



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

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PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

HISTORIC DISTRICT

An historic district is defined as a significant concentration of buildings, structures, or sites that are united historically and aesthetically by plan or physical development. The following constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of eligibility for the nomination potential of a historic district for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This does **not** mean that the district is being nominated to the registers at this time. Rather, it is being evaluated to determine if it qualifies for such listings. Applicants will be notified of the staff's and the State Review Board's recommendations.

Contact the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archivist to determine if previous survey material for this proposed district is on file, and if the district has been previously evaluated by DHR. Obtaining previously recorded information could save a significant amount of time in preparing this Preliminary Information Form (PIF). The archivist may be reached by phone at (804) 482-6102, or by email at Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov. The archivist will also give you the address of the regional office to which you should send your completed PIF materials.

Please type this form and, if additional space is needed, use 8½" x 11" paper. If an electronic version of this PIF is available, it would be helpful if it could be submitted on a disc, or via email to the archivist. Note: All submitted materials become the property of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and will not be returned.

Photographs: Please provide at least four (4) **color or** black-and-white (B&W) photographs of general streetscapes and four (4) color or B&W photographs showing a sample of individual buildings within the proposed district. The inclusion of photographs is essential to the completion of this application. **Without photographs, the application cannot be evaluated.** Photographs should be labeled on the reverse side in soft pencil or china marker (not with adhesive labels), and are not to be mounted or affixed in any way.

Digital Images: In addition to the images printed on photographic paper, digital images, if available, should be submitted in TIF or JPEG format and can be included on the same disc as the PIF.

Maps: Please include two (2) maps showing the location of the proposed district:

- ☐ A copy of a USGS Quad map with name of county/city printed on the map and with the name of the proposed district indicating its location (sections of USGS Quadrangle maps can be printed free of charge from <http://store.usgs.gov> and hand-labeled to mark property boundaries or location), and
- ☐ A map showing a closer picture of the proposed boundaries with street names and/or routes and possible building footprints would also be helpful. Please include a "North" arrow, date, and "Not to Scale" on this map.

Before submitting this form, please make sure that you have included the following:

- ☐ Section of labeled USGS Quadrangle map
- ☐ Proposed district boundary map
- ☐ 4 labeled color or B&W general photos
- ☐ 4 labeled color or B&W individual building photos
- ☐ Completed Resource Information Sheet, including
 - o Applicant contact information and signature
 - o City or county official's contact information

Thank you for taking the time to submit this Preliminary Information Form. Your interest in Virginia's historic resources is helping to provide better stewardship of our cultural past.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the proposed district for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the district could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Property Information		For Staff Use Only	
		DHR ID #:	
District Name(s):	Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District		
District or Selected Building Date(s):	Archaic Period; Late Wood-land Period; 1716 to 1967 <div style="display: inline-block; margin-left: 10px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circa <input type="checkbox"/> Pre <input type="checkbox"/> Post </div>	Open to the Public?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Main District Streets and/or Routes:	Constitution Highway (Rt. 20), James Madison Highway (US Hwy 15), Zachary Taylor Highway (US Hwy 522), Route 700, Rapidan Road (Route 615), Route 627, River Road (Route 636), Twin Mountains Road/Algonquin Trail (Route 647), <div style="float: right; text-align: right;"> City: Rapidan Zip: 22701, 22948, 22733, 22960, 22792, 22726, 22741 </div>		
County or Ind. City:	Culpeper County, Madison County, Orange County USGS Quad(s): Culpeper East, Germanna Bridge, Madison Mills, Rapidan, Unionville, Mine Run, Orange		

Physical Character of General Surroundings

Acreage: 44,150 Setting (choose one): ☐ City ☐ Urban ☐ Town ☐ Suburban ☒ Rural ☐ Transportation Corridor

Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features/Streetscapes: The proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District is bounded on the north by Route 631, Robinson River Road (Route 721, and Twin Mountains Road/Algonquin Trail (Route 647). The boundary then shifts to the outer perimeter of the Morton's Ford Battlefield (068-5007), which continues northeast before sweeping south and then southwest. Mountain Run makes up much of the southern boundary of the proposed district, until it meets Clifton Road (Route 628). That, in turn, gives way to Constitution Highway (Route 20), as the southernmost boundary. Skirting the town of Orange, the southwest boundary is made up by Route 2020, and Route 634, before turning north along James Madison Highway (US Hwy 15). The area within this expansive boundary consists almost entirely of the rolling hills of the Southwest Mountains, including Clark Mountain, and tributaries that feed the Rapidan River as it moves east toward the Rappahannock River. Agricultural fields and pastures occupy the majority of the landscape. Most of the architectural resources are dwellings and agricultural buildings of various sizes, illustrating a shift from large plantations to smaller, though still substantial, farms over the last three centuries. Small crossroads communities, namely Locust Dale, Rapidan, and Raccoon Ford, offer visual interest with their denser collections of architectural resources of varying uses.

Ownership Categories:

Private

Public-Local

Public-State

Public-Federal

General District Information

What were the historical uses of the resources within the proposed district? Examples include: Dwelling, Store, Barn, etc...

Dwelling, Store, Barn, Church, School, Bank, Post Office, Train Depot, Mills

What are the current uses? (if other than the historical use)

Dwelling, Store, Barn, Church, Library, School, Post Office

Architectural styles or elements of buildings within the proposed district:

Carpenter Gothic, Classical Revival, Colonial, Colonial Revival, Commercial, Craftsman, Federal, Folk Victorian, Georgian, Gothic Revival, Greek Revival, Italianate, Vernacular, and Victorian.

Architects, builders, or original owners of buildings within the proposed district:

Architects: J. B. Danforth, Louis Bancel La Farge, Ellen Biddle Shipman, Walter Dabney Blair, Arthur A. Shurcliff
Owners: Philip Pendleton Nalle, Charles P. Moncure, C. D. Williams, John Hancock Lee, E. F. Hill, Henry Fry, Robert Terrell, Robert K. Smith, William Madison, Hugh Walker, Sr., Joseph Clark, Col. James Taylor, Sr., Reid A. Dunn, Col. George Taylor, E. W. Armentrout, and H. T. Holladay.

Are there any known threats to this district?

Continued subdivision and development.

General Description of District: (Please describe building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district and a general setting and/or streetscape description.)

The proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District is centered around the bold sweep of Clark Mountain, the broad plains that stretch to the north, west, and east of the mountain, and the Rapidan River, which flows through the district for just over 24 miles and forms the district's spine. Clark Mountain is part of the Southwest Mountain Range, which as the name implies, runs southwest-northeast, entering Orange County just north of Gordonsville, and fading away to the east of the Rapidan; there is no higher elevation east of Clark Mountain (1,082 feet) in Virginia.¹ The proposed historic district includes the southern portion of the Robinson River, beginning to the north of the crossroad community of Locust Dale and ending with the Robinson's confluence with the Rapidan. The Rapidan bisects the region as it enters the proposed historic district at Madison Mills in Madison County, and serves as the boundary line between Madison and Orange Counties and Culpeper and Orange Counties as it travels east, before exiting the proposed district just west of its junction with Mine Run. As a small section of the Rappahannock drainage, the proposed district also incorporates several streams and tributaries, including Great Run, Cedar Run, Long Branch, Raccoon Branch, Rocky Branch, Summerduck Run, Potato Run, and Mountain Run, which also serves as part of the southern boundary of the proposed district.

