

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 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 any 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 J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
other names/site number VDHR file no. 070-0060; site no.s 44PK112 and 44PK113

2. Location

street & number North side Rt. 773 west of junction with Rt. 617 N/A not for publication
city or town Ararat X vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Patrick code 141 zip code 24053

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M. Catherine Skusek May 18, 1998
Signature of certifying official/Title 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 commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing
0	1
5	2
0	1
0	0
5	4

- buildings
- sites
- structures
- objects
- Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

Category

Subcategory

- DOMESTIC
- AGRICULTURE
- TRANSPORTATION
- FUNERARY

- single dwelling (site)
- agricultural field
- road-related
- cemetery

- DOMESTIC
- AGRICULTURE
- TRANSPORTATION
- FUNERARY
- LANDSCAPE

- single dwelling (abandoned)
- agricultural field
- road-related
- cemetery
- street furniture/object

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

- foundation
- walls
- roof
- other

Narrative Description

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

8. 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.
X 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.
X 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.
X C a birthplace or a 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 fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

ARCHEOLOGY

Period of Significance

Ca. 1820-1855

Significant Dates

Ca. 1820

1833

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Stuart, James Ewell Brown

Stuart, Archibald

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

unknown

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
#

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approximately 71 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing			
1	17	539480	4046490	3	17	539740	4046490
2	17	539600	4046570	4	17	539920	4046700

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	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>	date	<u>April 13, 1998</u>
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston Street</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>		

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust, Inc.</u>		
street & number	<u>PO Box 240</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 251-1833</u>
city or town	<u>Ararat</u> state <u>VA</u>	zip code	<u>24053</u>

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 the 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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1

**J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace property comprises seventy-one acres of cleared ridge top, wooded bluffs, and cultivated bottomland on the south bank of the Ararat River in Patrick County, Virginia. The property is located less than a mile from the North Carolina state line and it is readily visible from the Blue Ridge Parkway, which runs along the top of the Blue Ridge just to the north. Surrounding development is slight and is typified by farmsteads dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Inventory

1. Site 44PK113 (multi-component historic/prehistoric). Contributing site.
2. Archibald Stuart Grave Site (1855). Contributing site.
3. Road trace (1800s). Contributing site.
4. Fence line (1800s). Contributing site.
5. Road trace and ford (1800s). Contributing site.
6. Site 44PK112 (prehistoric). Noncontributing site.
7. Historic marker and access road (mid-1900s and later). Noncontributing site.
8. Flag pole (1990s). Noncontributing structure.
9. Tenant house (ca. 1930). Noncontributing building.

Description

The property is approached via State Route 773, and a public entrance has been created at a state historic highway marker (marker KG2, "Stuart's Birthplace"). In 1997, this entrance area was enhanced by the installation of split rail fences, planting beds, and interpretive signage. From the entrance a modern gravel lane leads to the hilltop near the center of the property, the location of archaeological remains of Jeb Stuart's birthplace and childhood home, Laurel Hill (Site 44PK113). About half way up the hill, the lane crosses a historic road trace. This trace is deeply entrenched at points, suggesting it was in use during the era of wagon transport. At the end of the modern lane, just down slope to the southwest of the house site, is the site of Archibald Stuart's grave. The grave site is a small, roughly square plot of land scattered with fieldstones, outlined by a recent border of fieldstones, and additionally designated by several modern granite blocks. In 1952, remains believed to be those of Archibald Stuart were removed from the site and reinterred in Saltville, Virginia. It is possible that a portion of Stuart's remains, and the unmarked remains of other Stuart family members or others are still buried at the site.

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J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.

Description (continued)

The grave site is aligned with a row of trees that run approximately north and south and that mark a slight change in grade between the hilltop homesite area and the sloping ground to the west. Although the locusts, dogwoods, and sassafras trees forming this row appear to be relatively young in age, they probably perpetuate an older fence line. The proximity of the line to the house site, and the location of the Stuart grave site on the house side of the line, strongly suggest the line marks the division between the antebellum house yard and/or orchard and garden area associated with Laurel Hill, and field crop or pasture areas outside the domestic precinct. (Small family grave plots and individual graves were occasionally sited in garden and orchard areas during the 1800s.)

