



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 041-5804

1. General Property Information

Property name: Leonard R Williamson House

Property address: 3005 Williamson Road

City or Town: Alton

Zip code: 24520

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

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

Building Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 50.5 Acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban Suburban Town Village Hamlet Rural

Briefly describe the property’s overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The Leonard R Williamson House is located on the Southside of Williamson Road (SR 712), 1/4 mile from Calvary Road (SR 119), and 2 miles from SR 58 in Halifax County, VA, at 3005 Williamson Road, in the southwest corner of Halifax County, VA and 1 mile from Caswell County, NC on SR 119.

In 2024, the 50.5 acre property remains in the same family, passed down from father to son for six generations thus far. Leonard R Williamson House sits on a small Williamson family farm that includes a current residence built in 1910, equipment sheds, a family food garden, and multiple small sheds added over time to meet the needs of each generation of tobacco farming families. Williamson farm nestles among the gently rolling hills in the rural southside of the state of Virginia. Included with the farm are several forested stands of old growth timber along with open pastures.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Rural American Farmhouse

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: Leonard R Williamson and his father William “Billy” Williamson

Date of construction (can be approximate): 1840

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property’s general characteristics, 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 materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

Leonard R Williamson House is a story-and-a-half hall-and-parlor style home hand built by father and son for the newlywed couple shortly after Leonard married Mary Foster in Person County, NC on 1 August 1839. It is a structure of mortise and tenon built with wooden pegs, resting on fieldstone piers, 2 1/2 feet above ground. A steeply pitched roof is covered with standing-seam metal and has boxed cornices. One side (front) appears to be covered with original wood siding, and sheds are attached to the remaining sides. Architectural evidence reveals that a chimney and fireplace were once located on one end (north). Narrow window openings are centered in each gable end, and a six-over-six double sash window is on the first floor. The ceiling in the hall is covered with fourteen-inch-wide pine boards running the length of the room. An enclosed winder stair provides access to the upper half story. In 2024, Leonard R Williamson House continues to offer new generations the same view of the original home’s as-built appearance. Although the original wood home stood unaltered for nearly 200 years, a lean to was added on 3 sides in the 1940s and a vinyl siding cover was added to the front in 2012. Through its 184 year life, the dwelling has been both a family home and a rented home, most recently serving to store and preserve Williamson family antiquities and other treasures for more than 50 years.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- Current residence circa 1910, hand built by Leonard’s grandson James Warner Williamson
- Chicken coop circa 1930
- Garage circa 1960
- 3 acre stocked pond
- Equipment sheds
- Tobacco drying barns

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

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

Our American Williamson family story began in 1637 Isle of Wight County, Virginia (across the river from Jamestown) when Sir Richard Williamson (Knight) arrived from London just 30 years after the original settlers first landed at Jamestown Colony in Virginia. Family members slowly migrated westward, reaching Halifax County, Virginia shortly after the county was carved from Lunenburg County in 1752. Thomas Williamson was one of the original settlers in Halifax County and the first Williamson ancestor to reach that far west. Thomas bought 100 acres in 1761, surveyed (1756) and then patented his 400 acres along the Dan River just across US 58 in 1763. His descendants have remained in the county and served as well-known pillars of the local Delila (Calvary) community since Thomas first arrived. His Grandson Leonard settled the original 52.5 acre Williamson farm where his descendants continued to live, farm, and raise families on the small family farm for nearly 200 years since the Leonard R Williamson House was built in 1840. Originally including 52.5 acres, Leonard's grandson James Warner Williamson gave 2 acres to his only sister Cremona Winifred Williamson to build a home and raise her family with Jack Grinstead around 1910. When the Leonard R Williamson House was built, an older log cabin dwelling sat directly across from the new house location. Although this cabin was removed in the 1960's to make way for an expansion of the main residence originally built in 1910, it indicates that members of the Williamson family lived on this farm even longer. Leonard was a tobacco farmer by trade and his wife Mary (Foster) was a housewife tending a family food garden while raising 10 children. Five farming generations since then have continued the same self-sufficient agricultural traditions on that 50 acre family farm started by Leonard and Mary, with each tobacco farming family adding necessary storage sheds, tobacco drying barns, chicken/milk cow shed, and other various structures. In 2019, the farm was designated a Virginia Century Farm by the state Department of Agriculture for continuous agricultural use by the same family over 100 years (designated as the Heritage B52 Farm).

