

Listed On:
VLR 03/20/1984
NRHP 05/15/1984

NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic ACCOKEEK FURNACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (44ST53) (VHLC File #89-66)

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication

city, town Stafford vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county Stafford code 179

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Forested

4. Owner of Property

name First Commercial Bank, c/o Mr. Horace G. Schief

street & number 3801 Wilson Boulevard

city, town Arlington N/A vicinity of state Virginia 22203

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Stafford County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Stafford state Virginia 22554

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
title Survey (Site #44ST53; VHLC File #89-66) has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Research Center for Archaeology, P.O. Box 368

city, town Yorktown state Virginia 23690

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Accokeek Furnace Archaeological Site (44ST53) is situated adjacent to [REDACTED] approximately [REDACTED] of the town of Stafford. Within the nominated acreage are the principal archaeological features associated with this early to mid-18th-century industrial complex. The site, while covered with woods and undergrowth, is in a good state of preservation.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The remains of the Accokeek Furnace Archaeological Site (44ST53) in Stafford County, Virginia, are largely located on an outcropping of bedrock which can be seen on the southern bank of [REDACTED], where the stream valley constricts. Extending immediately north of the stream and opposite the furnace site is a high bank which is covered with nodules of glassy-like silicate slag. This slag is similar in luster to volcanic glass and contains blue and green swirls and air pockets. It is a waste product of high temperature iron ore reduction and indicates the presence of an iron furnace. The area immediately surrounding the site is wooded with a moderate amount of undergrowth. While 44ST53 is likely to have been cut over during timbering operations, a 1983 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission field survey indicates that the site has not been radically disturbed since the furnace itself was dismantled.

To the north of the slag deposit, along the northeastern [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is a flat, primary terrace, approximately 300' long and 150' to 200' wide, which appears to have been a silted-in pond. It is likely to have been related to a dam placed across [REDACTED] between the exposed bedrock and slag covered embankment to generate head for the furnace bellows, for no large rapids or falls occur in the vicinity.

The most prominent feature (Photo 1) which can be seen on the surface of 44ST53 is a raceway or channel on the southern bank approximately 90' long which has been excavated directly into the bedrock outcrop. Midway through the bedrock, the raceway makes an abrupt right angle turn, extending toward [REDACTED]. The first leg of the raceway measures approximately 5' wide by 4' deep, whereas the second section averages 7' in width and 4' to 5' in depth. The entrance to the raceway lies more than 6' above [REDACTED] and discharges onto a sand and gravel flood deposit within the meanders of [REDACTED]. This sand, if properly washed and sifted, would have been useful to the operation of the furnace and may have influenced the Principio Company in their decision to place the furnace at that site.

Immediately south of the raceway is an elevated berm, approximately 30' wide by 80' long, the probable location of the furnace stack. Although no structural remains of the furnace were located during a 1983 field survey by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, probing could not have conclusively located it, as

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N/A Builder/Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Accokeek Iron Furnace (44ST53) in Stafford County, Virginia, was constructed ca. 1726 upon land which belonged to Captain Augustine Washington, father of America's first president. Construction commenced in 1726 by the Principio Company, with which Washington had a lease agreement. The furnace was in operation until ca. 1756. The archaeological deposits at 44ST53 include the furnace site, while the remains of its store, warehouses, mill, and forge are also expected to be present. Scientific excavation of this industrial complex could yield previously unavailable research data on early to mid-18th-century iron manufacturing technology in Virginia.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The land of Augustine Washington, which lay along the upper reaches of [redacted] and near the site of two mills which were already in operation was part of the approximately 1,600 acres he had legally claimed in that area during the first quarter of the 18th century. During the winter of 1724-1725, John England, an American partner in the British-owned Principio Company and an experienced iron maker, began negotiations with Captain Washington for access to a rich iron mine on [redacted]. England, who had come to America in June 1723 and built a bloomery at Principio in Pennsylvania, was charged with managing the Company's interests in America.

