

APPENDIX C

HISTORIC RESOURCES



HISTORIC RESOURCES

The following Historic Resources appendix resources have been studied and documented to satisfy Virginia State Code Sec. 15.2-2224, Surveys and studies to be made in preparation of plan; implementation of plan. Additionally, the information is an educational resource for the community, offering valuable insights into environmental and land use planning within Spotsylvania County.

HISTORY OF SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY

A timeless sense of self, place and community are at the center of life. Spotsylvania's heritage supports this truth as the foundation for present and future change. A preservation plan, therefore, includes a summary of character defining history. The following time periods have been established by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for use in cultural resource documentation.

Pre Historic Native American, Late Woodland Period, Pre 1607

Before European settlement, present day Spotsylvania County was home to the Siouan tribes. While these Native Americans were dominantly nomadic, there tended to be an ethnic division of land among them. The Fall Line marked the boundary between the Coastal Algonquians and the Piedmont Siouan-speakers at the end of the Late Woodland period. The land between the North Anna and Rappahannock Rivers, principally roamed by the Manahoacs, formed the region that later became Spotsylvania County.

Settlement to Society, 1607-1750

Forts and friendly Indian settlements were established as the first colonists arrived from Europe. Alexander Spotswood was appointed Lieutenant Governor to the Colony of Virginia in 1710, and playing a significant role in westward expansion. Importing German immigrants, mainly indentured servants, he devised a settlement based on iron ore discoveries along the Rapidan River, and founded the County of Spotsylvania in 1721. The first permanent settlement in 1725 was called Germanna. Spotswood's Tubal Furnace site was one of the first sources of iron discovered and mined in the colonies. It continued to be a success throughout the colonial period as well as a foundation for future growth.

In 1729 The Spotsylvania County Court petitioned the Assembly to authorize the construction of a road from an ironwork site at Fredericksville to the Rappahannock River. This road, approximately following part of modern State Route 208, became a major transportation route and opened opportunities for settlement.

Religion also played a large role in the organization of settlement in the County. St. George's was established as the official parish and undertook the process of dividing land into parcels. By 1731 a second parish was created, eventually resulting in the re-districting of lands to the west and creating Orange County. The County Court moved from Germanna to the new town site of Fredericksburg.

Within the following decade Spotsylvania experienced the largest population increase of the colonial period. Tobacco became the thriving industry and center of activity, bringing in an influx of servants. However, there remains little evidence of a slave population during this period. The cost of welfare increased, causing eventual problems.

Colony to Nation, 1750-1789

Combined with the outbreak of small pox in 1748, drought and poor tobacco crops caused an economic depression in the 1750s. The first “poor house” was created. Tensions over church meeting locations resulted in another division of St. George’s Parish along the Po River. In 1769, Berkeley Parish and St. George’s Parish divided Spotsylvania County directly in half. This division added stress as the County continued to pay an increasing welfare cost from a lower tax base.

The canal, Plank Road, and the narrow gauge railway were unsuccessful attempts to establish competitive transport links westward.

Debate over the location of the courthouse divided the County along town and county lines. Although separate, both town and county moved toward freedom from religious and political scrutiny of the Royal Crown. The war for the nation’s independence was fought and won. In 1778 the Assembly passed an act which permitted the relocation of the county seat to the geographic center of Spotsylvania. The first court session was held in 1781. In 1782, Fredericksburg became its own political entity with a separate district court established in 1789.

Early National Period, 1789-1830

The time between the writing of the Constitution and the Civil War proved to be prosperous for Spotsylvania County. With its close ties to Fredericksburg, so too came close associations with many important historical figures such as George Washington, Revolutionary War generals Hugh Mercer and George Weedon, naval war hero John Paul Jones, and future U.S. president James Monroe. Due to plentiful and fertile farmland, agriculture was the main occupation in Spotsylvania during this period, something which is still evidenced today.

