

VLR-3/18/75 NRHP-4/22/76

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
STATE: Virginia
COUNTY: Shenandoah
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE: APR 2 1976

1. NAME
COMMON: Orkney Springs Hotel
AND/OR HISTORIC: Orkney Springs Hotel

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: South side of Route 263: .1 mile west of intersection of Routes 263 and 610.
CITY OR TOWN: Orkney Springs CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Seventh (J. Kenneth Robinson)
STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Shenandoah CODE: 171

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Summer music camp</u> <u>Symphony symposium</u> |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY c/o Mr. and Mrs. Miles Portlock
OWNER'S NAME: Orkney Springs Hotel, Inc.
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Orkney Springs STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Shenandoah County Court House
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Woodstock STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
STREET AND NUMBER: 221 Governor Street
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Virginia
Shenandoah
APR 2 1976
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Orkney Springs is situated at the base of the Alleghany Mountains in Shenandoah County. The complex occupies a small natural basin and is remarkably unchanged since the turn of the last century. The great four-story hotel and its annex face the village's Main Street. A two-story ante-bellum hotel sits to the north side of the street, and behind this, the mineral springs filter into a placid lake. A long cottage row, without which no summer resort would be complete, rests to the east of the hotel structures.

The oldest structure in the hotel complex, Maryland House, constructed in 1853, is a two-story rectangular frame structure covered with stucco and surrounded on each face by a double gallery. The galleries are supported by simple, tapered Greek Revival box columns. Access to each room is gained by doors leading directly to the galleries. The window sashes are nine-over-six. Outside stairs provide access to the second floor of the hotel. Originally, a covered walkway above the road connected Maryland House to the main hotel.

Virginia House, the main hotel structure, built between 1873 and 1876, is an immense wooden pile, 100' x 165', four stories in height, containing 175 bedrooms. The building is constructed in an H-shape; the front wing is eleven-bays long and five-bays wide with a pedimented, projecting central bay. A simple hipped roof is used. A three-story veranda, supported by slender chamfered posts, extending around the front wing of the structure, accents the height of the building. Its railings consist of sawn-work typical of the period. A two-story gallery projects from the central bay to act as protection for guests to pass from the street to the front door.

Virginia House, part of which is abandoned, retains an echo of its former elegance. The complex's main dining room contained within is graced by a double row of square columns; at the back of the room is an elevated musicians' gallery. A fountain once dominated the center of the room. On the third floor of Virginia House is a grand ballroom, 50' x 100' with 18' ceilings. The ballroom occupies the entire front wing on the third floor of the building. Because of recent fire regulations, the third and fourth floors of Virginia House are no longer used. The building still has only one room per floor with a private bath; a larger bath serves the other fifty rooms on each floor.

The interiors of Virginia House are severely plain. The door and window moldings are typical of the period. Each door has six flat panels with applied moldings. The parlors on the second floor are 50' square and have oversized sliding doors for access. The lobby retains a massive oak reception desk with the mail slots for each room and cottage behind it.

Virginia House was designed as a summer hotel; the oversized windows, high ceilings and long corridor with rooms on both sides allowed the cool mountain air to act as a natural air-conditioning system.

Pennsylvania House, erected in 1867 is now the annex for Virginia House and, like Maryland House, is of timber construction covered with stucco and a hipped roof. Pennsylvania House is three stories and it, too, is surrounded (see continuation sheet # 1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) #1

| | |
|------------------|------|
| STATE | |
| Virginia | |
| COUNTY | |
| Shenandoah | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| APR 22 1976 | |

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION

on each face by open galleries supported by tapered box columns. The window sashes are nine-over-six, and each room opens directly on to the galleries. A two-story covered passage and stair connect the Virginia and Maryland buildings. (Collectively, the galleries at Orkney Springs measure 2,999 feet in length.)

The spa's cottage row consists of seven identical two-story, six-room, hipped-roof cottages with two-story corner porches. The eaves are decorated with sawn-work barge boards.

Behind Maryland House are the mineral springs. Beside the lake stands a small columned pavilion three-bays long and one-bay wide with a hipped roof and a cupola. Of the springs, the largest is Bear Wallow.

JFY

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) medicinal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social History | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> XXXXX | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Orkney Springs is one of the last and is the most complete of the mineral spas that sprang up so freely in western Virginia in the nineteenth century. Its history reads like a turn-of-the-century novel extolling the virtues of the "Old South." In the two decades 1870-1890 Orkney ranked among the Commonwealth's most famous spas. A brochure of 1885 describes the various springs as containing sulphur, alum, arsenic, chalybeate and iron sulphur, and healing springs, and guarantees relief from dyspepsia, chronic diarrhea and female diseases. And the final attraction for the summer of 1885 was the presence of a "first class" string and brass band. And even today if one were to walk the village's Main Street from October to April, the most interesting item would be a Virginia State Department of Health sign declaring the water at Orkney to be healthful for both the body and the palate.

