



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) _____

Purpose of Evaluation

Please use the following space to explain briefly why you are seeking an evaluation of this property.

This property is said to be the oldest in the county, but formal documentation does not exist. We hope to learn whether the lore around this building's age is true and have it documented and acknowledged for people studying the history of the county. Though we know that National Register status does not have this kind of formal power, we hope that, given threats to develop the area, local officials would take this property's historic status into consideration when reviewing development proposals.

Are you interested in applying for State and/or Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes _____ No X

Are you interested in receiving more information about DHR's easement program? Yes X No _____

1. General Property Information

Property name: O'Leary's Cabin/Milly's Cabin

Property address: 4228 Sperryville Pike

City or Town: Woodville

Zip code: 22749

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Rappahannock

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 68 acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

"O'Leary's Cabin" is a 68 acre property located on the side Fielding Mountain. The building is located about a quarter of a mile up the hill from Sperryville Pike. There is a private gravel road connecting Sperryville Pike and the area near the buildings, though the bottom of the gravel road (including a bridge over a creek) belongs to a neighboring farm and is accessed through an easement. The majority of the property is wooded, other than the area surrounding the buildings. There is a walking trail in the woods leading to the top of Fielding Mountain. No other buildings are visible from the house, which is surrounded by the neighbor's fields, woods, and a hilly meadow.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Vernacular log cabin

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _____

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): ca. 1830

Narrative Description:

In the space below, briefly describe the general characteristics of the entire property, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the architectural style, materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions, remodelings, or other alterations.

The “O’Leary’s Cabin” Property is situated on a 68 acre piece of mostly wooded land in a rural area. Presumably, some of it was probably once used for farming. In the past several decades, the land is mostly used for recreation, including the annual foxhunt. The primary structure is a log cabin house, made of squared logs. It is consistent with vernacular styles dating to the 18th and early 19th century. The two-bay building has one main story, as well as an attic room and a finished basement. It is covered in clapboards and painted white. It has a small front porch with a cement and soapstone floor. It has a tin side-gabled roof overtop of the original roof, which is still largely intact and visible from the inside. The front of the house has one original sash window with wooden shutters, to the left of the door. The building has two stone chimneys, one on the left, towards the front of the house, and other on the right and towards the back.

The building has had two additions. The original portion of the house, dating to the early 19th century, consists of the front room and loft. It has hand-hewn chestnut ceiling beams, what is presumably the original floor, a likely original wood mantle, and interior wall corners that have settled into crooked angles. The original portion of the house also consists of the attic, where the original hand-hewn log board purlins, and even several chestnut shingles are visible.

The first addition to the house consists of the middle room, which has 19th-century circular saw-marked ceiling beams. Its walls, which are, like the original portion of the house, covered in wooden clapboard and plaster over brick nogging. A window was cut into the wall of the middle room in 2016. The majority of other windows are original. The basement was finished at an unknown date and consists of a kitchen, dining, and utility room (remodeled in 2016) with stone floors. In the basement kitchen, underneath the mid 19th-century addition, there is a 19th century corner stone fireplace with a massive stone lintel.

A 2016 addition and remodel added a room and small patio to the back, maintaining the 19th century window on the back of the first addition. It also replaced a 20th-century side screened porch with a glass side porch, which covers old stone steps that lead to the basement kitchen. The 2016 additions are not visible from the front of the building.

Briefly describe any outbuildings or secondary resources (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

To the south of the primary structure, there is a log barn, likely dating to the 19th century. It was moved in the 20th century from lower down the hill to its current location. It is made of squared logs and has a loft and an overhang area. Near the barn is a shed, in poor condition, likely 20th century. Elsewhere on the property, there are sections of an old stone fence, as well as more modern fences. There are also power lines running through the property, first built by Page Power Company after an easement made in 1928.

4. Property's History and Significance

In the space below, briefly describe the history of the property, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

Local legend states that the cabin dates to the 1740s and is the oldest building in Rappahannock County. More research is needed to corroborate that statement, but the architectural features of the building support an 18th century or early 19th century construction date. It is primarily significant for its architectural features, displaying very old, vernacular construction techniques.

Before 1925, the property was owned by the O'Leary family, and the cabin is often called "O'Leary's Cabin."¹ From 1925 to 1950, it was owned by John W. Dodson and Hattie Johnson and known locally as the "Johnnie Dodson Place."² From 1950 to her death in 1985, the property was owned by Mildred Miller Thornton Fletcher.³ Though she was married and lived primarily with her husband in nearby Sperryville, she owned the cabin herself. Her daughter recalls her saying that a woman "should have a house of her own."⁴ The building is still known locally as "Milly's Cabin." More research needs to be done to find information on the cabin's original owners and previous residents.

¹ Rappahannock County Deed Book 33, 1925, 137-138.

² Ibid., Rappahannock County Deed Book 54, 1950, 188-190.

³ Ibid., Circuit Court of the County of Rappahannock, form 169-MF for the estate of Mildred Miller Thornton Fletcher, book 33. 566.

⁴ Helen Williams, "History, and family fill the rooms of Milly's Cabin," *Rappahannock News*, October 3, 2013, https://www.rappnews.com/features/history-and-family-fill-the-rooms-of-milly-s-cabin/article_e9805705-9b0f-5378-89c7-11e48339c07b.html.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Annie Canby and Peter Bresnan

organization: _____

street & number: 1733 Q St NW

city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20009

e-mail: anniecanby@aol.com telephone: +41 76 369 00 89

Legal Owner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

•• Signature required for processing all applications. ••

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Emma Bresnan

organization: _____

street & number: 76 Freeman Pkwy

city or town: Providence state: RI zip code: 02906

e-mail: elbresnan@gmail.com telephone: 301-312-0588

6. Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator, City Manager, and/or Town Manager

name/title: Gary W. Curry, Jr., County Administrator

locality: Rappahannock County

street & number: 3 Library Road

city or town: Washington state: VA zip code: 22749

telephone: (540) 675-5330