Spotsylvania County prospered industrially in this era as well. Governor Spotswood’s early network of roads for the transportation of iron and his importation of skilled iron workers established a self-sufficient iron empire that set in motion the rise of America’s iron and steel industry. Spotswood’s furnace remained important throughout the early 19th century and in 1842 it was acquired by the United States Government for a cannon foundry which proved useful in the Mexican-American War.

Antebellum Period, 1830-1860

During this period of growth throughout the Union, Spotsylvania continued to emerge slowly despite the increase in population and profits generated by the tobacco and mining industries. The early decades of the Antebellum Period were the zenith of the plantation system.

Increase in production prompted the Commonwealth of Virginia to construct a transportation network for better access to the markets, finally succeeding in opening the West and Southwest to settlement. Spotsylvania was no longer one of the leading producers of iron and lead, but the County began to extract gold from local mines.

Spotsylvania County should be noted for its role in African American history. During the years before the Civil War, African Americans worked as slaves and occasionally as free men and women, making them an important factor in the area’s development. They were employed in various occupations, including farm



and plantation work, domestic service, and skilled trades (such as blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, and needle workers). They also worked in the iron, construction, and shipping industry on the Rappahannock River, as well as in their own businesses. By the first half of the 19th century, Spotsylvania's population had reached about 11,000, over 50% of which were African American.

Expansion of the school system was limited, with no public schools established as of 1837. In 1846 the Commonwealth required that the courts appoint a public school superintendent and commissioners. By 1860 each county was to create at least three public schools. But the Civil War intervened and Spotsylvania did not act on the law until the 1870s.

The Civil War, 1861-1865

While Spotsylvania County is rich in history from all eras, it is best known for its role in the Civil War. Situated between two capitals, the County became a bloody stage. Four major battles were fought in the County: Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, The Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House. Today, core areas of those battlefields are preserved within the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park system, the second largest battlefield park in the world.

- **Fredericksburg - December 11-13, 1862**
Union General Ambrose Burnside attempted to break Confederate General Robert E. Lee's lines along a ridge behind Fredericksburg. Although the Sunken Road in Fredericksburg is well-known as the site of a bloody one-sided repulse, the battle was actually decided in the Confederate's favor in fields south of the city in Spotsylvania County.
- **Chancellorsville - April 27- May 6, 1863**
General Lee's greatest victory took place at Chancellorsville. Outflanked by Burnside's successor, "Fighting Joe" Hooker, Lee sent Stonewall Jackson on a flanking maneuver of his own. The result was another Confederate victory, but at a heavy price, as Jackson was mortally wounded by his own men.
- **The Wilderness - May 5-6, 1864**
A new Union commander, Ulysses S. Grant, struck at Lee in Spotsylvania County in the Spring of 1864 in The Wilderness. Two days of bloody combat brought stalemate and the decision of Grant to try to get between Lee and Richmond at the crossroads town of Spotsylvania Court House.
- **Spotsylvania Court House - May 8-21, 1864**
The Union Army lost the race to Spotsylvania Court House. Undeterred, Grant continued to slam his great army against Confederate entrenchments. The bluecoats won initial success in a May 12 attack, but it degenerated into another costly deadlock at the "Bloody Angle". When further attacks failed, Grant once again side-stepped Lee and departed Spotsylvania County.

Reconstruction and Growth, 1865-1917

While prior to the Civil War Spotsylvania County was a farming society with plantations and slave homes, following the Emancipation Act the immense number of freed slaves required housing and infrastructure.



The number of African Americans decreased, and only ten percent of the white population remained. Yet there were still almost 5,000 freedmen needing home, land and sustenance. This proved to be a consistent trend, with an enormous increase in small, bungalow type housing occurring in the last decade of the 19th century.

African American schools also emerged. The first school for blacks began classes in November, 1867. The first African American high school was built by a local carpenter in 1909, and in 1913 the first class in the Snell Training School started.