A second historic road trace follows a stream that flows along the western border of the property. The second road once connected the first road to the Ararat River at a ford presently marked by a shallow stony riverbottom and a small island. The second road trace passes by an abandoned, one-story tenant house of circular-sawn light frame construction. The house has flush-board siding, a metal-sheathed gable roof, stone footers, celotex interior sheathing, and a weatherboarded rear shed kitchen. The circular-sawn lumber used in the house, and the use of round-headed wire nails in its construction, suggest a twentieth-century date of construction, perhaps as late as the 1930s or 1940s.

At several locations on the property are loose scatterings of fieldstones that may represent the remains of farm buildings, although none have been investigated archaeologically to determine if that is in fact what they are. Other features include a modern flagpole that stands near the site of the Laurel Hill house site, and Site 44PK112, a prehistoric Native American site. According to local tradition, a slave cemetery is said to occupy the edge of the bluff to the north of Site 44PK112, although no definitive above-ground signs of a cemetery exist at the location. The boundaries of the property are mostly defined by twentieth-century barbed wire fences. Wooded areas are characterized by a mix of deciduous and evergreen species, and include pine, beech, tulip poplar, rhododendron, mountain laurel, and ground cedar.

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**J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.**

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace, located in Patrick County, Virginia, is associated with the early life of an important Confederate figure, General James Ewell Brown Stuart (1833-1864). Stuart's historical significance is two-fold. As a brilliant cavalry tactician he supplied General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia with a devastating lightning-strike capability and critical intelligence support. Stuart's importance had a symbolic dimension as well. His daring style of campaigning and his trademark plumed hat, red-lined cape, and banjo-picking entourage epitomized the romantic ideal of the Confederate soldier, and was employed to bolster Southern morale while the war was being waged and afterwards as a creed of what historian Charles Reagan Wilson has termed the "religion of the Lost Cause."

Stuart's military prowess and his symbolic appeal were rooted in traits he acquired in the backcountry Virginia landscape of his youth, as represented by the birthplace property--the core area of the farm of Jeb's father, locally prominent Archibald Stuart. These seventy-one acres of cleared ridge top, wooded bluffs, and cultivated bottomland preserve the basic appearance of the landscape experienced by Stuart, and they include the archaeological remains of "Laurel Hill," the house where Stuart was born, as well as associated archaeological and historic landscape features such as road traces and fence lines.

Justification of Criteria

The J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under two criteria. Under Criterion B and Criterion Exception C, the property is eligible for its association with J.E.B. Stuart as his birthplace and childhood environment, as a connection to the physical and cultural landscape that molded his character, and as a proving ground for the horsemanship skills that would contribute to his later military triumphs and historical standing. The special significance identified for the property is enabled by National Register guidelines, which read in part: "Some properties associated with a person's formative years may qualify if it can be demonstrated that the individual's activities during this period . . . were important in understanding his or her later achievements." The birthplace property is secondarily significant under Criterion B for its association with Stuart's father, Archibald Stuart, a political figure of regional importance.¹

¹ Boland, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons," 16.

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**J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.**

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Statement of Significance (continued)

Under Criterion D, the property is eligible for its research potential as the well-preserved and temporally defined remains of an early nineteenth-century farmstead, and for its potential to yield insights into the lives of Jeb Stuart, Archibald Stuart, and the family members and black slaves who lived and worked at the site. The J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace possesses national significance for its association with Stuart, a figure of national prominence. The period of significance extends from ca. 1820, when the Stuart family is believed to have begun improvements on the property, through the 1830 date of construction of the Stuart house "Laurel Hill," through Jeb Stuart's birth in 1833 and the 1847-48 fire that destroyed Laurel Hill, and terminates with the death of Archibald Stuart (who continued to occupy the site) in 1855.

