

VLR-4/21/87 NRHP-1/19/89

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.

I. Name of Property

historic name Rockbridge Alum Springs/Jordan Alum Springs other names/site number Rockbridge Alum Springs Historic District (Preferred) DHL File No. 87-86

2. Location

street & number VA Route 633 city, town California state Virginia code VA county Rockbridge code 163 zip code N/A

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public-State/Federal and building(s)/district/site/structure/object. Includes a small table for Contributing and Noncontributing resources.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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: N. Bryan Mitchell, Director, VA Division of Historic Landmarks, State or Federal agency and bureau. Date: December 14, 1988

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. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel

RECREATION & CULTURE: Bandstand

HEALTH CARE: Resort

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT: Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

GREEK REVIVAL

GOTHIC REVIVAL

NO STYLE

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE, BRICK

walls STONE, BRICK, WOOD, STUCCO

roof METAL, ASPHALT

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary Description

Located off the VA Route 633, Rockbridge County, within a high hollow surrounded by several forested mountains, the Rockbridge Alum Springs property (incorporating also the Jordan Alum Springs of the post-bellum period) contains a complex of buildings, structures, and sites dating primarily to the 1850s that is historically associated with the operations of the Rockbridge Alum Springs, a popular 19th- and early 20th-century mountain resort lying near the springheads of Alum Creek. While the main hotel buildings of the two spas are no longer standing, the complex of buildings, structures, and sites that does remain possesses considerable significance. The nominated acreage includes sixteen (16) contributing buildings: the barroom, store/post office, Montgomery Hall, the Gothic Building, the Alum Springs Pavilion, two cottages of Baltimore Row, the Ladies Hotel, four cottages of Kentucky Row, Jordan's House, a servant's quarters, a slave quarters, and a storehouse. Four contributing structures remain: a well and the stone spring chambers and gazebo and bandstand of the Jordan Alum Springs. The nomination includes three noncontributing buildings, all of which date to the period of the 1940s-1950s: the Bailey Museum building, a greenhouse and a root cellar. The archaeological remains of numerous buildings and structures are scattered throughout the nominated acreage. Among ten (10) contributing sites are the site of Jefferson Cottage; the sites of two of the Kentucky Row cottages; the site of the Alum Springs Ballroom; the sites of two icehouse pits and a stone cistern and the foundations and ruins of three Jordan Springs buildings dating to the 1870s. Five (5) sites are considered noncontributing because they are visibly disturbed and appear unlikely to yield important information on the period of the property's significance.

Detailed Analysis

Rockbridge Alum Springs is approached by an unpaved secondary road off VA Route 633, Rockbridge County. The road winds through woods with the Rockbridge Alum Springs located on a hill side. Upon entering the area of the resort complex, the road winds around in a circle with the majority of the buildings fronting the roadway.

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
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION
HEALTH/MEDICINE
ARCHAEOLOGY

Period of Significance
1838-1938

Significant Dates
1853

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

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

Statement of Significance

The Rockbridge Alum Springs is significant as one of the best preserved antebellum springs resort complexes in Virginia. Built during a period of rapid development of Valley resort springs, the Rockbridge Alum Springs ranked second only to the White Sulphur Springs in popularity, fashion, and elegance. The original springs complex consisting of a large Central Hotel flanked by cottages and supporting service buildings survives in plan, although a museum building constructed in the 1940s by Harold Bailey, who also restored a number of the resort buildings present, replaced the original hotel. This complex of standing buildings, together with the archaeological remains of other buildings and structures from its period of significance offers a graphic and comprehensive picture of a Virginia resort springs during the mid-to-late 19th century. Further archaeological research at the property likely will yield important information on the social and recreational use of the Virginia Springs in their hey day that cannot be gleaned from the written record.

Historical Background

The first person to formulate plans for the development of the Rockbridge Alum Springs was Alexander Campbell, a Rockbridge County surveyor. In 1790 Campbell, together with John Dunlap, purchased a tract of 2000 acres that included the present springs. When Campbell died in 1806, the area became known as Dunlap Springs, Dunlap erecting in ca. 1820 "a house of entertainment for those who might desire to use my water."¹ The reference to the use of "my water" refers to the five alum and one chalybeate springs found on Dunlap's property. The springs percolated through the slate rock of the adjacent North and Mill mountain and ran in a stream through Dunlap's property. In the early 19th century the alum

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

- Primary location of additional data:
- State historic preservation office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other

Specify repository:
VA Division of Historic Landmarks
221 Governor St.
Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approx. 40 acres

