

VLR 12/3/03  
NRHP 2/11/04

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Ashville Historic District

other names/site number VDHR # 030-5323

#### 2. Location

street & number Area including 4236-4130 Ashville Rd. and part of Old Ashville Rd. not for publication N/A  
city or town Marshall vicinity X  
state Virginia code VA county Fauquier code 061 Zip 20115

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I ~~recommend that this property be considered significant~~      nationally      statewide X locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12/23/03  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:      Signature of Keeper  
     entered in the National Register       
     See continuation sheet.      Date of Action  
     determined eligible for the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
     determined not eligible for the National Register  
     removed from the National Register  
     other (explain):





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Fauquier County, Virginia

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### 7. Description

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions) **SEE CONTINUATION SHEET**

foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
roof \_\_\_\_\_  
walls \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X** **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- X** **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

**ARCHITECTURE** \_\_\_\_\_  
 **ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance** 1870-1953 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1870  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Approximately 23 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing  
1    \_\_\_\_\_    2    \_\_\_\_\_  
3    \_\_\_\_\_    4    \_\_\_\_\_  
X See continuation sheet.

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Maral S. Kalbian/ Architectural Historian and Margaret T. Peters/Research Historian

Organization: Maral S. Kalbian date July 15, 2003

street & number: 2026 Old Chapel Road telephone 540-837-2081

city or town Boyce state VA zip code 22620

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name See Attached Property Owners List

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**6. HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:**

DOMESTIC

Single dwelling  
Secondary structure

COMMERCE/TRADE

Specialty Store

EDUCATION

School

RELIGION

Religious facility

FUNERARY

Cemetery

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:**

DOMESTIC

Single dwelling  
Secondary structure

RELIGION

Religious facility

FUNERARY

Cemetery

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

**Materials:**

FOUNDATION

Stone

WALLS

WOOD: weatherboard  
log

STUCCO

SYNTHETICS

ROOF

METAL: tin  
ASPHALT

OTHER

WOOD

BRICK

STONE

**SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:**

The Ashville Historic District is located in the village of Ashville, in a rural area of northwest Fauquier County, Virginia, about 3 ½ miles west of the Town of Marshall. The Reconstruction-era African-American village contains approximately twenty resources, the majority of which are vernacular dwellings, and generally front along Ashville and Old Ashville roads. The boundaries of the roughly 23-acre linear historic district encompass most of Ashville along the west side of Ashville Road, north of its junction with Ramey Road, and south of its junction with Old Ashville Road. The district contains nine properties, including the Ashville Church, Ashville School, Ashville Community Cemetery, and a concentration of historic dwellings, which represent the growth and development of this Reconstruction-era African-American community.

Although the village is unincorporated and was thus never officially named, the community is referred to in county records as "Ashville" as early as 1874. By reason of its rural nature and



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lack of official limits, Ashville generally encompasses a much larger area than what is included in the Ashville Historic District. The approximately 23 acres that are included in the district contain the historic resources that are clearly visible from Ashville Road, while the more remote rural areas and ones with concentrations of non-contributing resources are not included in the boundaries.

Ashville's layout is dictated by roads, property lines, and landscape features. It is primarily a linear district situated along the west side of Ashville Road between a steep hill to the east and Little Cobbler Mountain to the west. A small creek named Bolling Branch follows Ashville Road and runs through the yards of many of the properties in the district. The Ashville Community Cemetery is located on a hillside on the western edge of the district.

The seventeen contributing resources in the district are made up primarily of residences and their associated domestic-related outbuildings. The other contributing resources include a church, former school, former store, and cemetery. Archaeological resources are not included in this nomination. The six noncontributing elements in the district are primarily outbuildings.

**ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS**

Ashville is a small rural community that lies approximately 3 ½ miles west of the town of Marshall in northwest Fauquier County, Virginia. The community developed after the Civil War and was named after sisters Harriet and Catherine Ash, who in 1869 willed about 150 acres of land to their former slaves. Some of the freed blacks that were willed land included Betty and William Ash, Jacob Douglas, and Frank Settle. A new community grew on a portion of this land under African-American ownership and focused around the Ashville Baptist Church, organized in 1874.

The architectural resources in the Ashville Historic District include domestic-related buildings as well as a church, former school, former store, and a community cemetery -- basic elements of small rural villages. The buildings, some of which are fairly modest, are generally of the vernacular and are significant as a collection that makes up an intact Reconstruction-era African-American community. Although Ashville has continued to grow and develop as a residential community through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the historic district includes a concentration of the oldest resources that are symbols of the endurance of this African-American community.

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The majority of land within the Ashville Historic District is located on portions of tracts that were willed to former slaves Frank Settle and Jacob Douglas by sisters Harriett and Catherine Ash (Fauquier County Will Book 32: 97,149; Fauquier County Land Tax Books, 1870). The house at 4236 Ashville Road (030-5323-0001) is one of the oldest in the district and was probably built by Jacob Douglas shortly after he received his land in 1870 (**Photo 1**). Sited on a small hill at the southern edge of the village, the two-story, two-bay, gable-roofed, vernacular frame dwelling features stucco siding, a standing-seam metal roof, stone foundation, and a large exterior-end stone chimney.

Douglas deeded a portion of his land north of his house to the Colored Church of Ashville (organized in 1874) and another parcel across Ashville Road to the school trustees. The current vernacular Gothic Revival-style frame church known as Ashville Baptist Church (030-5323-0003) was constructed in 1899, replacing the original one (**Photo 2**). The one-story, three-bay, stuccoed frame church has a standing-seam metal gable roof and sits on a stone foundation with a cornerstone. A two-stage tower with an open pyramidal-roofed belfry tops the protruding entrance bay, located at the front gable end. Pointed-arched double-hung windows in rectangular frames are found throughout the building. Modern additions are limited to a side/rear one-story wing.