Acknowledgments

Several individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report, foremost among them the owner of the nominated property and sponsor of the project, the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust, Inc. Tom Perry, a Stuart scholar and founder of the Trust, and Trust secretary Mike Hayes provided the author with information and guidance throughout the process. John Salmon, historian with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and National Register manager Marc Wagner assisted the author in developing the statement of significance for the property.

Historical and Archaeological Background

The history of human occupation at the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace extends well before Stuart's birth in 1833. An archaeological assessment conducted by the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research in 1993 identified two Native American sites on the ridge top adjacent to the Stuart homeplace site. Sites 44PK112 and 44PK113 have yielded artifacts dating from the Paleoindian (ca. 12,000-8,000 B.C.) and Archaic periods (8,000-1,200 B.C.). Site 44PK113, for which phase II testing has been undertaken, includes a component identified as a "Middle to Late Archaic resource procurement camp."²

² Discussions of the archaeological context and European settlement of the birthplace property are based largely on a report prepared by Kenneth E. Stuck, Clifton A. Huston, and Charles M. Downing of the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research entitled "A Phase II Archaeological Evaluation of Site 44PK113, the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace, Patrick County, Virginia" (1996). Site 44PK113 is recommended for National Register eligibility not for its

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J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

European settlement in the Ararat River valley commenced during the second half of the eighteenth century. Across the Ararat River from the birthplace site is situated the homestead site and tomb of William Letcher, an early settler and ardent patriot who was murdered by a Tory sympathizer in 1780. The birthplace site eventually passed into the ownership of Letcher's granddaughter, Elizabeth Pannill (born ca. 1802), who in 1817 married Archibald Stuart (ca. 1795-1855), a member of a militarily distinguished backcountry Scotch-Irish family. At first the Stuarts lived with Elizabeth's parents in Pittsylvania County, but through the 1820s they transferred slaves and other assets to the Patrick County property in anticipation of moving there. Archibald relocated first, by 1824, and in 1830 he constructed a dwelling to accommodate his wife and young family. Known as Laurel Hill, this house was where James Ewell Brown Stuart was born on February 6, 1833, as noted in the Stuart family bible.³

It was in the rugged natural landscape of his father's farm, and in the corresponding cultural landscape of western Patrick County, that Jeb Stuart's legendary charisma began to take form, and it was on the farm's grassy lanes and in its pastures and woods where Stuart first learned the horsemanship skills that would ultimately contribute to the outcome of major Civil War engagements. As Stuart scholar Tom Perry has put it, Laurel Hill was "the place where Jeb Stuart first got on a horse." Stuart could hardly avoid being swept up in Virginia's horse culture, one of the defining attributes of Virginia manhood from colonial times forward. Colonial Virginia historian Rhys Isaac has observed that it was essential for a self-respecting Virginian "to be proudly mounted when [he] entered the stages of significant action in the social landscape." One manifestation of Virginia horse culture was horse racing, an activity in which

Native American remains, which have been compromised by historic-period agricultural activities, but instead for the research potential of historic-period remains associated with the Stuart family occupation. Phase II work at Site 44PK112, should it be undertaken, may determine it to be eligible for the register based on the "very early dates of some recovered artifacts" and its "potential to add to our understanding of this little known period," ie. the Paleoindian period (Huston and Downing, "Archaeological Assessment of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Property," pages ii and 43). Site 44PK112 is listed as a noncontributing site in the inventory not for any lack of potential significance, but because Phase II investigation has not been undertaken, and because the site does not fall within the period of significance (ca. 1820-1855) proposed for the birthplace property.

³ Tom Perry, personal communication.