Between the lowlands of the Rapidan and the highlands of the Southwest Mountains, the landscape varies from broad scenic floodplains to gently rolling hills to steeply sloping mountainsides. The proposed district

¹ Frank S. Walker, Jr., *Remembering: A History of Orange County, Virginia* (Orange, Va: Orange County Historical Society, 2004) 48.

today consists mainly of vast swathes of agricultural land, the majority of it used for cattle grazing and hay production.² Of the 44,150 acres within the proposed district, the United States Department of Agriculture recognizes one-fifth (9,580 acres) as prime farmland, and one-quarter (10,970 acres) as farmland of statewide importance (Map 1). The USDA defines “prime farmland” as “land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses.”³ Areas with 50% or more of land that meets this definition is considered “prime.” Farmland is considered of statewide importance where less than 50% of the area is prime but a combination of lands of prime or statewide importance is 50% or more.⁴ The present boundaries of the proposed district were based on the distribution of these significant agricultural resources. The region’s strong agricultural heritage has limited development throughout the proposed district and preserved historic viewsheds which define the area’s visual landscape. Residents within the proposed district have bolstered the preservation of these lands by placing 14,500 acres of it under conservation easements, protecting the natural beauty and resources of the area.

At present, the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Historic includes 13 resources currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. An additional 167 inventoried architectural resources within the boundaries of the district, and additional research and survey may reveal still more (Map 2). Three historic crossroads communities are also part of the proposed district: Locust Dale, Rapidan Station, and Raccoon Ford. With denser concentrations of buildings, these villages create a sense of community between the dispersed residences that dominate the district.

The natural geography created by the river, streams and mountain deeply shaped the cultural geography of the district’s human occupation. Of the 40 identified archaeological resources associated with Native American occupation, 32 are close to or on the banks of the Rapidan River. While occupation dates for many of these sites is not precise, they range from Paleo-Indian to Late Woodland. Twenty of these sites have been identified as camps, while others are lithic scatters, a village or town (44MA0063) and a hunting station (44CU0031). Recovered cultural materials include quartz flakes (44OR0013, 44MA0124, 44OR0316, 44MA0119, 44OR0012, 44MA0107, 44OR0306), Savannah River projectile points (44MA0125, 44OR0316), and a LeCroy projectile point (44MA0124). These sites are concentrated at three points along the river: to the east at Madison Mills, at the confluence of the Robinson and Rapidan Rivers, and on the north bank of the Rapidan, west of present-day Zachary Taylor Highway (US Hwy 522). These clusters of camps and lithic scatters could indicate multiple short-term occupations of preferred locations. The strongest evidence of prehistoric occupation in the area is the Rapidan Mound (44OR0001), approximately 1.2 miles east of the Greene County-Orange County line and outside the boundaries of the proposed district.⁵ Excavations there recovered cultural material indicating human activity in the area as early as A.D. 660, based on a Stony Creek Series pot. However, the pot has no identifiable relationship to the mound or its subsequent history.⁶ The majority of the 806 recovered sherds were what Holland referred to as sand tempered Albemarle series.⁷ Holland et al identified an “unvarying relationship between the Albemarle pottery series and the sand tempered ware,” which suggests “that during the period of artifact deposition, this was an era of cultural stability or else that the time of deposition was short.”⁸ The absence of recovered European trade goods

² United States Department of Agriculture, “Orange County, Virginia,” *Census of Agriculture*, 2012; United States Department of Agriculture, “Madison County, Virginia,” *Census of Agriculture*, 2012; United States Department of Agriculture, “Culpeper County, Virginia,” *Census of Agriculture*, 2012.

³ *National Soil Survey Handbook*, Part 622.03.

⁴ *National Soil Survey Handbook*, Part 622.03.

⁵ C. G. Holland, Sandra D. Speiden, David van Roijen, “The Rapidan Mound Revisited: A Test Excavation of a Prehistoric Burial Mound,” *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Virginia* 38:1 (March 1983), 1.

⁶ Holland et al, 30.

⁷ Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum, “Shepard,” Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland. Accessed 1 June 2017.

<https://www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/PrehistoricCeramics/Prehistoric%20Ware%20Descriptions/Shepard.htm>; Martin Gallivan, “Overview of the Powhatan Chiefdom” in Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, ed., *A Study of Virginia Indians and Jamestown: The First Century* (National Park Service, 2005). Accessed 1 June 2017, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/jame1/moretti-langholtz/chap3.htm.

⁸ Holland et al, 31.

places the deposition likely in an era before European contact.⁹ Some of the sites within the district are likely contemporary with, and possibly related to the Rapidan Mound site.

The first written history of the indigenous people who lived on the Rapidan River comes from the writings of Captain John Smith. In August 1608, Smith began sailing up the Rappahannock River. Shortly after Smith and his party, including Mosco, an Algonquin-speaking Indian serving as translator, landed at what would become Fredericksburg, they were set upon by a band of Manahoacs. After a brief skirmish, the Manahoacs withdrew, leaving behind an injured compatriot. The injured Manahoac shared information about his people and their villages further upriver. Fearing further attacks, Smith and his group sailed downriver to a wider area while the Manahoacs followed along the shore. Once the two parties established communication, Smith landed and returned the injured man to his people. As Smith left, he observed several hundred Manahoacs along the river. By 1672, European settlers could find no trace of the Manahoacs. John Lederer traveled through the Madison-Culpeper-Orange area at least twice between 1669 and 1672, when he published a report observing abandoned Manahoac villages.¹⁰ Though Smith did not venture into the present-day proposed historic district, it seems plausible that the occupants of Late Woodland period sites along the Rapidan either witnessed his presence or learned of it from those who did. Ethnohistoric research indicates that the Manahoac were associated with the Monacans, either as members of a Siouan language sub-family or through a confederacy.¹¹ The two peoples may have shared cultural elements, such as organizing their societies around small, lineage-based villages, in addition to having a common language. The abandoned villages Lederer reported may indicate that the Manahoac merged with the Monacan or another people within this Siouan-language confederacy when faced with the geopolitical shifts brought about by European colonization. The Monacan signed the Treaty of Middle Plantation in 1677, along with the “Kings of the Saponi,” who may have included the Manahoac. By 1713, Governor Spotswood’s forced removal of interior indigenous populations to Southside Virginia decimated the remaining communities.¹² Today, the Monacan Nation considers the Manahoac to have been closely affiliated with them.

Euro-American settlement in the region began in earnest by 1714, when Governor Alexander Spotswood established Fort Germanna on the Rapidan River, near its junction with the Rappahannock. To the east of the proposed district, Germanna served as the embarkation point for the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe in 1716. This party of gentlemen, surveyors, and guides likely followed the Rapidan, before following a tributary to cross the Blue Ridge at Swift Run Gap.¹³ Spotswood apparently liked what he saw, and when removed from the governorship in 1720, he agreed to become a permanent Virginia resident and received 86,000 acres of land in the newly created Spotsylvania County to develop a buffer against the French.¹⁴ Spotswood’s tenacity brought rewards. Both the settlement at Germanna and Spotswood’s ironworks grew. By 1734, Spotsylvania County had a substantial enough population of freeholders to form a new county. On 21 January 1734, these men initiated the legal proceedings necessary to create Orange County.

As the frontier of settlement pushed into the Piedmont, land was claimed, patented, and contested. The northern boundary of the new county proved highly problematic. Orange County would reach its northern limits at “the grant of Lord Fairfax.” The challenge was establishing exactly where the Fairfax grant ended. The colonial government argued that the Fairfax land lay north of the Rappahannock River, since no complaints were lodged when St. Mark’s Parish was established in 1730. Thomas Fairfax countered that his land extended to the Rapidan and he had been lodging complaints for years. In 1745, the Privy Council finally ruled that Fairfax’s claims to land extending as far south as the Rapidan were valid. As Orange County had

⁹ Holland et al, 31.