Beginning in 1876, classes were taught to children in the old church until the construction of a separate school building across the road (**Photo 3**). This one-story, gable-end frame building sits on a stone foundation, and is believed to have been constructed in the 1910s. It is currently being renovated and is clad in vinyl siding, with a standing-seam metal roof, new one-over-one-sash windows and an interior flue. Some of the original 6/6 windows still hang in the rear of the building.

The house at 4186 Ashville Road (030-5323-0006) is located along the west side of Ashville Road, toward the northern edge of the district (**Photo 4**). The three-bay, 1 ½-story, vernacular dwelling is the only one in the district that is of log construction. Stucco has been added to the sides and rear of the building, but the original weatherboard siding is still exposed under the porch and in the central front gable. The standing-seam metal gabled roof is dominated by a large central front gable with a six-over-six-sash window. The house features six-over-six-sash windows and a large exterior-end stone chimney with a brick stack flanked by four-light fixed attic windows. The well-preserved dwelling appears to have been constructed ca. 1875 by Charles Brooks and for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was in the ownership of the Sanford family.

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Most of the other historic resources in the district are dwellings that date to the first quarter of

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the twentieth century and illustrate different vernacular forms that were popular throughout the region during that time. The house at 4200 Ashville Road (030-5323-0005) was constructed ca. 1900 and is an example of a vernacular hall-parlor-plan dwelling (**Photo 5**). The two-story, three-bay, gable-roofed house has a standing-seam metal gable roof, stucco siding, six-over-six-sash windows, and a three-bay front porch with square posts. John Wesley Bolden, a former owner, constructed the fine stone wall along the front of the property in the mid-1940s.

The house at 4224 Ashville Road (030-5323-0004) is a two-story, three-bay vernacular I-house with a gable roof of standing-seam metal, a central brick flue, and a three-bay front porch (**Photo 6**). It was constructed in 1921 by John Hughes and is located on a hill overlooking the community.

The district also includes a 2 ½-story frame dwelling that is a modified version of an American Foursquare. The House at 4146 Ashville Road (030-5323-0007) is a two-bay frame dwelling with a hipped roof clad in standing-seam metal and three-bay front porch with battered wooden posts on brick piers (**Photo 7**). The formed concrete foundation was hand-poured using sand from Bolling Branch which runs through the front yard closer to Ashville Road.

A portion of the house at 4130 Ashville Road (030-5323-0008) is believed to have been used as a store named “Skinny Sanford’s” during part of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (**Photo 8**). Constructed in the 1910s, the building sits on a strip of land between Ashville Road and Bolling Branch, and is currently used as a residence.

The Ashville Community Cemetery (030-5323-0009) is located on top of a hill off Old Ashville Road at the western edge of the district. The boundaries of the approximately one-acre cemetery are not clearly marked and parts of it are overgrown (**Photo 9**). It includes both marked and unmarked graves and the earliest burial dates to Samuel Morris Armstrong who died August 19, 1873. The cemetery contains gravestones of many of the family names associated with African-American landholders in the area including Sanford, Ashby, Lewis, Ford, O’Bannon, Bushrod, White, O’Neill, Allen, Marshall and Brooke. The cemetery is an important cultural resource for this African-American community and is still in use today.

The Ashville Historic District is a collection of fairly intact post-Civil War buildings at the center of which is the Ashville Baptist Church and the former school (**Photo 10**). The streetscape of the

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district retains an early-20<sup>th</sup>-century appearance because of the lack of modern intrusions

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(Photos 11, 12). The non-contributing elements are mainly outbuildings that do not detract from the historical character of the village. Although several other African-American communities developed in Fauquier County during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ashville is one of the best preserved.

ASHVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

NOTES ON FORMAT AND ORGANIZATION OF INVENTORY:

The properties are listed numerically by street address. The resources are indicated as contributing or noncontributing and are keyed to the map in regular order.

Ashville Road

**4236 Ashville Road 030-5323-0001**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Dwelling, Stories 2, Style: Other, ca 1870**

Two-story, 2-bay, frame (stucco), gable-roofed (standing-seam metal), vernacular dwelling on stone foundation with boxed cornice and large exterior-end stone chimney. The house has had some alterations including the modern vinyl 1/1 windows (original were 6/6). Other details include a 3-bay hip-roofed porch with square supports and a rear 2-story ell with interior-end brick flue. The house has a side, 1-story lean-to addition of concrete block and a new wooden deck on the front.

*Individual Resource Status:* **Dwelling**

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Garage** - ca. 1960, 1-story, concrete block, gable-end (v-crimp metal) garage with vertical wood plyboard door

**Non-Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Shed**- ca. 1960, concrete block shed with gable roof of v-crimp metal.

**Non-Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Pump House** - ca. 1960, concrete block pump house with gable roof v-crimp metal.

**Non-Contributing**

**Old Ashville School, Ashville Road 030-5323-0002**

*Primary Resource Information:* **School, Stories 1, Style: Other, ca 1910**

One-story, rectangular, frame (vinyl siding); gable-roofed (standing-seam metal) schoolhouse on stone foundation with interior-end brick chimney. Building has been renovated with new siding, new vinyl 1/1 windows, a modern deck and a new door. It appears as though work is being conducted on the interior.

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*Individual Resource Status:* **School**

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Shed** - early-20th-century, frame (vertical wood siding), shed-

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roofed (standing-seam metal) shed with exposed rafter ends.