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J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

Jeb Stuart almost certainly participated. Far from being the polite sport of today, horse racing was in Isaac's words "a violent duel that tested not only the speed of the horses but also the daring and combative skills of the riders," with whipping and jostling to dismount a competitor accepted and even encouraged. "The prevailing taste for strong self-assertion and aggressive contest" in traditional Virginia horsemanship were an ideal preparation for the more serious business of horse-mounted combat.⁴

Young Jeb Stuart evinced a keen interest in horses and horse culture. His earliest surviving letter, written to a cousin when he was thirteen, discusses a colt. (In the same letter Stuart boasted that he had avoided fighting with his schoolmates not through cowardice but because of a "firm resolution never to be imposed upon"--an early expression of the kind of character traits that would later contribute to his chivalrous image.) Later, at West Point, Stuart realized the horsemanship skills he had acquired on the farm as a matter of course were, in his eyes, a distinctly Southern legacy. To a cousin he described his riding drills: "[They are] great fun to us from the South, but you ought to see what ridiculous figures these Yankees cut on horseback. Some of them never mounted a horse before." The raw horsemanship skills Stuart acquired in backcountry Virginia were polished by the military training he received at West Point. Both experiences contributed to his war-time renown as a cavalry tactician.⁵

In 1845, at age twelve, Stuart left home for school in Wytheville, Virginia, returning thereafter only for occasional visits. After West Point he embarked on a military career that kept him constantly on the move. This fact has led to an absence of sites exclusively associated with his adult life. The house on Grace Street in Richmond where Stuart died in May 1864 after being wounded in the Battle of Yellow Tavern has been replaced by a parking garage, leaving only Stuart's grave in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery and the equestrian statue of him on Monument Avenue in Richmond to commemorate his death and later legendary status. Stuart harbored mixed emotions about his mobile life. He clearly revelled in the excitement and novelty of his chosen career, but he also dreamed of one day settling down to the life of a landed Virginia squire. In 1857, he wrote his mother asking if he could purchase part of the Laurel Hill

⁴ Isaac, *Transformation of Virginia*, 99.

⁵ Mitchell, *Letters of Major General James E. B. Stuart*, pages 3 and 44. Southern prowess in horsemanship at West Point is mentioned by John C. Waugh in *The Class of 1846*, page 59, and Stuart's special aptitude is discussed by Emory Thomas in *Bold Dragoon*, pages 19 and 30.

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J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

plantation as an eventual homeplace, and during the war he remarked often of his longing to return to Patrick County and live out his days among the mountains and people of his youth.⁶

Stuart's military genius lay in his recognition that in the context of the Civil War Virginia landscape, cavalry was most effective strategically in reconnaissance, rather than outright combat. As biographer Emory M. Thomas explains it, Stuart saw that "cavalry should provide a screen behind which friendly forces mass and move undetected and thus unhindered by the enemy." Stuart's daring rides behind enemy lines--including the famous "Ride Around McClellan" in 1862--gathered critical information on enemy troop movements and strength for his superior, Robert E. Lee. In addition to his success in reconnaissance, Stuart led Confederate forces at the Battle of Brandy Station, the largest cavalry engagement of the war, and he contributed to several Southern victories. He also contributed--notoriously--to the South's pivotal defeat at Gettysburg by arriving late on the scene. Despite the occasional blunder, Stuart received the highest of accolades from General Lee, who after the war described him as "my ideal of a soldier."⁷

Stuart represented an ideal to other Southerners as well. Historian Paul D. Escott, in his article "The Uses of Gallantry: Virginians and the Origins of J. E. B. Stuart's Historical Image," traces the roots of the Stuart legend to Southern propagandists such as poet Paul Hamilton Hayne and novelist John Esten Cooke writing as early as 1862. After the war, Southerners intent on regaining the moral high ground that seemed lost in military defeat further refined the image of Stuart as the product of a virtuous antebellum Southern society. In their strenuous and ultimately successful mythologizing, Southerners were aided by none other than Jeb Stuart himself, who from early manhood, when he resolved to be a "Bold Dragoon" rather than a "petty-fogging lawyer," and with increasing adroitness during the war, "consciously labored to create the reputation of chivalry that attached to him."⁸

The Patrick County farm that Jeb Stuart hoped one day to return to was essentially the creation of his father, attorney Archibald Stuart. Before and during the period of Laurel Hill's

⁶ John Salmon and Tom Perry, personal communications.