Before 1800 the local farmers would gather at the then-undeveloped springs after the harvest to "enjoy the waters." By 1833 the population had expanded and a small community of log cabins was incorporated to form the town of Van Burenville. Later larger hotels and cottages grew in response to the rising demand of people to take the waters. A photograph now in the archives of the Virginia Historical Society shows one of the earliest hotel structures as a weatherboarded building, five-bays long with a wood shingle roof and no visible chimneys, indicating its use only as a summer hotel. The first-floor windows were filled with louvers instead of glass.

In 1845 Henry Howe in writing his history of Virginia visited Orkney Springs and described it as having "waters composed of several lively springs and are strongly chalybeate. Everything the water passes through or over, is beautifully lined with a bright yellow fringe or moss." An ante-ballum proprietor, Mr. A. R. Seymour, advertised Orkney in 1850 as a "Sylvan Retreat."

In the years before the Civil War the springs were well known for frequent jousting tournaments. By 1900 the entertainment had been reduced to more sedate forms of frivolity that included "glass ball and clay pigeon tournaments, foot racing, gander pulling and grease pole racing."

It was in the space of time after 1865 and the swift move into the modern age that Orkney experienced its greatest popularity. Visiting the springs had become an expanding habit for more affluent Southerners. Routes were published presenting the easiest journeys by rail from every major point in the South and East. Regular stage service sprang up in Mount Jackson

(see continuation sheet # 2)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet) #2

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| STATE | |
| Virginia | |
| COUNTY | |
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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE

to accommodate the travelers on the final ten-mile excursion to the springs. By then the complex at Orkney contained three large hotels, seven cottages, stables, a bowling alley, and every possible outdoor sport, with a capacity to accommodate 750 people. Rates were \$10-\$15 by the week, \$30-\$50 by the month with the finest rooms at a substantial \$56 monthly. Children were admitted at half price.

Like so many of its sister resorts, Orkney Springs declined precipitously towards the turn of the century. But as fire, abandonment, and neglect reduced these once popular spas to overgrown fields, Orkney managed to survive. It found its doors open once again, not as a haven for families escaping from the heat of the cities, but as a summer music camp for Virginia high school bands, and as a location for an internationally known symphony symposium.

JFY

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wayland, John W. A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia. Strasburg, Va.: Strasburg Publishing House, 1969, first published 1927.

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Archives.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|--|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | ° ' " | ° ' " | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | ° ' " | ° ' " | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | ° ' " | ° ' " | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | ° ' " | ° ' " | |

UTM References:
(See Continuation Sheet #3)

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **20 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| | | | |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: **Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission** DATE: **March 1975**

STREET AND NUMBER:
221 Governor Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Richmond** STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.
Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Exec. Director
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
 Title _____

Date **MAR 10 1975**
 Virginia Landmarks Register

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date **APR 22 1976**

ATTEST: **National Register of Historic Places**

 Keeper of The National Register

Date **APR 22 1976**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) #3

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| STATE Virginia | |
| COUNTY Shenandoah | |
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| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
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(Number all entries)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---------|-------|----------|-----|-------|---|------|---------|-------|----------|-----|-------|
| A | 1,7 | 6,8,9 | 5,4,0 | 4,2 | 9,6 | 3,0,0 | B | 1,7 | 6,8,9 | 8,8,0 | 4,2 | 9,6 | 3,0,0 |
| | ZONE | EASTING | | NORTHING | | | | ZONE | EASTING | | NORTHING | | |
| C | 1,7 | 6,8,9 | 5,4,0 | 4,2 | 9,5 | 8,2,0 | D | 1,7 | 6,8,9 | 8,8,0 | 4,2 | 9,5 | 8,2,0 |

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Orkney Springs Hotel, Shenandoah County, Virginia

CONTINUATION SHEET 4 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

DESCRIPTION

The acreage being nominated to the National Register consists of the twenty southernmost acres of Parcel One of three large parcels of land comprising the grounds of the hotel. These twenty acres represent merely a fraction of the more-than-one-thousand-acre tract, and in themselves provide an appropriate setting for the large main buildings and the surrounding collection of smaller structures. In addition to the cottage row previously mentioned, the surrounding building assemblage includes a one-story Victorian manager's cottage northeast of the Maryland House and four two-story Victorian guest houses: three situated to the west of the Virginia House and one set directly across Route 263 from the others.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Orkney Springs Hotel, Shenandoah County, Virginia