**Contributing**

**Ashville Baptist Church, 4218 Ashville Road 030-5323-0003**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Church, Stories 1, Style: Gothic Revival, 1899**

One-story, 3-bay, frame (stucco over German lap siding), gable-roofed (standing-seam metal); vernacular Gothic Revival-style church on a stone foundation with a cornerstone that reads "org. Sept. 1874 Rebuilt Sept. 1899." a two-stage tower with an open pyramidal-roofed belfry tops the projecting entrance bay located at the front gable end. Pointed-arched double-hung windows in rectangular frame are found throughout the building. Modern additions are limited to a side/rear 1-story wing.

*Individual Resource Status:* **Church**

**Contributing**

**4224 Ashville Road 030-5323-0004**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Dwelling, Stories 2, Style: Other, 1921**

Three-bay, 2-story, frame (vinyl), I-house with gable roof (standing-seam metal) with central brick flue and 2 lightning rods. Front 3-bay porch with turned posts. The house has a rear 2-story wing with enclosed side porches. alterations include new siding, new front door, new windows, and new concrete porch floor.

*Individual Resource Status:* **Dwelling**

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Garage** - Frame (plyboard), gable-roofed (v-crimp) garage with double doors. It sits on an old foundation but is a modern (1980s) superstructure.

**Non-Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Shed** - ca. 1920, frame (vertical wood siding); shed-roofed (standing-seam metal) shed with exposed rafter ends.

**Contributing**

**4200 Ashville Road 030-5323-0005**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Dwelling, Stories 2, Style: Other, ca 1900**

Two-story, 3-bay, frame (stucco), gable-roofed (standing-seam metal), hall-parlor-plan vernacular dwelling with following details: 6/6 windows; 3-bay hip-roofed front porch with square posts and caps; exterior-end concrete block (parged) flue on south end; plain friezeboard with returns; rear 2-story ell with interior-end brick flue; 2-light basement windows; triangular attic vents; and rear shed-roofed wing on wooden post foundation. Additions include the rear wings as well as digging out the basement and putting in windows.

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*Individual Resource Status:* **Dwelling**

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Garage** ca. 1943, frame (vertical wood siding), gable-roofed (v-

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crimp metal) garage on with exposed rafter ends and a formed concrete foundation with cinder block rear extension that sits below grade

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Shed** ca. 1992, pole building with gable roof and T-1-11 siding.

**Non-Contributing**

**4186 Ashville Road 030-5323-0006 Other DHR Id #: 030-0553**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Dwelling, Stories 1.5, Style: Other, ca 1875**

Three-bay, 1 1/2-story, log (weatherboard on front under porch and stucco on sides and rear), hall-parlor-plan dwelling with a gable roof (standing-seam metal) with a large central-front gable with a 6/6 window and weatherboard siding. Other details include: exterior-end stone chimney with brick stack flanked by 4-light fixed attic windows; 3-bay front porch with square posts; rear 1-story wing with exterior-end concrete block flue; 6/6 windows, stone foundation; metal roof; and side basement access.

*Individual Resource Status:* **Dwelling**

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Garage** - ca. 1940, frame (vertical wood siding), gable-roofed (v-crimp) garage on cinder block foundation.

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Well House** - ca. 1940s, pyramidal-roofed (metal) well cover supported by chamfered wood posts on concrete pad.

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Shed** - ca. 1945, concrete (parged), gable-roofed (asphalt shingle) shed with exposed rafter ends.

**Contributing**

**4146 Ashville Road 030-5323-0007**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Dwelling, Stories 2.5, Style: Other, ca 1910**

Two-and-one-half-story, 2-bay, frame (weatherboard), hip-roofed (standing-seam metal) American Foursquare dwelling with 3-bay front porch with wooden battered posts on brick piers. The formed concrete foundation was hand-poured using sand from the creek. Under the porch is a 3-part bay window and the entrance door with 2-light sidelights. The 6/6 windows on the house were put in 1976. Other details include: hip-roofed dormer with paired 4/1 windows; 2 central interior brick chimneys with corbelled caps; overhanging eaves; 3-light basement windows; rear hip-roofed enclosed porch; and rear deck.

*Individual Resource Status:* **Dwelling**

**Contributing**

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*Individual Resource Status:* **Garage** ca. 1920s, frame (asbestos shingle), gable-end (standing-seam metal) garage with double doors.

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Shed** ca. 1997, shed of pole construction clad in plyboard with a gable-end roof covered in v-crimp metal.

**Non-Contributing**

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**4130 Ashville Road 030-5323-0008**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Dwelling/Store, Stories 2, Style: Other, ca 1911**

Two-story, 4-bay, gable-roofed (corrugated metal), frame (aluminum siding), building just off of Ashville Road. According to oral tradition, it was originally used as a store- it is now a dwelling. It has been somewhat altered. Details include 1/1 windows, central brick flue, side enclosed porch, batten shutters, front porch with concrete block parapet wall, 3-light attic windows in north gable end, rear shed-roofed concrete block wing.

*Individual Resource Status:* **Dwelling/Store**

**Contributing**

*Individual Resource Status:* **Shed** early 20th-century, gable-end (v-crimp), frame (vinyl) shed with batten door and exposed rafter ends.

**Contributing**

**Old Ashville Road**

**Ashville Community Cemetery, off Old Ashville Road 030-5323-0009**

*Primary Resource Information:* **Cemetery, ca 1873**

Ashville Community Cemetery sits on top of a hill off of Old Ashville Road. The cemetery, which includes approximately one acre, is linear and includes several family plots divided by overgrown areas. Some of the stones are marked but many are unmarked.