⁷ Thomason, *Jeb Stuart*, 3 and 14; Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 74 and 230-231.

⁸ Escott, "Uses of Gallantry," 47-72.

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J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

occupation, Archibald Stuart rose to a position of prominence in the political structure of the southwest Virginia Piedmont. He was first elected to the state legislature in 1819 (while a resident of Campbell County), and he represented Patrick and adjoining counties at the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-30, where he supported the reform agenda. He later served in the U.S. House of Representatives. Stuart's political activities stemmed from his service as a trial attorney in the region's courts, and as a Commonwealth's Attorney for Patrick and Floyd counties. Despite his political prominence, some have argued that Archibald Stuart was never "prosperous" in an economic sense, although it is unclear whether he has been judged by eastern Virginia standards or by the standards of mountainous Patrick County. By way of illustration, Stuart owned twenty-eight slaves in 1840, a small number in comparison to large plantations elsewhere, but probably a sizable holding in the context of mountainous western Patrick County.⁹

The Laurel Hill house burned in the winter of 1847-1848. Archibald Stuart and a son moved into the kitchen, a separate building on the property, and Elizabeth Stuart and a daughter went to stay with relatives. The Stuarts did not rebuild their house; a reduction in the number of slaves and other assets on the farm in the years following the fire suggests the reason was largely economic. Archibald died in 1855 and was buried near the house site. In 1859, Elizabeth sold the farm (then 1,500 acres) and moved to Wytheville. From that date onward the farm appears to have been occupied primarily by tenants (a small frame tenant house from about 1930 survives on the creek bottom below the Laurel Hill house site). Later owners included Joseph Hollingsworth, Samuel H. Taylor, Thomas Brown, Lillia Brown, and G. E. Brown. In 1991, seventy-one acres including the birthplace site were acquired by the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Preservation Trust. The Trust has proved a conscientious steward of the property, which remains in agricultural usage (cultivation on the river bottom, cattle pasturing on higher ground). Periodically the Trust hosts Civil War encampments on the property, and trails are maintained in wooded areas for hikers and horseback riders.

In 1993, the Trust invited the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research to conduct an archaeological assessment of the birthplace property. Testing disclosed the existence of two sites on the hilltop traditionally identified as the Laurel Hill house site, and one of these sites (44PK113) appeared to represent the remains of the house. The William and Mary archaeologists returned in 1995 to conduct a phase II investigation of 44PK113. Using the distribution of

⁹ Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 7.

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**J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.**

Statement of Significance (continued)

artifacts determined during Phase I as their guide, the archaeologists excavated twenty-two test units in areas of Site 44PK113 that appeared to correlate to former structures (Exhibit A). The archaeologists identified the remains of a cellar measuring approximately twenty by sixteen feet in dimension. Evidence of a destructive fire, and high-status artifacts datable to the early-to-mid nineteenth century (including a sherd of sprig-painted polychrome whiteware dating to 1830-1840), strongly suggest the cellar once belonged to the Stuart house. In addition, a burn/destruction layer in the cellar contained a concentration of fieldstone rubble interpreted as either a collapsed section of foundation or a chimney fall, as well as other architectural debris and quantities of melted glass. Near the house site are the remains of two or three outbuildings, including a probable kitchen, and Native American remains (Exhibit B).