UTM References

A 1,7 6,2,1,1,0,0 4,1,9,6,5,4,0
 Zone Easting Northing

C 1,7 6,2,1,6,0,0 4,1,9,5,8,7,0
 Zone Easting Northing

E-1 7 6 2 1 8 8 0 4 1 9 6 4 7 0

B 1,7 6,2,1,9,9,0 4,1,9,5,8,8,0
 Zone Easting Northing

D 1,7 6,2,1,4,4,0 4,1,9,6,0,0,0
 Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point approx. 700' SW of VA 633 on an unimproved road leading off from VA 633, which point is approx. 6500' W of intersection of VA 633 with VA 780; thence approx. 2300' S, thence approx. 2500' W; thence approx. 2700' NE to the point of origin.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of approx. 40 acres. The boundaries are drawn to include the architectural and known archaeological remains of the Rockbridge Alum Springs and Jordan Alum Springs. The 40 acres is a small fraction of the original land holdings of the two springs: 500 acres for the Jordan Alum and from 1500 to 2000 acres for the Rockbridge Alum. While the historical land holdings of the two springs were considerable, the resort sites were themselves limited to an area of intensive use defined by the present bounds within a small hollow

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Division of Historic Landmarks Staff

organization Division of Historic Landmarks date 1987

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3143

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23219

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

The first buildings confronted are the twin barroom and combination store/post office (#1, #2). Built in the 1850s, the twin buildings face south and have double windows topped by Gothic Revival-style hood molds. The doorways are distinguished by sidelights and transoms with lattice-like muntins. Both buildings are covered by standing-seam sheet metal gable roofs.

Immediately to the west of the twin buildings is Montgomery Hall, also known as the "Vale" (#3). The two-story, three bay brick structure originally served as a guest house and was built in the 1850s. Its facade is distinguished by a two-story, two tier porch which shelters the main entrance. The porch has lattice posts and first- and second-story balustrades. The single-door entrance has a clear-glass transom. Fenestration consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows. The building is covered by a hipped roof of standing-seam sheet metal.

The interior, typical of the several large guest houses, at the spa consists of a central passage that contains the main stair. The stair ascends to the second story and has a turned newel, turned balusters and a molded handrail. The rooms off the main passage have plain wood mantels. Wood trim frames the principal doors and windows, as is the case in all the guest houses. Hanging lighting fixtures that date from the 1870s and 1880s are found in the principal rooms and have been electrified.

Located to the west of the Vale/Montgomery Hall is the Gothic Building (#4) which also dated to the 1850s. A 2 1/2-story brick structure, the building is nine bays in length and contains five front (north) entrances. The entrances are sheltered under a one-story porch. Fenestration consists primarily of 6/6 hung-sash windows. The structure is covered by a gabled roof, with standing-seam sheet metal. The facade contains a large gable at the attic story. The interior plan on the first floor consists of four sitting rooms with small chambers to the rear and a central stair hall. Bedrooms are located on the second floor and run along a central corridor. The stair continues to the third floor which space was originally used for storage.

To the west of the Gothic Building is the Alum Springs Pavilion (#5). The pavilion was erected during the 1850s and is a semi-circular structure supported by a colonnade built into the face of a cliff of shale rock from which the waters of the Alum Springs flow. Five doorways lead to the spring waters which varied in the strength of mineral content. The pavilion is topped with a lead statue of Hygeia, goddess of

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

health. The face of the cliff was shored up in the 1950s with several concrete buttresses. originally, a ladies bowling alley stood to the northeast of the pavilion. It has long since been demolished.

Standing to the south of the pavilion are two cottages (#6, #7) that were originally part of a group of nine cottages called Baltimore Row. The cottages were similar in design to cottages directly across the lawn known as Kentucky Row except that they originally lacked private baths. The interior plan consists of four rooms with a central chimney supporting corner fireplaces with plain mantels. During the 1950s one of the two surviving cottages in Baltimore Row was converted into a garage (#7). The original facade with its lattice supports, balustrade and overhanging roof was not altered, and is therefore considered a contributing member of the complex.

Located to the south of the Baltimore Row cottages are the brick and stone ruins of the Jefferson Cottage (indicated on map as #8). While the chimney and a partial end wall are all that remain, the site has high potential to yield important information on the period of significance.

To the east of the ruin is the former Ladies Hotel (#10). Built in the 1850s, the two-story, brick structure is covered by a gable roof with standing-seam sheet metal. The three-bay facade is distinguished by a two-story, two-tier porch with lattice supports. The porch shelters doorways on the first and second stories. The entrances have paneled doors, sidelights and transoms. The central bay is flanked by 6/6 hung-sash windows. The Ladies Hotel contains a central-passage plan with the principal stair found in the central passage. The stair is similar to that found in Montgomery Hall and the Gothic building. The central passage is flanked by four rooms on each floor, each room containing a plain mantel. The rear south elevation contains a one-story enclosed porch. The site of the service/dining area of the former Central Hotel (#9) is considered noncontributing, based on surface testing that indicated at the location shale 12-15cm below the present surface of the ground.

In the rear yard of the Ladies Hotel is a half-story root cellar (#37). The ca. 1950 building is covered by a gabled roof and is constructed in common-bond brick. Due to its age of less than fifty years, it is considered a non-contributing building.