Perhaps presuming upon England's success in striking an agreement with Washington, the Principio Company in a letter dated September 9, 1725 authorized John England to build a furnace on Captain Washington's land, nearly a year prior to the signing of a formal lease agreement and several months prior to Washington's obtaining legal ownership of the property. England was to construct the Accokeek Furnace with proceeds from the sale of iron from Principio Furnace. One of the Principio Company's partners in England, William Chetwynd, suggested that John England acquire additional land in Virginia and plan to erect a second furnace at Accokeek. He also authorized England to purchase forty to fifty slaves. England, by the spring of 1726, began patenting land near Accokeek on behalf of the Company.

On July 24, 1726, after the furnace was under construction, a formal agreement was executed between Augustine Washington and John England as the Principio Company's representative. It was witnessed by three men who were already employed at the Accokeek operations. Under the terms of this lease, Washington granted 1,600 acres on [redacted] to John England for a period of 1,000 years, in exchange for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



ACCOKEEK FURNACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (44ST53), STAFFORD COUNTY, VA
Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7, 8

Page 1, 1

7. DESCRIPTION -- Archaeological Analysis

the area is underlain by rock. A stone alignment of unknown function 1' wide and 15' long was seen above the surface of the ground, 30' south of the raceway. Occasional blocks of dressed stone, typical of an iron furnace, can be observed beneath the underbrush throughout the vicinity of the furnace site.

Approximately 40' west of the raceway is a retaining wall composed of dry-laid iron cinder slag, approximately 4' in height and 35' in length (Photo 2). To the west of the wall is a forest trail which served as access to the site.

Two mine pits were noted in the vicinity of the furnace site. The closest is located approximately 120' south of the raceway, while a second pit is located about 250' east of the raceway across Accokeek Creek.

8. SIGNIFICANCE - - Historical Background

acquiring a 1/6 interest in the produce of the furnace. England was authorized to dig mining shafts or pits, to erect furnaces and buildings and to make brick or quarry stone. He was, however, to build the ironworks at his own expense and to pay all costs through the furnace's first blast. Although Washington was to bear 1/6 of the maintenance cost of the ironworks (not to exceed twenty pounds sterling annually), England was not to remove more than one hundred tons of ore to be smelted elsewhere unless he had Washington's written permission. The agreement also applied to any other iron furnaces that either England or Washington might undertake in Virginia, requiring that each of them would be partners in the other's operation. Moreover, England agreed to offer Washington a 1/6 share in any iron manufacturing enterprises he might undertake in Britain.

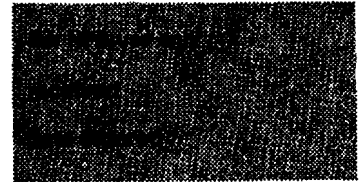
In November 1726 William Chetwynd advised John England that the shipment of hearthstones for Accokeek would be delayed until the following spring, thus postponing the furnace's first blast until July or August 1727. Ledger #5 of the Principio Company details John England's expenses for starting the Accokeek Ironworks, including food, crockery, livestock, and tools, the latter being made by Benjamin Turley and his men at the North East Forge. A millstone was also charged to the Accokeek works. By the end of 1727, the Company had invested more than eight hundred pounds at Accokeek.

In 1728 Nathaniel Chapman came to Accokeek as manager. John England, as the Principio Company's ironmaster, divided his time between Accokeek, White Clay Creek in Delaware, and Principio. Friction developed between England and Washington and their partners in Britain over the former men's unwillingness to pay for the costs of slaves and the upkeep of the furnace and the latter men's unwillingness to share profits of them.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



ACCOKEEK FURNACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (44ST53), STAFFORD COUNTY, VA
Continuation sheet #2 Item number 8

Page 2

8. SIGNIFICANCE - Historical Background

In 1729 Augustine Washington went to England to negotiate with his partners in person. An agreement was executed whereby he owned 1/6 of the Accokeek ironworks and 1/2 of all of Principio's Virginia mines other than Accokeek. This lease, entered in county records, confirms the existence of the Accokeek furnace and dam and other support structures. According to William Byrd II, Augustine Washington's responsibilities included the raising of the iron ore (for which he was paid a tonnage rate and a fee for all ore that was exported) and cartage two miles from the mine and six miles to the landing, whereas John England and his manager, Nathaniel Chapman, were responsible for the actual ironmaking.

