

Department of Historic Resources

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SIX HISTORIC SITES ADDED TO THE VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

—New listings cover sites in the counties of Augusta, Shenandoah, and Washington (Abingdon); and the cities of Lynchburg, Richmond, and Roanoke—

—Boundary Increase was approved for the Wytheville Historic District—

—VLR listings will be forwarded for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places—

RICHMOND – A Revolutionary War–era militia mustering ground in southwest Virginia, a commercial corridor that became a hub for tobacco-related enterprises in Lynchburg, and two sites in the Shenandoah Valley are among the six places added last week to the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Department of Historic Resources.

Located on about nine acres in the town of **Abingdon**, the site Retirement and the Muster Grounds consists of a Federal period brick dwelling (Retirement) and the meadow where a Washington County militia mustered before marching south to fight in the Kings Mountain Campaign during the Revolutionary War. Also known as “Dunn’s Meadow,” the Muster Grounds served the same purpose for local militia during the War of 1812, the American Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I.

Today the property is the official starting point of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, which highlights the route of an American Patriot Army under the command of Colonel William Campbell that decisively defeated an American Loyalist force at the battle of Kings Mountain in the fall of 1780. That Patriot army began with 400 militiamen gathering at the Muster Grounds in Abingdon and later grew as the Virginians joined with militias from Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina to become known as the “Overmountain Men.” The battle of Kings Mountain is considered a turning point in the war.

Retirement, constructed ca. 1808 and expanded in 1858, in the 1880s, and again between 1910-1920, is important for its architectural character and quality of workmanship.

In **Lynchburg**, the newly listed 12th Street Industrial Historic District features tobacco prizeries, warehouses, and commercial laundry plants that recall Lynchburg's history as a major processing and transportation center for tobacco, as well as its growth into a city with businesses requiring large commercial laundry facilities.

Located on the James River, Lynchburg emerged as the transportation, industrial, and commercial hub of the Lower Piedmont Region of Virginia during the early 1800s through the mid-20th century. With the completion of the Lynchburg and Salem Turnpike in 1836, the 12th Street corridor became a gateway from western regions to the city's commercial heart.

In the mid-1800s, 12th Street emerged as a center for tobacco, with industrial enterprises expanding west from the James River and Kanawha Canal and railroad operations in the Lower Basin. Following the Civil War, the corridor grew through the late 1800s with construction of new tobacco factories and warehouses, attracting a large African American workforce.

While most of the buildings in the district were built for the purpose of processing and storing tobacco, some would accommodate a variety of other uses including housing a Civil War hospital, and an African American school and lodge. After the decline of Lynchburg's tobacco industry in the early 20th century, other industries, such as commercial laundries, arose as the local economy diversified. The oldest building in the district today is a circa 1858 tobacco prizery.

In the Shenandoah Valley, the Fannie Thompson House in **Augusta County** and the Funkhouser Farm in **Shenandoah County** have also been listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

The Thompson House is the sole unmodified dwelling remaining in what was once a thriving segregated African American neighborhood known as Jack's Hill that occupied a hillside along the South River just south of Staunton. Moved to its current location in 1875, the house was among a cluster of dwellings built by newly emancipated African Americans during the Reconstruction Era that became a part of Greenville, a community of working-class blacks that endured through the Jim Crow era of segregation. Originally a simple one-room dwelling, the log house evolved into a two-story residence with rear additions.

Greenville's population plummeted after the mid-20th century through the onset of the Civil Rights movement, integration of public schools, and the exodus of residents to places offering better housing and employment opportunities for African Americans. In 1974, Thompson House's last resident died. Today the house retains much of its historical integrity, despite the loss of some original interior and exterior detailing and materials. It encapsulates vernacular construction methods of the late 19th century and ingenuity in the use of salvage

materials, which are character-defining features, and illustrates the growing Thompson family's changing economic circumstances into the mid-20th century.

Prominently situated along the Valley Pike (US Route 11), one of the first macadamized roads in the United States, and consisting of 223 acres, Funkhouser Farm in **Shenandoah County** was established in the late 1700s. The house was constructed around 1790 and was home to four generations of the Funkhouser family, who owned the property between the 1830s and late 1960s. The farm, along with its evolved farmhouse and associated outbuildings, is representative of the continued and sustained growth of agriculture as a leading economic force in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley during the 19th century.

During the Civil War, the Funkhouser Farm witnessed passage of armies associated with three Shenandoah Valley campaigns: Confederate General Stonewall Jackson's 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign, Confederate General Jubal Early's 1864 Maryland Campaign, and Union General Philip Sheridan's 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign.