Situated immediately to the east of the Ladies Hotel is the Bailey Museum (#11). Constructed in the late 1940s by Mr. & Mrs. Harold H. Bailey, the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

building served as a repository for their collection of ornithological items. The museum building was constructed at the head of the center lawn on the site of the Rockbridge Spring's Central Hotel. Mr. Bailey demolished the former hotel in order to make room for his museum and research center. Some of the materials from the old hotel were, in fact, salvaged for reuse in the museum. The two-story, hipped-roof museum is composed of a large front section with a rear wing. The main entrance is sheltered by an enclosed one-story porch. Fenestration consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows. In plan, the building contains a large lateral front hall flanked by two large meeting rooms. The hall contains the main stair which leads to the second story. The remaining space is divided into rooms that formerly housed the various displays of the Bailey's ornithological exhibit. The building is less than fifty years old and is therefore considered noncontributing.

Originally, the Family Building was located to the east of the Central Hotel. It housed the barber shop and telegraph office. It is no longer standing.

To the east of the hotel and running along the circular drive are four brick cottages that comprised a part of the original nine cottage Kentucky Row (#14, #15, #16, #17) similar in design to the remaining cottages of Baltimore Row, the buildings are constructed of brick and have overhanging hipped roofs supported by lattice posts. Like the cottages of Baltimore Row, each unit has a central chimney which serves four corner fireplaces, one for each of the four chambers. Sites #13 and #19 are cottage sites from the original Kentucky Row that are likely to yield important information on the period of significance. Two other cottage sites, #18 and #20, have had their central chimney and foundation largely removed and are not significant.

The Ballroom Building (indicated on map as #21) originally stood to the north of Kentucky Row. It is no longer standing but the site has potential to yield important information related to the complex in its period of significance. To the south of the entrance at the bar room and store/post office formerly stood the Gents Bowling Alley and Billard Room. Both buildings are no longer standing.

A number of buildings are found to the south of the former Ladies Hotel and Bailey Museum. The largest building is the former Jordan's House (#26). This building was, in effect, a duplex, each unit with its own separate entrance. Built in brick, the building is covered by a gable roof and has 6/6 hung-sash windows. The eastern doorway is sheltered by

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

a one-story porch with square posts that support a shed roof. The west doorway has a balustrade with no roof. Both entrances have paneled single doors and transoms. In plan, Jordan House contains a stair hall/parlor arrangement in the easternmost unit and a lateral stair hall fronting twin chambers in the westernmost unit.

Standing to the east of the former Jordan's House is a building that once served as servant's quarters (#25). Originally one of two such structures, the remaining building is a two-story, brick structure covered by a hipped roof. The building is divided into two units, each unit having a separate entrance. Fenestration consists of 6/6 hung-sash windows. The unit on the west has sustained brick damage on the south wall near the entrance.

To the east of the servant's quarters is a former greenhouse (#12). The building is topped by a gable roof with standing-seam sheet metal. The one-story building has a high brick foundation and glass walls partially fabricated from sash. It dates to the 1940s and is noncontributing.

Located to the west behind Jordan's House is a one-story wood-frame building with horizontal plank siding (#28). It was originally a storehouse. Built in the 1870s, it has survived in a good state of preservation.

Located to the east of Jordan's House is a wood-frame building with board and batten siding (#25). It most likely served originally as slave quarters. The building is covered by an overhanging gable roof with post supports for the overhang. It has a central chimney and is divided into two units.

About 200 yards to the rear (south) of Jordan's House is the former location of the Jordan Alum Springs. During the late 19th century the Jordan Alum Springs rivaled the Rockbridge Alum Springs until it was purchased and merged into the Rockbridge Alum Springs complex. Two buildings are all that remain of the Jordan Alum Springs. The gazebo (#31) is located on a trail that led to the main hotel, now demolished. The 1880s gazebo is small, latticed building that sheltered the chalybeate or iron spring. It is now covered with an "A"-roof. Photographs as well as pieces of the original roof survive to facilitate a reconstruction.

The ca. 1880 bandstand (#32) is located about fifty yards to the south of the gazebo. It is a large octagonal building with chamfered posts

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

supporting an octagonal domed roof. The building has bracket supports and a lattice cornice. It remains in an excellent state of preservation. To its south is a former residential dwelling (#30). Although the fireplace chimney still stands, little else remains of this noncontributing site.

The ruins of a stone jail (indicated on the map as #36) are located to the northwest of the bandstand. The ruins consist of a partial wall and foundation remains. Several openings in the wall retain iron bars. Other sites related to Jordan Springs include stone foundation (#33) that should be investigated archaeologically and standing brick ruins (#34) that appear to date to a period later than the period of significance. To the east of the jail are the foundation ruin and brick chimney stack of a building (indicated on the map as #35), likely part of the original Grand Hotel building.