In recognition of Nathaniel Chapman's management skills, the Principio Company's partners in Britain advised John England to delegate authority to him. Among his duties was the operation of the Principio Company's store in Virginia, which in 1732 the British partners stocked with 589 pounds of mercantile goods. Advertisements for runaway workmen, placed by Chapman in the Williamsburg Virginia Gazette indicate that the staff of the store included indentured servants. Chapman served as trans-shipment agent for the Company, importing and exporting goods to and from Virginia.

In 1737 Augustine Washington became a full partner in the Principio Company's holdings and functioned as the Company's official residential partner in America, assuming the responsibilities of John England, deceased in 1734. He moved to Ferry Farm near the Accokeek Furnace and lived there until his death in 1743. Lawrence Washington, who inherited his father's share of the Principio Company, assumed his role as resident partner. After Lawrence's death in 1751, his share descended to his brother, Augustine, Jr., and eventually to William Augustine Washington.

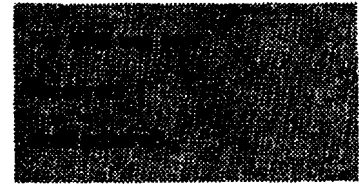
Meanwhile, Nathaniel Chapman continued as manager of the Accokeek Ironworks. A May 11, 1738 advertisement in the Pennsylvania Gazette suggests that the quality of Accokeek iron was well known, for bars being sold in Philadelphia were said to be "Mixed of Virginia Accokeek and Principio Iron, which makes it somewhat harder than Principio alone."¹

During Nathaniel Chapman's tenure as manager of Accokeek Furnace, it became the Principio Company's headquarters the point from which iron was shipped from the Company's Maryland facilities. Pig iron was produced at Accokeek and the Company's other furnaces for shipment to England or for conversion to bar iron at a Company forge. Company-owned sloops transported cast iron, pigs and bars throughout the Chesapeake region. Most of the Company's iron exports went to the heads of the colony's major rivers where it was loaded into tobacco ships as ballast, for which the transportation rate was 1/3 that of cargo. Records of the Principio Company show that much of its exports occurred via the James River.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



ACCOKEEK FURNACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (44ST53), STAFFORD COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #3

Item number 8

Page 3

8. SIGNIFICANCE— Historical Background

It was Nathaniel Chapman who eventually closed the Accokeek Furnace. Most of the ironworks' portable implements, including hoes and woodworking tools, were removed ca. 1756. After the cessation of ironmaking, the mill at Accokeek continued under lease to William Kendley.

By 1771 the Principio Company's business was on the wane. At the onset of the American Revolution, the Virginia Assembly, addressing an urgent need for pig iron, passed an act for the encouragement of ironworks, which directed James Hunter to inquire of Accokeek's owners whether they intended to reopen the ironworks or if they would build a new furnace within six months, equal in size or larger than the former one. In the event that the owners were not interested in reopening the ironworks, Hunter was authorized to claim two hundred acres at the site, including the old furnace and dam, compensating the owners at a fair price. Thomas Russell, the manager of the Principio Company, wrote to James Hunter that they had no plans to resume the Accokeek works. The land was surveyed and the title conveyed to James Hunter, a document which describes Accokeek's dam and pond as if they were intact.

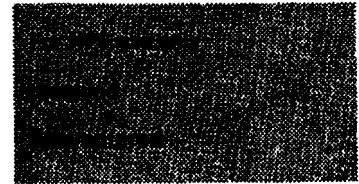
After the war, Thomas Russell and William Augustine Washington petitioned the Virginia legislature for revocation of Hunter's grant, alleging that Hunter had never built anything upon the property. Three other Principio partners also petitioned for shares. The legislature never acted. When James Hunter died in 1785, the inventory of his holdings at Accokeek made no mention of iron manufacturing equipment. Although Russell and Washington continued to press their claims until the end of the 18th century, the matter was never resolved. The location of the furnace road is shown on the 1864 Gilmer map of Stafford County, a remnant of the once important Accokeek facility.

