

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Listed On:
VLR 04/18/1989
NRHP 11/16/1989

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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fort Riverview
other names/site number 44AH91 and 44AH195

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication
city, town Madison Heights vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Amherst code 009 zip code 24572

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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]
Signature of certifying official VA Department of Historic Resources Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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.
 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:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

S. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE: fortification

LANDSCAPE: forest

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation N/A
walls Earthen

roof N/A

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION

Representing a Confederate fortification complex in Amherst County, Virginia, [redacted] Fort Riverview is situated at [redacted] the James River. Within the nominated acreage are two archaeological sites (the principal fortification and an adjacent rifle trench), a cluster of stone piles on the south slope below the fort, and the trace of an old road leading from the fort to the river. This complex, currently in woods, is in an excellent state of preservation.

BACKGROUND

Fort Riverview is located on a steep ridge overlooking the James River [redacted] in Amherst County, Virginia. The Civil War fortification is found in a wooded area, across and south of a steep ravine [redacted]. Riverview Farm is located [redacted] overlooking a sharp bend of the James River, [redacted]. The earthworks provide excellent views of [redacted] downriver vistas of the James River. The rectangular fort here was strategically placed above the bridge, while a flank position trench [redacted] provides views of the James River to east and north. The fort provided the Confederate army a defense [redacted]

The fortification complex is composed of two separate major archaeological features: the rectangular fort (44AH91) and the adjacent flank position trench (44AH195). The rectangular fort is approximately 150' wide east to west by 175' north to south. Included within these dimensions are the interior of the fort with two raised-platform gun emplacements (in the southeast and northwest corners, respectively); 6'-foot-high earthen parapet walls that average seven feet across on top; a 5'-deep below grade moat that surrounds the entire structure and averages 10' in width; and a sally port, or entrance, with fill spanning the moat, located on the south side of the structure. Near the structure's entrance is an old road trace that traverses down the steep slope of the

See continuation sheet

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)

Archeology: Historic - Non-Aboriginal
Military

Period of Significance

1861-1865

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Civil War

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Bullder

N/A

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fort Riverview Confederate fortification complex at Riverview Farm in southeastern Amherst County is an outstanding example of military architecture of the Civil War period. The site consists of a hilltop fortification with two gun emplacements and a rifle trench with one gun emplacement or observation post. Other features include the trace of an old road leading from the fortification to the river and over fifty stone piles of unknown origin scattered down the south slope of the hill. The reason for the existence of the stone piles remains unknown, as do the identity of the builders of Fort Riverview, its date of construction, and the period of its occupation. Probably it was built in 1864 as part of the defensive works constructed about the time of Hunter's raid on Lynchburg to seize the railroads. It could have been built as late as March 1865 to hold the bridge for Lee's retreat, which ended at Appomattox Court House, from Petersburg up the Southside Railroad toward Lynchburg. Whatever the impetus for its construction, the fortification today retains virtually all of its architectural and archaeological integrity. Its isolated location on a forested hilltop has protected it from vandalism and intense relic hunting. The current owners enthusiastically support the preservation and study of Fort Riverview.

JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA

Fort Riverview is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria C and D. It is eligible under Criterion C because it is an excellent example of Confederate military architecture that retains a high degree of integrity. Under Criterion D Fort Riverview is eligible because it is a relatively undisturbed archaeological resource that is likely to yield useful information relating to the construction and occupation of defensive structures during the Civil War.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blackford, Charles Minor. Annals of the Lynchburg Home Guard. Lynchburg, Va.: John W. Rohr, 1891.

----- Campaign and Battle of Lynchburg, Va. Lynchburg, Va.: Garland-Rodes Camp of Confederate Veterans, 1901.

----- Letters from Lee's Army; or, Memoirs of Life In and Out of the Army in Virginia during the War Between the States. 1963 ed. New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1947.