¹⁰ Walker, 66-67.

¹¹ Carole Nash, “Modeling Uplands: Landscape and Prehistoric Native American Settlement Archaeology in the Virginia Blue Ridge Foothills,” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2009); Jeffrey L. Hantman, “Between Powhatan and Quirank: Reconstructing Monacan Culture and History in the Context of Jamestown,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series 92:4 (September 1990), 676-690.

¹² Nash, “Modeling Uplands.”

¹³ Walker, 81

¹⁴ Randall Shrock, “Alexander Spotswood (1676–1740).” *Encyclopedia Virginia*. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2014.

already been formed using the Rappahannock River as its boundary, a substantial portion of Fairfax land ended up in the new county.¹⁵

Fairfax's reliance on the Rapidan River as a boundary followed the Virginia tradition of using geographical features as boundary markers. On 1 November 1740, a portion of St. Mark's Parish was divided off into St. Thomas' Parish, the boundaries of which ran "down the said run to the River Rapidan; then up the Rapidan to the Robinson River; thence, from the said river along the ridge between the Robinson and the Rapidan and to the top of the ridge of this mountain."¹⁶ Similarly, when Culpeper County was formed out of Orange in 1748, the Rapidan became the dividing line between the two. Legally enshrined as a county line, the Rapidan would remain a physical boundary for the next 250 years and occasionally serve as a cultural boundary as well.

Roads, rather than rivers, tied the region together. The first roads followed either the general east-west path of the rivers, game trails, and indigenous hunting trails that avoided swampy grounds, went around rather than over hills, and kept to the east of hills and woods to blunt prevailing westerly winds.¹⁷ River Road in Orange County follows the twisting path of the Rapidan River quite closely, making use of the broad flood plain in otherwise hilly areas. Twin Mountain Road in Culpeper County runs roughly parallel to the river, but farther away from it. It makes use of the much wider floodplain to the north of the river, and the distance between them offered some degree of protection from flooding. The primary north-south road through the area was the "Carolina Road," which began as "an interrelated collection of game trails and Indian paths" and crossed the Rapidan near Raccoon Ford.¹⁸ The keeping of ferries and taverns at often-crossed fords soon became a lucrative business as pack trains and carts moved goods and people across the landscape.¹⁹

While the Rapidan River proved too volatile to support riparian transportation, it did support the growth of several mills throughout the region, as did its tributaries. At least fifteen mills are known to have operated within the proposed district between 1750 and 1950.²⁰ Some ground grain for family and farm use, while others were commercial operations. A 19th-century ledger for the Raccoon Ford Mill records the variety of products available: family flour, fine and extra fine flour, chicken feed, corn for hominy, "brown stuff," shorts, and midlings.²¹ Other mills handled additional materials. The Raccoon Ford Mill also included a sawmill, and in the early 20th century Peyton Roberts of Dunlora operated a sassafras mill.²² Two mills merit specific mention: one for its association with a prominent family and the other for its lasting contribution to the cultural landscape. In 1777, James Madison, Sr., purchased 2,301 acres of land on the Rapidan at Barnett's Ford (now the Route 15 crossing). Francis Madison, James' son, received 1,000 acres, which he used to develop his home at Prospect Hill, today known as Greenway (056-0020). In 1793, the county granted Francis Madison permission to build a mill dam and two years later he conveyed a 16.5-acre mill tract to his father, two brothers, and himself. From then on, the mill operated under the name William Madison & Co.²³ Half a century later, William Willis built Central Mills at Waugh's Ford. Willis' mill ground both feed and flour. Soon after building the mill, Willis added a store. This small compound eventually grew to become the town of Rapidan Station.²⁴ Both locations continued to support milling operations into the 20th century (056-0025 and 068-0368), though the mills are no longer operational. [are they still standing?]

The natural geography of the area deeply influenced troop movements during the Civil War, which subsequently influenced the cultural geography of the counties. As Confederate forces began to suffer reversals in the fall of 1861, Lee sought to locate the Confederate Army of the Potomac in a position that

¹⁵ Walker, 21.

¹⁶ Claude Lindsay Yowell, *A History of Madison County, Virginia* (Strasburg, Va: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1926), 99.

¹⁷ Eugene M. Scheel, *Culpeper: A Virginia County's History Through 1920* (Culpeper, Va: The Culpeper Historical Society, 1982), 131.

¹⁸ Walker, 45; Scheel, 132.

¹⁹ Scheel, 133-134.

²⁰ Patricia J. Hurst, *The History and People of Clark Mountain, Orange County, Virginia* (1989), 38.

²¹ Hurst, 36.

²² Hurst, 45, 50.

²³ Walker, 123.

²⁴ Alan J. Shotwell, *The History of Rapidan Station* (A.J. Shotwell, 1989).

would allow it to quickly respond to threats from the Potomac and the Chesapeake. Orange County offered such a position, due largely to its geography. The Southwest Mountains, backed by the Rapidan River, created a natural military breastwork, which Confederate forces enhanced with lines of trenches, rifle trenches, and gun emplacements. By the winter of 1863/1864, a twenty-mile battle trench ran along the south back of the Rapidan from Liberty Mills to Morton's Ford, creating the core of the "Rapidan Line." Clark Mountain served as the primary observation post and signal station. The Rapidan Line not only put the Confederate Army in a strong defensive position, it also allowed monitoring of nearly all northern and eastern land routes to Richmond and would be a key position until May 1864, when the Confederate forces finally moved out of Orange County.²⁵

Federal forces moved into Culpeper County as Confederate forces established their defensive line along the south bank of the Rapidan. On 12 July 1862, General John Pope's newly-formed Army of Virginia marched into Culpeper Courthouse, claiming the territory for the Union. Within two weeks, ten thousand men settled into the Union camp.²⁶ Union occupation released a repressed current of unionist sentiment in the county. Free blacks, including Ryburn Bundy, supplied U.S. troops with food and information about Confederate movements. White Unionists similarly supplied food and information, including Archibald Shaw who escaped Confederate service due to partial deafness and widow Matilda Hudson who supplied nearly \$1,000 of food, fodder, and livestock to Pope's forces.²⁷ While Union occupation encouraged Unionists to express their allegiance, it also encouraged defiance from those who sided staunchly with the Confederacy. While most Culpeper citizens masked their opinions under veils of civility or indifference, some took actions extreme enough to warrant their arrest. For example, Ella Slaughter was incarcerated for drawing a pistol against a soldier who entered her house and "grossly and brutally insulted" her. Episcopal Reverend John Cole was sent to Washington, D.C., when he led his congregation in prayer for the welfare and success of the Confederacy.²⁸

During the Civil War, the natural boundary created by the Rapidan River took on military and political significance, reshaping the cultural landscapes to either side by allowing or suppressing the expression of personal ideologies. For the soldiers encamped along the Rapidan Line, however, the river often created a sense of camaraderie. Soldiers from both sides would wade to the center of the river or meet on its bridges to exchange news and goods, particularly coffee, clothes, shoes, and tobacco.²⁹

The conclusion of the Civil War brought both freedom and economic struggle to the proposed district: the former came to the African-American population, while the latter came to everyone in the region. Major military battles, including the Bristoe Station, Cedar Mountain, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, around the proposed district laid waste to agricultural fields and the years of turmoil along with plundering left residents with little. Some communities, such as Raccoon Ford, disappeared almost entirely after the war. The availability of land and employment, as well as a desire to maintain community ties, led many of the freedmen to remain in the area. Several "freedmen's villages" developed, providing spaces for newly-freed African Americans to explore new opportunities without the obstructions that shaped broader communities with the advent of Jim Crow laws and the evolution of the Lost Cause narrative.³⁰ This was only temporary, though. With the adoption of the 1902 state constitution, African Americans and poor whites were effectively disenfranchised and overt discrimination became enshrined in law.³¹

Throughout much of the 20th century, the textures of life in the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Historic District have changed relatively little. Agriculture continues to dominate the economy, though with

²⁵ Walker, 147, 148, 153.