As leaders in the community through 268 years, each generation of Williamson sons made significant contributions to the beloved Calvary family community. Fourth Grandson of Richard Williamson, original ancestor to leave London for life in 1637 Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Thomas Williamson is our first ancestor to settle in the newly formed territory of Halifax County, Virginia by 1761. His son William (Billy) Williamson developed the Williamson family cemetery in 1830 after the death of his wife Susan, that the family used for 3 generations until moving to the new and nearby Calvary Methodist Church cemetery after 1925. Billy and his wife Elizabeth Susan Wesley (Susan) were the first persons interred in one corner of the old family cemetery that his descendants have owned and faithfully maintained since then.

Billy's son Leonard Williamson donated 3 acres of land for the Calvary community to build the first Calvary Methodist Church. Before the church was built in 1882, members worshipped at an outdoor arbor, with a homemade altar and slabs from the sawmill as pews. Members donated logs to build the original one-room wood structure that was heated by a large wood burning stove, lighted by kerosene lamps with an Aladdin lamp for the organist, provided seating of pine pews handmade and hammered together with cut nails for strength, and served as sanctuary and Sunday School for the next 67 years. In 1892, the first organ was purchased and was played by several members, including Leonard's Granddaughter Miss Emma Williamson. In 1925, the church cemetery began interring members on those same 3 acres and continues to serve as a final resting place for many local families including four generations of Williamson descendants thus far. In 1949, the old wood church building was moved to make way for the current brick church to be built on the original site of the old wood church, with additions completed in the 1970s and 1980s. Now known as Calvary United Methodist Church, this local institution continues to stand as a tall and proud beacon of hope for all on SR 119, selflessly

servicing the Calvary community, where members still provide seasonal home garden produce, grocery food items year round, and weekly soup lunches as a welcomed helping hand for those in need of food or a hot home-cooked meal. Leonard and Mary are the second generation laid to rest in the Williamson family cemetery that began with his father Billy in 1839.

Leonard's son George Williamson donated 2 acres of land to build a new community schoolhouse located on the corner of Calvary (SR 119) and Williamson (SR 712) Roads. Calvary School was built near the Leonard R Williamson House in 1914 as a larger and more modern replacement for an older Cherry Hill School in the Calvary community. Both schools were built along one of the routes of an old stagecoach road that connected Richmond, VA with Hillsboro, NC. This road was a main thoroughfare for the southwestern section of the county. The school had three rooms – a large classroom, a small one, and a cloakroom. The school closed when students were moved to Turbeville Agricultural High School in 1941. Teachers at Calvary School lived in the Leonard R Williamson House, a short 1/4 mile walk from the school. The schoolhouse was later covered by brick siding and enlarged to become the family home that still stands in 2024 and has been owned by George's descendants since then. George and his wife Araminta "Minnie" (Mise) are the third and last generation laid to rest in the Williamson family cemetery that began with his Grandfather Billy in 1839.

George's son James Warner Williamson (Pa Warner) built the first and only General Store in the Calvary community, across from the Calvary School around 1930. Still standing and owned continuously by his descendants, but used now for storage, the store served as a focal point for community meetings and events including many years as a voting location. Pa Warner was a respected leader fondly known throughout the Calvary community. He would whittle small wood toys for children and organize community hog boiling events at his home where everyone would gather to bring and boil their hogs in a metal water trough (still safely stored in an old shed on the 50 acre farm where he lived), while enjoying great community feasts prepared and shared by all. Each family would then cure ham hocks from those boiled hogs that were sold for extra income around the holidays. Pa Warner continued the family agricultural tradition of tobacco farming but was also able to develop early methods of topping and suckering. He discovered that stopping flower and sucker growth early led to much improved yield and crop quality for a stronger tobacco flavor. Not one to hold on to this new secret, Pa Warner shared his newfound knowledge with the wider community to improve crop and income conditions for all. Pa Warner and his wife Ma Net (Nettie Lucinda Taylor of Caswell County, NC) were the first generation Williamson ancestors interred together in the new Calvary Methodist Church cemetery.

Pa Warner's son Leland Stanley Williamson and his wife Sadie Ann (Howerton) were the next generation keeping the old traditions alive while living and farming the 50 acre family farm. Sadie selflessly devoted her life to actively support her community in the Alton Homemakers Club, her local 4-H Club, and of course her beloved Calvary Methodist Church. She was affectionately known as a fun-loving person who could cook up anything (including the very best scratch buttermilk biscuits around) and create beautiful handmade quilts for her grandchildren and others.

