 | late-19th-century, 2-story, 3-bay, hip-roofed, frame, Queen Anne-style Dr. Stone Farm; frame garage - contributing; early-20th-century windmill - contributing structure |
| 60-44-2 | Route 671 | ca. 1900, 2-story, 3-bay, gable-roofed, frame, Victorian I house; garage - contributing  |
| 60-44-3 | Route 671 | 1908, 1-story, gable-fronted, gable-roofed, frame, vernacular Methodist Episcopal Church   |
| 60-44-4 | Route 671 | 1912-13, 1-story, 3-bay, flat-roofed with corbeled brick parapet, brick, commercial vernacular Bank of Riner   |
| 60-44-5 | Route 669 | ca. 1910, 2-story, 5-bay, gable-roofed, frame, vernacular Surface Mill   |
| 60-44-6 | Route 669 | early-20th-century, 2-story, 3-bay, shed-roofed, commercial vernacular store now used as a residence (NC due to alterations)   |
| 60-44-7 | Route 671 | 1908-09, 2-story, 3-bay, hip-roofed, frame, vernacular Kinsey-Lawrence House; garage and two frame outbuildings - contributing   |
| 60-44-8 | Route 671 | mid-19th-century, 2-story, 3-bay, gable-roofed, frame, Greek Revival Jonathan E. Hall House and late-19th-century frame store addition                                   |

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60-44-9	Route 671	1885, 1-story, 1-bay, gable-fronted, gable-roofed, Greek Revival Auburn Methodist Church; barn - contributing
60-44-10	Route 671	early-20th-century, 1-story, 3-bay, frame, shed-roofed, commercial vernacular Sam Barnett Store
60-44-11	Route 671	late-19th-century, 2-story, 3-bay, frame, gable-roofed, Victorian I house
60-44-12	Route 671	late-19th-century, 2-story, 3-bay, frame, gable-roofed, Victorian I house
60-44-13	Route 671	ca. 1900, 1 1/2-story, 3-bay, frame, gambrel-roofed, vernacular dwelling
60-44-14	Route 671	ca. 1900, 2-story, 3-bay, frame, gable-roofed, Victorian vernacular dwelling
60-44-15	Route 671	1980s, 1-story, 2-bay, brick, gable-roofed, modern Auburn Methodist Church social hall (NC)
60-44-16	Route 669	early-20th-century, 2-story, 2-bay, frame, vernacular barn
60-44-17	Route 671	1980s, 1-story, 4-bay, frame, gable-roofed, Modern Ranch-style dwelling (NC)
60-44-18	Route 669	1960s?, 1-story, 4-bay, modern mobile home (NC)
60-44-19	Route 669	ca. 1900, 1 1/2-story, 3-bay, frame, mansard-roofed dwelling heavily altered in the 1970s? (NC due to alterations)
60-44-20	Route 669	1960s?, 1-story, 5-bay, modern mobile home (NC)



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60-44-21	Route 669	1980s?, 1-story, 5-bay, frame, gable-roofed, modern dwelling (NC)
60-44-22	Route 669	late-19th-century, 2-story, 3-bay, gable-roofed, frame, Victorian I house
60-44-23	Route 669	ca. 1900, 1 1/2-story, 2-bay, frame, gable-fronted, gable-roofed, vernacular dwelling
60-44-24	Route 671	late-19th-century, 2-story, 3-bay, frame, gable-roofed, Victorian I house

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period the village boasted a store, the Auburn Meeting House, a log schoolhouse, a lumber yard, a tanyard, the Auburn Hotel, a shoe factory, a barrel factory, a blacksmith shop, and a tobacco factory (Lawrence). The inhabitants drew their water from individual cisterns and a community well (Lawrence). A property map of 1878 shows the town's present form as a line of houses and shops running north and south of the crossroads (Montgomery County Chancery Suit Number 965). Tradition suggests that the village was a popular stop for drivers taking horses to market in Danville from Kentucky and Southwest Virginia (Lawrence).

The Auburn Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was built about 1848. This church was one of the earliest structures in Auburn, succeeding a steam-powered sawmill on the same site. The church was commonly referred to as the Auburn Meeting House. It was sold to the Baptists in 1892 and was used by them until they built their present church (outside the district) in the mid-twentieth century.