*Individual Resource Status:* **Cemetery**

**Contributing**

**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The village of Ashville in the northwestern part of Fauquier County, Virginia, is significant as a rare and relatively intact collection of buildings associated with a small African-American community dating from shortly after the Civil War. The resources within the essentially linear historic district represent the most important elements, other than private residences, of African-American life – education, religion, and commerce. The community includes a church dating from the late 19th century; a schoolhouse, also dating from the last decade of the 19th century; an early-20<sup>th</sup>-century commercial structure; and a community cemetery that reflects the central

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role of funerary facilities in the African-American community. There are no intrusions, and an examination of the land records reveals that the parcels have remained relatively intact since 1870. Ashville's formation demonstrates a particularly unusual and interesting element: the land on which the newly freed slaves established their town was willed to them by their former owners, two sisters, Catherine and Harriet Ash. Unlike many African-American villages

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established during reconstruction, particularly in neighboring Clarke County, Ashville derived its name from the former slave holders as opposed to being named after early African-American landholders.<sup>1</sup> From examination of the land records, it appears that the majority of the parcels within the historic district were willed by Catherine Ash to Franklin Settle and Jacob Douglas; others who received bequests of both land and buildings owned land in the immediate vicinity, but not within the boundaries. However, all of the African-American land holders in this area were identified in the land tax records as residents of Ashville throughout the last two-and-one half decades of the 19th century and the first four decades of the 20th century. Although there are several other African-American communities in Fauquier County, Ashville is one of the best preserved. The Ashville Historic District is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. Its local significance is in the area of Ethnic Heritage for African-American history. The varied collection of buildings demonstrates Ashville's growth and development as an African-American Reconstruction-era rural community and the buildings possess a high degree of architectural integrity.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Ashville straddles county road 731 in northwestern Fauquier County and traces its roots to the identical wills of sisters Catherine and Harriet Ash. Both wills were written in the spring of 1869 and proved in the autumn of the same year. Each testator names her sister as heir to her estate and upon the death of the second sister, which was Harriet, the property was to be divided among the slaves whom they held jointly before emancipation. William Ash was to receive ten acres lying next to Bowersett's line (another land holder in the area) "which ten acres is to include a part of the timber land and to be so laid off and divided so as not to cross or obstruct the road as it now runs to the dwelling house; also one feather bed ..." James Shacklett was to receive the same amount of land and a feather bed; Betty Ash was to receive 20 acres of cleared land to include the dwelling house and all the buildings along with ten acres of woodlands as well as a feather bed; Frances Settle and Jacob Douglas were to receive all the remainder of the tract of land "whereon I now reside" and also one feather bed each. Each will states, "I further will and bequeath the residue of my personal property of every kind to Betty Ash, Frances Settle and Jacob Douglas to

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be equally divided between them. The coloured [sic] devisees above named are not to claim under this will until after the death of the said Catherine (or Harriet);...the said parties were slaves of the said Catherine Ash and Harriet Ash formerly."<sup>2</sup> It appears that the Ash sisters, along with another sister, Maria, acquired the 150-acre parcel in 1852 and by 1855 records show \$150 improvements which increased to \$200 by 1862. The parcel with the dwelling passed to



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Betty Ash and she continues to appear in the Land Tax Books as late as 1933. It appears that this parcel is not within the proposed historic district but rather lay in the area outside the boundaries. The land tax books for Fauquier County in 1870 substantiate that the directives of the will were carried out and show that Betty Ash held 22 acres, William Ash 10 acres, Jacob Douglas 55 acres, and Frank Settle 55 acres. James Shacklett does not appear in the tax books for 1870, but he is listed in 1880 charged with 10 acres, presumably the same 10 acres he inherited from Catherine Ash. Tax records reveal that these people (Ash, Shacklett, Settle, and Douglas) continued to appear as property owners with improved lots in the area well into the second decade of the 20th century, although both Settle and Douglas sold off small parcels at various times.<sup>3</sup>

The improvements on their lots, along with several other notable families including Ford, Sanford, Gant, Henderson, Brooks, O'Neal (or O'Neill) generally were fairly modest, many being \$100 or less with a few notable exceptions. Ann Shacklett, presumably an heir of James Shacklett, was charged with \$150 improvements in 1897, but she held 100 acres at that time, leading to the conclusion it was probably outside the tiny village. Franklin Settle is charged with \$200 improvements on his 16  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre parcel in 1909; William Sanford is charged with \$200 on his parcel in the same year and William Sanford Jr. is charged with \$2,000 in 1933 on his parcel which is located at 4186 Ashville Road (030-5323-0006). The dwelling stands on a 3-acre parcel charged to Charles Brooks in 1880, with \$40 worth of improvements by 1891. The buildings increase in value to \$150 by 1931. Following the death of his son, Turner, quite likely the Rev. Turner W. Brooke [sic] who was buried in the Ashville Cemetery in 1928, the property was willed to his wife and ultimately passed to her daughter, Mamie Shumate. The property was sold in a bargain sale to Wilbur Sanford in 1930 and remained in the Sanford family until 1992.<sup>4</sup>

The Henry Hughes House parcel at 4146 Ashville Road (030-5323-0007) was originally part of the land of Frank Settle that he received from Catherine Ash. Settle sold the 7-acre parcel to William Sanford in 1893 and it was ultimately transferred as a result of a chancery suit to Henry G. and Fannie Francis Hughes in 1944. Tax records indicate that Henry and Mary M. Hughes lived in Ashville in the 1920s and 30s; it is possible he was father to Henry Hughes who acquired

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the Sanford property in 1944. William Sanford is charged with minimal improvements in 1897 but by 1909 is charged with \$200 for buildings, indicating that he may have built a new or more substantial dwelling on the parcel in the early years of the century.