Immediately to the north of the gazebo are the stone-fronted chambers of the Jordan Alum springhouse (indicated on map as #29). While the springhouse building itself has not survived, the chambers are similar to those that are found at the Rockbridge Alum Springs pavilion. However, the Jordan Alum Springs entrances are set in earth, rather than stone.

A round stone cistern is located about one hundred yards to the rear of the Bailey Museum building. The cistern is lined with stone and served as a reservoir for the Rockbridge Alum Springs. The structure (indicated on the map as #24) is in an excellent state of preservation. Two nearby icehouse pits functionally related to the original reservoir system may yield information on the original size and configuration of the ice houses, (#22, #23).

The depressions of a railroad spurline roadbed from Goshen are found to the south of the Bailey Museum building. The spurline ran behind the former Central Hotel and originally brought guests to the resort complex.

The standards of several former gaslights are found scattered around the oval drive of the Rockbridge Alum Springs. Remaining fixtures in the extant buildings were originally gas fixtures and indicate that the resort was lighted by gas. The gas generator's location has yet to be identified.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 6DESCRIPTION -- Inventory
(* = noncontributing)

- 81-86-1. Barroom. Stucco; gable roof (tin); 1-bay, 1-story, no porch; Gothic Revival. Windows are distinguished by hood molds. Doorway has lattice window transoms and sidelights. Built in the 1850s for use as a bar.
- 81-86-2. Store/post office. Stucco; gable roof (tin); 1-bay, 1-story, no porch; Gothic Revival. The twin of the adjacent barroom, it was also built in the 1850s for use as the store/post office.
- 81-86-3. Montgomery Hall. Brick (American Bond); hipped roof (sheet metal); 3-bays, 2-story; 3-bay, 2-story, 2-tier porch with lattice supports. Vernacular. Central-passage plan. Built in the 1850s to serve as accommodations for guests.
- 81-86-4. Gothic Building. Brick (American Bond); gable roof (sheet metal); 9-bays, 2 1/2 story; a 1-story, 5-bay porch. The attic gable and hood molds give the building its Gothic flavor. Central passage plan. Built in the 1850s as accommodations for guests.
- 81-86-5. Alum Springhouse. Wood-frame. The springhouse is built into the side of a stone cliff. Pyramidal roof, composition shingles. A metal statue of Hygeia crowns the structure. Chamfered posts support the roof. The interior has stone chambers with buttresses added in 1977. The present structure dates to the late 1860s, or early 1870s.
- 81-86-6. Cottage, Baltimore Row. Brick (American Bond); hipped roof (sheet metal); 4-bays, 1-story; 3-bay porch with lattice supports. Vernacular. Four rooms around a central chimney. One of nine cottages that originally constituted Baltimore Row. Built in 1850s as guest cottages.
- 81-86-7. Cottage, Baltimore Row. Brick (American Bond); hipped roof (sheet metal); 4-bays, 1-story; 3-bay porch with lattice supports. Vernacular. Twin of adjacent cottage (#6).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

- 81-86 - 8. Site. Jefferson Cottage. Stone foundation, approx. 25'x100'; Chimney on NE and SW ends, center chimney. In a brochure of ca. 1890, the Jefferson Cottage was described with the McCormick, "Cottages are very large and have all modern improvements. Rooms en suite. Elegant private baths." Surface testing yielded cultural material to a depth of 30cm from present surface. High archaeological potential to yield important information related to period of significance.
- 81-86 - *9. Site. Service/Dining Area, Central Hotel. Shallow ground depression outlining foundation, approximately 30' square. Surface testing indicated shale located 12-15cm below. Unlikely to yield intact cultural remains from period of significance. Noncontributing.
- 81-86 - 10. Ladies Hotel. Brick (American Bond); gable roof (sheet metal); 2-stories, 3-bays; 2-story, 2-tier porch with lattice supports; central passage flanked by guest rooms. 1850s. Vernacular.
- 81-86 - *11. Bailey Museum. Brick (stretcher bond); hipped roof; 2-stories, 10-bays; 1-story, gable roof porch with brick piers. The Bailey Museum was constructed in the late 1940s by Harold Bailey. Less than 50 years old. Noncontributing building.
- 81-86 - *12. Greenhouse. Brick (American Bond); gable roof; 1-story, 5-bays; built by Bailey in the 1940s, noncontributing building.
- 81-86 - 13. Site. Kentucky Row Cottage. Brick foundation, 30'x25', partially standing central chimney. Most intact cottage site remaining from Kentucky Row. Potential to yield important information on period of significance.
- 81-86 - 14-17. Cottages (4), Kentucky Row. Brick (American bond); hipped roof (sheet metal); 4-bays, 1-story; 3-bay porch with lattice supports; Vernacular. Four rooms grouped around a central chimney. These four cottages remain of the former nine-cottage Kentucky Row. 1850s. Built as guest cottages.
- 81-86 - *18. Site, Cottage, Kentucky Row. Brick foundation, 30'x25', standing central brick chimney. Disturbed, but may yield intact cultural remains from period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 8