²⁶ Daniel E. Sutherland, "Introduction to War: The Civilians of Culpeper County, Virginia," *Civil War History*, 37:2 (June 1991), 124.

²⁷ Sutherland, 129.

²⁸ Sutherland, 129.

²⁹ Scheel, 199.

³⁰ Walker, 197.

³¹ Walker, 203.

an ever-increasing reliance on machinery. As of 2012, the total value of agricultural products sold in Culpeper, Madison, and Orange Counties totaled \$162.3 million.³² Cattle and horse farms also dot the landscape, creating pastoral views and historical continuity. More and better-quality roads brought an increase in automobile traffic. However, many of these roads follow the old established ones, such as River Road, and move through the landscape in concert with it. A deep sense of history and preservation has also shaped the area, with multiple properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. While the listed properties tend toward the grand and architecturally remarkable, they do include more modest dwellings such as Locust Grove (023-0049) and Greenway (056-0020), both of which are one-and-a-half-story, frame dwellings. Over the past five decades, the populations of Culpeper, Madison, and Orange Counties have grown steadily, due primarily to the expansion of the Washington D.C., Fredericksburg, and Charlottesville metropolitan areas. The bucolic landscapes of the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District continue to appeal to this new generation of suburban "settlers" who seek the peace of country living, within commuting distance to a city, and with all the comforts of suburbia. The subdivision and development of lands is already readily apparent along the interstates and as demand continues to grow for housing in these areas, threatens to creep into the proposed district itself.

Architectural Character

The architectural character of the proposed district is significant for both its domestic and non-domestic structures, including mills (Madison Mill/Gillam's Mill, 056-0025; Willis Mill/Rapidan Mill, 068-0368), stores (Rapidan Trading Post, 023-0052-0002), and churches (Waddell Memorial Church, 068-0054). It also has within its bounds a broad range of architectural styles, such as: the story-and-a-half, hall-and-parlor plan Greenway (056-0020), built circa 1780; Locust Hill (056-5012), with its combination of Federal and Greek Revival architectural elements; and the Georgian Revival Grelen (068-0347), built in 1935 and seemingly modeled on the restoration work undertaken at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

The dwellings built by Virginia Indians through their thousands of years of habitation within this district are no longer extant. They would have consisted of bent saplings bound together at their tops and driven into the ground as a frame subsequently covered with thatch. Particularly during the Woodland period, Virginia Indians built their houses in groups along with indoor and outdoor fire pits, occasional subsurface storage pits, and in close association with small corn fields. They represent rare and highly significant landscape features despite their minimal "footprint." Similarly, archaeological evidence of fish weirs and burial mounds, while not among the identified resources in the proposed district, may survive in terrestrial and marine contexts.³³

The proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District includes 199 previously inventoried architectural resources, the oldest of which is Bloomsbury (068-0005), built circa 1722. The modest, three-bay, one-and-a-half-story frame colonial farmhouse was doubled in size around 1797. The original section features an unusual floorplan on both the main floor and second story that incorporates a U-plan stairway of a form unknown elsewhere in Virginia. The 2-story Federal-period addition stands at right angles to the original block and is flanked by early shed-roofed end wings. It too retains most of its original interior and exterior detailing. Locust Grove (023-0049) stands as a rare surviving example of a middle-class farmer's dwelling. Built in the late 1760s as a 16-foot-by-20-foot, single-bay structure, the house was gradually expanded until about 1840, and today is a one-and-a-half-story, four-bay log and frame structure. Other colonial dwellings include: Windsor, built 1735 (068-5006); Green Level, built circa 1760 (068-0110); Montebello, built circa 1740 (068-0050); Belle Plaine, built circa 1760 (056-5043); Meander Plantation, built 1766 (056-0010); and Arrow Point, built circa 1770 (056-0032). According to local traditions, several of these began as one-room dwellings at the time of the first land patent and were gradually enlarged and improved over time, much as Locust Grove was.

³² United States Department of Agriculture, "Orange County, Virginia," *Census of Agriculture*, 2012; United States Department of Agriculture, "Madison County, Virginia," *Census of Agriculture*, 2012; United States Department of Agriculture, "Culpeper County, Virginia," *Census of Agriculture*, 2012.

³³ Egloff and Woodard 2006

The Early National Period continued many of the trends established during the colonial era. Modest frame dwellings were erected, then expanded, as the owner had the means or the interest to do so. Such was the case at Francis Madison's Greenway, built circa 1780 and expanded in 1800 (056-0020). Morton Hall (068-0031) was built as a one-and-a-half story farmhouse circa 1780, and expanded with two Italianate wings at an unknown date to create an H-plan. Often, these additions were made with an eye toward harmonizing with the original architecture of the buildings, such as at The Residence (056-0055), built in 1793, but expanded several times over the last two centuries. In other cases, including Willow Grove (068-0049) and the Willis-Holladay House (068-0184), the original structure was built of frame and 19th-century additions were done in brick, creating more abrupt architectural differentiation between the phases of construction. Wood Park (068-0055), built circa 1799, has the most dramatic history of alterations. Originally built as a two-story, three-bay, hip-roofed, dwelling measuring 18' X 44', the original central passage block was enlarged between 1816 and 1849 with a one-and-a-half-story, saltbox structure on the north side of the house. A two-story, rectangular, gable-roofed, Romantic-style addition was constructed on the northwest side of the main block between 1849 and 1860. The ballroom wing in this third addition contains barrel vaulting and classical frescoes, as well as an unusual porch elaborated with Moorish and Gothic detailing.

Owners, architects, and builders drew from an increasing variety of architectural styles during the Antebellum period, many of which are represented in the proposed district. Several vernacular-style resources from this period survive, the best documented of which is the Nalle-Rhoades House (023-5304). Built circa 1850, this dwelling is a two-story, five-bay, frame structure with an irregular footprint. The region also saw Federal homes, including Locust Hill (056-5012) built in 1834 and Chilmark (056-0034) built circa 1840, and Greek Revival dwellings such as Brampton (056-0001) built in 1846, Indian Trace (056-0009) built circa 1850, and Horseshoe Farm built between 1852 and 1857 (023-0011). While the two latter properties have Greek Revival massing and details, the expression of the style is a local interpretation. Arguably, the most architecturally interesting property constructed in this period was Greenville (023-0009). This three-story brick dwelling has a three-story Tuscan portico with an Italianate bracket entablature and a low-pitched M roof, visible from the rear.