Gilmer, J. F. "Map of Amherst and Nelson Counties." 1864.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Prepared Under the Direction of the Secretary of War by Robert N. Scott. 129 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

See continuation sheet

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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

VA Department of Historic Resources
Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 27 acres

UTM References

A

Zone Easting Northing

C

B

Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the rectangle whose corners are marked by the following UTM reference points marked by the following UTM reference points:

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated acreage encompasses the features historically associated with the fort.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Mark Wittkofksi, Archaeologist; John S. Salmon, Historian

organization Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks date March 1989

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

city or town Richmond state Virginia zip code 23219

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fort toward the southern ravine and eventually ceases on the flood plain [redacted]. The northern flank position trench is dug down into the steep hillside above the fort and forms a slightly C-shaped feature. It is approximately 112' long and 13' wide. The trench widens to about twenty feet at its eastern terminus, which affords an excellent view of the downriver portion of the James River. The trench could have provided a location for an additional gun emplacement or might simply have been constructed for the reconnaissance of the James River environs.

Located on the less steep, south slope of Fort Riverview and continuing down nearly to the terminus of the ravine are more than fifty piles of river cobbles and rock. The exact origin and purpose of the stone piles are unknown. They appear to represent cart or wagon loads of stone (each pile is approximately 2' high and 8-10' in diameter). The rocks have not been cracked by fire as would be expected had they been used in the construction of chimneys for soldiers' huts. The majority of the stones appear to have had a river origination and therefore would not be expected to occur naturally in these locations. The rocks do not appear to be field stone from the nearby pasture, nor is there an obvious pattern of deposition. The placement of the rocks does not coincide with any former road traces.

There are two natural protective barriers (steep ravines) to the north and south of this fortification. The approximate 630' elevation of this fort provides a considerable height advantage of more than 130' above the James River and possible Union attack. The flank position affords a clear view of the downriver portion of the James River and thereby would slow an attack by way of the river or adjacent James River [redacted]. The site is located within the region containing the highest portion of the Piedmont Plateau. The local landscape includes steeply sloping hilltops overlooking small winding creeks that eventually make their way to the James River.

Fort Riverview was visited by archaeological staff of the Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks in 1988 and 1989. Being covered with forest, the nominated property was found to be in an excellent state of preservation. No evidence was found indicative of prior vandalism or significant subsurface disturbances.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Fort Riverview fortification complex was constructed during the Civil War by the Confederate army on a hilltop overlooking the James River, most likely to defend the nearby [redacted] bridge from seizure by Union forces. The complex consists of a fortification with two gun emplacements, a rifle trench with one gun emplacement or observation post, the trace of an old road (pre-1864) that leads from the fortification to the river, and more than fifty stone piles of unknown origin scattered down the south slope of the hill.

Within the fortification, one gun emplacement faced southeast toward the railroad bridge while the other faced northwest to defend the battery from attack by land. The rifle trench is directly to the north of the fortification; its observation post or gun emplacement provided a clear field of view down the James River and the James River [redacted]. The road trace, which appears on an 1864 map, begins near the sally port in the south face of the fortification and leads to the southeast down the steep eastern slope of the hill to the bottomland near the river. Scattered through the woods on the more gradual southern and southwestern slopes are more than fifty piles of stone cobbles. Although the piles do not appear to mark hut sites (there is no sign of foundation-digging into the hillside), they also do not seem to be the result of field-clearing activities, as the stone is riverine in origin.

The fortification was constructed at an unknown date by the Confederate army to defend the strategically important [redacted] bridge across the James River [redacted]. It was at Lynchburg that three separate railroad lines met: the Southside Railroad from Petersburg to Lynchburg, which passed through the principal tobacco-producing region of the state; the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, which linked central Virginia with the upper Piedmont and Northern Virginia; and the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, which led from Lynchburg through Southwest Virginia to Tennessee. In addition, the James River [redacted], which began in Richmond, passed through Lynchburg on its way to Covington. Had the Union army captured Lynchburg it could have disrupted the four major transportation routes through central Virginia.