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The property located at the north end of the district on Ashville Road was part of the property willed to Franklin Settle that passed to his sole heir, Eliza Fox who in turn deeded it to Bertha Ford. It ultimately descended to Wendolyn Ford.<sup>5</sup> Nellie Ford got 3 ½ acres from Franklin Settle in 1882 which is 4162 Ashville Road, and that parcel now belongs to her heirs. The portions of the two Ford parcels that lie within the district boundaries do not have any surviving or contributing buildings.

The parcel known as Skinny Sanford's Store at 4130 Ashville Road (030-5323-0008) was conveyed by Franklin Settle to William O'Neill in 1911. It is unclear whether there was a store on the parcel operated by O'Neill, but during the mid-20th-century it became known as "Skinny Sanford's."<sup>6</sup>

The property at 4238 Ashville Road (030-5323-0001) was originally willed to Jacob Douglas as part of his bequest from Catherine and Harriet Ash. A deed dated 1913 from Jacob Douglas to David S. Jackson mentions that Douglas had already deeded a parcel to the Colored Church of Ashville and another parcel to the school trustees. The remaining acreage was sold to David Jackson who apparently secured it with a deed of trust to J. L. Strother. In 1921, Jackson sold it to Betty and Uriah Smith with the land being described as "near Ashville" and containing a spring. Betty Smith then sold the same parcel to Carl B. and Lillian Ford in 1930; in 1947, the Fords sold a parcel of two acres with the spring to Willie D. O'Neill; and in 1948, O'Neill sold the track "with all the buildings" to James Thomas Lewis who continues to hold the parcel with a house on it today.<sup>7</sup>

An examination of census material for this part of Fauquier County in 1910 reveals that most of those who are designated "colored" worked either as laborers or as domestics in private homes.<sup>8</sup>

A few are listed as farmers, indicating that they probably farmed their own land. For those who worked as domestics, many traveled as far away as Alexandria and other parts of northern Virginia, necessitating their "staying over" and coming home only intermittently, while others must have worked for local area estate owners.<sup>9</sup>

It can be presumed that the establishment of the community of Ashville grew from the

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concentration of African-American ownership of small parcels in this vicinity. Towns were a very "potent unit" for the freedmen after Emancipation, serving as centers of political and social activity and offering the services of those institutions that were important to the African-American community, e.g. religion, education and commerce. Prior to the Civil War, towns were often "off limits" to slaves, perhaps accounting for the importance attached to

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establishment of African-American towns following the war.<sup>10</sup> There was probably less freedom associated with rural living, since many of the freedmen worked for wages or were sharecroppers for their previous owners. Towns offered African-Americans opportunities; to freely worship, conduct commerce, and acquire an education, all activities from which they were barred when they were enslaved. Many African-American towns generated an elite African-American society, with more mulattos and more freedmen who could read and write.<sup>11</sup> It is not surprising that town living was viewed as preferable, and represented a strong departure from social life under slavery. The importance of land ownership cannot be over emphasized; in the eyes of many former slaves, land ownership was the first measure of true freedom. In the case of Ashville, it was the joint decision of the Ash sisters that led to this critical opportunity for their former slaves.

Jacob Douglas, who had received one of the two largest parcels from Catherine Ash, deeded a lot in 1876 to the Trustees for the Public Free Schools for \$25.<sup>12</sup> That this date follows so soon after Douglas and the other African-Americans who were willed land by the Ash sisters is indicative of the importance that the African-American community placed on education. Gerald David Jaynes, writing in Branches Without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South, 1862-1892, points out that there were “three defining characteristics of 19th-century Radical Republicanism: universal education, universal male suffrage, and universal small proprietorship.” He indicates that prior to the Civil War the South had “failed to satisfy each of these fundamental criteria.” In 1865 most Republicans agreed that “the whole fabric of southern society must be changed.”<sup>13</sup> Prior to the Civil War and Emancipation, education for African-American was expressly forbidden in Virginia. Even education for white students was confined to private academies or tutors. It was not until the adoption of the Underwood Constitution in 1870, which provided for the establishment of Virginia’s first statewide system of public education in the Commonwealth, that education was recognized as a governmental responsibility.<sup>14</sup> The fact that Jacob Douglas and his wife Sarah were willing to sell for a token sum of money, and that the Trustees were willing to purchase, land for a free school in 1876 demonstrates that African-Americans in this community recognized in a tangible way the overriding importance of education for their children. According to information from the Afro-

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American Historical Association in Fauquier County, Dave Jackson joined Douglas in the actual construction of the school that stands today on land owned by the Ashville First Baptist Church (030-5323-0002). The exact date of construction is unclear; it seems that school classes were held in the Ashville First Baptist Church prior to the erection of a separate building. According to the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the period from 1874-1878, Fauquier County had 15 colored schools with eight male teachers and one female teacher. The

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average school year lasted only 4-3/4 months, which although shorter than for white schools probably had the same causes, e.g. the need for children to help in the fields. It was pointed out in the report that one-story school buildings were better for the children's health because the space was easier to heat and ventilate. In the report from 1878, the general public sentiment about the schools in the county was generally favorable.<sup>15</sup> Most scholars agree that education in the South in the last quarter of the 19th century was essentially a "bottom-up" development, with the impetus for education coming from the local communities themselves rather than being imposed from a higher authority.<sup>16</sup> This may have stemmed from the general suspicion among rural southerners of government and government control. Many white southerners believed that "education [unnecessarily] raised expectations" for the Negroes which led to an alliance between blacks and northern reformers.<sup>17</sup> There is no indication, however, that the African-American school in Ashville received any assistance from outside the community. Tax records for 1891 show that \$3,123 of the \$12,490 paid in land taxes by Negroes went to free schools in Fauquier County, a portion of which undoubtedly was allocated to Ashville.<sup>18</sup> Other funds were raised from among the parents and patrons of the school.