In the words of William and Mary archaeologists, Site 44PK113 is eligible for the National Register under Criterion D "because of its research potential for contributing information on early nineteenth-century farmsteads, particularly because of the intact subsurface features, the short span of occupation, and sudden destruction." (The Virginia Department of Historic Resources, in concurring with the recommendation, added that the site possessed "potential to provide information not only on J.E.B.'s childhood, but on farmsteads of middle to upper middle class Virginians in the western part of the state.") In reaching their conclusion, the investigators applied criteria developed by archaeologist John S. Wilson on the evaluation of the significance of historic farmstead sites (reference cited in bibliography). According to Wilson, a site with a high level of reliable data (and hence good potential for National Register eligibility) is "one where successive dwellings and outbuildings are located in different areas of the farmyard, there is a complete record of owners and tenants, and the whole complex burns down accidentally on a known date." In these respects--especially the last--Site 44PK113 makes a strong candidate for designation. The archaeological investigations at Laurel Hill support the documentary evidence that the site was Jeb Stuart's birthplace. In addition, the knowledge gained from the investigations will help the owner in protecting the property's archaeological remains.¹⁰

Historic Evolution of Landscape and Integrity Statement

The mix of cleared and wooded land that presently characterizes the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace property is likely a fair approximation of the appearance of the property during Stuart's childhood. The 1850 federal census farm schedules for Patrick County--the first to provide

¹⁰ Site 44PK113 National Register Eligibility Rating Sheet.

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**J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.**

Statement of Significance (continued)

detailed information on farm make-up and product--recorded Archibald Stuart as the owner of 425 acres, of which 125 acres were improved and 300 acres unimproved. In this respect, Stuart's farm was typical of the largely unimproved farms of his western Patrick County neighbors. Presumably, the property's cleared land was located on the fertile Ararat River bottoms and associated creeks and on level or gently sloping uplands, the same areas that are now clear. Unimproved areas near the farm core would have been associated with steep slopes like the presently wooded bluffs overlooking the Ararat River. "Laurel Hill," the historic name of the property, suggests the presence of "laurel"--rhododendron in western Virginia usage. To this day the riverside bluffs are cloaked in thick growths of rhododendron. The pasturing of cattle on the property keeps some wooded areas relatively free of undergrowth. The same appearance would have been observed during the antebellum period when the Stuarts would have permitted their herds of cattle, swine, and sheep to range through the woods, as was customary. Missing from the present landscape is the virgin timber that would likely still have stood near Laurel Hill during Jeb Stuart's childhood.

The road traces evident on the property today likely date to the period of Stuart occupation. Most prominent is feature no. 3 in the inventory: a deeply worn roadbed trending east to west through the southeast corner of the property. This feature apparently represents the old course of State Route 773, which now passes approximately 500 feet to the south. On a 1917 plat that appears in William and Mary's initial archaeological assessment report, this road is identified as the "Patrick Road," likely a reference to its status as a principal route between the nearby town of Mount Airy in North Carolina and the Patrick County area to the north of the town. The archaeological remains of Laurel Hill suggest the house faced this road. The other prominent historic road trace, which follows the stream bed along the western boundary of the property, connects the State Route 773-Patrick Road course to a ford on the Ararat River.¹¹

¹¹ Huston and Downing, "Archaeological Assessment of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace Property," 18; and Soil Conservation photographs. Nine historic state and regional maps dating from 1823 through 1928 in the collections of the Virginia Room of the Roanoke Public Library (Roanoke, Virginia) were examined in order to shed more light on the development of road systems in the vicinity of the nominated parcel. Unfortunately, none of these maps were detailed enough to portray secondary roads, and in fact several did not even portray the Ararat River. Only one county map from the nineteenth century--the 1821 Wood map--was identified; this map too portrays only major landscape and settlement features without showing roads in the vicinity of the nominated parcel.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

The landscape of the birthplace property is better understood beginning in the mid-twentieth-century period. The earliest known Soil Conservation Service aerial photograph of the area dates to 1940 and portrays the southern one-third of the property. Forest clearance in the Southern Appalachians was near its peak during the period the photograph was taken, and consequently pasture and crop fields occupy a greater extent of the property than at present. The 1940 photo appears to show the tenant house that still stands near the west boundary of the property, possibly with one or two outbuildings that are no longer extant. The photo also shows two barns that formerly stood near the course of the pre-State Route 773 road trace. A later aerial photograph, taken in 1963, shows the tenant house but the outbuildings and barns that stood in 1940 appear to be missing. Also, portions of the property that were cleared in 1940 had begun to revert to forest in 1963. Both the 1940 and 1963 photos show the two historic road traces that are still prominent, whereas tertiary farm lanes have come and gone.¹²

The high level of integrity of the archaeological remains so far investigated suggests a similar state of preservation for unidentified remains located elsewhere on the property. Since 1991, no unauthorized digs or other evidence of looting have been detected on the property, which is gated.¹³

¹² U.S. Soil Conservation Service photographs.

