

## Department of Historic Resources

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Contact: **Randy Jones**

Department of Historic Resources

(540) 578-3031

[Randy.Jones@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Randy.Jones@dhr.virginia.gov)

### **STATE APPROVES 9 NEW HISTORIC SITES FOR LISTING IN THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER**

**–Listings cover landmarks in the counties of Alleghany, Bland, Chesterfield, Gloucester, Lancaster, Shenandoah, and Southampton, and the City of Hampton–**

RICHMOND – A steamboat wharf stop that gave rise to a Northern Neck village, and a train whistle stop that extended the life of a rural Southampton County community were among the four new historic districts and five individual landmarks recently approved for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Department of Historic Resources

The Morattico Historic District, in **Lancaster County**, is a rare surviving example of a Northern Neck village that relied on a water-based economy from its perch along the lower Rappahannock River. The village arose as a steamboat stop and developed a seafood industry of fishing, oyster and crab harvesting, and seafood processing.

Although the Morattico district's historic wharf and cannery are gone, the houses of many of those who made their living on the nearby waters survive. The dwellings range from modest worker housing to large Victorian residences. Commercial buildings in the historic district feature a circa-1890 general store (now a museum), a small circa-1949 post office building, and several single-story seafood processing facilities that date to the mid-1950s. The Morattico Historic District's period of significance extends from 1890 to 1960

The Sebrell Rural Historic District, an agricultural area within **Southampton County**, contains the remnants of Barn Tavern, which gave rise in the 18<sup>th</sup> - and 19<sup>th</sup>-centuries to a community of the same name. The village of Sebrell, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century rail-stop town, evolved from Barn Tavern. The remnants of these two villages, situated roughly a half-mile apart, contain the largest concentrations of historic buildings in the district. The surrounding area features historic farms with a mix of large and small agricultural fields, timber farms, and pasture. The period of significance for the district extends from 1761 to 1931, the year Plank Road was rerouted around Sebrell, which hastened the village's economic decline.

The other two historic districts approved for listing on the state landmarks register date back to Virginia's early Colonial era.

The Downtown **Hampton** Historic District has been an active port on the Chesapeake Bay since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the colonial assembly ordered that a port be built there in 1691 and laid out the plat for the original crossroads of King and Queen Streets in the same year, although a community had existed in the vicinity since 1610. This crossing point represents one of the earliest examples of town planning in English America and has been the focal point of downtown Hampton from the Colonial period to the modern era.

Hampton began its history as one of the most important coastal cities in America but its growth was hampered by the War of 1812, the burning of the city at the outset of the Civil War, and another great fire in 1884. Only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century did it begin to recover. As a result of those fires, despite being one of the earliest English settlements in the U.S., the majority of the historic district's buildings date from the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Downtown Gloucester Historic District encompasses the heart of the village of Gloucester Court House, the administrative center of **Gloucester County** since at least the time of the 1766 construction of a third county courthouse and the official 1769 establishment of the Town of Botetourt (modern day Gloucester Court House).

The courthouse site has been the focal point of the town's development since before its legal creation, and a courthouse has existed at or near the current one since circa 1680. After the Civil War, industrialization and new forms of commerce brought more people into Gloucester Court House, resulting in development and expansion of the village down Main Street beyond the original courthouse circle. The period of significance for the historic district runs from 1754 to 1960.

In addition to those four historic districts, the two boards of the Department of Historic Resources also approved listing the following individual landmarks during the boards' joint quarterly meeting on September 30:

- The Bauserman Farm, in **Shenandoah County**, consists of a well-preserved 1860 Victorian house and 76 acres of land that has been farmed continuously since the early 19th century. The farmstead illustrates the evolution during 100-plus years of a successful, moderate-sized farm under the stewardship of successive generations of a single family. The farm also represents the legacy of the once dominant family-farm tradition perpetuated by German immigrants in the northern Shenandoah Valley. Historic buildings on the farm include a circa-1823 summer kitchen; a circa -1893 granary, a late-19th-century bank barn, and a circa-1940 chicken house, among other historic structures or building foundations.
- The Falling Creek Marker in **Chesterfield County**, is one of 16 markers erected along Virginia's portion of the Jefferson Davis Highway between 1927 and 1947 as a memorial to Jefferson F. Davis, the only president of the Confederate States of America. The historic stone markers were paid for, erected, and maintained by the United Daughters of the Confederacy through local chapters and their affiliated state

and national organization. The UDC campaign that extended the length of the Davis highway through former Confederate states is considered by the UDC to be one of its greatest accomplishments, and also featured UDC-sponsored maps, educational brochures and travel publications to promote the continental highway.

- Jefferson School, completed in 1926 and expanded in 1952, which provided primary and secondary education for African-American students in the Clifton Forge (**Alleghany Co.**) community from 1926 until 1965, when desegregation took effect. As the fourth school constructed to serve African-American students, it was central to Clifton Forge's black community for nearly 40 years. Today an active alumni association keeps the school's legacy alive.
- The Rochelle-Prince House, constructed around 1814 in Courtland (**Southampton Co.**). The house was the one-time residence of James Henry Rochelle, who had a noteworthy career as a naval officer during the Mexican War, Civil War, and later with the Peruvian Navy. His niece, Martha Rochelle Tyler, who also resided there, was a granddaughter of President John Tyler and served as postmistress of Courtland for 14 years. During the 1970s the house was converted to a museum by the Southampton County Historical Society, after Anne Louise Prince left the property to the historical society.
- The Wolf Creek Bridge, in **Bland County**, which was erected circa 1912 for the New River, Holston and Western Railroad. The bridge is important for its engineering (as a Pratt through-truss structure) and its cylindrical steel columns, a patented feature of the Phoenix Bridge Co. An unusually old example to have survived with integrity of design, the Wolf Creek Bridge was converted for vehicular traffic in 1946. It continued to serve as a key link in the regional transportation network until 1987, when it was retired from service.

These new listings in the Virginia Landmark Register will be forwarded by Virginia's State Historic Preservation Officer— Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, director of the Department of Historic Resources—to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Listing a property on the state or national register places no restrictions on what a property owner may do with his or her property.

Designating a property to the state or national register either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district does provide an owner the opportunity to pursue tax credit rehabilitation improvements to his or her property.

Such tax credit projects must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. An owner of a register-listed landmark may also donate a preservation easement on the property to the Commonwealth of Virginia in return for state tax credits.

Virginia is a national leader among the 50 states in registering historic sites and districts. The state is also a national leader for the number of tax credit rehabilitation projects proposed and completed each year. Together the register and tax credit rehabilitation programs have played a significant role in promoting the conservation of the Commonwealth's historic sites and in spurring economic revitalization in many Virginia towns and communities.

The nomination forms, which provide detailed information about each of the above listings, can be accessed on the DHR website at the following address:  
<http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/boardPage.html>.

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