In the early 1870s the only general store was owned by J. H. Altizer and Major Canaan Lawrence. Altizer's interest was bought by John M. Kinsey. The store was operated by the Lawrence family until 1938. Kinsey built a large house (60-44-7) on the southeast corner of the main intersection in the early twentieth century. A second store was built in the late 1860s by George Surface, who proved to be one of the village's most successful developers. The post office at Auburn was established in 1871 to 1873, operating out of the Lawrence Store. In 1882 a postmaster was appointed and the town was renamed for a prominent local Republican farmer and politician, David Riner, because of the pre-existence of another Auburn in Virginia. Two frame center-passage houses (60-44-7 and 60-44-8) were built soon after the war near the crossroads.

A normal school called the Riner Academy was opened in 1887 by Floyd Surface, Montgomery County's progressive school superintendent, and classes were held for three years in the meetinghouse (Lawrence). A medical doctor, J. L. Stone, moved to the village in 1870 and built a large house (60-44-1) north of Franklin Street, as the east-west road became known in the late nineteenth century. In the 1880s a new two-room school was built to replace a log building used as a school after 1873. Members of the community supplied building materials and a third room was added later. The building no longer stands (Lawrence). The

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Auburn Methodist Church (60-44-10) was built by John M. Kinsey on a lot purchased by him on the east side of Main Street. It was dedicated in 1885 (Lawrence). It competed with the later Methodist Episcopal Church built on a lot given by rival merchant George Surface on the northwest corner of the main intersection (Rowe).

Before the turn of the century George Surface bought the Dr. Stone House (60-44-1). Major Lawrence purchased the home of his former partner John M. Kinsey (60-44-7), built about 1869, and in 1908 added a range of rooms behind the house, a new roof, and an up-to-date porch to create a house not unlike George Surface's. Several other large houses were built during this period to the west, now cut off from the district by the VA Route 8 strip development. Old photographs show a dirt main street lined with rows of picket and plank fences.

By the second decade of the twentieth century Riner had reached its peak of development. George Surface had founded the Bank of Riner in a structure on the northeast corner of the village's main intersection (60-44-4) in 1912 to 1913, and its influence had been felt. He also built a large diesel-powered mill (60-44-5) in the village. There were two telephone central offices, a high school, the Surface Mill, Feather's Blacksmith Shop, the post office, three churches (Methodist, Methodist Episcopal South, and Baptist), four stores, the Bank of Riner, and a garage. The bank failed in 1931 and never reopened. The improved road of 1922 between Christiansburg and Floyd brought new business, a new store, a garage, and another mill. Main Street was surfaced. Later the WPA helped lay concrete sidewalks. The village was at one time home to the Southwest Cooperative Livestock Shipping Association, a Farm Bureau, a farm association, a grange, a community fair, a milk receiving and cooling station, and a cooperative cannery. By 1948 twenty-one telephones were operated by the newly formed Riner Telephone Company, which took over from earlier competing companies. Electric power was introduced in 1933.

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road 60 feet east to point F, thence 200 feet with east property line of house on south side of VA Route 669 to point G, thence 60 feet west with rear property line of said house to point H, thence 300 feet southwest and south with east property lines of house at 60-44-10 and adjacent field with barn, to point I, thence west 225 feet to point J on property line west of site 60-44-11, thence 90 feet south with said property line, to point K, thence west and north 180 feet with the south and west property line of house on west side of Va Route 671 to point M thence north 200 feet with rear property lines of houses on west side of VA Route 671 to point N, and thence 160 feet east back to the east side of VA Route 671 at point O, thence north 480 feet along the east side of said road to point P corresponding to the south property line of site 60-44-8, thence west 140 feet with said line to point Q, crossing VA Route 671, thence north following the west property lines of site 60-44-8, 80 feet to point R, thence following the south side of VA Route 669, 60 feet to point S corresponding to the rear property line of site 60-44-3, thence 75 feet north along the west property line of said site to point T, thence 75 feet west along the south property line of site 60-44-2 to point U, thence 70 feet north along the west property line of said site to point V, and thence 175 feet east in a line corresponding to the north line of site 60-44-2 to point W, crossing VA Route 671, thence 100 feet to the point of origin.

UTM REFERENCES - continued :

E 17/549990/4102000

F 17/549820/4102860

# RINER HISTORIC DISTRI

Montgomery County, Virginia

GIBSON WORSHAM, ARCHT

 NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

 PHOTO KEY