The beginning of the 20th century saw commercial construction becoming more prominent. Commercial growth began even before the automobile arrived, driven by mining coal and mineral resources. Zinc, gold, lead and silver mining in the first quarter of the 1900s provided a period of wealth.

World War I to World War II, 1917-1945

While the mining industries benefited from the expanded railroad system, the next decade saw improvements on road systems. The predecessor of Route 1, the Richmond-Washington Highway, was begun in 1918. Often muddy, as it was a gravel roadway, it was paved over in 1927. The number of registered cars was doubling almost every decade, establishing a base for hotels, food, gasoline stations and entertainment.

Federal and state government programs began to expand and sponsor public works programs that improved highways and constructed parks, encouraging growth and affecting the landscape of Virginia and its historic resources. Despite the development and growth potential, the population of the county did not increase at a tremendous rate and housing began to decline.

World War II to the Present

Spotsylvania County's population began to experience tremendous population growth beginning in 1945. The need to move products for commerce and war requirements initiated new transportation planning. Suburbanization and highway systems allowed people to live at great distances from where they worked. By 1955, the state had more urban than rural dwellers.

The County saw much of its development in the 20th century as a result of its proximity to the cities of Richmond and Washington D.C., which were growing at such a rate that their suburbs spread as far north and south as Spotsylvania. The first subdivision ordinance was created in 1961. The completion of Interstate 95 (I-95) in the 1960's, the extension of the Virginia Railway Express to Fredericksburg in the 1990's, expanding military installations, and new business parks have been significant factors in making Spotsylvania one of the fastest growing counties in Virginia.

Today, much of the Primary Development and Transition areas have been developed or are intended for development as high density and mixed use locations purposely close to I-95 and the City of Fredericksburg. In the midst of this change some historic places and/ or structures have been lost, but Spotsylvania has still managed to retain rural and agricultural character over much of its land.

History continues to be made as time goes by. As new eras emerge the Comprehensive Plan should be updated to look back and document significant historical events that occur in more recent times.



PAST AND PRESENT PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Tracing its history back to 1721, Spotsylvania County has contributed to the historical assets of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Within the planning period, Spotsylvania County will celebrate its 300th anniversary (1721 to 2021). In recognition of the many natural habitats, archaeological sites, historical landscapes and structures of historical and architectural significance there have been many efforts made at the private, local, state and federal level to protect these non-renewable resources. In addition, Spotsylvania County benefits from a substantial base of completed surveys on which it can build its current historic preservation efforts.

Efforts by Private Groups

As Spotsylvania's population continues to grow, the County increasingly is dealing with the threat of development encroachment upon significant historic and/ or cultural resources. Perhaps most in danger is the County's open space and its vast Civil War resources. In recent years, these problems have been recognized not only within the community, but also highlighted by national organizations.

In the 1960s the Spotsylvania Historical Association, Inc. (SHA) spearheaded a drive to get information from property owners about their historic properties. It was an informal attempt but the collection of files became the basis for the "Handbook of Historic Sites in Spotsylvania County," finished in 1987 by an Ad Hoc committee. It was first called "The Red Book" due to the color of the large binder that held the pages. Both phases of the County architectural survey, completed in 1996 and 2000, included many properties listed in the 1987 Red Book.

While the County has long taken pride in its significant history, it is only more recently that private groups have paid serious attention to preservation efforts, as development pressures have increased. In 1998, the Chancellorsville Battlefield was named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of the *11 Most Endangered Historic Places*. The Trust focused on the battlefield's placement among one of the nation's major transportation routes and the repercussions of a proposed rezoning which would compromise the integrity of the historic site. In 2005, the County was recognized in several other national publications, including another National Trust most endangered list as part of a historic corridor called *The Journey Through Hallowed Ground*, which follows US Route 15 from Pennsylvania through Virginia. In addition, the National Park Service designated the Chancellorsville site a *Priority 1 Endangered Civil War Battlefield* and the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) named the entire county to their annual *History Under Siege Report*. These recent and numerous designations reveal that the fight to preserve Spotsylvania's history has reached a new level as the County makes decisions to deal with the pressure from growth and development.

As a result of their concentration within the Region, numerous private preservation efforts center around the preservation of the County's Civil War battlefields. A regional organization formed in 1996 by local citizens, Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT), has a national as well as local membership base. Their goals are to purchase and preserve Civil War battlefield sites outside the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FSNMP) boundary. Within Spotsylvania County, in 2020 the CVBT reported approximately 461 acres in ownership with an additional 8.6 acres in easement.

In 2018, the Civil War Trust (formerly the Civil War Preservation Trust) reported management of approximately 416 acres.



The Friends of Wilderness Battlefield’s purpose is to assist the FSNMP in its efforts to preserve the Wilderness Battlefield in Spotsylvania and Orange Counties. One specific success for the group has been the restoration of Ellwood (1790). In 2003 the group, in partnership with FSNMP, began a two year long fund-raising campaign to support the restoration of this historic house which was prominent in the Battle of the Wilderness.

While seeing historic “Salem Church” lost in a sea of traffic and commercial development on Rt. 3 west is considered a failure by preservationists, local groups have had several outstanding accomplishments in their fight against the destruction of Spotsylvania’s history. Possibly the most important successes in the past several years has been that of preserving over 200 acres north of Plank Road, near Lick Run and the “First Day” fighting of the Battle of Chancellorsville and 205 acres of Slaughter Pen Farm on Tidewater Trail.

Most of Spotsylvania County’s private preservation groups or historical societies have been formed in the past twenty to thirty years, as development has started to move at a faster pace. These organizations focus on grassroots preservation advocacy that include citizen education, donations of easements and protection of cultural resources for citizens and tourists.

The Spotsylvania Preservation Foundation, Inc. (SPFI) for example, founded in 1988 by a group of historic home owners, was created in order “to preserve and protect historic resources through education, advocacy and community involvement.” The group believed that the establishment of a Historic Ordinance and Architectural Review Board was critical to preservation efforts. Members also wanted to become advocates for sensitive land use decisions to prevent the degradation of historic resources. The group contributed to the restoration of the “Spotsylvania Jail” (1855) located in the Spotsylvania Court House Historic District. SPFI disbanded in the mid-2000s.

A developer led effort to study and seek Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places designation for the Bowman Center, also referred to as the Spotsylvania County Industrial Park, and Sylvania Plant Historic District was successful in late 2019 and early 2020. Monument Development of Richmond, Virginia led the effort. A Virginia Landmarks Register designation was applied in December, 2019. This was followed by National Register listing in February, 2020. The historic designation helps recognize the historic importance of the site while potentially benefitting efforts to rehabilitate the site with tax credits made eligible by inclusion in the historic register.

Local and State Government Actions

In October 1987, the Board of Supervisors of Spotsylvania County approved a historic district ordinance as enabled by the Code of Virginia. In order to carry out the provisions of this section, an architectural review board known as the Historic Preservation Commission was created. The Commission’s role is to encourage the sensitive rehabilitation of the historic structures within this district through a design review process. Reviews are mandated for proposed development or alterations to properties within historic districts. Certificates of Appropriateness are issued when such activities preserve historic character. The Preservation Commission has since designated eight historic sites and districts for protection: Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Rapidan Dam Canal of the Rappahannock Navigation, Tubal Furnace Archaeological Site, Spotsylvania Court House Historic District, St. Julien, Prospect Hill, Massaponax Church, and La Vista.

The National Register of Historic Places designates one Historic District within Spotsylvania County. On September 8, 1983 the Spotsylvania Courthouse District was accepted in the National Register after much discussion by the Board of Supervisors. This area encompasses 101 acres, and 25 buildings. Architecture, engineering and event themes are cited as being historically significant to the district. Federal and Greek Revival designs are the predominant architecture styles within this area which historically functioned for a variety of uses including: commerce/trade, domestic, government, and religion.

In December 1995, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), in conjunction with Spotsylvania County contracted with EHT Traceries, Inc., an architectural history and historic preservation firm, to conduct a Historical Architectural Survey of Spotsylvania County, Virginia. The Project was funded jointly by Virginia and the County under the terms of the Historic Preservation Fund Matching Grant Program. The area in the County's 'primary settlement district', the area slated for dense growth, was surveyed first. The final compilation of data documented 124 properties to the Reconnaissance Level and 12 properties to an Intensive Level. The survey was continued, as recommended, in a second phase conducted between October 1999 and December 2000 by the architectural and historic preservation firm of EHT Traceries, Inc. under the direction of the VDHR and the Spotsylvania County Planning Department. The project was fully completed in February 2001, encompassing the survey and/or documentation of 152 historic properties. In March of 2005 a Cost Share Survey was awarded from the Department of Historic Resources for Archaeological Resources and an archaeological predictive model was developed.

On August 18, 2003 Spotsylvania County was certified as a Certified Local Government (CLG). In June of 2013, Spotsylvania was one of thirty-one CLGs in Virginia. The CLG program was created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980, and establishes a partnership between local governments, the federal historic preservation program, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). The program allows DHR, as the State Historic Preservation Office, to recommend for certification local governments that have put key elements of a sound local preservation program in place in their communities. Designation as a CLG gives a local government a way to participate more formally in the state and national historic preservation programs. General requirements for certification are identified in the federal program; specific requirements for the Virginia program have been established by DHR.

Goals of the Virginia CLG program are threefold:

- Promote viable communities through preservation
- Recognize and reward communities with sound local preservation programs
- Establish credentials of quality for local preservation programs

Spotsylvania County was named a "Preserve America Community" in 2005 (www.preserveamerica.org). In June of 2013, Spotsylvania is one of twenty-three other Virginia communities recognized in the program for its efforts to preserve cultural resources and history. The program boosts heritage tourism and fosters an appreciation for local resources while aiding community revitalization. Grants are available, road signs are erected and the Preserve America logo is used for publicity.

In 2009, The Spotsylvania County Department of Economic Development and Tourism, (through the support of a Preserve America Grant from the National Park Service) commissioned Rivanna Archeological Service of Charlottesville, Virginia to conduct a comprehensive study of the County for the purpose of



documenting a general history, with an emphasis on its African American history. Their final product was presented in March, 2010 and formed the basis of The African American Heritage Trail. More information can be found [HERE](#).

Federal Government Actions

On the federal level, past and current preservation efforts are largely limited to Civil War resources and monitored through the National Park Service. The Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania areas were home to some of the bloodiest battles that occurred, and this hallowed land possesses a great deal of significant Civil War history. There are two main efforts overseen by the National Park Service in Spotsylvania County.

The first of these efforts, the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FSNMP), encompasses the battlefields of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, Chancellorsville, and Wilderness. The FSNMP's headquarters are located at the historic Chatham estate, which served as the Union headquarters and a hospital during the battle of Fredericksburg. Efforts to organize a national park on the site of these historic battles first ensued in the late nineteenth century by a dedicated group of local residents who were backed by Civil War veterans. The residents felt that a national park showcasing the area's Civil War history would be a sound economic investment as it would draw tourists to the area. Congress repeatedly denied the citizens' request until legislation authorized the park in 1927. The acquisition of land began in the early 1930s. As of June, 2013, the Park encompasses 8480.83 acres in federal ownership and easements in all 5 jurisdictions including Spotsylvania, Stafford, Caroline, Orange County, and the City of Fredericksburg. The National Park Service continues to work with the Civil War Trust and the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust to protect lands within the park's legislated boundary.

