

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A
other names/site number Little Mountain Pictograph Site
DHR File No. 67-107

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication
city, town Blackstone vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Nottoway code zip code

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Heath C. Miller 19 Dec 1990
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, 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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: ceremonial site

RECREATION AND CULTURE: work of art

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: forest

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Faulkner, Charles H.

1986 The Prehistoric Native American Art of Mud Glyph Cave.
University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.

Hranicky, William Jack

1990 The Little Mountain Pictograph Site (██████): A Prehistoric
Observatory. Ms. on file, Virginia Department of Historic
Resources, Richmond.

Swauger, James L.

1984 Petroglyphs of Ohio. Ohio University Press, Athens.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (38 CFR 67)
has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
221 Governor St., Richmond, VA 23219

10. Geographical Data

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DESCRIPTION

The Little Mountain Pictograph Site [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The pictographs are found in a rockshelter [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The rockshelter is small and encompasses less than 15 square meters (Photo 2). The ceiling of the rockshelter is approximately three meters feet high at its mouth, though it rapidly slopes to the floor at the rear of the shelter.

Three pictographs, all in a good to excellent state of preservation, were observed at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The first pictograph (Photo 4) consists of a single human handprint (left). The second is not as clear but may represent a series of overlapping handprints (Photo 5). It has also been suggested that the second pictograph constitutes a "sunburst" motif or "sun glyph" (Hranicky 1990:15,21). The third is located approximately nine feet above modern grade and consists of a solitary "turkey foot" (Photo 6). All of the pictographs are executed in red ocher (hematite).

The pictographs are accompanied by historic graffiti executed in pencil/graphite. The most legible inscriptions are clustered near the handprint and consist of initials bearing the dates 1887, 1897, and 1903. The historic graffiti appears to have been carefully placed to avoid the pictographs, possibly reflecting the recognition of the paintings by local residents at least as early as the late nineteenth century.

The Little Mountain Pictographs are not associated with any archaeological remains. Limited archaeological testing was conducted by VDHR staff, assisted by members of the Archeological Society of Virginia. Excavation of a shovel test unit into the talus deposits near the mouth of the rockshelter did not reveal any evidence of cultural activity nor did it result in the recovery of any prehistoric artifacts. Within the rockshelter, excavation of a test unit (.5 meters square) revealed shallow surface deposits with considerable charcoal extending to bedrock at a depth of between .08 and .20 meters below modern grade (Figure 1). The only

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artifacts recovered were fragments of modern glass from the base of the profile. These characteristics indicate that the deposits within the rockshelter have accreted recently as a result of modern use by campers and hunters.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Little Mountain Pictograph Site [REDACTED]
Nottoway County, VA
A.F. Opperman, photographer
1990
Negatives filed at VDHR, Richmond
File No. 67-107

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

FIGURES

Little Mountain Pictograph Site [REDACTED]
Nottoway County, VA
A.F. Opperman, illustrator
1990
Original filed at VDHR, Richmond
File No. 67-107

[REDACTED]

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Archaeology: Prehistoric

Period of Significance
A.D. 900 - A.D. 1600

Significant Dates
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
Late Woodland Period

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

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

See continuation sheet

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Little Mountain Pictograph Site [REDACTED] constitutes an example of a rare class of archaeological resources significant under National Register criteria C and D at the national level. The pictographs at Little Mountain reflect Native American artistic and symbolic expression rarely occurring as paintings in eastern North America. The probable ritual/ceremonial function of the site at such an isolated and dramatic setting further provides important insight into a poorly understood aspect of regional settlement patterns.

Historic Context

Though of modest proportion, the Little Mountain Pictograph Site [REDACTED] constitutes an example of a rare type of archaeological resource. It is only the second pictograph site presently identified in Virginia, the other being the "Indian Paintings" at Paint Lick Mountain in Tazewell County [REDACTED] also listed in the National Register). Though petroglyphs occur throughout eastern North America, [REDACTED] constitutes one of only approximately 10 pictograph sites presently known in the mid-Atlantic and northeastern regions of the United States (James L. Swauger, Carnegie Museum, personal communication). No pictographs have been identified in any of the adjacent states to the north and west including Delaware, Maryland, Ohio, and West Virginia. Only two pictograph sites have been identified in Kentucky, both of which are listed in the National Register. The Little Mountain Pictograph Site therefore provides valuable comparative information concerning Native American symbolism and artistic expression at a national level that transcends state boundaries.

According to Swauger, most Native American "rock art" (pictographs and petroglyphs) in eastern North America probably dates to the Late Woodland period (ca. A.D. 900 - A.D. 1600; Swauger 1984, personal communication). Swauger's interpretation is based upon observed rates of historical deterioration of known petroglyph sites during the 19th and 20th centuries. Given the generally greater fragility of painted depictions, such an interpretation is reasonable. A late prehistoric attribution of most rock art in the mid-Atlantic and northeast regions is also consistent with current

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temporal interpretation of similar phenomena in the southeast (Faulkner 1986). Though no Native American cultural/temporal association was revealed by limited archaeological testing at the Little Mountain Pictograph site, the presence of any cultural deposits would be difficult to relate to the pictographs with any degree of certainty.

Examples of prehistoric Native American symbolic expression are difficult to interpret from the perspective of their precise meaning. According to Hranicky (1990), the "sun glyph" at the Little Mountain Pictograph site may have astronomical significance and may be associated with the observation of the winter solstice. Additional research will be necessary, however, to support this hypothesis, particularly given the small sample available for study on a national and regional basis.

Irrespective of specific meaning, the Little Mountain Pictographs are certainly symbolic in character, and may represent expressions of Native American belief systems or have functioned in ritual behavior. Their occurrence at such a dramatic and isolated location further reflects an ideological function. Specific locational information on the poorly documented role of such settings contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of regional prehistoric settlement systems. As such, the pictographs at Little Mountain reflect intangible, non-material aspects of Native American cultural systems that are poorly represented in the conventional archaeological record.