African-American communities that centered on institutional buildings such as schools and churches began to emerge in the post war years. They were shaped by the rural and agricultural environment in which they were located. In the case of Ashville, the communities often stood at the center of somewhat larger tracts of land held and farmed by African-Americans. Neighborhoods or small communities became "self-sufficient cocoons," and schools depended on local conditions and enthusiasm.<sup>19</sup> The schoolhouses, like those built in both Ashville and Morgantown, tended to "blend into the topography." Public schools in the rural South were basically make-shift and reflected the communities that they served. Patrons or parents of school-age children usually determined the location of a school, and there were often complaints about accessibility.<sup>20</sup> This may very well account for the fact that the tiny communities of Ashville and nearby Morgantown each had their own school. Individual schools had considerable autonomy and often raised money locally to improve their facilities. Apparently, schools were forced to attract students to enhance their base of financial support. The early

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school buildings were primitive and roughly built. There were hard benches and few windows and most African-American schools were overcrowded. Because of the short school term, schools played a somewhat "part time role."<sup>21</sup> Many of the educational reforms of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century bypassed African-American schools.<sup>22</sup> There was a general acceptance by the white reformers that Negroes had inferior ability. The historic debate about whether the Negro should receive a classical or a practical education raged in those years. There are few records to indicate the direction of Ashville School's curriculum, but the small 19th-century school house

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continued to function until 1963 indicating that it probably followed the general direction of education in the early years of the 20th century. The U.S. Census for 1900 indicates that over 87% of whites in the Piedmont region of Virginia were literate, while only 41.3% of blacks were able to read and write.<sup>23</sup> The importance attributed to their educational system by Ashville residents is expressed in The Circuit, an African-American monthly newspaper published in Catlett, Fauquier County, in the late 1930s and early 1940s and the sole African-American newspaper in the area, where it is stated, "Patrons and Parents of our school are much pleased with the splendid progress being made by our children in school."<sup>24</sup> The fact that this tiny Fauquier community supported education for its children and clearly took great pride in its school is a tribute to its persistence in sustaining education for its children and probably more important, attracting students from the surrounding areas.

The other institution that stood at the center of social life for the freedmen who lived in the village of Ashville was the church. The public practice of religion for African-Americans was severely limited prior to the Civil War. Slaves were generally limited to attending white churches where they were forced to sit in the balconies and listen to white preachers. Religion, from the earliest days of slavery, however, was often central to the life of the slave. In the years following Emancipation, the church and its related organizations and activities formed a critical framework for the newly freed slaves. The church provided not only the social framework but a venue of most social activities for the community. It is not surprising that one of the earliest buildings in Ashville was the church. The church was organized in 1874 and its existence is documented in a rare entry in the Land Tax Records of 1891. It is likely that a simple building was erected sometime shortly after its organization. In 1883 Jacob Douglas and his wife deeded land to the Colored Baptist Church of Ashville in a deed that was not recorded until 1886. According to its cornerstone, the current church building (030-5323-0003) was rebuilt in 1899. The prominent place of the church in the community is demonstrated by the coverage in The Circuit. The sections devoted to each community like Ashville and Morgantown were almost totally devoted to church news. The minister who served both the Ashville First Baptist Church

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and Mount Nebo Baptist Church in Morgantown from the early 1920s to the 1940s was the Reverend Arthur Stewart. Short summaries of his sermons, church celebrations, along with a list of those who were "indisposed" or had visited other areas of the state during the preceding month were included in the news of the village. There was one reference to one Andrew Washington, a resident of Petersburg, who had been baptized in Ashville in 1911 and when he died, was buried in the Ashville Community Cemetery in 1940. The family names that appeared in the column correspond to those whose names appear in the land ownership rolls of the county, including Ford, King, Jackson, Wynes, and Miles.<sup>25</sup> The First Baptist Church of Ashville is still

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an active congregation and acquired the parcel and the school house across the road in the late 1960s.

Another important feature of African-American communities is the cemetery. In Ashville, the cemetery stands adjacent to one of the parcels owned by the Sanford family, who acquired land from Franklin A. Settle, one of the recipients of land under Catherine and Harriet Ash's wills. This cemetery (030-5323-0009), like the one in its sister community of Morgantown, was a community cemetery that was operated by the Ashville Baptist Church. A survey conducted in 1969 calls it "Sanford's Cemetery," and is located at the western boundary of the property deeded by Francis Settle to William Sanford in 1893.<sup>26</sup> Henry G. and Fannie Hughes acquired the property from William Sanford, Jr. in 1943 as a result of a Chancery Suit [Beatrice Williams v. William Sanford, 1943]. Apparently, the parcel of land passed in and out of the hands of the Sanford family for nearly 50 years but the cemetery continued as late as 1969 to be referred to as "Sanford's Cemetery."<sup>27</sup> Funerary and burial practices have long been an important part of African-American life; provisions for appropriate burial were taken most seriously and often small contributions to a burial fund were made to ensure that this was the case. Stones in the cemetery are simple, and many have been removed or seriously damaged. The earliest legible gravestone is for Samuel Morris Armstrong who died August 19, 1873. Other early stones date from 1895, 1897, 1902, 1910, and 1920.<sup>28</sup> Family names that have been documented in the cemetery include Sanford, Ashby, Lewis, Ford, O'Bannon, Bushrod, White, O'Neill, Allen, Marshall, and Reverend T[urner] W. Brooke and his wife Sara. Many of the other names are not associated with landowners in the confines of the town itself, indicating that the church and cemetery served residents from the surrounding area as well where undoubtedly African-Americans owned and cultivated small farms.

