

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

4746

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Willisville Historic District

Other names/site number: DHR #053-5116

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)



2. Location

Street & number: 33000 and 34000 block of Welbourne Road (Route 743)

City or town: Middleburg State: VA County: Loudoun

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: X

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date: <u>10/24/19</u>
<u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date:
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain: _____)


Signature of the Keeper

12.9.2019

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>16</u>	<u>21</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>26</u>	<u>25</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling; secondary structure

COMMERCE/TRADE/ department store/ general store

COMMERCE/TRADE/ specialty store/ blacksmith; shoe repair

EDUCATION/ school

RELIGION/ religious facility/ church

FUNERARY/ cemetery; graves/burials

AGRICULTURE SUBSISTENCE/ spring house

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling; secondary structure

RELIGION/ religious facility/ church

FUNERARY/ cemetery; graves/burials

VACANT/ NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/
Craftsman

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: French Provincial; Colonial Revival

OTHER: I-house

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: fieldstone; WOOD; METAL; STUCCO

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Willisville Historic District, located in the vicinity of Middleburg, Loudoun County, is located northeast of the village of Upperville, between the historic African American communities of Howardsville and St. Louis. The antebellum farms, from which the original Willisville lots were carved, remain and form the village boundaries: Clifton to the west, Pelham and Crednal to the north, and Catesby to the south and east. This open farmland forms a protective greenbelt around the village core. All four of these historic farms are in perpetual conservation easement, protecting this open space and viewshed for future generations. Willisville also sits within the Unison Battlefield Historic District [DHR 053-6087; NRHP 2011]. Five resources in the Willisville Historic District are within the battlefield's historic district, but are noncontributing as all postdate the battle; they are the Willis House property (053-5116-0008), which includes a dwelling, barn, and well; the Willisville Store (053-5116-0009); and the Anderson House (053-5116-0009). Although located in Northern Virginia, today characterized by rampant suburban sprawl, the village of Willisville maintains its late-19th and early-20th century feeling. Welbourne Road, historically known as the Millsville to Upperville Road, and later known as Willisville Road, forms the organizing spine of the village and remains unimproved, following its 18th-century alignment. Vehicular traffic through the village is sparse and the road serves as a pedestrian connector through the village, as it always has. The Willisville Historic District is comprised of 19 primary resources and of these, 16 are contributing resources; thus over 80 percent of Willisville's primary resources were built within the district's period of significance. The Willisville sewer treatment facility, built in 2005, has an

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unobtrusive profile and is surrounded by three-board fencing, blending with surrounding rural properties. Three historic cemeteries are contributing sites within the district. The district's assortment of contributing structures, including a privy, a well, a cistern, a stone wall, a stone barbeque pit, and a historic roadbed, are indicative of the district's rural character, while a contributing object is the hand-built stone monument at the Willisville Methodist Church property. Although there are 21 noncontributing buildings in the district, the majority of these are sheds that are compatible in terms of scale and use with the residential lots; there also are 4 noncontributing single dwellings. Noncontributing structures include a swimming pool, two gazebos, and the aforementioned sewer treatment facility. The district's integrity rests not only in the intact historic spatial relationships and pristine surrounding, but also on limited modern intrusions. Professional archaeological testing has not been undertaken within the historic district.

Narrative Description and Architectural analysis

Setting and Landscape Features

The village of Willisville is located in the lower Loudoun Valley, a fertile agricultural area characterized by farmland interspersed with historic villages, which mark 19th-century crossroads, all interwoven by a rural road network. Hay fields, rolling hills, abundant waterways, and long, open vistas are typical of this area. A traditional rural economy rooted in cattle, horses, wheat, and hay has historically supported the valley. Today, many farms remain in agricultural production mainly hay, cattle and horses.

Willisville today encompasses 24 acres and its compact size retains its historic, pedestrian scale. Parcels vary from less than one-half acre to three acres in size. Many lots have irregular shapes, a result of the organic growth of the village as parcels were passed between generations and divided among family members. Many were deep lots with short frontages on Welbourne Road, providing access to the transportation thoroughfare while reserving land for family gardens.

Willisville, Howardsville [DHR 053-0062], the eastern side of Upperville [DHR 030-5438], St Louis [DHR 053-5099], and Rock Hill stand as part of a network of rural villages established by African Americans in southwestern Loudoun County. Numerous African American communities once extended throughout the county, but many have been lost to more recent development. These villages mostly were settled before the Civil War, when white landowners allowed free African Americans to settle at the edges of farms or other marginal areas. These villages were socially interdependent, sharing churches and schools, and connected by family ties and the rural road network.

After the Civil War, these areas, typically at edges of larger farms or on non-arable parcels, were broken into small lots and made available to purchase. The communities of Willisville, Howardsville, and St. Louis consisted of no more than 20-25 families, all of whom lived within walking distance of employment in agricultural fields, mills, or nearby farmhouses. Willisville was the most compact of the three; founding Willisville families purchased deeds of about three

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acres, tracts small enough to be affordable but large enough for family garden plots and livestock.

Early dwellings were constructed of materials that could be readily harvested, typically log or fieldstone. The Willis House, one of the earliest known remaining buildings, was a one-room log dwelling with fieldstone chimney. Families retained their land holdings across multiple generations and houses typically grew organically as families prospered and family members multiplied. A small number of houses, owned by the Waters and Hackley families, replaced earlier dwelling that were either demolished or destroyed by fire.

Primary Dwellings

Willisville is organized along Welbourne Road, with most buildings fronting neatly onto this east-west axis. The Willisville Chapel and the former Willisville School anchor the village's east and west boundaries. Other historic community buildings include the former Willisville Store that today serves as a residence. The remaining buildings were constructed as residences. Frame construction appears in the late-19th century, with brick typically used for flues. The mid -20th century saw the introduction of the first modular dwellings in the form of kit houses.

Willisville's residential buildings reflect a range of architecture, including forms distinctly indigenous to Loudoun County (the Brewer House) and the modified Virginia I-House (the Warner, Gaskins and Henderson Houses), as well as vernacular interpretations of national styles including Bungalow/Craftsman (the Waters and Howard Houses) and Colonial Revival. All of these vernacular interpretations show the mark of the craftsmen who built them, individual tastes, and socioeconomic means of those who owned them. Dwellings vary in height from one to two-stories.

ANTEBELLUM PERIOD (1831-1860)

Willisville's mid-19th century origin was as a mixed settlement of free persons of color, enslaved African Americans, and possibly a white overseer. Several of Willisville's earliest dwellings predate 1860.

Dwellings of Free Persons of Color

Loudoun County's labor class of the early 19th century, regardless of race, lived in rudimentary log and stone dwellings. The Willis House, located at 34017 Welbourne Road [DHR 053- 5116-0008], appears to be one of these. Judging from the log construction and large stone chimney, which would have accommodated a hearth for cooking, the original building predates the Civil War.¹ Henson Willis, a free person of color, was likely living here before the Civil War began.² The two-story, cross-gable, stuccoed house was originally constructed as a one- or one-and-a-half-story log dwelling. The cross-gable plan indicates a pattern of expansion as families grew. In Willisville, families chose to expand and reconfigure existing dwellings rather than demolish

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and rebuild. The Willis House has been expanded numerous times over the years to accommodate larger families and modern needs, but retains historic integrity of design, workmanship, and materials.

In addition to the Willis House, there were other early buildings in Willisville, which may be attributed to free African Americans. It is possible that the Sarah Jackson House,³ which burned in 1910, dated to this period. Sarah Jackson was a free person of color, appearing in the Loudoun's personal property records as early as 1856.

Elsewhere in Loudoun County, there are few surviving examples of dwellings built by free African Americans prior to the Civil War. Most of these dwellings are in southwest Loudoun, in areas not yet touched by suburban sprawl. Examples are the one-and-one-half-story Gracie Reid House [DHR# 053-0062-0005; 053-6087- 0193] and 20857 Green Garden Road [DHR# 053-0062-0001; 053-6087-0198], both in Howardsville. Another example is the Wormley Hughes House, located along Snake Hill Road, built of local fieldstone and located in St Louis.

Mid-19th Century Dwellings for Enslaved African Americans

It is possible that the rear portion of the Anderson House, located at 34055 Welbourne Road [DHR No 053-5116-0010] and the Evans House located at 33999 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0005] were both originally constructed as slave dwellings on Townsend Seaton's property. Both houses are sited away from Welbourne Road, in proximity to the Warner House, which was also built prior to the Civil War. Typical of the slave quarter form in northern Virginia, the Evans House originally had two exterior doors, which would have accommodated more than one family unit. The rear portion of the Anderson House had a central chimney, also typical of this form in northern Virginia.

Extant slave quarters that once housed enslaved field workers are rare. Many were built of log directly in contact with the ground, allowing them to deteriorate easily. A rare example of a surviving quarter is the Stone Slave Quarter near Arcola [DHR #053-0984], which was built circa 1800. The Arcola Slave quarter, also a double-pen layout, is an example of a multiple-family slave dwelling in Loudoun County.

Mid-19th century Dwellings of Middle-Class White Families

The I-house form was very common across the region during the mid-to-late-19th century. The floor plan was simple to construct and allowed for ample natural light and cross breezes. The Warner House, located at 33995 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0015], is a modified I-House, constructed circa 1850.⁴ Typical of the I-House plan, the Warner house is a two-story, side-gable, single-pile house with central stair and flanking parlors. Also typical of the I-House, the Warner House features a nearly full-width, one-story front porch, which incorporates the minimal architectural styling on the house.

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The location of the Warner House is atypical of late-19th-century Willisville's settlement patterns. Located away from Welbourne Road, the house was originally built on Seaton's property facing east, not north towards the village center. Architectural clues, such as the brick end-chimneys; the flat, four-panel front door; the Doric columns supporting the one-story front porch; and the raised foundation, indicate the house was built by trained craftsmen, rather than laymen. The attention to architectural detail indicates the house was constructed for a middle-income family. It is possible that the house was built for an overseer prior to the Civil War and possibly housed Seaton's overseer.