Approximately half of the previously inventoried architectural resources contained within the proposed historic district were built between 1866 and 1916. Styles during this period include vernacular, Italianate, Carpenter Gothic, Gothic Revival, Folk Victorian, Victorian, Commercial, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. Dwelling plans include I-houses (023-5302) and American four-square (056-0022). This is the first period to see a substantial number of surviving resources that are not dwellings, however. Many of these embody the variety of architectural styles named above, and capture the diversification of the local economy in the area. Waddell Memorial Church (068-0054) and Emmanuel Episcopal Church (023-0037) were both erected in 1874 and use two variations of Gothic Revival architecture to lend gravitas to the spiritual mission of the buildings. Waddell exhibits a more formal use of the style, while Emmanuel employs a simplified Carpenter Gothic aesthetic. The Rapidan Railroad Depot (023-0052-0012) and the Rapidan Passenger Station (023-5315) follow a similar pattern. Both built in 1890, the freight depot uses a simplified Folk Victorian style, appropriate to its function as a utilitarian building, while the passenger depot relies on a more ornate Victorian aesthetic, including fish scale shingles, elaborate brickwork, and decorative windows. Collectively, these buildings highlight the development of crossroads communities during the post-bellum decades as rail traffic increased, hauling lumber and other goods for rebuilding projects throughout the South. The most remarkable building of this period in the proposed historic district may well be the Rapidan Post Office 023-5316), constructed as the Rapidan Bank. The building exhibits vernacular adaptations of both Neoclassical and Italianate architectural styles. The foundation is formed of poured concrete, and the exterior of the building is formed of brick laid in an atypical bond of six rows of stretchers to one row of alternating headers and stretchers. The structural system features a belt course between the first and second floors. The hipped roof is sheathed in asphalt shingles and has a wide eave overhang decorated with modillions. The solid wood primary entrance door is located on the south facade and is capped by a single-paned transom. Square

concrete posts support a concrete cap with a wide eave overhang. The entry was created to emulate the elaborate stone porches of notable bank buildings constructed in the Neoclassical style.

Previously inventoried resources built between 1916 and 1945 tend to reflect a different aesthetic than those constructed previously. While central-passage, single-pile houses (068-0387, 068-0404) continued to be built, an influx of Northern capital to the region led to the creation of grand country estates. Oakland (056-0035), now Heartland College, was built by Robert K. Smith of New York City between 1918 and 1923. The Georgian manor house included some ten thousand square feet and boasted an interior designed by Tiffany Studios. Similarly, Midland/Yalton (068-0107), Grelen (068-0341), and Mount Sharon (068-0104) all embody the Colonial Revival aesthetic while including the modern amenities available in 1935 and 1937, when they were built. One particularly interesting resource constructed during this period is the Taylor Sylvania Barn (068-5017). Erected in circa 1920, the barn is a Sears kit barn with four cupolas across the roof. Thus, the barn captures not only the agrarian past of the proposed historic district, but also the shifting consumer culture and availability of mass-produced goods during its period of construction.

Two additional resources merit mention for their exceptionality. The first is the sole resource currently inventoried from the post-war period. The Rapidan Mill (068-0368) occupies the same site as the historic Willis Mills discussed above. Built circa 1950, it replaced the previous mill after it burned. The second resource is a stone chimney on Route 673 (068-0357). This chimney was likely attached to a slave cabin, given its distance from the other surviving resources on Route 673 and captures a fragment of an otherwise lost landscape. The presence of substantial numbers of enslaved Africans throughout the colonial and Antebellum periods is indisputable, but the near absence of domestic buildings directly connected to them, beyond those ancillary outbuildings (kitchens, smokehouses, etc.) on previously inventoried buildings highlights the need to more closely examine the existing building stock throughout this proposed district to locate the trace remains of their significant home buildings, and not just those they were forced to build for others.

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the proposed district. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Please list all sources of information. Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

Summary

The proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District is locally and regionally significant for its association with broad patterns of history (Criteria A) with areas of significance including military (Civil War), agriculture (farming), industry (milling), science (geography and hydrology), and social history (early settlements, African-American communities, 20th-century migration patterns). It is locally significant for its distinctive characteristics of architecture/construction (Criteria C), but also for the aesthetic created by the surviving patterns of agricultural fields and riverine woodlands flanking the waterway, dotted with a mix of domestic and agricultural architectural survivals ranging from high style to vernacular buildings. The proposed district also has the potential to yield important historic and pre-historic information (Criteria D). There is great potential for Virginia Indian archaeological sites to contribute to our understanding of the past. The district's potential to contribute to a broader regional history, extending through the mid-20th century, suggests a period of significance from the Archaic prehistoric period, the Late Woodland prehistoric period and from early European settlement ca. 1716 to 1967, a broad time span in which many historical trends left their mark on the architectural, archaeological, natural and cultural landscape.

The area within the proposed district possesses a high degree of integrity as a significant cultural landscape focused on geographical features which shaped human occupation for centuries. The intact, stratified archaeological deposits help us understand the periods with the fewest surviving documents, including both the time before contact between Native Americans and Europeans, and the period of initial colonial exploration and settlement. Remnants of centuries old agricultural landscapes - fields, fencelines, farmsteads, or pastures - line the banks of the river. Increasing forest cover protects and obscures once prominent mills and towns that marked the district's 19th-century economic diversity. While there are fewer roads, more traffic, and various styles of houses, schools, churches, and businesses, there is relatively little recent development. This reflects a timelessness that evokes the enduring landscape of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with hints of earlier periods.

Agriculture

Just as the geography of the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District shaped the cultural landscape of the area, so too did its geology influence the area's settlement and development. Much of the proposed district lies north of the Everona limestone belt, where the soils have the highest natural fertility in the county.³⁴ Unsurprisingly, the earliest settlers in the area claimed these lands. By the time Orange County formed in 1734, much of these fertile lands had already been claimed. In May 1713, Larkin Chew patented 4,020 acres of land located in the Burr Hill area of Orange County (just outside the district boundaries). Other large tracts were soon after patented by families that would be prominent in local and Virginia history for centuries to come, including Taylor, Baylor, Todd, and Madison.³⁵ On the north side of the Rapidan River, Thomas Fairfax held significant acreage. Agricultural pursuits dominated the early modern period of the region's development, as Tidewater planters sought to develop western lands with the crop they knew best: tobacco. As the markets for other agricultural products developed, farmers within the proposed district switched to hay, corn, grains, and livestock to secure their personal economies. As late as 1850, over 68% of Orange County's free males were engaged in farming or related occupations.³⁶

Only in the 1920s was the centrality of farming to Virginia life challenged. Following World War I, almost all the land in the area that could be farmed was under cultivation and advances in farming equipment promised higher yields and lower labor requirements. Despite the spread of scientific management techniques and the growth of cooperative purchasing associations and canning clubs, young men and women followed the

³⁴ Walker, 53.

³⁵ Walker, 53-57.

³⁶ Walker, 218.

national trend of relocating to urban locations, often following better paying jobs and higher standards of living available in urban areas.³⁷ While the numbers of individual farmers decreased throughout the 20th century, their importance did not. Into the 1960s, politicians courted the farm vote by reciting the mantra that farming was the backbone of Virginia's economy and farmers the moral core of its society.³⁸

Industry: Milling

The milling industry grew concurrently with the development of agriculture within the proposed district. The most interesting example of milling may also be the oldest. Patricia Hurst records the history of "Indian Will," the last person of indigenous heritage to live on Clark Mountain. "Indian Rock" is the mill rock upon which he ground maize according to the memories of local inhabitants, including R. Monroe Waugh and Daniel Minor, a descendant of some of the earliest enslaved Africans on Clark Mountain.³⁹

Increased Anglo-American settlement within the area brought a rise in water-powered grist mills throughout the proposed district, including those for family and farm use, as well as commercial mills. Grist mills produced family flour, fine and extra fine flour, chicken feed, chop for horses, corn for hominy, brown stuff, shorts, and midlings.⁴⁰ The region would also see the development of "land plaster mills," which ground limestone for soil application, saw mills, and fulling mills. Each of these relied on harnessed water power, often created by damming either the Rapidan River or a tributary stream to create a mill pond and then running the water through a mill race to turn a water wheel.⁴¹ While streams and the Rapidan provided a reliable source of water power, accessing that power was not without challenges. Court permission had to be obtained to block streams, and after the creation of Culpeper County in 1749, mills built on the Rapidan had to secure permission from both Culpeper and Orange Counties. Dry spells often drove millers to cease operations, while floods, such as the 1930 flood, could be so severe as to completely wash away a mill.⁴²