¹³ Tom Perry, personal communication.

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J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace
Patrick Co., Va.

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UTM References

- 5. 17 540140 4046520
- 6. 17 540160 4046150
- 7. 17 539810 4045950

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace nominated parcel are portrayed on the accompanying 1:200 scale map. The nominated parcel boundaries correspond to the present boundaries of the parcel that includes Site 44PK113, identified as the archaeological remains of Laurel Hill, Stuart's birthplace.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the J.E.B. Stuart Birthplace nominated parcel correspond to the core area of the Stuart family's landholdings at the time of J.E.B. Stuart's birth in 1833 and include Site 44PK113, identified as the archaeological remains of Laurel Hill, Stuart's birthplace. The pastures, woodland, and cultivated fields included in the parcel approximate the range of landscape types that Jeb Stuart would have experienced during his early efforts at horsemanship.

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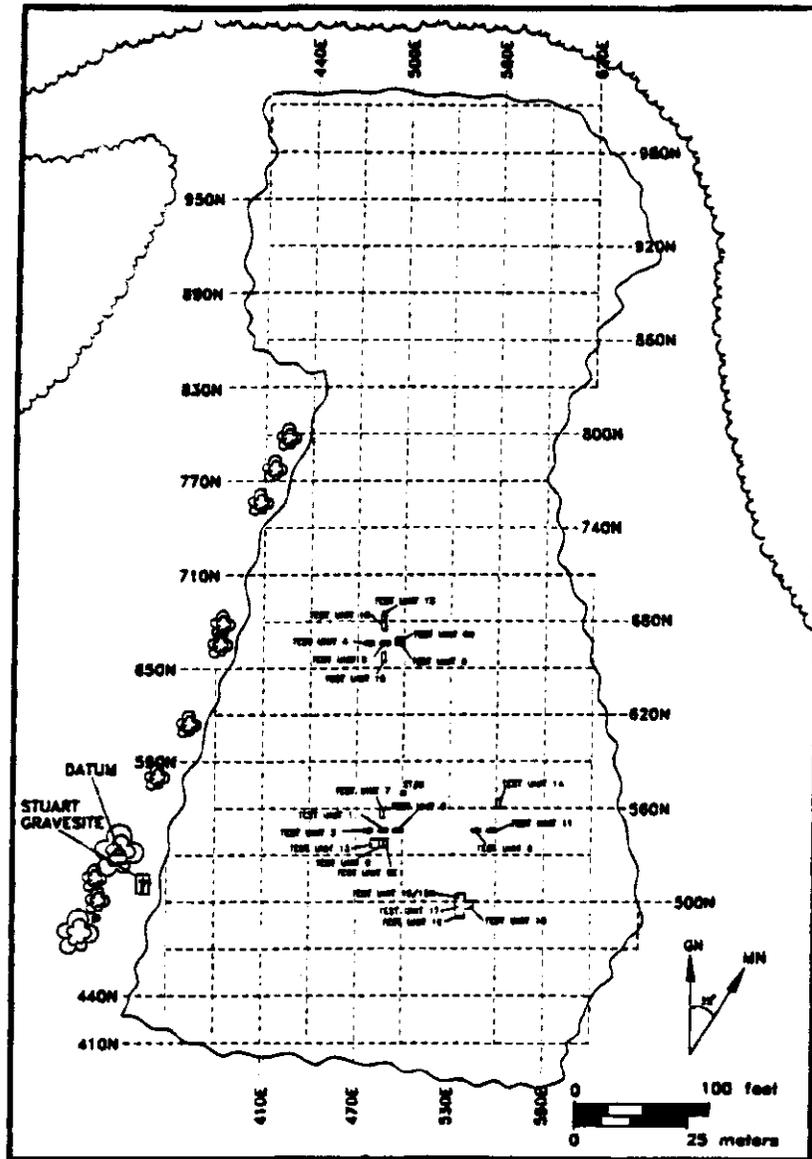