Elsewhere in Virginia, the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House in **Richmond** and Villa Heights in the **City of Roanoke** were added to the state landmarks register during the March 15 quarterly meeting of DHR's two boards, the State Review Board and the Board of Historic Resources.

A three-part storage and office complex in downtown Richmond, with portions dating back to 1886, the Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House allowed for the storage and shipping of the Indiana-based company's innovative plows to retailers throughout Virginia and beyond.

The Richmond complex functioned as a distribution cog in the efficient network that company founder, James Oliver, established to ensure that his plows, farm equipment, and replacement parts—all manufactured at the company's main South Bend, IN, plant—could be quickly shipped to smaller distribution facilities and retailers. Under Oliver's guidance and that of his successor, son James D. Oliver, the company expanded through its "branch houses" to cover the nation and reach a world market.

The Richmond complex also exemplifies the evolution of industrial buildings after the advent in the early 20th century of reinforced concrete. This development made possible construction of larger interior spaces, and more numerous and larger windows than the use of brick alone. The two types of construction methods are juxtaposed in the earlier warehouses and later portions of the complex and add to the interest of the building as a whole.

The Oliver Chilled Plow Works Branch House is also one of the few complexes in its area of Richmond that survived the widespread demolition of similar, once-plentiful buildings during the urban renewal period of the later 20th century. The Oliver Corporation sold the complex in 1969.

Villa Heights in **Roanoke** was constructed by 1820 for Lt. Colonel Elijah McClanahan. A veteran of the War of 1812, McClanahan owned most of the land that ultimately became the Northwest section of Roanoke City, which included “Long Meadow,” the future site of Villa Heights, a large, brick, two-story dwelling. Designed in the Federal-style with a center-passage, the house retains its original single-pile floor plan. During the early 20th century significant alterations in the then-popular Classical Revival style were made to the house with the addition of interior and exterior elements.

Featuring a monumental portico with Doric columns and fluted pilasters, fanlight and sidelights at its main entrance, the façade is both dramatic and architecturally distinctive. The interior retains intact early 20th century wood molding and trim, paneled wooden doors, and fireplace mantels. Although the house was re-purposed in the late 1950s for public recreational use, it remains illustrative of an early 19th-century dwelling with later significant Classical Revival details.

The property is also significant for its association with Lt. Col. McClanahan who served as a justice when Roanoke County was formed from part of Botetourt County and was later appointed its first High Sheriff. He was also among the trustees chosen at the founding of the town of Salem, and among the founding elders of Salem Presbyterian Church. One of the largest landholders in the county, McClanahan married Agatha Lewis, the daughter of General Andrew Lewis, a Revolutionary War hero.

In addition to the six new VLR listings, the DHR boards approved a **boundary increase** for the previously listed Wytheville Historic District. The expansion will incorporate into the district the Carpenter Building, a Commercial-style, one-story masonry building with a bowstring truss roof.

Constructed around 1941, the building originally served for the storage of automobiles for the nearby Crowgey Motor Company; a 1942 side addition was used to warehouse auto parts. In 1946, Albert B. Carpenter acquired the building and re-purposed and upgraded the interior for use as a hosiery mill that manufactured and dealt in knitted goods, yarns, and textiles, but mostly produced men’s socks.

Carpenter was a local entrepreneur and civic-minded citizen who operated other hosiery mills and wanted to expand his business. In 1947, the Wythe County Chamber of Commerce championed a \$150,000 “program” for the interior renovation of the building, installation of new equipment, and construction of the rear addition. The

addition of the Carpenter Building to the Wytheville Historic District continues the story of the downtown's commercial development during the mid-20th century.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources will forward the documentation for the six newly-listed VLR sites and boundary increase of the Wytheville district to the National Park Service for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Complete nomination forms and photographs for each of these sites can be accessed on the DHR website at <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/boardPage.html>.

Listing a property in the state or national registers is honorary and sets no restrictions on what a property owner may do with his or her property. The designation is first and foremost an invitation to learn about and experience authentic and significant places in Virginia's history.

Designating a property to the state or national registers—either individually or as a contributing building in a historic district—provides an owner the opportunity to pursue historic rehabilitation tax credit improvements to the building. Tax credit projects must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The tax credit program is voluntary and not a requirement when owners work on their listed properties.

Virginia is a national leader among states in listing historic sites and districts in the National Register of Historic Places. The state is also a national leader for the number of federal tax credit rehabilitation projects proposed and completed each year.

Together the register and tax credit rehabilitation programs play significant roles in promoting Virginia's heritage and the preservation of the Commonwealth's historic places and in spurring economic revitalization and tourism in many towns and communities.

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