The **Hall Place [DHR #053-0589]** at Brown's Corner is another example of a Virginia I-house originally constructed for a white owner and later owned by African Americans.⁵ The Hall Place features the typical three-bay symmetrical façade, single pile construction, and one-story full width front porch that characterize this historic house form.

RECONSTRUCTION AND GROWTH (1866-1916)

Immediately after the Civil War, with the devastated local economy, there was little to no construction. From the 1870s to the late 1890s, with African Americans achieving property ownership, Willisville witnessed a period of modest growth. Homeownership and cultivation of small family garden plots were a means to escape poverty for recently emancipated African Americans. During this period, Willisville transformed from an informal settlement to an established village.

Architectural styles of this period varied widely, depending on needs and resources of each community. The historic district's extant residences dating to this period are varying expressions of vernacular construction. One particular form was described in History Matters' survey of Loudoun County's African American Architectural Resources: a "*relatively rare building form ... a true one-and-a-half story building ... with a side-gable and heightened eaves that contain half-size, frieze windows.*" Such windows configurations are also known as wall dormers. The report goes on to explain "*...The higher eaves and attic story windows allow for expanded living space in the upper story. Visually, this form appears larger than a standard one-story-plus attic building but smaller than a true two-story structure. This building form is generally associated with working and middle-class rural dwellings and has been associated with Pennsylvania-German settlers in the area.*"⁶

The Brewer House, located at 33991 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0001] is an evolved example of this vernacular form. Built by Henry Jackson circa 1874, the north façade has high eaves with four, half-size, frieze windows, giving the impression of a much larger building than it really is. Window openings are original although the sashes have been replaced. Later, vernacular expansions of the house include a shed dormer at the west side and a cross-gable at the east side. This dwelling is one of the earliest extant buildings in Willisville; Henry Jackson,⁷ formerly enslaved at Welbourne, built the original one-room or two-room, one-and-a-half-story building. George Brewer (b. 1851) later enlarged the house about 1894.⁸

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Two examples of construction from the 1880s/1890s are the Gaskins House located at 34974 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0012] and Henderson House located at 33973 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0003.] Both dwellings were built as vernacular expressions of an I-House; both are of narrower width and sit at grade. The two houses face each other and were constructed close to Welbourne Road to allow for maximum acreage for family agricultural plots to the rear. Both houses are of frame construction, with side-gable roofs and exterior brick flues. Characteristic of Willisville, the brick flues sit on small fieldstone water tables. Both dwellings have been enlarged with contemporary rear additions that have vinyl sash and siding.

The Gaskins House, built by George Tebbs, who purchased land in 1876, appears in the Land Tax records by 1881.⁹ At that time, the house was valued for \$200, so twice the value of the nearby Willis and Anderson Houses. It is possible that the house was originally constructed as a two-rooms-over-two form, exemplifying rising living standards in the later decades after emancipation. The Gaskin House has been remodeled with a contemporary two-story front porch and fan-like detailing at the second story. The house has been expanded, incorporating the rear kitchen into an attached two-story addition. The house had one of Willisville's earliest wells, which was hand dug and lined with stone.

George Evans' son Thomas and his wife Kate built the **Henderson House** between 1890 and 1895.¹⁰ Except for the vinyl siding and second-story window sash replacement, the façade likely appears much as it did when constructed. The Henderson House retains its original 19th century architectural detailing at the front porch, including late Victorian-era scroll-sawn brackets and turned wood posts. The house now has a one-story contemporary rear addition. The house originally had a meat house, which has since been demolished and a cistern, fed by rainwater, that provided water. By the mid-20th century, the Henderson House boasted one of Willisville's first garages.

Other vernacular I-houses built during the same period are the houses at 22256 Newlin Mill Road in St. Louis (DHR #053-5099-0014) and 22326 St. Louis Road in St. Louis (DHR #053-5099-0017) constructed respectively 1890 and circa 1900. Both of these dwellings, like the Henderson and Gaskins houses, are two-story, three-bay buildings with the narrower width and built at grade. Both of the St Louis frame houses have stucco exteriors.

Education

The first Willisville schoolhouse stood at the northeast corner of Welbourne Road and the 'new public road' (today's Willisville Road.) Typically, Loudoun's first African American schools were linked to religious organizations and many of the buildings served both educational and religious purposes. This was true of Willisville. The original 1868 edifice was built of log with weatherboard siding and measured 20' x 30' in dimension. The schoolhouse burned in 1920.

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Funerary

There are two known burial grounds in Willisville that date to the late 19th century. The larger is the Old Willisville Cemetery located at 33910 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0014] and is one of Loudoun County's oldest known remaining African American cemeteries. Originally associated with the 1868 Willisville Church and School, the cemetery is located at the west end of the village, adjoining the Willisville Schoolhouse. The cemetery is located on a flat dry lot, elevated above the roadbed. The cemetery occupies a small, half-acre lot, with approximately 45 known burials, the earliest of which is Henson Willis who died in 1873. Graves are typically marked with a limestone slab at grade or a headstone marker; there is at least one remaining obelisk. The existence of formal markers is testimony to Willisville's late 19th century prosperity; often, less permanent markers identified 19th century African American burial sites.¹¹ A yucca plant, an evergreen historically associated with African American burials, thrives in the center of the cemetery. A wrought iron fence previously marked the perimeter of the grounds.

The other Willisville cemetery dating to this period is the **Evans and Warner Family Cemetery** at 33995 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0015.] The earliest burial is attributed to 1914. Originally, there were possibly 14 markers, although only one remains and sits loosely at grade leaning against a tree.

There are at least 34 documented African-American cemeteries in Loudoun County¹² and several are located near Willisville. Julia Evans, wife of George Evans who died in 1878, is laid to rest in the Crednal [DHR 053-0141] family cemetery, which has separate burial grounds for the white Carter family and the African American family members of the farm. Nearby Rock Hill Cemetery, north of Unison, is a much larger burial ground, and served a broader community

WORLD WAR I THROUGH GREAT DEPRESSION (1917-1940)

By 1920, there were possibly nine or ten¹³ dwellings in Willisville, ranging from modest cabins to the George Brewer House, which appeared to be the largest house in the village by then.¹⁴

The **Waters House**, built circa 1930, at **33960 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0112]**, was built in the Craftsman / Bungalow style. Distinctive features of the bungalow style are the compact form with a height of one-and-one-half-story and prominent front porch. The house has robust proportions and the front porch dominates the south elevation. The Waters House was likely built on the site of an earlier 19th century building.

The **Charles Briggs House** was also built sometime between 1925 and 1930. The Charles Briggs house was a vernacular one-room-over-two form either of log or frame construction and sheathed in weatherboard siding. The house was destroyed as part of a planned burn for training purposes sometime after 2002.

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Education

The Willisville Schoolhouse, constructed on the same site as the original school, was built in 1921 with a later 1934 addition. The 1921 building was constructed as a frame, one-room, one-and-a-half-story, front-gable schoolhouse. A brick flue, located along the east exterior wall, provided heating. Windows with three large six-six double hung wood sash with louvered shutters along the west side and two along the east side lit the interior.

The schoolhouse was enlarged in 1932 with a rear frame addition constructed on a brick foundation. Five large twelve-over-twelve window sash along the west elevation lit the interior. A massive, parged stone chimney at the north gable end heated the addition. Likely constructed at the same time as the rear addition, a gable-roofed front porch with fluted columns was added to the south elevation.

An associated outhouse stands at the north edge of the property and is built of frame with vertical board siding and a rear sloped roof with galvanized metal sheet roofing.

Religion

Constructed in 1924, the **Willisville Chapel**, located at 34008 Welbourne Road [DHR #053-1049; 053-5116-0016], stands apart from other African American churches in Loudoun by virtue of its Gothic Revival features: a sharply pitched roof, front lancet windows, center oculus, and distinctive stonework. These details set this building apart from other church buildings constructed at the same time.

The chapel, funded jointly by the community and the neighboring Dulany family, is witness to the early prosperity of the village, which set Willisville apart from others in the county. Many early African American churches were of frame construction; only a few were built of stone. By comparison, the Austin Grove Church [also known as Midway] in Rock Hill, located at 33999 Austin Grove Road, demonstrates the style of a more vernacular African American stone chapel. Constructed just 13 years prior to the Willisville Chapel, this church with modest proportions, rectangular six-over-six wood sash windows, and a gently sloped front gable roof, is an example of the vernacular craftsmanship and economic means more representative of the county's rural African American congregations. According to Kevin Grigsby's Howardsville, the African American congregation built the church with a later 1960 front addition by Bishop Howard Sr. and his son Bishop Howard Jr. and son in law Alfonza Grigsby.¹⁵ Like Willisville, the congregation pre-dates the church building, having been founded in 1872, after emancipation.¹⁶

The community continued to bury family members in the Old Willisville Cemetery and family plots, never establishing a cemetery at the new Willisville Chapel. The **Hackley-Smith Family Cemetery** located adjacent to **34001 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0006]** is the third, and last, cemetery established in the Willisville Historic District during

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this period. Although the Hackley family did not own the property, they buried Nannie Hackley in 1921 as the first known member of this burial ground. It is assumed the family chose the location because it was the site of earlier burials, possibly an antebellum cemetery for the enslaved.

Commerce/ Trade

Commerce and trade in Willisville in the early 20th century centered on the service industry, catering to prosperous white farm owners within walking distance – African Americans worked as farm laborers, gardeners, butlers and chauffeurs. Loudoun County's rich agricultural economy also provided other types of job opportunities and entrepreneurial opportunities for Willisville residents. In 1925, Dudley Gaskins, a horseman, constructed the rear barn at the Willis House. The barn has a side-gable roof with large double-leaf front doors, which would have provided an opening large enough to accommodate livestock, horses, or hay. Barns such as these were indicative of the local economy's robust character.

African American communities often focused around churches and schools, although at least some members operated commercial enterprises too. There is one known purpose-built commercial establishment in Willisville and it dates to 1922/1924. The **Willisville Store**, located at 34049 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0009; 053-6087-0080] is a frame, two-story, front gable building with one-story, shed-roofed porches on its north and south elevations and a rubble stone foundation. There are two windows with one-over-one sash centered in the front gable end. Vinyl siding covers the historic weatherboard siding. The store faces directly onto Welbourne Road and sits within a few feet of the roadbed. It was originally designed for mixed use with retail below and residential on the second floor. The building has since been converted to a residence but retains its commercial character.

Few other commercial establishments remain in Loudoun County for comparison. St. Louis boasted a commercial building at 35285 Snake Hill Road [DHR #053-5099- 0009], which dates to 1890 with early 20th century modifications. Howardsville had a larger population, but no known commercial establishments, other than entrepreneurial endeavors accommodated in private residences.

Industrialization and National Building Styles 1940 – 1956

During World War II and its associated rapid industrial growth, national building styles became available to Willisville's residents through mass-produced building materials. This is reflected in the Moton House, located at **33960 Welbourne Road, [DHR #053-5116-0011]** and built between 1930 and 1933. Judging from catalogue photos, the Moton House is likely a Sears kit house based on the Crescent Model.¹⁷ Affordably priced Sears house kits were shipped by rail and arrived in the nearby village of The Plains. Another example of a Sears house in the vicinity is 22249 St. Louis Road (DHR #053-5099-0013), although it has been highly altered.

Another Craftsman-style bungalow stands at **34001 Welbourne Road (DHR #053-5116-0006)**.

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Known as the Hackley House, it was built on the site of an earlier dwelling, which burned in 1950. This one-story house is also possibly a kit house. The frame structure with stucco cladding and tin roofing was constructed for longevity and affordability. The house has a side-gable, low-pitched roof. The central brick flue indicates the original mid-20th century heat source was likely a cast-iron stove fueled by wood or coal. The rear bathroom was added in the 21st century, indicating the house was originally constructed without indoor plumbing.

The last-built contributing resource within the historic district is the **Howard House at 34007 Welbourne Road [DHR 053-5116-0007]** This one-and-a-half-story Bungalow built of solid stone is an example of uniquely Loudoun County vernacular architecture. There is a similar house along nearby Trappe Road, also built by the Howard family. Three generations of the Howard family of stonemasons – a grandfather, father and son – built this house in 1954. The house was started in 1951 before Bishop Howard went to serve in the Korean War and was finished in 1954 on his return.

WILLISVILLE HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Notes on Format, Organization and Justification of Inventory

In the following inventory, which is listed numerically by street address, all resources, both primary and secondary, have been classified as either contributing or non-contributing based upon the district's significance in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Architecture, and based upon the Period of Significance from 1840 to 1956. About 80 percent of the primary resources are contributing resources due to their retention of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association. The majority of the secondary resources are affordable, modular sheds situated behind a property's primary resource and are of suitable scale and use that they do not detract from the district's overall integrity. As well, the setting, the rural open farmland surrounding the district, and the rural road bisecting the village, remain much as they did during the period of significance.

The resources listed in the inventory are keyed to the accompanying Sketch Map by the last four digits of each property's 10-digit DHR inventory number (i.e., 0001, 0002, etc.). The Sketch Map depicts the contributing status of the primary resource on each property. The inventory includes the property address, DHR file number (s), property name, and property information and contributing status.

^Indicates a property within the Unison Battlefield Historic District (NRHP 2011), but that is noncontributing to the battlefield.

Welbourne Road

From 33910 to 34055 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0000 Millsville to Upperville Road
Primary Resource Status: Historic Roadbed Contributing (structure)

The one-lane gravel Welbourne Road marks the 1740 boundary line between Amos Janney and Nathaniel Brown's Fairfax grants.¹⁸ Welbourne Road also appears in the 1845 Yardley Taylor

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Map and also is mentioned in Civil War military history describing the Battle of Upperville. Welbourne Road may have been rebuilt in the late 19th century as it is later referred to as the “new public road leading from Millsville to the Colored School House.”¹⁹ Today, Welbourne Road still follows its original alignment, established in 1740.

33991 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0001

Brewer House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 1 ½ Style: Vernacular, 1875 and significantly enlarged 1894

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Barn**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Cistern**

Contributing (structure)

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Non-Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Pool**

Non-Contributing (structure)

This is a one-and-a-half-story, side-gable house with four frieze windows at the second floor. Later additions to the front elevation are a front gable on the east and a shed dormer on the west, providing additional light at the second floor. This asymmetrical arrangement reflects the evolution of the vernacular dwelling and was not uncommon in Loudoun County at this time. A one-story addition extends south off the rear elevation.

The rear, side gable frame barn, located off the rear addition, has both vertical board and weatherboard siding. A stone cistern is located immediately south of the barn. Both were likely constructed after 1939 when Colonel Brooks, who had horses, owned the property.

A newer aboveground pool is located south of the cistern. A contemporary, modular, front-gable with gambrel roof, one-bay dwelling with one story covered front porch is located on the hill east of the pool. The dwelling sits on a temporary foundation.

33969 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0002

Peters Property

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 1 Style: modular, 2007

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Non-Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Shed/ Dwelling**

Non-Contributing (2)

This modular, side-gable house features a prominent one-bay, one-story, front-gable porch with balustrade and three front steps. The windows have vinyl sash and fixed shutters. The siding is vinyl and roofing is asphalt shingle. A small modular shed is located at the west edge of the property and a modular dwelling is located to the rear of the primary dwelling.

The first house on the lot was the William Peters House, located at the northwest corner. A concrete pad of the former front porch remains in situ.

33973 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0003

Henderson House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 2 Style: Vernacular, ca 1890-1895

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Shed**

Non-Contributing (2)

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This two-story, side-gable, I-house sits at grade and features a one-story, three-bay front porch with turned posts and scrolled brackets. The house is frame and is sheathed in vinyl siding. Exterior brick flues with corbelled caps stand at the east and west gable ends. Typical of other brickwork in Willisville, the brick flues sit on small, raised stone foundations. The first-story windows have two-over-two sash. A contemporary one-story gable frame addition extends from the south elevation.

A small, front-gable shed sits at the west edge of the property and a larger, side-gable shed is located at the south property line.

33999 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0005

Evans House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 2 Style: Vernacular, c. mid 19thc

Individual Resource Status: Single Dwelling

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: Shed

Non-contributing

This two-story, side gable, frame and stucco house originally featured two exterior doors in the 2nd and 3rd bays on the south elevation. These doors have since been replaced with one-over-one vinyl sash windows. The original kitchen, now abandoned, once stood separate at the rear but has since been connected to the main body of the house. The north elevation features a porch with turned posts, now partially enclosed. Exterior brick, stucco-clad flues stand at both the east and west ends.

A small, frame front-gable shed with horizontal weatherboard and corrugated metal roofing is located at the rear of the house. The site is wooded.

34001 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0006,

Hackley House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 1 Style: Craftsman, ca 1951

Individual Resource Status: Single Dwelling

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: Shed

Non-Contributing (2)

This one-story, side-gable, frame and stucco house features a partially enclosed screen porch on its north façade. The standing seam metal roof has open eaves and exposed rafter tails. There is an interior brick, corbel-capped chimney. A rear one-story, square-plan bathroom was added to the south elevation when the Willisville sewer was installed. A well was dug in at this time. The windows have one-over-one vinyl sash units. This is the second dwelling on the site and was reportedly built as a gift to the family by Paul Mellon.

No Address 053-5116-0000

Hackley / Smith Cemetery

Primary Resource Information: Cemetery, ca 1921

Individual Resource Status: Cemetery

Contributing (site)

The Hackley / Smith Cemetery is located south of the Hackley House, outside the house's one-acre boundary line. The first documented interment is 1921, predating the nearby existing house. There are 8 burials attributed to this site. The cemetery is in a wooded area.

34007 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0007

Howard House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 1.5 Style: Craftsman, 1954

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Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Stone BBQ**

Contributing (structure)

Individual Resource Status: **Stone wall**

Contributing (structure)

Individual Resource Status: **Shed**

Non-Contributing

This dwelling is a one-and-a half story, three-bay, side-gable building with a pair of shed dormers with four-light casement windows. A screened-in one-story porch extends across the center bay of the north façade. The exterior walls are solid fieldstone with rough-cut ashlar quoins, exhibiting vernacular craftsmanship. One-story additions with stucco siding extend from the rear (south) elevation. The latest addition was added when the house was connected to the Willisville sewer. The house has a root cellar.

A stone barbeque is located at the rear of the property and a low stone wall fronts on Welbourne Road. The stonework is attributed to the Howard family. At the northwest corner of the property sits a small shed with T111 siding and a rear-sloped roof. The front (east) elevation features Charles Howard's artwork.

^ 34017 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0008; 053-6087-0081; Willis House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 1.5 Style: Vernacular, c. mid19th c.

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Barn**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Well pump**

Contributing (structure)

This 2-story, cross-gable, stuccoed house features an enclosed, hip-roofed porch on its northeast façade. The different rooflines and additions show the evolved style of this vernacular dwelling. Only visible from the rear, the original side gable roof and a massive stone chimney form the south elevation. The stone chimney was extended with a cement-block flue after the second story was added to the house. A stucco-clad frame ell, creating the cross-gable plan, extends west and was likely constructed after 1925 by Dudley Gaskins. An interior chimney on the west-end pierces the roof. This portion of the house sits on a fieldstone foundation. Later single-story, frame additions extend from the east and south elevations. The windows have vinyl clad, one-over-one sash.

A hand pump stands to the east of the house. A post-1925 side gable barn with board siding and metal roof is located behind the main house

^ 34049 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0009; 053-6087-0080; Willisville Store

Primary Resource Information: Mixed-use Commercial Building, Stories 2 Style: Vernacular, ca 1922- 1924

Individual Resource Status: **Commercial Building**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Sheds**

Non-Contributing (2)

This two-story, two-bay building rises from a fieldstone foundation. The wood-frame building is clad with vinyl siding that mimics the appearance of weatherboard. The front-gable roof has asphalt-shingle cladding and overhanging eaves. An exterior concrete-block flue is located on the west elevation. The building is fenestrated with one-over-one double-hung vinyl-sash windows.

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A one-story three-bay enclosed porch is located on the north façade and extends beyond the main block on the side (west) elevation. An enclosed rear porch is on the south elevation.

^ 34055 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0010; 053-6087-0079; Anderson House
Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 2 Style: rear portion built prior to the Civil War

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Shed**

Non-Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Gazebo/ well**

Non-Contributing (structure)

This vernacular I-house is two stories high and three bays wide. The various additions show the evolved character of this house. It currently serves as apartments for three families.

The one-story front porch is three-bays with a half-hipped roof supported by square wood posts. The front elevation partially protrudes under the one-story porch. Sidelights flank the central entry, which has a single-leaf door with screen. The wood-frame dwelling is clad with vinyl siding and has a side-gable roof of standing-seam metal made of 10' rolls and hand crimped metal, an indication of its age. An exterior-end parged flue is located at the east gable end; the horizontal cracking pattern indicates the flue's substructure may be concrete block. A one-story, three-sided canted bay with a half-hipped roof is located on the west (side) elevation. Window openings hold four-four, one-over-one vinyl sash and six-over-six double-hung wood sash. Shutters are vinyl and are inoperable.

A two-story ell is located on the rear (south) elevation. One-story porches with half-hipped roofs are located on both sides of the ell. A two-story wooden deck and stairs accesses the rear, upstairs apartment.

A shed is located at the rear of the property and is in poor condition. An open gazebo with a pyramidal roof structure and asphalt shingles is located at the east edge of the property and marks the location of the original well.

34049 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0011 Moton House
Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 1.5 Style: Colonial Revival, between 1930 and 1933

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Contributing

This one-and-a-half-story, frame house appears very similar to the Sears and Roebuck Company's "Crescent" model kit house, which was sold between 1921 and 1933. The house features gable dormers and a modern 1-bay porch with paired Doric columns, cornice returns, and an arched, front gable pediment. A dentil cornice has been applied to the south façade. The house has a basement. The roof has collapsed, threatening this structure.

34974 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0012 Gaskins House
Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 2 Style: Vernacular, circa 1880

Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Shed**

Non-Contributing (2)

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This two-and-a-half story, three-bay frame house features a double-story porch on its south façade. A door flanked by one-over-one windows accesses the second-story porch. Originally one room deep, a two-story, contemporary rear elevation extends to the north. The house is wrapped in vinyl siding. There are brick flues at each gable end. Typical of Willisville, the foundation of the brick flues are stone. Window sashes are one-over-one vinyl units. The house was substantially renovated in the early 21st century.

Two non-contributing sheds are located at the rear of the property.

33960 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0013

Waters House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 2 Style: Craftsman, ca 1930

Individual Resource Status: Single Dwelling

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: Shed

Non-Contributing (2)

This one-and-a-half-story frame and stucco-clad house features a front gable roof. The prominent one-story front porch with shed roof, supported by square posts, sits on a concrete block foundation. Windows have one-over-one vinyl sash. There is a central brick chimney flue. This is the second dwelling to be built on the site.

One small modular shed and one concrete block shed are located at the rear of the property.

33910 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0014; Schoolhouse and Old Willisville Cemetery

Primary Resource Information: School, Stories 1 Style: Vernacular, 1921

Individual Resource Status: School

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: Privy

Contributing (structure)

Individual Resource Status: Old Willisville Cemetery

Contributing (site)

Individual Resource Status: Gazebo

Non-Contributing (structure)

This one-and-a-half-story frame former schoolhouse features a front-gable roof with cornice returns and a pair of six-light windows at the attic of the front gable end. The single-leaf, raised-panel front door is flanked to the right (east) by a single double-hung wood sash window. The one-story porch with pediment is supported by a pair of fluted pillars and is accessed by wood steps, which reportedly cover the original 1868 steps. A one-story rear (north) addition was built in 1934 and features a bank of five twelve-over-twelve windows on the west elevation. There is a large stucco-clad chimney at the north gable end. This is the second building constructed on the site; the original school was log sheathed in weatherboards.

The original privy remains at the rear of the site. Although in dilapidated condition, the frame and vertical board structure features a rear sloped roof. The single-leaf door faces north.

The Old Willisville Cemetery is located adjacent to the schoolhouse along Welbourne Road. Thirty-six known burials are attributed to this cemetery, which was established with the burial of Henson Willis (1836-1873). Grave markers vary from simple limestone markers to a modest obelisk. Previously, the cemetery was enclosed with a wrought-iron fence. The last burial was in 1950.

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A metal gazebo with pyramidal stands to the northeast of the former schoolhouse. The gazebo sits on a poured concrete pad.

33995 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0015; Warner House and Evans / Warner Cemetery

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 2 Style: Vernacular, ca 1850

Individual Resource Status: Single Dwelling

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: Evans / Warner Cemetery

Contributing (site)

Individual Resource Status: Shed

Non-Contributing (2)

This dwelling is a typical two-story Virginia I-house with center hall and flanking bays and side gable roof. The windows on the west façade have six-over-six and three-over-six double-hung wood sash. Possibly the center window at the second floor was originally a door as it is larger than the other two. The windows on the gable ends have fixed one-light sash but are partially obscured by the chimneybreast. A three-bay Colonial Revival front porch supported by Tuscan columns stands on brick piers. Front steps have been replaced in poured concrete. A rear frame addition extends to the west or rear elevation and also stands on brick piers. Vinyl siding covers the original weatherboards on the main block, while German siding remains exposed on the rear addition. Typical of brick chimneys in Willisville, the foundation is stone. A contemporary one-story west addition was added when the dwelling was connected to the sewer. The house has a basement.

The Evans / Warner Family Cemetery is located on the Warner property and approximately 12 burials are attributed to this site, although many of the stones have been removed. A child's headstone, for Quentin Warner (1920-1921), rests at grade against a tree.

Two sheds are located at the south and west edges of the property.

33008 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0016; 053-1043;

Willisville Chapel

Primary Resource Information: Chapel, Stories 2 Style: French Provincial, 1924

Individual Resource Status: Church

Contributing

Individual Resource Status: Monument

Contributing (object)

Willisville Methodist Church, modeled after a French provincial chapel, is built of fieldstone with a steeply pitched, gable roof with asphalt shingles. A square belfry with lancet-shaped, louvered vents and a pyramidal roof originally once sat atop the roof, but has since been removed. The original bell sits at grade to the west of the structure. A round, wheel-like window is located below the front gable. There are rounded, arch windows on the sides and lancet windows on the façade or south elevation. The original sashes were removed during a 1990s renovation but are privately stored in the village. The front entrance contains a rounded arch, vertical-board door. A one-story, modern concrete block addition extends from the rear.

A rectangular, stone object, its stonework attributed to the Howard family, holds the sign for the church and stands along Welbourne Road.

33951 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0017

Lewis House

Primary Resource Information: Single Dwelling, Stories 2 Style: modular, ca 1996

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Individual Resource Status: **Single Dwelling**

Non-Contributing

Individual Resource Status: **Shed**

Non-Contributing

The Lewis House is a contemporary five-bay, two-story, side-gable house sheathed in vinyl siding with the appearance of horizontal weatherboard. The windows have one-over-one vinyl with fixed vinyl faux-paneled shutters.

A one-story, non-contributing modular shed is located at the rear of the property.

33950 Welbourne Road 053-5116-00018;

Willisville Sewer

Primary Resource Information: **Structure**

Style: Other, 2005

Individual Resource Status: **Sewer Treatment Facility**

Non-Contributing (structure)

This lot features sewage treatment equipment enclosed in a chain link fence at the east end and an open lot surrounded by a three-board fence on the west end. Although non-contributing, the sewer treatment equipment is unobtrusive and the site appears largely as an open grassy field. The sewer is located on the one-acre lot of one of Willisville's earliest houses, the Sarah Jackson house, which burned before 1910.

Landscape Feature

34008 Welbourne Road 053-5116-0004

Charles Briggs Property

Primary Resource Status: **vacant lot**

The original dwelling at this site was demolished after 2002. This is now a vacant lot. The house was constructed sometime between 1925 and 1930. Professional archaeological testing has not been undertaken on the site.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African American
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1840 - 1959

Significant Dates

C. 1840 (Willis House construction)
1868 (first school/ church)
1921 (second school on same site)
1924 (stone chapel)
1959 (sale of schoolhouse to private bidder)

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Allison, John (builder)
Hall, Albert (builder)
Jackson, James (builder)

Owners: Sarah Jackson, George Tebbs, William Gaskins, Henry Jackson, George Evans,
Lucinda Willis, and John Howard

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any other applicable criteria considerations.)

The Willisville Historic District is an intact, rural village with origins predating the Civil War. The village retains a high degree of historic integrity, reflecting two centuries of settlement. Welbourne Road is the main pedestrian and vehicular thoroughfare through the village. Most village lots follow their original 19th-century property lines, flanking both the north and south sides of Welbourne Road. Most 19th-century vernacular dwellings retain their original core, with 20th-century additions, constructed as fortunes and families grew. The tight-knit village is set within an expansive landscape of large, pastoral farmsteads, woodlands, and open vistas, appearing much as it did in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The district is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic History: African American as an intact village settled by African Americans prior to and after the Civil War. It is also locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its collection of buildings, structures, sites, and an object, constructed by and for African Americans throughout the history of the village. These resources, in many ways, are vernacular adaptations of popular styles and reflect the building traditions of the region, from the mid-19th through mid-20th century. With a Period of Significance dating from c. 1840, coinciding with construction of the Willis House and extending to 1959, with the sale of the Willisville Schoolhouse, the Willisville Historic District reflects both the evolved cultural patterns of vernacular construction and adapted national styles, representing economic gains created by the resilience of the families who rose from slavery. Freedmen largely built some of the original late-19th-century dwellings; many of these were constructed of stone and log with their own hands, testimony to the fortitude and skill required to raise their economic and social position after emancipation. Only two dwellings postdate the period of significance. In sharp juxtaposition to the suburban growth in eastern Loudoun County, the village retains a rhythm and way of life connected to its historic past. Some descendants of the founding families retain ownership. The pedestrian scale, intimate size, rural setting, and vernacular design remain intact. The surrounding farmland, much of which is under conservation easements, protect the rural setting.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

African American communities once dotted 19th-century Loudoun County. According to land tax records, immediately after the Civil War, there were approximately thirty²⁰ settlements of freed people throughout the county. However, many of these settlements have vanished due to African Americans migrating north, rampant suburban growth, and gentrification. In 1860, African Americans comprised roughly 36 percent²¹ of Loudoun's population, while today African Americans comprise only 7 percent of the total. The mid-20th century construction of Dulles

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Airport eliminated the village of Willard,²² and unchecked residential sprawl in eastern Loudoun has eliminated the historic settlements of Conklin, Oak Grove, and Nokesville. Property values in Loudoun have priced some African Americans out of the residential market. Gentrification and infill development have altered the complexion of St Louis. The villages of Howardsville and Willisville remain distinct as exemplars of African American architecture and culture. Not only is preservation of the architectural fabric important, but so too the preservation of the community of the people, their stories, and their history.

Welbourne Road, an unpaved rural road, which serves as the organizing spine, bisects the village on an east to west axis. Welbourne Road marks the 1740 boundary line between Amos Janney and Nathaniel Brown's Fairfax grants.²³ Some early Loudoun roads followed these property divisions. Welbourne Road also appears in the 1845 Yardley Taylor Map and is mentioned in context with Civil War military history about the Battle of Upperville but may have been rebuilt in the late 19th century, as it is later referred to as the "new public road leading from Millsville to the Colored School House."²⁴ Willisville Road forms the west boundary and open farmland of the Catesby and Pelham farms form the east boundary of the village. Wooded areas enclose the village on the north and south.

Types of Housing for the Enslaved and Free in Antebellum Loudoun County

In the aftermath of Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion, Virginia laws restricted rights of free African Americans. "Free Negroes," the term given to free persons of color and to manumitted persons and designated as "FN" in county records, were required to leave the Commonwealth or petition to remain. Permission to stay was granted according to "good behavior," sponsorship (from a white person), and level of skill. During the 1830s, Loudoun's African American population was roughly 5,500, of whom approximately one-fifth were free. In Loudoun's 1856 Land Tax Records, there were approximately 73 "Free Negroes" in western Loudoun.²⁵

It is possible that Willisville's origins lay in a varied collection of dwellings of free African Americans, of slave quarters, and of at least one overseer's house, all dating to before the Civil War. According to a 2004 architectural survey of the area, one of Willisville's oldest known dwellings is the Willis House, which dates to circa 1840 and was built as a one-and-a-half story log house.²⁶ The distinctive stone chimney with ashlar corners indicates the dwelling may even date earlier. Henson Willis (1821 – 1874)²⁷ occupied the cabin; the first known written record of Henson Willis is the 1856 Loudoun County Personal Property tax record where Willis is identified as "Hughes [sic] Willis, FN."²⁸ Willis appears frequently in local resident Ida Dulany's diary as the "free negro Henson Willis."²⁹ Henson Willis was married at that time to Lucinda, who was enslaved by Ida Dulany's family. Willis's first wife, Bitha, was a Dulany slave who had died in childbirth at the plantation Welbourne in 1855.³⁰ Henson Willis was a mechanic – someone who could work with wood and possibly worked at the Clifton Mill. A mechanic would have been a valued trade and therefore it was likely than Henson Willis may have petitioned successfully to remain in Virginia after his manumission.

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Willis is also recorded in Loudoun's "Record of Free Negroes" as Hughes [sic] Willis, in which he is classified as mulatto (a racial category based on perceived racial ancestry), and his manumission was by a William Carr.³¹ The Willis cabin was located at the edge of Townsend Seaton's (1825-1908) Catesby Farm on a non-arable, swampy area, which had little value. Willis likely bartered rent in exchange for labor. Land tax records indicate Willis owned neither personal property nor real estate. The dwelling was originally built as a two-bay, one-and-a-half story house with a stone foundation and massive stone chimney on the south gable end. The stonework shows the mark of a skilled stonemason, with ashlar cut stone as quoins and natural fieldstones. The house was originally oriented with the side gable end towards Welbourne Road.

During the 19th century, areas of Loudoun County were denoted by the names of large plantations and/or locally prominent property owners. For example, there were other free African Americans living "nr Clifton" (a likely reference to the Clifton Mill), in the vicinity of present-day Willisville. Loudoun County property tax records and U. S. Census records lend further insight into the antebellum circumstances of Loudoun's free persons of color. Sarah Jackson (1819 - 1910)³², a "Free Negro," was living in southwest Loudoun. The Sarah Jackson House once stood at the west end of Willisville, near the school, where the Loudoun Sewer plot is now. The Nickens family was also in the vicinity; they were a prosperous free family before the Civil War. Land tax records list James H. Nickens in 1851 and Barry and Richard Nickens in 1856.³³ Living near Unison, another "FN," Alfred Hoe (1802 - unknown), was living nearby Welbourne as a free person of color with his family.³⁴ Hoe was married to Priscilla (1802 - ?), who was enslaved by John P. Dulany and had been purchased by him as a young girl in 1812.³⁵ Alfred Hoe is listed as a "Free Negro" in the 1847 Fletcher's Road case³⁶ and accompanied Colonel Richard Dulany into the Civil War.³⁷

According to the 1860 Census, slave schedules indicate there were over 140 enslaved persons living in the vicinity of Willisville.³⁸ Some Willisville buildings likely had their origin as slave quarters. According to renowned historian Doug Sanford, houses of the enslaved "...varied in size and layout, and many different type of houses could exist on a single plantation, especially with large enslaved populations and wealthy owners. Enslaved agriculture workers, or field hands, resided in smaller cabins near fields. The most modest of these had unfinished interiors and dirt floors, shuttered windows, and chimneys formed of wood and mud."³⁹

Sanford also opines on dwellings for the enslaved, stating by the 19th century, quarters were designed to accommodate family units, a departure from the barrack style housing of the late 18th century. Often, a quarter housed two families in one dwelling as

A duplex was a double cabin ... with exterior doorways providing entry to each room, and no interior access from one space to the other. Each room had its own fireplace, with chimneys positioned either at the ends of the structure or with a ... chimney placed in the center with flues to serve both fireplaces. The relatively large numbers of surviving duplexes that date to the 1820s to 1850s are generally more substantial and weather-tight, with continuous foundations or masonry piers, raised wooden floors, glazed windows, and brick or stone fireplaces. Some duplexes had interior walls with plaster and trim boards, but the majority was more cheaply built.⁴⁰

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On plantations with large enslaved populations, field laborers would have been housed separately from those who worked in or near the main house. According to John Michael Vlach, in his book *Back of the Big House*, “quarter” also referred to the subdivision of larger plantations into smaller land bays for crop management. According to Sanford “... these so-called farm quarters also included an overseer’s house and related outbuildings ...”⁴¹ As one observer noted:

A Negro Quarter is a Number of Huts or Hovels, built some Distance from the Mansion-House; where the Negroes reside with their wives and Families and cultivate at vacant times the little Spots allow’d them.⁴²

Three of Willisville’s pre-Civil War structures follow the building typography outlined in Sanford’s thesis and Vlach’s observation of slave quarters and dwellings. According to the 1860 agricultural census, the Seaton family of Catesby owned 32 enslaved people, firmly establishing themselves in the ‘planter class’ or top ten percent of slave owners. Also according to census records, there were four “house slaves,” who would have resided close to the main house. The remaining 28 persons would have been field slaves who resided away from the main house in groupings or ‘quarters.’

Originally part of Catesby, the plantation owned by the Seaton family, the Warner House was likely built for an overseer and, according to a 2002 architectural survey of Loudoun’s African American resources, dates to circa 1850.⁴³ This house would have been part of a ‘quarter’ – a collection of dwellings for those laborers working in fields. The house is built as a typical Virginia I-house, with a central hall passage and two flanking parlors. With its raised foundation, generous, one-story, front porch, large windows, and architectural detailing, this dwelling was more likely constructed for an overseer or white laboring-class family.

Early photographs of the George Evans House⁴⁴ show two exterior doors, possibly an indication that the house was originally constructed as a duplex, as described by Sanford. It is sited close to the Warner House and away from Welbourne Road, another clue the Evans House and Warner House may have been functionally related as a ‘quarter.’

After the Civil War, 1865 through 1870s

At the end of the American Civil War (1861-1865), with Virginia’s economy in shambles and its agricultural landscape severely damaged, many emancipated African Americans migrated to northern and Midwestern states in search of better opportunities. According to Edward Ayres, in *The Promise of the New South*, “The countryside soon became depleted, with the best people leaving first,” and he quoted Lewis Blair, who wrote in the 1880s, “the younger and more ambitious desert the village and the county ...”⁴⁵

In the southwest corner of Loudoun, prior to the Civil War, the African American population had dwindled to thirty-five percent of the county’s entire population. Those who left first were the able-bodied, seeking new fortunes and leaving behind a deficit in the labor class.⁴⁶ The

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slavery-based economy had collapsed and the nucleus of industry, water-powered mills producing lumber, textiles, and grain products, including the Dulanys' Millsville, had been destroyed during the war.⁴⁷ For those who chose to stay, or had no other choice, there were few opportunities to find work. Squatting or living as a sharecropper on the farm of a white landowner were among the limited options in rural areas.

Due to the continued dominance of the political and social power structure by whites, the emancipated African Americans who remained in rural Virginia had limited recourse when it came to establishing their own homes. These individuals and families settled where they were able – in abandoned shacks and former slave quarters on accommodating white landowners' property or on small plots of land they rented or purchased from former enslavers in need of income. From such small clusters, communities would be built, generally comprised of extended family or those previously associated by slavery.⁴⁸

Land tax records from 1867 indicate Willisville's post-bellum residents stayed in close proximity to where they had been prior to the war. Armistead Corbin and Henry Jackson (both previously enslaved by the Dulanys),⁴⁹ Willisville's earliest landowners, were living at "JA Carter," (presumably James A. Carter of the Crednal plantation), along with George Evans.⁵⁰ John Howard (enslaved by the Seaton family)⁵¹ was living at "Wm. Seaton" (presumably a member of the Seaton family of the Catesby plantation). The antebellum practice of referring to parts of the county by the names of locally prominent families or large plantations continued into the late 19th century, making for a challenge in analyzing postwar settlement patterns.

Immediately after the war, the U.S. Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, more commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau. The office was established, among other things, to supervise "relief and educational activities" for the nation's emancipated African Americans. Locally, the Freedmen's Bureau was established at Warrenton, Leesburg and then finally Middleburg, and was led by Lieutenant Sydney B. Smith.⁵²

Autonomous land ownership, education, and community worship,⁵³ all previously illegal during slavery were now all within reach and represented enfranchisement within the new post-war society. The African American community in Willisville worked towards reaching all three of these significant milestones.

In March 1868, Colonel Richard Dulany petitioned Lieutenant Sydney Smith at the Freedmen's Bureau office in Middleburg. Dulany asked for a school:

Large number of colored people in his neighborhood has requested him to apply for assistance to build a school house ... Estimated the cost to be upwards to \$500 and requests the Bureau to furnish aid to the amount of \$200 or \$300. State that the balance can be raised for them.

Dulany's letter identifies the "neighborhood," confirming that by 1868, there was a community of African Americans living in close proximity around Willisville but without schools for the African American children.⁵⁴ This "neighborhood" likely consisted of freed people previously

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enslaved on the surrounding farms. On August 28, 1868, the Freedman's Bureau recorded in "office notes" that:

the Freedmen have a deed for a ½ acre An [sic] erecting the school house thereon. Size 18 x 30 Log Trustees George Evans, Garner Peters and Benj Berry. They have a teacher employed named [Mc]Gil Pierce.⁵⁵ School will probably commence Jan 1, 1869.⁵⁶

The deed for the half-acre lot was located at the corner of "the public road from Clifton Mill to Union."⁵⁷ The deed is notable for its establishment of the self-governing authority of African Americans over their own community institutions, for the successional ownership of the real estate, and for the survivorship of the institution

... in trust [for the] following conditions: 1st exclusive use and benefit of young colored person and children school determined by school trustees; 2nd lot and school house used on Sabbath days for holding Sunday school, colored persons holding religious worship for colored population of neighborhood; 3rd fill vacancy if one resigns...⁵⁸

It is possible that Dulany borrowed these governing tenants from the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁵⁹ The early Methodist Episcopal Church established working relationships between the church conference, the church trustees, and the local community by acknowledging the desires of a community and investing community resources to accomplish these community goals. It is also possible that Dulany borrowed these governing tenants from developments in the Virginia House of Delegates.⁶⁰ In any case, this deed is significant for its reflection of the civil tone of the Reconstruction Era and its emphasis on democracy and rights of all citizens, regardless of race.

By late October 1868, the new schoolhouse was under construction. In November 1868, a letter from the Freedman's Bureau identified Henry Mason, a "mulatto" painter living in Middleburg,⁶¹ as the contractor for the schoolhouse. Mason hired four men for fifteen days at \$2.50 each, totaling \$150.⁶² The first local pastor for the Willisville Chapel, collocated with the school, was Henry Carroll, who had a two-year term starting in 1869. Carroll lived in Baltimore, the location of the Methodist Episcopal conference, but preached at several different churches, including Paris and Upperville.

The Willisville schoolhouse was one of several built for African American children in Loudoun County after the Civil War. Freedmen's schools were also established in Middleburg [next door to Jay Street Church], Hillsborough, Hamilton, Lincoln, Waterford, and Leesburg.

1870s: Freedom, Citizenship and the Right to own Property

The decade following the Civil War brought new liberties associated with citizenship for African Americans. The year 1867 marked the beginning of the Reconstruction Era and, by 1870, Virginia re-entered the Union, thus transitioning from military rule back to civilian government. In Loudoun County, African Americans made strides in self-governance. Cook Nickens was elected Constable of Leesburg Magisterial District.⁶³ The Nickenses were a prominent free

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African American family before the Civil War and some of the first African Americans known to own property in Loudoun.

Judging from the U. S. census records and land tax records, there were about five or more families in Willisville.⁶⁴ The same families enslaved before the Civil War – those of George Evans, Hansen Willis, Alfred Hoe,⁶⁵ and Harry [Henry] Jackson – still were living in close proximity to Willisville, likely as sharecroppers, bartering rent for labor or farm produce. Garner Peters and William Gillison (1835 - ?), previously enslaved by the Dulany family, appear to have been still living within the household at Welbourne.

African Americans were likely allowed to settle in the Willisville area as it was in a remote area on non-arable land. A road case gives a description of the Willisville neighborhood describing the “public road from Clifton Mill to Union,” today’s Willisville Road, as “abandoned.”⁶⁶ Willisville was obviously in a “back routes” area, settled on land of lesser value.

In 1872, four years after the construction of the Willisville School, Townsend Seaton carved small lots from Catesby to sell to African American families. Seaton sold a little more than one acre to John and Delia Howard. In 1874, Seaton sold three acres to Lucinda Willis (1830 - ?), Henson Willis’s widow. The next year, he sold three acres to George Evans (1821 - ?) and another three-acre parcel to Henry Jackson (1825 - ?). All of these deeds refer to an 1871 survey, indicating Seaton had intended to subdivide lots for sale to the African American families who were already living in the community, possibly with a premeditated intent to offer property ownership to the formerly enslaved. In 1875, John Armistead Carter (1808 – 1890) of Crednal followed suit, carving parcels from Crednal, selling one acre to Sarah Jackson⁶⁷ and a year later, one acre to George Tebbs.⁶⁸

Such transactions, however, were mutually beneficial for sellers and buyers of these small plots of land. The Civil War left many Loudoun residents – both blacks and whites – close to poverty. Agriculture, the foundation of Loudoun’s economy, was in ruins; hard currency was difficult to come by; and a substantial proportion of workers in their prime having relocated. Personal property taxes from 1867 illustrate that the emancipated African Americans near Willisville owned little taxable property and that the white planter class’s fortunes had been decimated. Land ownership offered freed people an opportunity to build a house and establish a farm for their own food production, as well as providing the seller with much-needed income. Purchasing a lot on the edge of a plantation also placed freedpeople within walking distance of employment in the plantation’s fields or in the main house. Families who could not accumulate the means to purchase land became tenant farmers or sharecroppers to white landowners, in a relationship that soon proved to be far more advantageous to the landowner than to the tenant. Due to these circumstances, the antebellum political, social, and economic system soon morphed into the reassertion of white supremacy after Reconstruction ended.

Land ownership, on the other hand, represented a chance for African American social customs to survive. Not only was the community able to worship autonomously and to see their

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children educated, but so, too, were they able to bury their dead in a permanent and protected space. Before the Civil War, cemeteries of the enslaved were typically in unmarked locations and lacked grave markers. Funerary practices were dictated by the slaveowner rather than the deceased's family and friends. A notable example is the slave cemetery at Crednal, which has separate burial grounds for whites and blacks. Permanent gravestones and a high fieldstone wall denote the Carter family's cemetery. The boundaries of the African American graveyard, on the other hand, are not well defined and the only marked grave is for Julia Evans, wife of George Evans, who died in 1896. Depressions in the landscape mark countless interments of unknown others.

After the Civil War and with the purchase of the school and church lot, the community of Willisville was able to secure a location for their community cemetery, which they located on the west side of the half-acre school lot. Henson Willis was the first burial in Willisville in 1874, the year before his widow Lucinda purchased their home. Amanda [nee Hampton] Nickens died young and was buried the year following. Those interred in the Willisville cemetery represent families who had been enslaved at Welbourne, Crednal and Catesby as well as the generations who followed them. Today, in addition to the chapel cemetery, Willisville includes the Evans Warner family cemetery, established in 1914, and the Hackley Smith cemetery, established in 1921.

Other Freedmen's Communities in Western Loudoun County

According to the 1878 land tax records, there were five African American settlements in the vicinity of Willisville composed of those formerly enslaved by the Dulany, Carter, and Seaton families. In these records, Willisville was still referred to as 'nr Clifton' and consisted of seven families. An area "nr Upperville" likely included the village made up of five Evans families, including George Evans and his sons James, Richard, Edward, and Thomas. Another community identified as "nr Welbourne,"⁶⁹ was comprised of eleven families, including Garner Peters (1828-1893), Arch Strother (1835 - 1914), William Gaskins (1845 - 1924),⁷⁰ and Armistead Corbin (1835 - 1905), all formerly enslaved by the Dulanys.⁷¹ St Louis was by far the largest freedmen's settlement with fourteen families. Alfred Hoe and Wormley Hughes, two African Americans who were free before the Civil War, lived in St Louis during the late 1870s. Millsville was made up of five McQuay families, who would later settle in St Louis.

Sister Villages: Millsville, Howardsville, and St Louis.

The 19th-century community of Millsville⁷² stood at the ford crossing Goose Creek south of St. Louis along the Millsville-Upperville Road, today known as Kirks Branch Road. John Dulany owned mills along Goose Creek near the ford; these and the few dwellings around them collectively became known as the community of Millsville. In her 1850s diary, Rebecca Dulany, wife of Colonel Richard Dulany, listed the "Welbourne Hands" living separately from the enslaved African Americans who worked at Millsville. She referred to six men, some with

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families.⁷³ In 1860, land tax records listed three families of free persons of color as owning small plots “nr Millsville”⁷⁴ and “adj Jno Dulany.”⁷⁵ The mills were destroyed during the Civil War but had been rebuilt by the 1880s. However, Millsville did not survive into the 20th century as the mills later were lost to flooding.

Howardsville is located three miles northwest of Willisville and today remains a largely African American hamlet. Kevin Grigsby, in his book *Howardsville*, attributes the origins of the village to the antebellum era. The one-and-one-half-story Gracie Reid House [DHR# 053-0062-0005; 053-6087- 0193] and the house at 20857 Green Garden Road [DHR# 053-0062-0001; 053-6087-0198] both date to the mid-19th century⁷⁶ and were perhaps originally tenant houses or quarters for field hands associated with nearby Bellfield.⁷⁷ Early land tax records identify a community of free African Americans living “nr Bloomfield,” referring to the community’s geographical proximity to the predominantly white village of Bloomfield. After the Civil War, Howardsville grew into a thriving community, gaining population. Like Willisville, land ownership in Howardsville is documented by 1874 with the sale of small tracts by Mary Stephenson, of the nearby Grayson family, to African Americans.⁷⁸ Although geographically larger – Howardsville is 37 acres and ten dwellings – the hamlet never hosted its own church, cemetery, school, or store, but instead shared these community resources with Willisville and the nearby village of Rock Hill.

St Louis also had pre-Civil War origins and, like Willisville, developed after a land survey. In 1871, Thomas and Emily Glascock, of nearby Rose Hill, purchased 60 acres from William Benton.⁷⁹ A decade later on October 6, 1881, Glascock recorded ten separate deeds of sale to African American families.⁸⁰ Each of these parcels was small, ranging from one-half acre to three acres, totaling 21 acres in all. Whether the Glascocks purchased Benton’s 60 acres with the specific intention of offering lots for sale to the formerly enslaved is not known. Further, it is not clear if the Glascocks had enslaved any of the original St. Louis landowners, although it appears that several of the freedmen had a close association with the Dulany family. For example, in the deed of Anne Gillison, who was one of the eleven landowners, there is a note in the margin “1882 [illegible] mailed to Col Dulany...” The reason for sending Gillison’s deed to Colonel Richard Dulany is not known, although the Dulanys seem to have maintained paternalistic interest in the welfare of their emancipated slaves.⁸¹ In another deed, H. Grafton Dulany⁸², Richard Dulany’s brother and a local financier, loaned \$75 to Thomas Moore,⁸³ a new St Louis African American property owner, using his plot as collateral. Like Willisville, St Louis had its own school, church, cemetery, and store. As early as 1878, the land tax records identify St Louis by name, firmly establishing it in history.

In addition to the “sister” villages of Millsville, Howardsville, and St Louis, Loudoun County saw numerous smaller African American settlements that sprang-up after the Civil War. Brown’s Corner, east of Middleburg, was established by those formerly enslaved by the Broun family of Sunny Bank Farm. Broun’s Corner was never larger than the four dwellings that remain today. The hamlet had its origins as tenant houses of the Rogers family at nearby Stone Hill.⁸⁴ Rock Hill, northwest of Howardsville, also settled after the war, was never larger than four or five log dwellings and a one-room school.⁸⁵ Although the frame school was destroyed,

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it was replaced with a 1911 stone chapel, which is all that remains of the 19th century hamlet.

1880 and 1900s

The year 1877 marked the end of Reconstruction. At the federal level, the celebrated equal rights legislation, and many of the social and civil freedoms that came with it, began to be eroded. In 1880, one of Loudoun County's first documented lynchings occurred. Lynchings demonstrated that African Americans had no civil protection from mobs and vigilantes. In 1883, Loudoun's African American leaders met at the county courthouse to petition their diminishing rights.⁸⁶ In her book *The Warmth of Other Suns*, which explores the African American exodus from the South, Isabel Wilkerson states, "For all its upheaval, the Civil War had left most blacks in the South no better off economically than they had been before. Sharecropping, slavery's replacement, kept them in debt and bound to the plantation where they worked."⁸⁷ The U.S. Supreme Court's 1896 decision, *Plessy vs Ferguson*, enshrined the "separate but equal" doctrine in federal law and provided the constitutional cover for state and local governments to enact the discriminatory laws, regulations, and codes that collectively created the segregation era known as Jim Crow. Civil rights laws passed during Reconstruction were rendered meaningless. During the Jim Crow era, which endured well into the 1950s, African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities had few civil rights, were disenfranchised, and could not expect equal treatment by any arm of local, state, or federal government or by any part of the private sector.

In rural Loudoun County, despite a thriving neighborhood economy, property tax records from the 1880s indicate a subsistence level of living for Willisville's residents. Henry Jackson and Lucinda Willis, two of the more prosperous Willisville landowners, each owned a cow worth \$20 and \$25 respectively. A cow was valuable not only for feeding their families but also selling milk. Lucinda Willis owned a clock – the only one in the neighborhood. Neighboring tenants owned much less; personal property taxes reveal some families owned nothing taxable at all. The U. S. census also reveals struggles with poverty; several Willisville residents remained unemployed or did not work at all. Lucinda Willis's farming of her three-acre plot provided her only means of income. The Willisville community, however, provided their own support network; neighbors sheltered those who could not provide for themselves. In the 1880 census, Frank Thompson, age 85, was too old to work and is listed as a "pauper" who boarded in a neighboring household.

The 1880 census shows approximately 16 families living in Willisville: Humphrey Stiles, Benjamin Brent, Garner Peters, George Tebbs + Wm Gaskins (same house), John Howard, Jane Coleman, George Evans, Lucinda Willis, Wm. H. Peters, Armistead Corbin, Lucy Tibbs, Thomas Moore, Edward Spinny, and George Brewer + Daniel Robinson (same house). Loudoun County's 1881 land tax records show five of those families owned lots in Willisville: George Evans, John Howard, Henry Jackson, Sarah Jackson, and George Tebbs. Welbourne, Catesby, and Crednal continued to be the main employers of the community. For example, in 1880, Sarah Jackson was working as a live-in servant at Crednal. Garner Peters (1821-1893),

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formerly enslaved at Welbourne, lived with his extended family, including his brother Moses (b. 1815), in Willisville. Both men continued to work as hostlers (grooms), presumably at the stables at Welbourne.⁸⁸ William Gaskins (1840 or 1847? – 1924) lived in Willisville in George Tebbs's house and worked at Welbourne as a waiter.⁸⁹ William H. Peters (1829 - ?), formerly enslaved by the Dulany family, lived in Willisville next door to Lucinda Willis and worked as a shoemaker, likely in a modest building located on the site of the Howard House.⁹⁰ George Evans (1821 - ?), another of Willisville's founders who was formerly enslaved, lived on his plot in Willisville while working as a laborer, presumably on Seaton's farm. Alfred Hoe, who had been free before the Civil War, also lived in the community. Now 88 years old, he had worked as a carpenter and was now living with his grown son, Clifford Hoe, a 40-year-old laborer, in a house that was possibly on Crednal land. Sarah Jackson, also a free person of color before the war, lived in the vicinity of Willisville. Now age 61, she was a widowed housekeeper living at Crednal, so it is assumed someone rented her antebellum house.

If the 1870s were a time of settlement, when newly emancipated African Americans were able to establish themselves, then the 1880s and 1890s – within Willisville – was a time of community stability engendered by landownership. Census information reveals generations of African American and white families continued to live in close proximity to one another. Deeds reveal the financial stability of landowning families raising capital and building equity, while school records show the community was able to invest in the next generation by educating their children.

With Virginia's economy ruined by the Civil War, African Americans had little access to capital during Reconstruction, but those who owned land could use their real property as collateral for loans. The year 1878 marked the first mortgage in Willisville, with John and Delia Howard placing their property in trust for \$100. George Roszel, a cousin and agent for Grafton Dulany, Colonel Richard Dulany's older son, provided the financing.⁹¹ Some landowning families were also able to raise funds by splitting off a smaller lot from their parcel. In 1884, Lucinda Willis, with dwindling income, sold a half-acre to the church "for the purpose of constructing a parsonage"⁹² and, the same day, mortgaged her property for \$198.⁹³ Although the parsonage was never built, the cash income allowed Lucinda to supplement her meager living as a farmer. Also in 1884, Henry and Lettie Jackson [Brewer House] sold three-quarters of an acre to William Peters for \$64.⁹⁴ At that time, William Peters was living in a small house on the site of the Howard House, at the west edge of Lucinda Willis' property, and working as a shoemaker.⁹⁵

Land ownership also enabled African American families to transfer wealth and to build equity. George Evans gave a quarter-acre to Sophie Robison (1830 - ?), presumably a relative, who had been living in Townsend Seaton's household in 1880.⁹⁶ In 1880, Ellen and George Tebbs sold a half-acre lot to William Gaskins for \$54.⁹⁷ Five years earlier, the Tebbs had purchased their one-acre lot for \$80 from John Armistead Carter.⁹⁸ By selling a half-acre at a small mark-up, the Tebbses were able to improve their house.⁹⁹ In 1884, Henry and Lettie Jackson sold their house at twice its appraised value to their son-in-law and daughter, George and Chrissie Jackson Brewer.¹⁰⁰

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Employment opportunities for Willisville's residents continued to be on the nearby large white-owned farms. By the 1880s, Colonel Richard Dulany's children were adults with their own farms near Willisville.¹⁰¹ Mary Dulany Neville (1845-1935) lived with her husband, Robert Neville, a noted horseman, nearby at Pelham. Nellie Peters (b. 1829), wife of William H Peters, and their daughter Emma (b. 1868) both worked in the Neville household. Domestic work would remain one of the very few options for paid employment available to African American women in rural Virginia until the 1960s. Richie H. Dulany, the Colonel's second son, lived at Old Welbourne with George Evans's son Thomas (b. 1850), age 30, and William Peters Jr. (b. 1867), age 13, both of whom worked in the stables. Alfred Hoe¹⁰² Jr. (b. 1845), age 35, and his wife, Sarah, also worked for Richie Dulany but lived in their own household.¹⁰³

The onset of Jim Crow brought some of Loudoun's African Americans to leave the area permanently. As Isabel Wilkerson wrote, "Each year, people who had been able to vote or ride the train where they chose, found that something they could do freely yesterday, they were prohibited from doing today..."¹⁰⁴ Thus, William Peters (Jr) left Willisville for New Jersey. Mattie (Peters) Evans and her husband, Wellington Evans, moved to Galveston, Texas, where she worked as a waitress and he drove an ox cart. Sophie Burrell, Lucinda Willis's daughter, moved to Washington DC; by 1930, she had migrated farther north and lived in Brooklyn with her younger half-brother, Robert Willis.¹⁰⁵

Through the 1880s, Willisville still did not have an established name, with its geographical location still identified by adjoining white landowners.¹⁰⁶ For example, John Howard and Henry Jackson, now established landowners, lived "nr Seaton." As a geographical description, Willisville first appeared in land tax records in 1890.