- 81-86-19. Site, Cottage, Kentucky Row. Brick foundation 30'x25'. Well preserved central brick chimney, and like site 13, one of the best preserved cottage sites remaining from Kentucky Row. Potential to yield intact cultural remains from period of significance.
- 81-86-*20. Site, Cottage, Kentucky Row. Brick foundation, 2 courses wide; 1 course above ground, 15'x20'. Disturbed. Unlikely to yield intact cultural remains from period of significance. Noncontributing.
- 81-86-21. Site, Ballroom Building. Well preserved stone foundation, dry laid, 28'x35'. Potential to yield important information related to period of significance.
- 81-86-22. Site, Icehouse Pit. Well preserved rectangular depression, 35' across, 10' deep. May yield information on original size and configuration of icehouses.
- 81-86-23. Site, Icehouse Pit. Well preserved circular depression, 30' across, 10' deep. Slightly eroded but may yield information on original size and configuration of icehouses.
- 81-86-24. Site, Stone Cistern with brick lining. Structurally intact.
- 81-86-25. Servants' Quarters. Brick (American Bond); hipped roof (sheet metal); 4 bays, 2 stories; vernacular. Duplex. Built in the 1850s as servants' quarters together with a twin building of which nothing remains.
- 81-86-26. Jordan's House. Brick (American Bond); gable roof (sheet metal); 6 bays, 2 stories; 1-story, 1-bay porch; vernacular. Duplex. Built in the 1850s, the building originally served as the manager's house and staff lodging.
- 81-86-27. Slave Cabin. Wood frame (board-and-batten); gable roof (sheet metal); 2 bays, 1 story; 3-bay, 1-story porch; central chimney; vernacular. 1850s.

Number 29 through 36 were originally built as part of the Jordan Alum Springs (44RB 287).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

- 81-86 - 28. Storage Shed. Wood-frame (horizontal planking); gable roof (sheet metal); 1-story, 1-bay; Vernacular. 1880s.
Number 29 through 36 were originally built as part of the Jordan Alum Springs (44RB 287).
- 81-86 - 29. Stone Springhouse. Jordan Alum Springs. Dry laid stone set into hillside; 6 entrances, 5'x2' across; length, 60'. 1870s. The wood-frame covering is no longer standing and may have been similar to that found at the Rockbridge Alum Springs. Contributing structure.
- 81-86 - *30. Site, Jordan Alum Springs. 3-story, stone-and-brick chimney, 45' high; associated foundation of undetermined size. Heavily disturbed. Unlikely to yield information important to understanding of complex in its period of significance. Noncontributing.
- 81-86 - 31. Springhouse Gazebo. Jordan Alum Springs. Wood-frame; 1-story; gable roof (sheet metal); lattice screen, arches. 1870s. Contributing structure.
- 81-86 - 32. Octagonal Band Stand. Jordan Alum Springs. Wood-frame; 1-story; gable roof (sheet metal); chamfered wood posts, balustrade. 1870s. Contributing structure.
- 81-86 - 33. Site, Jordan Alum Springs. Well preserved stone foundation, 25'x50'. Should be further investigated archaeologically. Possibility of intact cultural remains.
- 81-86 - *34. Site, Jordan Alum Springs. Standing brick ruins, 20'x20', American bond, Disturbed. Unlikely to yield information related to period of significance. Noncontributing.
- 81-86 - 35. Site, Jordan Alum Springs. Well preserved stone foundation, 25'x50', with several stone piers extending about 130' south from the foundation. Remains of floor joists, some with cut nails, and brick rubble can be discerned between the stone piers. Ruins of brick chimney found on north side. These remains are most probably part of the original Grand Hotel building. High probability of intact archaeologically significant remains.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 10

- 81-86 - 36. Site, Jordan Alum Springs. Standing ruins, stone walled jail; iron bars. Should be investigated further archaeologically. Probability of intact cultural remains.
- 81-86 - *37. Root Cellar. Brick (American bond); gable roof (sheet metal); 1-bay. Built in the rear of the Ladies Hotel by Bailey in the 1950s, the cellar is less than fifty years old and is noncontributing.
- 81-86 - 38. Well. Brick. Well head no longer standing. Contributing structure. Potential to yield information related to period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

water was believed to be a cure for various disorders that included diarrhea, dysentery, and skin ailments.

Dunlap's house and spring met with considerable popularity, and in 1834 Dunlap and Mames Campbell, son of Robert Campbell, opened a small resort hotel at the spring. In 1842 a post office was established at the springs, with Campbell serving as the first postmaster. Before 1850 Campbell built a three-story brick building that became known as the Central Hotel. In 1850 the Campbell family, by then the sole owners, sold the property to Booth, Anderson and Christian. They in turn, in 1852, sold the spring land to John W. Frazier for \$150,000.