In June 1864 Union Major General David Hunter led an attack on Lynchburg to disrupt the transportation system. The ensuing battle for the city took place to its west [redacted] on 18 June 1864, and Hunter's attack was repulsed by Confederate troops commanded by General Jubal A. Early. That the strategic importance of Lynchburg was well known is revealed in a letter written by a Confederate officer in Petersburg to his wife, who was living in Lynchburg:

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The papers say the yankees are within eight miles of Lynchburg under Sheridan, and have destroyed all the bridges on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. The very thing has happened that I thought would happen. It is needless for them to occupy Lynchburg long. They know that by going there they can destroy five or six important railroad bridges. . . . From Lynchburg they will, of course, go down to Farmville and burn the High Bridge, and then cutting the line of the Danville Railroad, join Grant on the left flank near Petersburg.

If Fort Riverview had not been constructed earlier in the war, it probably was built at the time of Hunter's raid.

In the spring of 1865, just before Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the bridge's importance was evidenced by the raids of Union General Stoneman in the vicinity, as Lee was retreating westward from Petersburg. The route taken by the Confederate army was along the tracks of the Southside Railroad. Once again, the disruption of the rail system near Lynchburg would have contributed significantly to the deteriorating circumstances of the Confederate army. The bridge over the James River protected by Fort Riverview would have become strategically essential to Lee's continued retreat had he evaded capture at Appomattox Court House.

As an outstanding example of Confederate military fortification architecture, Fort Riverview possesses archaeological significance for studies related to the construction and occupation of defensive structures during the Civil War. Of particular significance, and unlike most related fortification complexes, this site possesses very high integrity with no evidence of prior vandalism or subsurface disturbances. The intact archaeological deposits at Fort Riverview thus have high potential for detailed investigations on the construction and maintenance of the fort as well as intensity of occupation at the fort and lifeways of those situated here. Further, such information should prove important for comparative studies on the construction and use of other Civil War fortification complexes.

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ENDNOTES

1. Charles Minor Blackford, Letters from Lee's Army; or, Memoirs of Life In and Out of the Army in Virginia during the War Between the States, 1963 edition (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1947), 255.

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FORT RIVERVIEW
Amherst County, Virginia

1. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View of Six Mile Bridge with Fort Riverview on top of the large hill overlooking the bridge (on left-center of photograph).
Facing: North
Negative No. 9644-3
File No. 05-185

2. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View of Six Mile Bridge and former Southside Railroad crossing of the James River. Fort Riverview is located on the hill top to the right side of the bridge.
Facing: West
Negative No. 9644-6
File No. 05-185

3. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View of Fort Riverview fortifications in the trees at the end of the pasture on the steep hill above the James River.
Facing: East
Negative No. 9644-33
File No. 05-185

4. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View looking across the sally port (entrance to fort) on southern side of earth works. Archaeologist and Fort Riverview property owners are standing on the top of the fort's parapet. An archaeologist is located within the moat.
Facing: East
Negative No. 9644-17
File No. 05-185

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FORT RIVERVIEW
Amherst County, Virginia

5. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View within the fort of the two gun emplacements. The archaeologist in the foreground is standing on the southeastern emplacement (James River side) while the archaeologist in the background is standing on the northwestern emplacement (land side).
Facing: Northwest
Negative No. 9644-12
File No. 05-185

6. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View from within the fort and looking out the sally port, upon which an archaeologist is standing.
Facing: South
Negative No. 9644-14
File No. 05-185

7. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View of rifle trench and gun emplacement directly north of the rectangular fort. Photograph is from the gun emplacement looking back up the hill into the rifle trench.
Facing: West
Negative No. 9644-32
File No. 05-185

8. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View of James River bottomland from rifle trench and gun emplacement.
Facing: North
Negative No. 9644-31
File No. 05-185

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FORT RIVERVIEW
Amherst County, Virginia

9. Credit: Division of Historic Landmarks
Date: 1989
Negative Filed: Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA
View of archaeologist pointing to one of the fifty-plus stone piles located on the southern slope of Fort Riverview. This pile was about thirty-yards from the sally port of the fort.
Facing: North
Negative No. 9644-22
File No. 05-185