Leland's son Verne Caret Williamson continued his mother's devotion as a financial benefactor to her treasured 4-H Club and Calvary United Methodist Church. Verne has worked tirelessly to preserve the integrity of our Williamson family agricultural legacy in the Calvary community, hosting family reunions, gathering ancestral family records, authoring a memoir of his life on the farm, and preserving Williamson family land ownership against encroachment for many generations to come. The Williamson family of 2024 takes pride in our modest history within Halifax County, Virginia. We remain very proud to carry on the strong Williamson agricultural and community focused legacy started so long ago, purposefully passing on those traditions to our children so that we remain devoted members of the Calvary community well into the future.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

- An Architectural History of Halifax County, Virginia (2016) by Halifax County Historical Society, p. 296
- My Life – The Farm, The Family, The Adventure (2018) by Verne C Williamson
- US Population Census of 1850, 1860, and 1870 for Halifax County, VA
- US Non-Population Agricultural Census of 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 for Halifax County, Virginia
- History of Halifax by Pocahontas Wight Edmunds p. 191
- Land Survey for Thomas Williamson of 1756
- Land Patent of Thomas Williamson of 7 July 1763
- Land Deed Index Record for Thomas Williamson of 19 March 1761
- Poll List for Thomas Williamson in Halifax County, Virginia of 1765
- Marriage Bond Record for Leonard R Williamson and Mary Foster of 31 July 1839 in Person County, NC

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

Private: 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: Verne C Williamson

organization: _____

street & number: 3005 Williamson Road

city or town: Alton

state: VA

zip code: 24520

e-mail: vernew@aol.com

telephone: 804.467.4877

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: Michelle Williamson-Vance

organization: _____

street & number: 3112 Sacramento Drive

city or town: Virginia Beach

state: VA



Leonard R. Williamson House.

decorative brackets beneath the cornice, and sawn balustrades. Three windows on the upper level and two on the ground level once had shutters. Pattie Jeffress Norwood remodeled the structure again in 1919, and following the purchase of the house by the American Legion, additional changes were made.

Today, a modification of the porch remains although it does not front on the present-day Jeffress Boulevard. Instead, the porch is located on the side of the remodeled structure but retains the columns and steps present in the 1900 home. American Legion Post 8 enlarged the building and added an auditorium. The upper floor of the former Jeffress house now consists of offices, although an effort has been made to preserve the historic integrity of the house.

On the front lawn is a cannon used during the Battle of Staunton River Bridge in 1864. It sits on a base of cobblestones salvaged from Main Street in South Boston. Two field pieces from World War I are located near the cannon.

Leonard R. Williamson House

Williamson Road
Calvary area
Circa 1840

Leonard R. Williamson and his wife Mary Foster Williamson married in 1839, in Person County, North Carolina. This story-and-a-half hall-and-parlor house was built soon after, since they are listed in the 1840

U.S. Census as residing in Halifax County. The structure of mortise and tenon with wooden pegs sits on fieldstone piers, two and a half feet above ground. The steeply pitched roof is covered with standing-seam metal and has boxed cornices. One side appears to be covered with original wood siding, and sheds are attached to the remaining sides.

Architectural evidence reveals that a chimney and fireplace were once located on one end. Narrow window openings are centered in each gable end, and a six-over-six double-sash window is on the first floor. The ceiling in the hall is covered with fourteen-inch-wide pine

boards running the length of the room. An enclosed winder stair provides access to the upper half-story.

The building is presently used for storage and is owned by descendants of the Williamson family.

Josiah Brandon House

Medley Road
Calvary area
Circa 1840

This Federal house, built for Josiah (Joseph) and Catherine Scott Brandon, has passed through numerous owners. Although some of its original characteristics have been lost or altered, many architectural details remain. The heavy framed structure has a gable roof with boxed cornices. Beneath its present-day seamed-metal roof are many original wooden shingles. The four-foot-high fieldstone foundation and the two exterior, single-shouldered, corbeled brick chimneys attest to the quality of the original construction.

The house has a central-hall plan with a two-flight staircase. Other interior architectural elements, possibly attributable to the Thomas Day workshop, include finely detailed thirteen-inch baseboards in the hall and parlor and interior mortise-and-tenon doors with two vertical panels. The flooring is of random-cut pine, and there is a Federal mantel in the parlor. The Brandons are buried near the house. Seth and Linda Perry are the current owners.



Decimal Degrees ^ Lon (X): -79.14059 Lat (Y): 36.55859



62.5 ft