The Accokeek Furnace Archaeological Site represents the second oldest 18th-century iron blast furnace identified archaeologically in Virginia, being preceded only by the Tubal Furnace Archaeological Site in Spotsylvania County (NR 10-19-1982). Archaeological remains at Accokeek ironworks should include evidence of its store, warehouses, mill, and forge as well as possibly the living accommodations of its labor force. The community of workers brought together at an iron manufacturing plantation would have included miners, charcoal makers, agricultural workers, teamsters, blacksmiths, and millers. The archaeological deposits currently identified at Accokeek include above ground portions at the likely furnace location, the mill wheel pit and races, a retaining wall made of slag, an extensive slag debris dump, mine pits, and several scatters of dressed stones that may have been part of the furnace. Archaeological excavation would be expected to reveal additional remains including accessory buildings associated with the blast furnace.

As documented by Edward F. Heite in his 1983 study on the Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake iron industry, future archaeological excavations of 18th-century iron

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



ACCOKEEK FURNACE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (44ST53), STAFFORD COUNTY, VA

Continuation sheet #4

Item number 8, 9, 10, 8

Page 4, 1, 1, 4

8. SIGNIFICANCE-- Historical Background

furnace complexes should prove important for studies on technological innovation in a frontier setting and the cultural communities associated with these early industrial facilities. Representing one of the earliest iron blast furnaces not only in Virginia but also in the country, the Accokeek Furnace Archaeological Site is in a good state of preservation. Excavations at the site, in conjunction with analysis of the extensive extant historical documentation, thus are likely to provide significant new archaeological data on the initial period of the iron industry in colonial North America during the 18th century.

Through investigations at the furnace location and adjacent support facilities, it is likely that detailed information not currently available will be obtained on the technology in use at the Accokeek Iron Furnace and the community of workers related to this industrial complex. As well, analytical tests performed on the slag produced from the Accokeek Ironworks, in comparison to that yielded by other furnace operations, should reveal much about the technical sophistication and efficiency of the ironworks, and could possibly aid in identifying the source of iron objects recovered on Colonial Period archaeological sites.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Heite, Edward F. "The Pioneer Phase of the Chesapeake Iron Industry: Naturalization of a Technology." Quarterly Bulletin, Archaeological Society of Virginia, Vol. 38, No. 3.

Northern Neck Grant Book II, Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA.

Principio Ledger. Principio Papers. Historical Society of Delaware.

Stafford County Deed Books.

Virginia State Library Accession #29453 (photocopy from Emmett Collection, NY Public Library.)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Verbal Boundary Description & Justification



Boundary Justification: The area nominated is restricted to the principal furnace-associated remains identified through archaeological research at this locale.

8. SIGNIFICANCE-- Historical Background (footnote)

¹Pennsylvania Gazette, 11 May 1738.

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #4)

- Bassett, J.S., ed. The Writings of Colonel William Byrd of Westover. New York: Burt Franklin Publisher, 1970.
- Heite, Edward F. "Accokeek Furnace Property, Stafford County, Va." Camden Delaware, typescript (Np), 1981.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

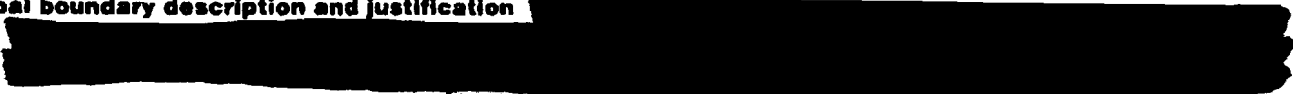
Quadrangle name Stafford, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A				B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing				
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification



(See Continuation Sheet #4)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date February 1984

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date March 20, 1984

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration