

REGIONAL SETTING & HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

This section describes Shenandoah County's regional setting and provides a brief history of the County. Included is a listing of properties included in the Historic Landmarks Survey done in the County and on file with the Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, and a map showing sites that are within areas that are likely to develop.

The Shenandoah County Comprehensive Plan - 1990, adopted November 13, 1973, henceforth referred to as the "1973 Plan," covered County history in four paragraphs of the plan preface.

REGIONAL SETTING

Shenandoah County is located in the scenic northern Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The County is 34 miles long, running in a northeast-southwest direction, an average of 16 miles wide, and contains a land area of 512 square miles. It is bounded by Frederick County on the north; by Rockingham and Page counties on the south; by Page and Warren counties on the east; and by Hardy County, West Virginia on the west. Major cities lying within a 150 mile radius of the County include Washington, D.C.; Richmond, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; and Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. See Figure 1-A Regional Location Map on the following page.

Part of the Ridge and Valley geologic province, the County contains elevations ranging from 537 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the Shenandoah River to over 3,000 feet msl in the Great North Mountain range which forms its western boundary. This province is characterized by steep slopes and wide river valleys.

Shenandoah County is served by the parallel routes of the Old Valley Pike (U.S. Route 11) and Interstate I-81 which run its length, and the I-81 intersection with I-66 which runs east to Washington, D.C. is just a short distance north of the County line.

(Insert Regional Location Map here.)

HISTORY

Shenandoah County was formed in 1772 from Frederick County, and was originally named Dunmore County in honor of Governor Dunmore. In 1778 the name was changed to Shenandoah after the Shenandoah River, an Indian name meaning "Daughter of the Stars."

Many of the earliest settlers were Scotch, Irish, and German, who moved to the County from Pennsylvania. The Town of Woodstock, formed in 1752, was selected as the County Seat in 1772 upon the formation of Shenandoah County. The English colonial government encouraged the creation of a frontier buffer between the settled tidewater and French and Indian influences to the northwest. The early settlers brought their German language, religion, culture, crafts, folk art and architecture. For the most part, they did not own or believe in the ownership of slaves. Their family farms were much smaller than the plantation system of the English settlers to the east of the mountains. Gradually these distinctions faded and blended into a new American culture. But to the discerning eye, the influence of these early Germans can still be noticed – as can their family names.

The County provided men and supplies during three periods of conflict: the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and the Civil War.

The earliest economic activity in Shenandoah County by settlers, beginning about 1670, revolved around fur trapping and trading. With permanent settlement, soon after 1726, came the introduction of flax, tobacco and new varieties of grain, livestock, vegetables, and fruit. Gradually, towns developed along the Valley Turnpike (now U.S. Route 11), which was the most important transportation route in and through the Shenandoah Valley for over 200 years until Interstate 81 was completed.

As communities grew at intersections of travel routes through the County, manufacturing was soon started to meet local demand, using products of nearby farms, forests, and mines. Small industries, tanneries, lumber mills, and primitive iron smelting furnaces were established by the middle of the 18th century.

A vigorous pattern of trade soon evolved in Shenandoah County. Supplies came from and Valley produce went to such market centers and port towns as Baltimore, Georgetown, Alexandria, and Richmond. Until after the Revolutionary War, hemp was a major cash crop. Tobacco was packed in wooden barrels built in the area and then exported. Cattle were driven to Baltimore and Alexandria. Turkeys were also raised. Other surpluses from farms went to market by wagon and river barge.

Many of the local manufacturing activities, which once met only the needs of nearby settlers, expanded, supplying items for sale outside the County. Industries commercially processing farm produce and other raw materials were developed. Flour and cornmeal were ground at many stream-side mills. Hams and bacon were cured in large quantity in area smokehouses. Sawmills became more productive. Plentiful iron ore, limestone, and timber led to the establishment of iron mining, milling, and smelting operations, which continued between 1742 and 1907. The furnaces soon became a major source of pig iron for forges in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Manganese and zinc ores were also mined intermittently between 1834 and 1962. Limestone has been quarried on a large scale since 1868.

Other industries were started because of the special skills of Shenandoah County residents. The Henkel Press, in New Market, was established in 1806. During the 1800's, Strasburg was noted for its pottery made by the Town's German settlers and their descendants.

The limestone soils of the Shenandoah Valley are excellent for agriculture. The great volume of grains which were produced here caused this region to be called the "Granary of the Confederacy" during the Civil War.

Shenandoah County was the scene of much fighting between 1861 and 1865. There were troop movements and skirmishes over most of the land area of the County, and there are four major battle sites: New Market, Toms Brook, Fishers Hill, and Cedar Creek. All of these actions took place in 1864. The Battle of New Market is one of the most famous battles of the war. It took place on May 15, 1864. In it, the cadets of Virginia Military Institute made a heroic charge against the Union forces advancing down the Valley. The Battle of Cedar Creek ended the fight for control of the Shenandoah Valley.

By the late 1870's, tourism was becoming an important industry in the County. Born of increased prosperity, improved transportation, and the local climate and scenic beauty, the tourism industry began slowly when wealthy persons built dwellings for seasonal homes. Summer hotels and resort spas appeared, as at Orkney Springs and Seven Fountains. Then came a number of summer visitors, seeking fresh air and outdoor recreation. Tourism began to flourish with the opening of the Shenandoah National Park and the Skyline Drive. Tourists are also attracted to the County's mineral springs and limestone caverns.

The County is noted for its many historic sites and structures, including the New Market Battlefield Park, the Henkel Press Publishing House, and the Confederate Hospital of Mount Jackson. The preservation and enhancement of these resources must be kept in mind while reviewing development proposals. To assist in that effort, the historic sites that have been inventoried in Shenandoah County are now included in the GIS system.

Table 1-A, below, is a listing of those sites and districts in the County that are included in the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places.

TABLE 1-A

VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER
 NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
Updated Through NPS June 15, 2001 Announcement

<u>PROPERTY</u>	<u>USGS Quad Map</u>	<u>VLR</u>	<u>NRHP</u>	<u>FILE #</u>
Beydler, Abraham House	Toms Brook	06-13-01	02-07-02	85-096
Campbell Farm	Middletown	04-17-90	08-15-90	85-127
Edinburg Historic District	Edinburg	12-03-97	07-22-98	215-001
Edinburg Mill	Edinburg	06-19-79	09-07-79	85-110
Elizabeth Furnace	Strasburg	03-17-99		85-940
Fort Bowman or Harmony Hall	Middletown	11-05-68	11-25-69	85-04
Hockman, Dr. Christian, House	Edinburg	01-17-84	02-23-84	85-76
Hupp House	Strasburg	12-04-96	02-21-97	85-7
Lantz Hall,				
Massanutten Military Academy	Woodstock	10-21-92	12-30-92	330-05
Meems Bottom Covered Bridge	New Market	04-15-75	06-10-75	85-103
Miley Site (44SH2)	Toms Brook	04-16-74	-----	85-101
Mount Jackson Historic District	New Market	04-21-93	06-17-93	265-04
Munch, Daniel House	Rileyville	12-05-01	03-13-02	85-363
New Market Battlefield Park	New Market	06-02-70	09-15-70	85-27
New Market Historic District	New Market	05-16-72	09-22-72	269-05
Orkney Springs Hotel	Orkney Springs	03-18-75	04-22-76	85-39
Quicksburg Site (44SH3)	New Market	04-16-74	-----	85-102
Shenandoah County Courthouse	Toms Brook	06-19-73	06-19-73	330-02
Shenandoah County Farm	Toms Brook	08-18-93	10-29-93	85-86
Snapp House	Toms Brook	11-21-78	05-07-79	85-29
Strasburg Historic District	Strasburg	05-15-84	08-16-84	306-16
Strasburg Stone and Earthenware				
Manufacturing Company	Strasburg	04-17-79	06-19-79	306-09
Van Buren Furnace	Woodstock	03-17-99		85-051
Woodstock Historic District	Woodstock	06-27-95	10-25-95	330-15
Zirkle Mill	New Market	12-14-82	02-10-83	85-122

There have been two major surveys of historic structures, places, and potential historic districts completed in Shenandoah County. The first one was completed in 1985 and contained information on approximately 180 listings. At that time, there were only two historic districts listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places, the New Market Historic District and the Strasburg Historic District.

One objective of the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 1991 was to have further surveys done to document additional properties, and also to obtain information on other potential historic districts, including those in the rural part of the County. Since then, two phases of an additional survey have taken place in cooperation with the County and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR); one was completed in 1993 and the second in 1995.

The Historic Landmarks Survey Report that was published in 1993 provided documentation on 326 sites at the “reconnaissance level” and 38 sites at the “intensive level” for a total of 364 sites that were located outside of the corporate limits of the six towns and also outside the boundaries of the George Washington National Forest. Fourteen of the sites were rural communities, villages or crossroads; they include Calvary, Columbia Furnace, Conicville, Forestville, Hudson Crossroads, Lebanon Church, Moores Store, Mount Clifton, Mount Olive, Oranda, Quicksburg, Saumsville, Wheatfield and Williamsville.

All of the information that was gathered was entered into the Integrated Preservation Software (IPS) that is utilized by the Department of Historic Resources. In addition, Preliminary Information Forms were prepared for the rural communities that can be used as a first step in the nominating process of making determinations of eligibility for the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places.

This report, titled Shenandoah County Historic Landmarks Survey - Survey Report can be reviewed in the Archives section in the Shenandoah Room of the Shenandoah County Library, located at 514 Stoney Creek Boulevard in Edinburg.

The second phase of the Shenandoah County Historic Resources Survey was undertaken in 1994 and 1995, and was also funded jointly by the County, the Department of Historic Resources and the Shenandoah County Historical Society. The 1995 report includes documentation of 359 individual sites at the “reconnaissance level” and 32 at the “intensive level” and also included documentation on 10 communities that were evaluated for their potential as rural historic districts. Recommendations for further research and for ten properties to be considered for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places are also included. This report is also available for reference at the County Library, and at the Planning and Zoning office.

(INSERT FIGURE 1-B MAP OF HISTORIC SITES)

SUMMARY

Shenandoah County's location in the Northern Shenandoah Valley and its underlying geology and soils have played a key part in its history and development in the past and continues to do so today.

Over 750 historic sites have been identified by the historic landmarks surveys that have been accomplished in the County, ranging from individual homes, farms, taverns, bridges and other structures to complete historic districts.

The towns of Edinburg, Mount Jackson, New Market, Strasburg and Woodstock now have historic districts that are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The preservation and enhancement of the County's historic assets is one of the major goals of this plan. One action which is recommended to implement this goal is the completion of the nomination process for the individual sites and potential rural historic districts that have been identified in the latest Historic Resources Survey. Partial funding for such efforts may be available through the Department of Historic Resources on a matching basis.

In addition, there are several battlefield sites in Shenandoah County which should be preserved and enhanced. The County supports the efforts of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, and will participate in detailed preservation studies for some of the identified battlefields.

The Historic Resources Survey reports for the County and the Management Plan for the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District are available for public reference at the County Library and the Planning and Zoning Office in the County Government Center.

Any development proposals submitted should identify historic features found on the site. This will aid in the preservation of additional structures and features which are significant from an historic or archaeological viewpoint.

The overall goal of these recommendations is to preserve the quality of life in the County for today's citizens as well as for those who will follow.