Each of the battlefields offers a variety of information accessible to the public. Tools for self-guided tours are available, educational programs are held throughout the year, and special lectures are also given. The preservation efforts of the FSNMP focus directly on the landscape preservation of the protected land within the Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, and Chancellorsville battlefields, and the several contributing buildings also acquired by the National Park Service. These are the Old Salem Church, which served as an infirmary for both the North and South; the Stonewall Jackson Shrine, which is the plantation office where Jackson died, and the previously recognized Chatham Manor.

The second federal preservation effort that the FSNMP participated in is through a grant issued in 1994 by the American Battlefield Protection Program, a subsidiary of the National Park Service. This grant allowed for the creation of the Related Lands Database, the first of its kind in the United States. The grant generated funds for a survey in areas of the county that lie outside of the existing National Military Park Boundaries, but may have significance to the Civil War. The database was developed by the FSNMP Cultural Resource Manager, Noel G. Harrison.

The database was an exciting new tool initially intended for use in rezoning and development procedures in the county. However, the Army Corps of Engineers in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has been able to utilize the database, and over 800 acres have been conserved using it as a tool in wetlands conservation. As administrators of the Clean Water Act, the Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for wetlands conservation, which is subject to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This act has allowed for the formulation of the land mitigation process, which requires developers or landowners to mitigate damage to historic resources by "setting aside core historic resources and ensuring their perpetual protection." Thus the Related Lands Database has been successful for a variety



of reasons: it has been a useful tool in formulating mitigation, developers have preserved lands that would have been otherwise not identified as historic resources, viewsheds along park boundaries are more protected, and some lands at risk outside the park boundaries are now secure.

In 2019, hard copies of the Related Lands Database were scanned and are now also available electronically. Spotsylvania County GIS has digitized the Database as a GIS layer for mapping interpretation purposes, consistent with Historic Resources Policies and Strategies.

Spotsylvania County Landmarks Listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places (www.nps.gov/history/nr)

- Rapidan Dam Canal of the Rappahannock Navigation
- Saint Julien
- Andrew's Tavern
- Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Memorial National Military Park
- Prospect Hill
- Tubal Furnace Archaeological Site
- Spotsylvania Court House Historic District
- Stirling
- Massaponax Baptist Church
- Kenmore Woods
- Fairview
- La Vue
- La Vista
- Bloomsbury Farm
- Oakley
- Walnut Grove
- Spotsylvania County Industrial Park/Sylvania Plant Historic District/Bowman Center, added to the Virginia Landmarks Register in December, 2019; National Register of Historic Places in February, 2020.



Additional Historic Resource Documentation and Recognition

In addition to existing Virginia and National Register designated historic sites within Spotsylvania County, there are a number of additional historic resources of significance, some of which are potentially eligible for such formal designations. Periodically the County conducts historic, cultural and archaeological resource surveys to document important historical resources throughout the County. The results of those surveys are maintained by the Planning office.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources also maintains records and determines whether resources are potentially eligible for Virginia or National historical register designations. For more information regarding the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, visit: <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/>.

Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS)

The Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS) provides online access to extensive database of information in the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Archives including documented architectural and archeological resources.

Within the V-CRIS, as per the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), The V-CRIS data provided in the mapping system is a point or polygon representation of archaeological or architectural resources that are documented by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. At this time, not all resources that have been surveyed at the reconnaissance or intensive level have been digitized. This information has been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses.

As a development review tool, County staff and local decision makers are able to utilize the V-CRIS to make better informed decisions regarding the prospect of development impacts in areas where historic resources, whether architectural or archaeological, are or are likely to occur. Such models can and have resulted in requests for additional information in an effort to mitigate potential negative impacts upon historic resources where V-CRIS identifies potential conflicts. Additionally, V-CRIS can help better inform land use decisions as part of the County Comprehensive Plan creation, review, and update processes whereby helping guide informed planning efforts.

The V-CRIS can be found [HERE](#)