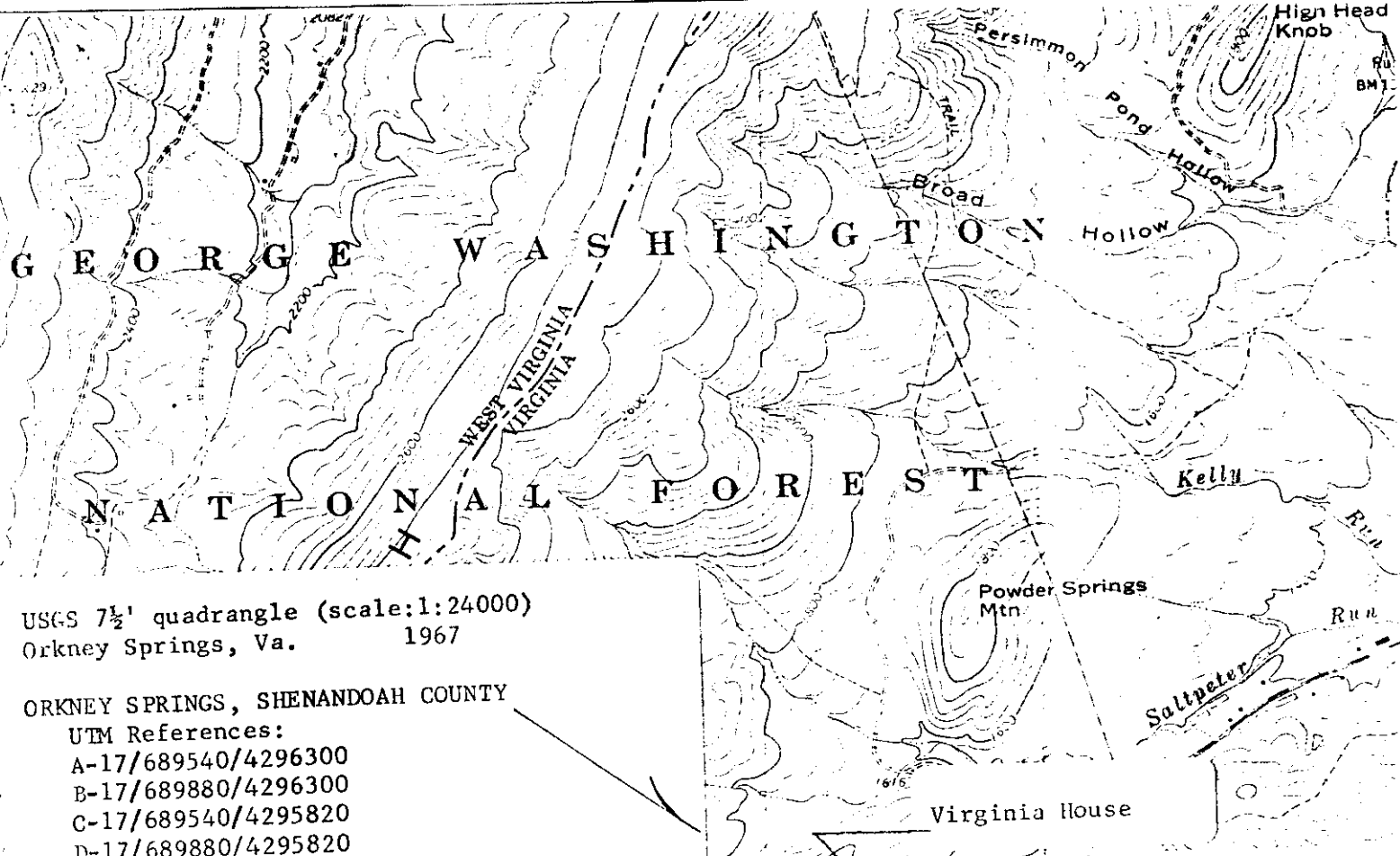
CONTINUATION SHEET 5

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, Orkney Springs Hotel, consisting of three larger buildings surrounded by an assemblage of accompanying cottages, survives as one of the last complete examples of the Virginia Valley nineteenth-century mineral spring complexes designed for public accomodation. The galleried main buildings (including the antebellum Maryland House (1853)), complemented by seven two-story, hipped-roof cottages with two-storied porches carrying out the multi-tiered effect of their larger counterparts, reflect the unique atmosphere of the bygone days of spa resort popularity.



USGS 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
 Orkney Springs, Va. 1967

ORKNEY SPRINGS, SHENANDOAH COUNTY

UTM References:

- A-17/689540/4296300
- B-17/689880/4296300
- C-17/689540/4295820
- D-17/689880/4295820