John W. Frazier took possession of the springs on November 1, 1852 and immediately began a large building campaign that more than doubled the existing accommodations. According to one account written by William Frazier, brother of John Frazier, the construction project at the springs was enormous. Frazier noted of the building activity in 1853:

"Arriving after midnight, I found the lawn covered with stacks of lumber, and the next day found at least fifty or sixty workmen-- brick and stone-masons, carpenters, plasterers, tanners, painters-- all busily plying their several trades; many new buildings going up and old ones being enlarged and extended; none of them in a completed state and some only just begun."²

John W. Frazier's building program required the hiring of six contractors whom he furnished with the necessary building materials. For supplies, Frazier contracted with several sawmills in Rockbridge, Augusta, and Bath counties and one in Pocahontas County. In addition to lumber, Frazier obtained such other necessary building supplies as sand and lime. According to William Frazier, John W. Frazier made "contracts of hire of a number of wagons and teams besides our own three wagons and four horse teams and three carts with their mules; all these were continuously hauling lumber from the mills, sand from the mountain, lime from Kerr's Creek and saw logs from our own land to our own saw-mill, which was kept running daily and most of the night; two brick-kilns had been burned in the fall and preparations were now making for burning a third."³ Unfortunately John Frazier did not live to see the resort completed; and the work finishing the project devolved on his brother.

The newly rebuilt spring opened on June 1, 1853, with construction still in progress. The workmen finally departed by July 15, 1853. Under

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

William Frazier's direction, Rockbridge Alum Springs enjoyed a most successful first season. In fact, the resort was so popular as to warrant the construction of additional building during each successive season of that decade. In this regard William Frazier noted:

"From the first autumn down to the war I was engaged fall, winter and spring in putting up and furnishing new buildings; some of them large two story and two and a-half story brick and one-story frame cottages, on the same plan J. W. Frazier had adopted of furnishing the contractors all materials read to hand."⁴

The buildings described in William Frazier's account are many of the same buildings that still stand at Rockbridge Alum Springs. Stylistically, the buildings demonstrate Frazier's eclecticism, through their combination of elements from the Gothic and Greek Revivals as well as Vernacular styles. Particularly interesting is Edward Beyer's depiction of the springs in his Album of Virginia of 1857. Beyer's views of the Rockbridge and its contemporaries clearly reveal that the spa was similar in style and plan to many other springs of that period, especially in its rapid evolution into a large complex. The accuracy of William Frazier's statement concerning the size of his spring and its prosperity is confirmed in yet another book of the period, J. J. Moorman's, The Virginia Springs. Moorman noted in 1859 that Rockbridge, "has appropriate buildings sufficient to accommodate 600 to 800 guests and new buildings are being added."⁵

Rockbridge Alum Springs' popularity and success had much to do with the public's rapid acceptance of Virginia's spas as vacation spots. Writing a New York editor in ca. 1858, Margaret (Gardiner) Beekman summarized the allure of the Rockbridge Alum Springs to travelers:

"Two days of easy transition finds us removed some four hundred miles or more, from the dim and dusk of our great city of New York enjoying refreshing breezes and nature's clear fountains in the heart of the Virginia mountains, the Rockbridge Alum Springs, tho' first in line of travel of many into which nature has so lavishly poured the chemicals of her laboratory, a first I may add is not generally known to your reader north of the Mason Dixon line."⁶

As Mrs. Beekman noted, Rockbridge Alum Springs in the antebellum period was the first spring in the line of resorts encountered by nothern

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

visitors in the valley. Typically, a traveler from the north would take the Virginia Central Railroad to Goshen a distance of thirty-three miles from the spring, to be met there by a coach. For the traveler from the south various railway companies offered transportation to points close to the Rockbridge Alum Springs. As a lure to potential guests, travel to the springs was provided at a reduced rate. Since the Virginia springs were scattered at short distances throughout the Valley, it was not uncommon for guests to travel to the springs in one vacation season. Cooke's "Map of Virginia Springs" provided the traveler with the routes and distances to the various resorts.

Of the Rockbridge Alum Springs in 1858, Mrs. Beekman's letter noted further, "When by a sudden turn of the descending road its presence opens...the aspect of a shining village of cheerful cottages."⁷ Then as today, the approach to Rockbridge Alum Springs was, by a secondary road which winds through the mountains to the small valley in which the resort complex is situated. As Mrs. Beekman's letter clearly attested, the spa left a very good first impression on its guests.

Once visitors arrived at the Rockbridge Alum Springs, a variety of activities awaited them. From the accounts that survive on the springs' amusements, it is evident that a gentle life in the country was the main attraction. While there were no organized classes, croquet, horse-back riding, hiking, bowling, and tenpins were available. The hotel provided riding horses or carriages so that patrons could ramble through the surrounding mountains. Twice daily, a small orchestra gave concerts from the music bandstand. At night, there were dances in the ballroom. During the height of the summer season, two special events were held: a full dress ball and a masquerade ball. Undoubtedly, the resort was full during these two occasions.