Residents in the 18th century saw the development of several mills within the proposed district, including Rapidan Mill, built by Lawrence Talliaferro sometime after October 1773. This mill changed hands several times, and grew substantially until it was burned during the Civil War. Henry T. Holladay built a new mill in the same location in 1868, which survived until it burned in 1950, and was replaced by still another mill (056-0025 and 068-0368).⁴³ While he owned the mill between 1833 and 1855, Robert T. Willis also built a store. These two buildings would eventually provide the locus around which the town of Rapidan would develop. Other early mills include: the Willis Mill, built before February 1759; Bourne's Old Mill (1763-1795); Raccoon Ford Mills (1780-1937); Porter's Mill (circa 1750-1794); Sims' Mill (1745-1751); Petty's Mill (1751-1755); Proctor's Mill (1769); and Madison's Mill (1793-1930).⁴⁴ As seen above, several of the 18th-century mills were rebuilt and redeveloped well into the 19th, and in some cases the 20th century. This did not prevent new mills from being built, however, particularly as new agricultural products developed. Josephe and Nancy Bourne built a mill on their land sometime before 1843 and John Terrill built Doctor's Mill Run sometime after 1850.⁴⁵ Peyton Roberts built a sassafras mill sometime between 1915 and 1920 to capitalize on the demand for sassafras oil for pharmaceutical goods, perfumes, soaps, toothpaste, and confectionaries in the early 20th century.⁴⁶ A velvet mill on Spicer's Mill Road, produced velvet used in funeral caskets, while the America Silk Mills Company in Orange (just outside the district's boundaries) was the largest processor of raw silk in the 1930s.⁴⁷

³⁷ Scheel, 250-251; Walker, 273.

³⁸ Walker, 219.

³⁹ Hurst, 8. Hurst offers no dates for "Indian Will," but includes that "the survey in Deed Book 37, page 137" substantiates the legend of Indian Will, though she does not explain why.

⁴⁰ Hurst, 36.

⁴¹ Hurst, 36-37; Walker, 228-230.

⁴² Walker, 229.

⁴³ Hurst, 39.

⁴⁴ Hurst, 39-50; Walker, 123.

⁴⁵ Hurst, 47-48.

⁴⁶ Hurst, 50.

⁴⁷ Walker, 273.

The milling industry played a vital role in the economy of the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District. Not only did the mills process cereals and lumber for local use, but they also turned bulky raw materials into more compact partially- or finished products that could easily be moved via the winding mountain roads to markets in Fredericksburg and beyond. Mills also provided income to the men who owned or worked in them. Perhaps the most interesting, though unintentional effect of the mills, was to create communities, such as Rapidan, which grew around shared needs to process goods for sale and to purchase what could not be made locally.

Military: Civil War

When viewed through the lens of military strategy, the topography of the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District offers a natural defensive line along the river and a natural signal station on the peak of the mountain. Lee took advantage of both between 1862 and 1864, when Confederate forces used Orange County as a primary base of operations. Naturally, Federal forces took what advantage they could of the similar topography on the north side of the River in Culpeper County.

When the war opened in 1861, the Clark Mountain area seemed as if it would remain isolated from military actions. While men enlisted and women adapted to war-time conditions on the home front, the mountain remained distant from the battles and skirmishes that defined the first months of the war. By fall 1861, however, things began to change. Federal forces maintained control of Fort Monroe, giving them control over the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, while Confederate forces lacked the necessary numbers to defend Confederate borders along the Potomac and the Chesapeake Bay simultaneously. The answer was to reposition the Confederate army in Orange County, which allowed it to respond quickly to advances from either the Chesapeake or the Potomac. The natural challenges of the landscape were enhanced with lines of trenches, rifle pits, and gun emplacements over the next several years, eventually growing into the “Rapidan Line,” while the establishment of a signal station on the summit of Clark Mountain allowed Confederate forces to observe Union movements across the Rapidan in Culpeper.⁴⁸

Military action in the area began in July 1862, when General John Pope directed an infantry brigade to march to Culpeper Courthouse, take possession of the town, and then push through to the Rapidan with the goal of reaching Gordonsville to destroy the Confederate rail lines there. Lee responded by ordering Stonewall Jackson to prevent Pope's advance. Jackson and his men duly marched into the proposed district, encamping on the western slope of Clark Mountain and holding the line of the Rapidan throughout the next several years.⁴⁹

During the war, the Rapidan Line created a protective zone into which Confederate forces could retreat as necessary to re-equip, resupply, and retrain. The significance of this haven can be seen in the number of times Confederate forces fell back to it, even after victories. After Jackson defeated General Pope at Cedar Mountain in 1862, he pulled back to the Rapidan Line. Lee established his headquarters behind the line in 1863, following the disastrous Bristoe Station Campaign. A.P. Hill's Third Corp and Ewell's Second Corp secured the Rapidan Line for the winter of 1863-1864.⁵⁰ While the Rapidan River served as the boundary between the two warring armies, it often proved a porous one. Approximately 30 skirmishes took place between 1862 and 1864, many of which focused on the bridges and fords in the area, significant locations that either limited or facilitated access to desired territory. Among the most notable are the Federal raids on Rapidan Station (13 July 1862) during which Federal forces burned the railroad bridge, as well as several houses and the signal station on Clark Mountain (18 August 1862), which resulted in the capture of a signal flag and a memorandum book.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Hurst, 53.

⁴⁹ Hurst, 57.

⁵⁰ Walker, 150-152.

⁵¹ Hurst, 93; Scheel, 213.

The most significant military action that took place within the proposed district came late in its occupation. On 6 February 1864, Federal troops crossed the Rapidan River at Morton's Ford, Raccoon Ford, and Robertson's Ford. The assaulting force quickly bottled up, due to attacking just after a change of guard, meaning that both old and new details were present on the Confederate defenses. Fighting continued throughout the day, only to see Federal troops withdraw with losses. At some point after sunset, a Federal detachment crossed at Raccoon Ford and burned the Orange County side of the settlement. Morton's Ford was supposed to have been a feint, drawing Confederate attention to the northwest while General Butler at Fort Monroe made a dash up the peninsula to Richmond. Butler called off his part of the raid, however, making Morton's Ford an anti-climactic skirmish that accomplished little.⁵²

In early May 1864, Confederate forces moved out of Orange County, never to return. The Federal troops on the Culpeper side of the Rapidan soon followed suit. While extraordinary battles took place in the area surrounding the proposed district, including the battles of Cedar Mountain, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, the district itself saw no major action. However, the proposed district served a more sustained, if less exciting, purpose. The topography of Clark Mountain and the Rapidan River offered Confederate forces a defensible position from which they could monitor and respond to Federal movements and in which they could find some respite as the war dragged on.

Social History

The proposed district is significant within the area of social history for its role in the early 18th-century development of western Virginia, the development of African-American communities both in slavery and in freedom, and the shifting residential patterns in the 20th century. Though John Smith holds the official title of first English explorer of the region in 1608, it was not until the 18th century that any extensive survey of the proposed district was made. In 1716, Governor Alexander Spotswood led an expedition of some fifty people, including four surveyors and some of the most ambitious land speculators in the colony, on a trek from Germanna over the Blue Ridge. Though the party did not leave detailed geographic notes on their travels, it seems that the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe - as the gentlemen travelers of the party dubbed themselves - traveled along the Rapidan before following a tributary to Swift Gap.⁵³ This not only correlates with Spotswood's mileage calculations, but also avoided the Fairfax lands north of the river and allowed the party to follow what has long been recognized as the easiest mode of transportation through the area, the River Road. This trip through the western hinterlands of the colony revealed the natural fertility of the soils, as evidenced by the wild flora, and enabled the men who traveled with Spotswood to stake the first claims to these lands, essentially securing gentry dominance in the area during the 18th century, and securing their own family fortunes for the future. Thus, the initial socio-cultural landscape of the proposed district was meant to mirror the existing landscape of the Tidewater.