Exhibit A. Site plan of Site 44PK113, from Stuck et al, "Phase II Archaeological Evaluation of Site 44PK113," page 28. The plan shows the location of test units.

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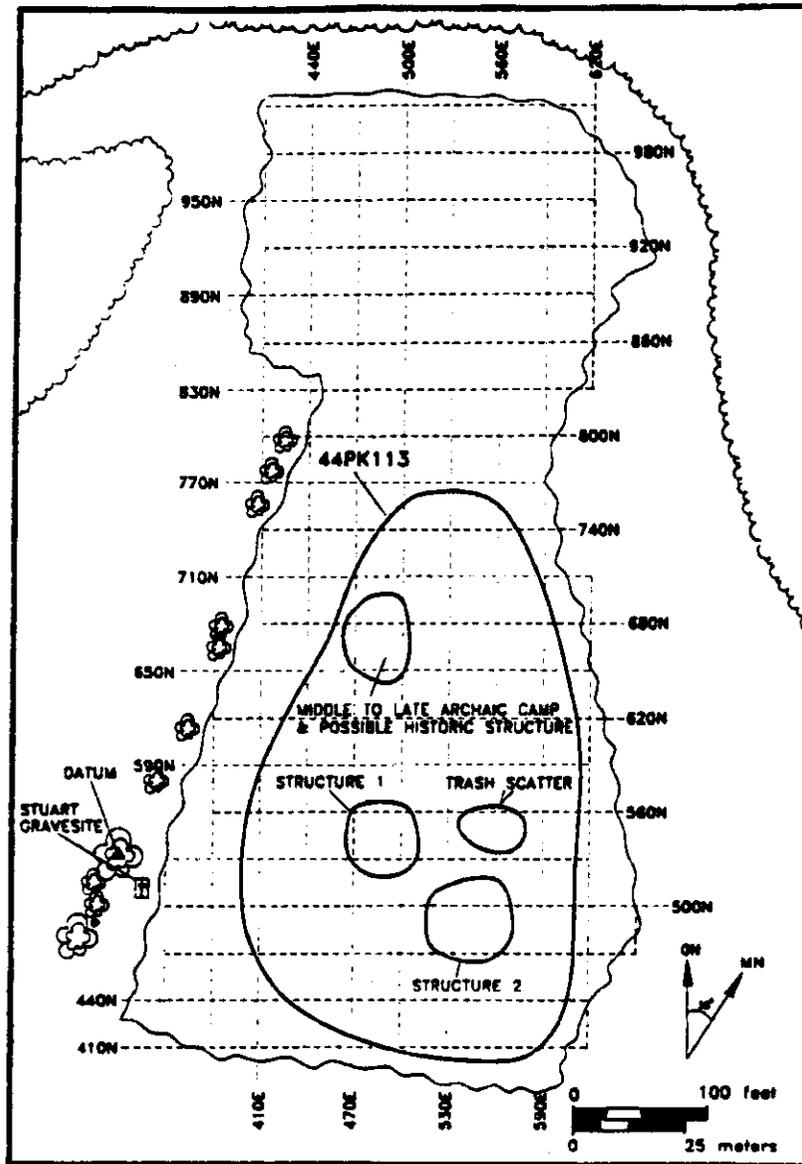


Exhibit B. Site plan of Site 44PK113, from Stuck et al, "Phase II Archaeological Evaluation of Site 44PK113," page 68. Structure 2 is interpreted as the archaeological remains of Laurel Hill's cellar, and Structure 1 represents the probable remains of the kitchen.