In addition to the resort business, William Frazier also bottled and shipped the spring water, promoting it as a medicinal cure. According to one source, Frazier in 1858 was grossing over \$9,000 annually from the sale of spring water.⁸ That same year he sold over \$38,000 worth of goods and services at the springs.⁹ The antebellum period was the most prosperous for the Rockbridge Alum Springs.

The outbreak of the Civil War stopped the growth of the springs and led to its conversion into a hospital. As early as November, 1861, Captain Thomas F. Roche advertised in the Lexington Gazette for firewood, "to be

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

used at the Rockbridge Alum Hospital."¹⁰ An unknown number of soldiers died at the hospital and were buried in unmarked graves.

With the collapse of the Confederacy, William Frazier began plans to reopen the springs. According to one source Frazier traveled to Baltimore and obtained a loan to refurbish and reopen Rockbridge Alum Springs. However, the springs never revived its antebellum prosperity.

Somewhat disheartened, William Frazier left Rockbridge Alum Springs assigning the responsibility of running the resort to a nephew, James A. Frazier. Unfortunately, James A. Frazier did not succeed in the business. Poor attendance, legal battles and neglect took their toll until the spring were finally sold at auction in 1880.

Part of the reason for the decline of the Rockbridge Alum Springs was steep competition from the adjacent Jordan Alum Springs. John W. Jordan owned a tract of 500 acres immediately adjoining the Rockbridge Alum Springs. In 1872 it was purchased by the Jordan Company. The company erected on a choice site the Grand Hotel, a four-story, mansard roof building with 150 guest rooms and opened it to the patrons on June 15, 1873.

From the opening of the hotel bitter disputes occurred between the Jordan Rockbridge Alums. A high board fence was erected between the properties to prevent guests from visiting the other spring. During this period of strife, although both resorts suffered financially, the Rockbridge Alum was particularly hard hit. Finally, in 1880 the two springs were merged under the ownership of Frederick Effinger of Staunton.

Effinger began immediately to restore and renovate facilities at the two springs. The Lexington Gazette on July 16, 1881, rendered an account of the ambitious project:

"The work done is immense, the house over the spring had fallen in and the whole Rockbridge Alum property was in such a deplorable condition, I think it was a debatable question whether it would be cheaper to repair or burn out and commence anew. Almost all buildings need roofs and new coats of paint, there were scarcely a good lock to be found on the whole property, a new kitchen and bake house, laundry and pantry to be put up, all the porch floors to be relaid, two miles of sewerage to be put down, 1500 feet of tin roofing to be put on, and the water works to be made new.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Yet, all this has been done... and the improvements decided upon to be made this fall and winter will put the Rockbridge and the Jordan Alum, consolidated, far beyond comparison with any other springs in Virginia."¹¹

As a means to finance further capital improvements and lower operational costs in January 1882, an attempt was made to incorporate the Rockbridge Alum Water Company. The incorporator included J. Fred Effinger, president of the springs, as well as several prominent citizens of Lexington, where the main office was located. The Lexington Gazette and Citizen noted of the new corporation: "There is strength and push in the company and we would not be surprised if all other drinks are driven off the market and alum water becomes the favorite beverage of the people."¹² Surviving brochures issued by the company promoted the healing qualities of the alum water. Such leaflets presented not only a complete analysis of the water, but also testimony of physicians on the effects of the water in curing diseases.

To bolster attendance at the resort itself, a spur line was run from Goshen Station to the doors of the hotel. The last leg of the railroad could now be made in thirty minutes behind a steam locomotive provided by the Virginia Iron Company. Depressions in the ground behind the Bailey Museum indicate the route of the railroad tracks, long since removed.

J. Fred Effinger's ownership was brief. In a brochure announcing the opening of the 1888 season, it was noted that the spring was under new proprietors. The Peyton-Campbell company had purchased the property and would manage the resort. The brochure for 1888 contained the following:

"It is proposed that the Hotels, in all their appointments and accommodations, shall be first-class in all respects. The cuisine will be supplied with the best that the country and city markets available can afford.

We enter upon another season fully organized and prepared to give our patrons all the advantages of a first-class watering place or summer resort. Whether sought for health, pleasure, or recreation, we hope to make it pleasant and profitable to all."¹³

The prosperity of the new spring never approached that of its antebellum years. The automobile had opened a variety of competing options for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

summer vacations. In 1903 the owners closed the hotel, leaving the cottages and smaller halls for rental lodging.

During the teens the spring captured the interest of a number of literary figures. James Branch Cabell patronized the spring and Sinclair Lewis and his wife visited the Cabell cottage on Kentucky row in 1918. Mrs. Gracie Lewis wrote of the visit:

"When we registered he (the manager) warned us that all we need expect in the way of service were the air and the waters... When I asked for some firewood I could have sworn I saw a colored man removing pieces of the porch to make kindling for the fire..."¹⁴

The springs came to their demise in the Great Depression. In 1941 the Rockbridge Alum Springs was liquidated; all the remaining buildings and 1,516 acres were sold for \$7,000 to James P. Alexander.