Though gentlemen like Colonel James Taylor and Larkin Chew patented thousands of acres of land, they could not effectively develop the land without the use of slave labor. Reliable population estimates begin with the first U.S. Census in 1790, though legal evidence of enslaved people's experiences survive from the colonial era. In 1723, a slave named Pompey was tried and executed for the murder of Ambrose Madison. Two Madison slaves, convicted as accomplices, were whipped and returned to the newly-widowed Frances Madison to be done with as she saw fit. In 1745, a slave named Eve was executed for poisoning her master, though Letty was declared not innocent of poisoning a white overseer and an African-American man named Simon three years later.⁵⁴ By 1790, approximately 45% of Orange County's population was enumerated as non-white.⁵⁵ By 1810, the population of "nonwhite" residents in the county became the majority, representing 53% of the county's total population. By the next decade, the population of "nonwhite, excluding Indians"

⁵² Walker, 160.

⁵³ Walker, 80-81.

⁵⁴ Walker, 183-184.

⁵⁵ Orange County is being used as the proxy for the proposed historic district because the majority of the district falls within its bounds, which have remained largely unchanged since the separation of Culpeper in 1749. *Social Explorer*, accessed 25 June 2017, <https://www.socialexplorer.com/>

residents made up 59% of the county. Until the Civil War, the population of “colored” individuals continued to constitute the majority in Orange County.⁵⁶ Though the majority of the district’s residents were enslaved, much of the built landscape in which they lived and worked has vanished. Quarters and domestic and agricultural outbuildings which would have defined elements of an enslaved African’s cultural landscape often do not survive. Two resources within the proposed district, however, may retain elements of that landscape. Belle Plaine (056-5043) may have a slave cemetery on its grounds, and it seems likely a stone chimney (068-0357) near Rapidan may have once been part of a slave cabin.

Following the Civil War, the African-American population of the region slowly decreased, falling to 48% by 1900. It seems that many freed people decided to stay in the area, maintaining connections to family and community that would have been otherwise lost. Several “freedmen’s villages” were established, three of which are in proposed district. Clifton began as an African-American community in 1866, when Philip Johnson, the first African American to own property in the area, purchased 52 acres of land at a public auction. Philip B. Jones (heritage unknown) purchased the remaining 223 acres of the Clifton tract. This land would move through several local families, including the Graves, the Johnsons, the Washingtons, the Taylors, the Campbells, and the Smiths, before being divided into 27 lots, in addition to lots for the Hopewell Baptist Church and cemetery.⁵⁷ Though the Hopewell Baptist Church (068-0388) was built in 1881, the congregation predates the structure and continues to be active to the present day. Possum Hollow came into being as a freedmen’s community in 1871, when Baylor Johnson purchased 23 acres of Francis Conway’s Hansford tract. Over time, the community grew to include 155 acres and its own church. Prominent families included the Johnsons, the Smiths, the Marshalls, the McDaniels, the Lewises, the Stearns, the Chandlers, the Byrds, and the Yarboroughs.⁵⁸ A third African-American community, referred to in local records only as “the colored settlement,” sat on the northwest side of Mountain Level. All of the property belonged to Franklin Stearns before 1872, when he began selling pieces of the tract to others. Additional research will likely recover more information regarding both the architectural and archaeological resources related to these communities, which would add much needed depth and texture to the post-bellum experience of the African-American community in the Rapidan River/Clark Mountain area.

The early 20th century brought a new group of people into the Rapidan River-Clark Mountain area: northern businessmen. The trend arguably began when William and Annie Rogers duPont purchased Montpelier (outside the district’s boundary) in 1901. In 1918, Robert K. Smith of New York purchased Lovell Farm and proceeded to build a 10,000-square foot residence, fitted with Tiffany interiors (056-0035). In 1935, William Clayton Williams, an executive with the General Motors Corporation, purchased and remodeled Yatton (068-0107), a “mansion of the Revolutionary period.” In contrast, Grelen (068-0341) was built circa 1935 with a Georgian Revival exterior, but designed to accommodate hand-carved wood paneling originally created for a penthouse apartment of the St. Regis Hotel in New York City. The most drastic action was taken at Mount Sharon (068-0104). Ellworth Augustus, a Cleveland businessman, and Elizabeth Augustus, his wife, purchased the property in 1936. They demolished the Victorian mansion on the site, and built a Georgian Revival residence in its stead. These resources are significant for capturing the social legitimization of northern capitalists via the purchase of country estates, and for the shifting architectural trends to reflect the national fascination with the Colonial Revival aesthetic in the first half of the 20th century.

Science

The geography of the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District offers the ability to study hydrology and geography. The National Geodetic Survey originated under the administration of President Thomas Jefferson and was meant to produce surveys of the U.S. coastline and create nautical charts to help increase maritime safety.⁵⁹ In 1871, President Ulysses Grant signed a bill authorizing the Coast Survey

⁵⁶ *Social Explorer*, accessed 25 June 2017.

⁵⁷ Hurst, 142.

⁵⁸ Hurst, 143.

⁵⁹ National Geodetic Survey, "History Overview," 2017, accessed 25 June 2017, https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/web/about_ngo/history/

to carry geodetic surveys into the U.S. interior and begin the continent-spanning survey of the 39th parallel.⁶⁰ Clark Mountain, at 38.3115° N, was surveyed that year and a permanently marked station established. Resurvey was completed in 1932, 1954, 1957, and 1965. Each visit found the markers largely undisturbed.⁶¹

The Rapidan River has a propensity to flood dramatically and endanger both lives and structures. In 1861, the facilities at Peyton's Mill were washed away.⁶² Floods in 1876, 1899, 1901, 1903, 1924, and 1926 washed out bridges and roads, and caused extensive damage to the properties along the river.⁶³ To monitor the river's conditions, the U.S. Department of the Interior installed a gauging station to measure the Rapidan's discharge on Somerville Ford Bridge in 1930. This measure proved ineffective, as the bridge flooded in 1937 and 1942, when the approaches to the bridge were completely washed away. In 1943, the steel center span of the bridge was deconstructed and the bridge removed from service. However, the gauging station continues to be used into the present.⁶⁴

The particular geography of the proposed Rapidan River and Clark Mountain Rural Historic District has spurred the collection of geological and hydrological data for over a century. The desire to capture this data is relevant as it relates to a national movement to understand the environment of the United States that began in the late 19th century. In addition, tracking hydrologic data satisfied a local and regional desire to better understand the Rapidan's behavior in order to preserve local communities and resources.