The other institution that was necessary for a small town was the local store. It can be assumed that basic supplies and foodstuffs would have been essential to many who lived in the village of Ashville and who worked the fields surrounding the town, either their own or as sharecroppers.

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The only structure supporting a store that survives today is known as "Skinny Sanford's Store" at 4130 Ashville Road. (030-5323-0008). The Sanford family owned several parcels of land in the community at various times in the 20th century, including 4146 Ashville Road, now known as the Sanford-Hughes House, and 4186 Ashville Road, now known as the Brooks-Sanford House. According to the Afro-American Historical Society of Fauquier County, there was a store known as "O'Neill's" which was probably owned and operated by William O'Neill who acquired the parcel in 1911 from Franklin A. Settle, one of the original grantees from Catherine Ash where the building known as Skinny Sanford's now stands. It is very likely that O'Neill's

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Store and Skinny Sanford's are one in the same, with Sanford operating the store after William O'Neill. The present building has the appearance of a dwelling, indicating that perhaps the store operated out of only part of the building.

Ashville did not have the usual amenities of a town such as banks, multiple stores, government buildings or industrial structures; however, the tiny community had those buildings that most closely represented the needs of a newly freed population. The records both in the county courthouse and the gravestones in the cemetery show that many who lived in the areas around the tiny communities called this "their" town. The surviving structures well illustrate those essential institutions. That a good representation of these structures, both institutional and residential, survive into the 21st century is a measure of the significance of this community. It continues to be a focal point for the African-American community and its history in Fauquier County.

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**ENDNOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> Maral S. Kalbian, Final Report African-American Historic Context, Clarke County, Va. County of Clarke (2002)

<sup>2</sup> Fauquier County Will Book 32, 97; Will Book 32, 147.

<sup>3</sup> Fauquier County Land Tax Books, 1870-1933.

<sup>4</sup> Fauquier Land Tax Books, 1880, 1891, and 1897; Will Book 47/317 (1914); Will Book 55/479 (1935); Deed Book 148/249 (19139); Deed Book 151/271 (1941), Deed Book 671/335 (1992).

<sup>5</sup> Fauquier County Deed Book 204/9 (1958); Deed Book 207/220; Deed Book 768/829 (1996).

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<sup>6</sup> Fauquier County Deed Book 105/433 (1911).

<sup>7</sup> Fauquier County Deed Book 109//386 (1913); Deed Book 109/343 and 109 346 (1913); Deed Book 121/462 (1921); Deed Book 135/160 (1930); Deed Book 164/183 (1947); Deed Book 166/235 (1948).

<sup>8</sup> U. S. Census for Fauquier County, 1910.

<sup>9</sup> Conversation with Karen White, President, Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County, April, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Orville V. Burton, "The Rise and Fall of African-American Town Life," in Toward a New South: Studies in Post Civil War Southern Communities, edited by O. V. Burton and Robert C. McMath, Jr., Contributions in American History, No. 97; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982, 152.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 152-158.

<sup>12</sup> Fauquier County Deed Book 67, 347 (February 15, 1876).

<sup>13</sup> Gerald David Jaynes, Branches without Roots: Genesis of the Black Working Class in the American South, 1862-1892, New York and Oxford,: Oxford University Press, 1986, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Emily J. Salmon and Edward D. C. Campbell, Jr., editors, The Hornbook of Virginia History, Fourth Edition, Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 1994, 98.

<sup>15</sup> Virginia School Report: Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1874-1878, Richmond: Superintendent of Public Printing, 70.

<sup>16</sup> William A. Link, A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986, 43.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>18</sup> Fauquier County Land Tax Books, 1891

<sup>19</sup> Link, A Hard Country..., 13.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 21,23, 28, 37-40.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>24</sup> The Circuit, December 4, 1942, 7.

<sup>25</sup> The Circuit, Feb. 2, 1940; March 1, 1940; December 4, 1942 and May 4, 1945

<sup>26</sup> Fauquier County Deed Book 363, 541 (1978)

<sup>27</sup> Fauquier County Deed Book 84, 318 (1893); Deed Book 127, 496 (1925); Deed Book 132, 507 (1929); Order Book 23, 156 (1943); Deed Book 154, 172 (1944); Deed Book 157, 495 (1944).

<sup>28</sup> Nancy Baird, Carol Jordan, and Joseph Scherer, Fauquier County [Virginia] Tombstone Inscriptions (2 Volumes) Bowie, MC: Heritage Books, Inc., 2000, Volume I, 3-4.

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES.**

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**UTM REFERENCES**

A 18 246409E 4305462N  
B 18 246196E 4305710N  
C 18 246303E 4306056N  
D 18 246638E 4306127N

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

The boundaries of the nominated Ashville Historic District are within the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A -18 246409E 4305462N; B- 18 246196E 4305710N; C-18 246303E 4306056N; and D-18 246638E 4306127N.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

The Ashville Historic District boundaries were drawn to include the largest concentration of historic buildings in the village of Ashville, along Ashville Road and part of Old Ashville Road. The generally linear district encompasses most of the historic resources that are clearly visible from Ashville Road and the district boundaries coincide with property lines whenever possible. Noncontributing buildings and more rural areas were excluded where possible.

**PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION**

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are of:

**ASHVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Location: Ashville, Virginia (Fauquier County)

VDHR File Number: 030-5323

Date of photograph: April 2003

Photographer: Maral S. Kalbian

All negatives are stored at the Department of Historic Resources Archives unless noted.