Alexander had no intention of reopening the springs and in 1942 sold the property to Harold Bailey. Bailey was a naval architect by profession and had a strong interest in ornithology. Bailey and his wife moved to the springs in 1945 and began the effort of renovating and rebuilding at the resort site. Bailey had acquired an extensive collection of birds, eggs, and an ornithological library which he intended to house at the springs. Bailey erected a museum building on the site of the former hotel buildings, salvaging materials from the hotel for reuse in his museum building. Bailey also restored many of the spring buildings which had fallen into various states of disrepair.

Bailey died suddenly in 1962 and left his estate to the Bailey Research Trust. Mrs. Bailey remained at the springs until her death in 1975 when the property was left to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The collections were moved to Blacksburg and the springs property sold. The Rockbridge Alum Springs is presently owned by Messrs. Keith, Norval and Randy Holland, who are presently offering it for sale.

Evaluation of archaeological sites on the property is based on a systematic ground reconnaissance conducted during December 1986. The survey covered the entire clear area surrounding the Rockbridge Alum Springs plus a fifteen-acre forested tract extending south of Alum Creek and west of the Alum Springs, encompassing the site of the former Jordan Springs. A limited series of shovel tests were placed within suspected areas where standing ruins, foundation remains, ground depressions, or

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

surface indications of cultural material suggested site locations in order to determine soil stratigraphy and the presence and extent of buried cultural material.

The method of survey used identified only those sites with standing or surface visible features. There is a strong likelihood that additional subsurface testing would identify other archaeological remains.

Based on the limited subsurface exploration, site 8, which has cultural material present to at least 30cm below the surface, has the most intact archaeological deposits and would have significant potential for archaeological research. The remains of site 35, the Jordan Springs Grand Hotel, although not as intact as site 8, would possibly have the greatest potential for archaeological research by helping to explain the role resort springs and spas played in the social life of the nineteenth century.

Other sites of research interest include site 13, 19, 21, 24, 33, and 36 as well as sites 22 and 23 which may contain evidence of associated structural remains. Sites 18, 20, 30, and 34 appear to have been largely removed as was site 9, where shale bedrock lies only 12 to 15 cm below the present ground surface.

The archaeological remnants of Rockbridge Alum Springs (44RB286) and the adjacent Jordan Springs (44RB287) represent the most extensive archaeological remains of a nineteenth century resort spa in Virginia. It was representative of a type of social activity that was largely confined to the Blue Ridge and Appalachian Region of a handful of states, with Virginia having the most of such sites. The remains contained within the Rockbridge Alum Springs Historic District, ranging from 1838 to the 1940s, covers almost the entire historic period of the operation of such spas. Complementing the archaeological record are the number of extant structures within the district.

Resort springs and spas were both a popular form of entertainment and a popular social occasion for many Americans, especially for the Tidewater families of the South who wished to escape to the coolness of the higher elevations afforded. Many others sought the miraculous health benefits claimed by drinking and bathing in the waters. In a period where little could be done for most ailments, these spas offered hope, and indeed did offer escape from cholera and yellow fever, since the mountain environment was not suitable for their spread. As equally important to some was the social life offered, to see and be seen by wealthy and socially prominent people.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8

While many people spent much of their summers at these resorts, little is known of the social life and behavior associated with these places. The archaeological record contained within the historic district would likely shed new light on such a significant segment of nineteenth century life in Virginia.

Endnotes

1. Marshall W. Fishwick, Springlore in Virginia (Bowling Green: Popular Press, 1978), p. 213.
2. William Frazier, Rockbridge Alum Springs Case (Staunton: Spectator Book and Job Office, 1884), p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 7.
4. Ibid., p. 8.
5. J. J. Moorman, The Virginia Springs (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1859), p. 265.
6. Margaret Gardiner Beekman, "Natural Bridge and Rockbridge Alum Springs," ca. 1858, Manuscripts, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA.
7. Ibid.
8. Fishwick, Springlore in Virginia, p. 218.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 218.
11. Lexington Gazette, 26 July 1881.
12. Lexington Gazette, & Citizen, January 1882. Quoted in Marshall W. Fishwick, "Story of a Spa - Part IV", Manuscript, VDHL file, Richmond, VA
13. Rockbridge Alum Springs, Virginia, Announcement Season, 1888 (np.), pp. 7-8.
14. Fishwick, Springlore in Virginia, p. 221.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

between Brushy Mountain and Mill Mountain.

4200
5059 (NW
(NIMROD HALL)
4199
4198
55'
4197
4196

MAP 2 of 2

Rockbridge Alum
Springs Historical Dist.
Rockbridge Co., VA

- UTM References:
A- 17/622100/4196540
B- 17/621990/4195880
C- 17/621600/4195870
D- 17/621440/4196000
E- 17/621200/4196470

Millboro, VA