Archaeology

The archaeological potential of the proposed district is confirmed through subsurface testing at Native American sites and historic sites along both sides of the Rapidan River, as well as in the lower reaches of Clark Mountain. Most of these sites (38 of 44) are connected to indigenous occupations, some of which may date to as early as the Paleo-Indian prehistoric period. The Archaic and the Woodland periods are represented, as well, with the latter having greater integrity (see below). As currently recorded in the VCRIS archaeological inventory, many of these sites were recorded via informants and then substantiated with surface or subsurface testing. Sixteen of the sites have undergone Phase I testing, though only Site 44OR0013, an Archaic camp, has undergone Phase II testing. Recovered artifacts from these sites include: LeCroy projectile points (44MA0124), Savannah Points (44OR0316 and 44MA0125), Halifax Points (44OR0012), and notched points (44MA0125). Unsurprisingly, Site 44OR0013 offers the most detailed assemblage, which included 52 quartz flakes, 42 quartzite flakes, quartzite flakes with cortex, quartzite core or chunk and cobble, quartz core, various biface fragments, possible drills, worked piece, scrapers, distal end fragments, median fragments, Kirk, Savannah River, and Halifax points. Subsurface testing of known and recorded, but previously only surface tested sites, may yield significant information regarding prehistoric life patterns, dating back to the Archaic period and possibly earlier. Ethnographic data suggest that sites from the Late Woodland period are connected with the Manahoac Indians. They hunted and fished along the river, utilized its floodplains for farming small plots around their seasonal encampments and villages, used area clay for pottery, and incorporated the natural flora in their medicines and meals. The history of the Manahoac tribe, along with other groups, represents significant patterns of cultural history that changed the landscape through hunting, trading, foraging and farming in ways still not fully understood.

Exploration and settlement of the region by European colonists generally followed the well-worn game and Indian trails along the Rapidan and around Clark Mountain. No sites dating to the earliest land patents in the early 18th century have been recorded, but the site of the first Orange County Courthouse (44OR0004) is known. As the emblem of rule and law, the first courthouse marked the beginning of the legal existence of Orange County and the ability of its residents to engage in the legal mechanisms of the colony. Of the

⁶⁰ National Geodetic Survey, "Milestones of the Survey," 2017, accessed 25 June 2017, https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/web/about_ngo/history/milestones.shtml

⁶¹ Hurst, 12-13.

⁶² Walker, 50

⁶³ Hurst, 154.

⁶⁴ Hurst, 121.

remaining five historic archaeological sites, four (44CU0170, 44MA0107, 44MA0116, 44OR0305) capture elements of domestic and agricultural life, such as the outbuilding at site 44CU0170. Given the reliance on slave labor prior to 1863, it is likely that surviving architectural resources that served as primary residences on large agricultural holdings were surrounded by now-vanished outbuildings and quarters, which could provide new insights into the practices of slavery in the Piedmont and on farms and plantations of various sizes. The final historic site, the mill at site 44MA0117, highlights the centrality of milling to the historic economy of the proposed district.

The table below describes many of the defining resources in the proposed district.

Theme	Significance in District	General Locations	Evidence for Additional Sites
Native American Sites (38 inventoried archaeological sites with Native American components)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early settlement patterns - Seasonal camps and villages - Lithic quarry - Archaic and Woodland Periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both banks of the Rapidan River and tributaries - Confluence of Rapidan and Robinson Rivers 	Local informant interviews and references compiled on the Scheel maps for Madison and Culpeper Counties include references to several more in the proposed district.
Colonial Development (1 inventoried archaeological site and 9 architectural sites, including 44OR0004, 068-0005, 068-5006, 068-0050, 023-0049, 056-5043, 068-0110, 056-0010, 068-0369, 056-0032)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early settlement patterns - Frontier plantations and early leased lands - Early industrial production through mills 	Within a short distance of the Rapidan River, spread throughout the district.	High probability for 18th- century sites along both sides of the river based on map projections, predictive models, and documentary evidence.

Theme	Significance in District	General Locations	Evidence for Additional Sites
Rapidan River Mills (056-0025, 068-0368, 44MA0117)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early industrial development - Includes both planter/farmer owned/operated and merchant owned/operated. - Diverse mill types, including grist, saw, plaster, sassafras, and cloth mills. - Skilled artisans involved in construction, including potentially enslaved Africans. 	Along both banks of the Rapidan River and several of its tributaries.	Hurst has documented evidence of several otherwise unrecorded, and often family-owned, mills. Scheel maps for Madison and Orange Counties include references to several more in the proposed district.
Civil War-Related Resources (battlefield core and study areas: 088-5180, 068-5007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diverse array of military related sites, including battlefields, transportation routes, encampments, earthworks, magazines, etc. - Connections with Union and Confederate forces throughout the war, especially in 1862, 1863, and 1864. - Connections with prominent figures (i.e. Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee) 	Inventoried resources in the northeast corner of the district.	Documentary and field research may result in the relocation and inventory of the additional military-related elements within the district, including locations of winter quarters, signal stations, and entrenchments.

Theme	Significance in District	General Locations	Evidence for Additional Sites
Plantations and Farms (tobacco, mixed grains, livestock) (numerous inventoried farms including 18th century (e.g. 056-0020, 056-0055, 068-0031), pre-Civil War (e.g. 068-0127, 056-5012, 056-0013), post-bellum (e.g. 068-0131, 068-0364, 023-5302), and 20th century (e.g. 068-0402, 068-5016, 068-0377, 068-5017))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of agriculture from initial settlement to 20th-century practices. - Relationship between agriculture and landscape modification, including development of transportation infrastructure and external markets. - Connection with settlement patterns and the lives of enslaved African laborers. 	Throughout the district often with access to an established road, such as the River Road	Scheel maps document several farmsteads (primarily 19th century) and historic property owner associations with no longer extant domestic sites, but focused architectural survey has not been completed for large portions of the proposed district.
Community Resources (19 inventoried architectural sites including churches [e.g. 068-0054, 023-5369], schools [e.g. 068-0370, 068-0569], stores [e.g. 023-0052-0002, 068-0424], and train stations [e.g. 023-5315, 023-0038])	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social history: community development - Architectural significance from the post-bellum to pre- WWII period 	Crossroads communities associated with river crossings and mills, set back from the waterways, but often extending across the river. Villages include Rapidan Station, Somerville Ford, Raccoon Ford.	Scheel maps document several villages and crossroads not yet inventoried, though many of these may be archaeological. Focused architectural survey has not been completed for large portions of the proposed district.

Sponsor (Individual and/or organization, with contact information. For more than one sponsor, please use a separate sheet.)

Mr. Ms.

Dan Holmes

Piedmont Environmental Council

(Name)

(Firm)

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

In the event of organization sponsorship, you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person:

Daytime Telephone:

Applicant Information (Individual completing form)

Mr. Mrs.

Ms. Miss

Dr. Elizabeth Cook, David A. Brown and Thane H.
Harpole

DATA Investigations LLC

(Name)

1759 Tyndall Point Lane

Gloucester Point

(Firm)

VA

23062

(Address)

fairfield@fairfieldfoundation.org

(City)

(State)

804-815-4467

(Zip Code)

(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Applicant's Signature:

Date:

Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. Mrs. Dr.

Miss Ms. Hon.

R. Bryan David

County Administrator

(Name)

Orange County

P. O. Box 111

(Position)

(Locality)

Orange

VA

22960

(Address)

540-672-3313

(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)
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Notification			
In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.			
Mr.	Mrs.	Dr.	
Miss	Ms.	Hon.	
		David Campbell	County Administrator
Madison County		(Name)	(Position)
		P. O. Box 705	
(Locality)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Address)
Madison	VA	22727	540-948-7500 ext. 100
(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)

Notification			
In some circumstances, it may be necessary for DHR to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.			
Mr.	Mrs.	Dr.	
Miss	Ms.	Hon.	
		John Egertson	County Administrator
Culpeper County		(Name)	(Position)
		302 North Main Street	
(Locality)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Address)
Culpeper	VA	22701	540-727-3427
(City)	(State)	(Zip Code)	(Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this district.

We are seeking evaluation of the district to properly recognize the historic significance and integrity of this area in rural Virginia.

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? **Yes** No

Would you be interested in the easement program? **Yes** No