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SUBJECT: House, 4236 Ashville Road (030-5323-0001)

VIEW: Southeast view

NEG. NO.: 20412

PHOTO 1 of 12

SUBJECT: Ashville Baptist Church (030-5323-0003)

VIEW: Northeast view

NEG. NO.: 20412

PHOTO 2 of 12

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SUBJECT: Old Ashville School (030-5323-0002)  
VIEW: Southwest view  
NEG. NO.: 20412  
PHOTO 3 of 12

SUBJECT: House, 4186 Ashville Road (030-5323-0006)  
VIEW: Southeast view  
NEG. NO.: 20413  
PHOTO 4 of 12

SUBJECT: House, 4200 Ashville Road (030-5323-0005)  
VIEW: Northeast view  
NEG. NO.: 20412  
PHOTO 5 of 12

SUBJECT: House, 4224 Ashville Road (030-5323-0004)  
VIEW: Northeast view  
NEG. NO.: 20412  
PHOTO 6 of 12

SUBJECT: House, 4146 Ashville Road (030-5323-0007)  
VIEW: Northeast view  
NEG. NO.: 20413  
PHOTO 7 of 12

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SUBJECT: House, 4130 Ashville Road (030-5323-0008)  
VIEW: Northeast view  
NEG. NO.: 20413  
PHOTO 8 of 12

SUBJECT: Ashville Community Cemetery (030-5323-0009)  
VIEW: View of O'Neill family plot  
NEG. NO.: 20465  
PHOTO 9 of 12

SUBJECT: Streetscape

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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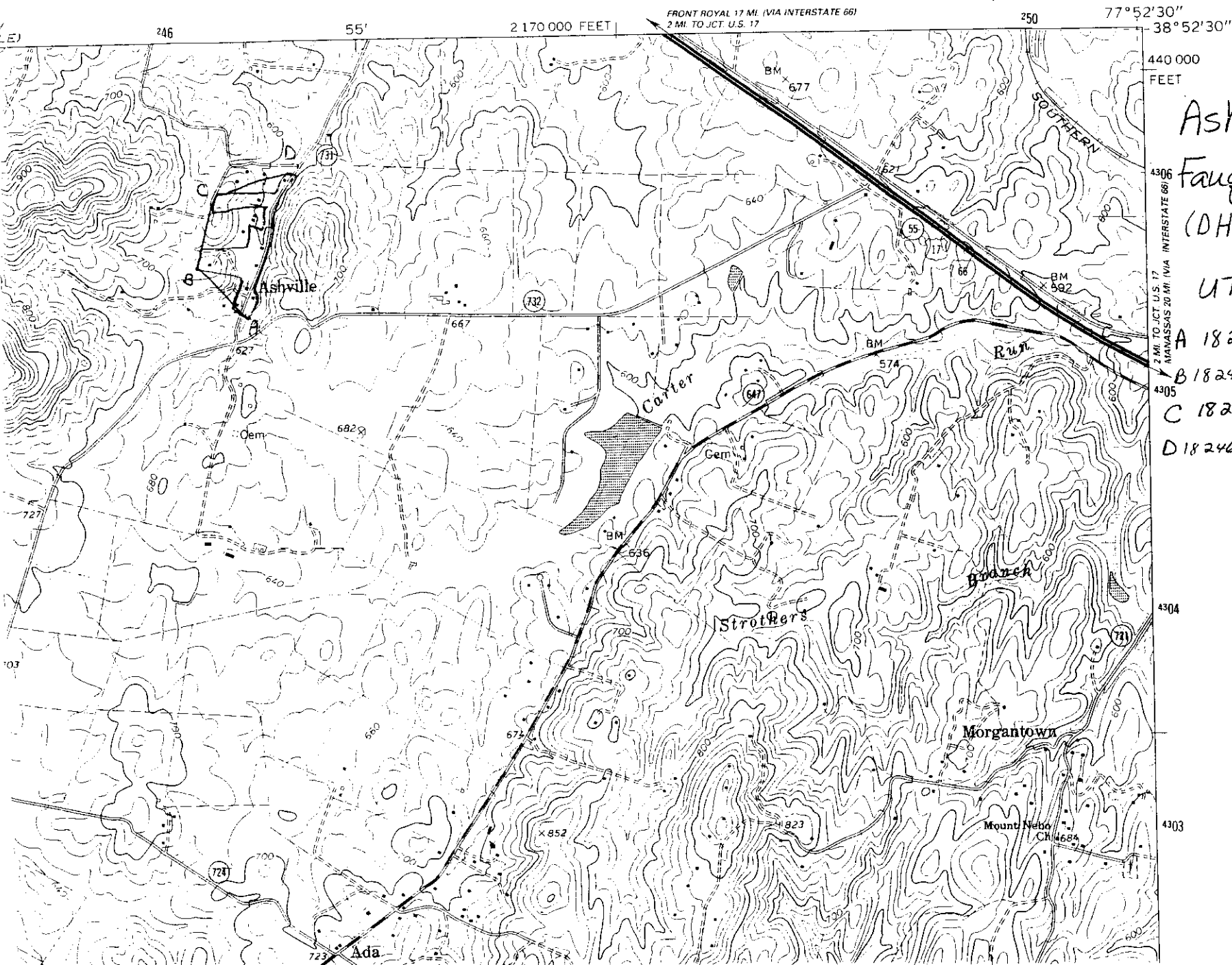
VIEW: Northeast view  
NEG. NO.: 20413  
PHOTO 10 of 12

SUBJECT: Streetscape  
VIEW: Northeast view  
NEG. NO.: 20412  
PHOTO 11 of 12

SUBJECT: Streetscape  
VIEW: South view  
NEG. NO.: 20412  
PHOTO 12 of 12

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Ashville H.D.  
Fauquier County, VA  
(DHR #030-5323)

UTM Coordinates

- A 18 246 409 E / 4305 462 N
- B 18 246 196 E / 4305 710 N
- C 18 246 303 E / 4306 056 N
- D 18 246 638 E / 4306 127 N