Church and School

Land ownership also brought African Americans opportunities for investing in the next generation, particularly in school. Such investment was essential, as Virginia's still-developing public school system devoted the vast majority of its resources to educating white children. During the 1880s and 1890s, Willisville's children attended a one-room school built during Reconstruction that offered grades one through seven. The children and grandchildren of Willisville's founders – Henry Jackson, Lucinda Willis, John Howard, George Evans, William Peters – were listed in census records as 'attending school.' Lucy Peters (1858 - ?),¹⁰⁷ daughter of Garner and Sarah Peters, taught at Willisville¹⁰⁸ during the 1893-1894 school year.¹⁰⁹

By 1884, the congregation at Willisville Chapel had grown and the church decided to purchase land to build a parsonage. The deed lists the purchaser as "M E Ch (col)" along with the seven Willisville trustees and two trustees who represented the Methodist Episcopal Church Conference.¹¹⁰ A half-acre was purchased from Lucinda Willis for \$50.¹¹¹ For purposes of assuming ownership, the new lot was held in trust for the Methodist Episcopal Church, noting any buildings that may hereafter be erected on the [site?] shall be maintained as a place

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of residence for the use and occupancy of the Preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church ... who from time to time may be stationed in this place ... authorized and declared by the General Conference.¹¹²

1900 – 1910s: Unequal Rights

By the beginning of the 20th century, the vision of equal rights for all, promised at emancipation, had been obliterated by Jim Crow laws, sanctioned racism, and white supremacist political, social, and economic relationships. Further exacerbating the problem, voting rights were challenged. In 1902, Virginia implemented a poll tax and literacy test, both of which were designed with the intention of disfranchising African Americans and eliminating hopes for civic participation and political representation.

During Reconstruction, the federal government never created or implemented a comprehensive plan to compensate emancipated African Americans for their years of unpaid labor so that they could establish new lives. Lacking financial resources, most rural African Americans had few options other than to remain in subservient relationships to white landlords. Moreover, whites refused to sell arable plots to African Americans, instead limiting them to marginal lands in undesirable areas. By 1900, only 1 percent of Loudoun's African American population owned land. This doubled to 2% a decade later, still far short of reasonable goals.¹¹³ By contrast, in Willisville, African Americans owned the entire village and roughly 70 percent of properties were owner-occupied.¹¹⁴

Willisville, although not immune to the broader racial overtones, was somewhat insulated. The efforts in the 1870s and 1880s to subdivide small parcels for land ownership had enabled more Willisville residents to secure home ownership. As shown in the 1900 and 1910 census, the neighborhood economy was still rooted in service jobs at neighboring farms, which provided steady income, although generations of black-white relationships continued much as they always had. John and Delia Howard were still in the house they purchased in 1874 but now lived with two others. George and Crissie Brewer lived with their son and a male "servant." Armistead Corbin lived with four boarders – Melvany, Stanley G., and Marcus and Kennie Hampton. Robert Neville, owner of Pelham, still trained racehorses, which provided jobs for Willisville residents. The 1910 census listed three African American men working as hostlers and living as lodgers at Pelham.

Julia Evans died in 1896 and after her death, George Evans begin to divide the balance of their three-acre lot.¹¹⁵ In 1897, Evans sold a half-acre lot to his granddaughter, Mary Evans, daughter of George's son Thomas Evans (1847-before 1897?). It is likely that Thomas predeceased his daughter, which is why the house was deeded to her. The deed describes "one house and lot in the village of Willisville on the road leading from Millsville to Upperville adjoining the lands of George Evans and William Peter."¹¹⁶ This deed confirms the location of the house and lot and confirms the era of construction of the Henderson House.¹¹⁷

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Frank Henderson, the Welbourne Coachman, holds horses in front of Welbourne.

The Henderson House reflects the improved circumstances achieved by the first generation after emancipation. The vernacular dwelling, originally built as a two-over-two modified I-House, was constructed of sawn lumber, rather than locally sourced materials of log or stone, which had been the hallmark materials of earlier houses. The front porch, although sitting at grade rather than elevated, was ornamented with machine-cut scrollwork, indicative of the affordability of such mass-produced features by the early 20th century. Able to afford more contemporary styles, this new generation built houses easily distinguished from the earlier vernacular dwellings that were devoid of ornamentation, as typified by the Willis or Brewer houses.

In 1899, George Evans sold his house and half-acre lot to his son William; "...a lot of ground with all appurtenances."¹¹⁸ This is the property still known as the Evans House. In 1880, William had been working at Crednal working as a live-in servant, while his wife Bitha (Willis) Evans, lived in the Evans House with her in-laws.¹¹⁹ In his 1899 will, George Evans gave "... the house where I now live [the Warner House] and about three acres of land ..." to his daughter Mary (Evans) Warner (1866 – 1942) during her life and after her death to her daughter Julia (1889-1926) in fee. Mary was given life right to the house plus rights to all the personal property: "... The house and kitchen furniture ... go with the House... The Horse and Cow or any other stock I may own at the time of my death I also will to my daughter Mary. This property is left to my said daughter as her separate estate free from any debt, control or management by her husband Dorsey Warner [(1864-1924.)]"¹²⁰

By the 1900s, there were ten homeowners in Willisville, two of whom were headed by men born into freedom instead of slavery: Frank Henderson (b. 1864 after the Emancipation Proclamation) and William Evans (b. 1867). Other property owners in Willisville were John W

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Howard (b. 1844) in the Anderson House; George Brewer (b. 1848) in the Brewer house; William H. Peters (b. 1823) on the Peters Property; William H. Gaskins (b. 1845) of the Waters House; Armistead Corbin (b. 1830) in the Gaskins House; Lucinda Willis (b. 1846) in the Willis House; and George Evans (b. 1820) in the Warner House. It is not known if the Briggs House was occupied at this time, while Sarah Jackson's House had been destroyed by fire.

Extended and multi-generational families often lived in the same household. The widower George Evans, now age 79, lived in the Warner House with his daughter, Mary Evans Warner and her husband, Dawsey [sic] Warner. In addition, their five children, George's grandchildren, were also in the house and attending school, along with two related adults, Edward Warner (age 50) and James Warner (age 44). In 1900, William H. Peters (b. 1831, also recorded as Peterson), formerly enslaved by the Dulanys, appeared for the first time in land tax records, on a lot split from the Brewer House. The dwelling thereon, valued at \$75, was modest by Willisville standards. Peters still worked as a shoemaker, which may have been his job while enslaved at Welbourne. His house, later to be known as the Peters Property was possibly constructed of sawn lumber as a one-and-a-half-story, side-gable building with weatherboard siding. The house had a low, one story, shed-roofed front porch supported by turned posts. The front porch was later modified with a poured concrete floor. Local resident Carole Lee remembers newspaper insulation, a cellar, a separate kitchen at the rear of the house and a central chimney. Although a small house, the household consisted of William Peters, his wife Nellie, their daughter Emma (Peters) Gaskins (b. 1866) and Emma's five children Milton (b. 1895), Lucious [sic] (b. 1896), Dudley (b. 1897), Rosely (b.1898), and Marie (b. 1900). By 1910, there were three Gaskins families living in Willisville: Richard (Pappa Dick) and Emma (Peters) Gaskins in the Peters House; William and Rose Gaskins with two children and grandchildren in the Waters House; and Lucius and Anna Gaskins in the Gaskins House.¹²¹

The year 1912 marked another expansion in the village, when John Peyton De Butts sold a one-acre lot to Zedda Hackley (1880-1950).¹²² In the 1910 census, Zedda was listed as living in the DeButts household. The deed is notable as it very specifically excludes any of De Butts's children from future title to Hackley's real estate interest. Oral history speculates that Hackley's four children at the time, Nannie Hackley Turner (1902-1923); Virginia Hackley Brooks (1908-1980); Rebecca Hackley Anderson (1909-1981); and Julia Hackley (1910-1949), were fathered by De Butts. Nannie died young and was interred behind the Hackley property. It is not clear why this location was chosen as her burial was outside of Zedda's one-acre lot, but it may have been the site of an earlier burial ground for the enslaved. Zedda Hackley's descendants continue to use the private cemetery. Today there are eight marked graves.

Colonel Richard Dulany died in 1908, closing a chapter of Civil War and Willisville's history. Dulany had enslaved many of Willisville's founders but the Dulany family also was instrumental in offering land ownership to African Americans and facilitating the right of community self-governance. Dulany also left a lifetime annuity to the sons of three men he previously had enslaved, Moses Peters, Garner Peters, and Alfred Hoe; each son received an annual lifetime stipend of \$50.¹²³

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Lack of advanced educational and training opportunities placed a barrier on Loudoun County African Americans' prospects. The county did not provide public education for African American children after the 7th grade. With families to support, many of the African American children held jobs while attending elementary school, thus reducing the amount of time they had available for study.

Willisville's school served the broader community, with students from as far away as Powell's Shop on Trappe Road and Howardsville. The one-room school was overcrowded and noisy. In 1910, Anna Gaskins (1890-1956) began her teaching career at the age of 18, in the same building where she was married. Her husband, Lucius Gaskins, was a cook and servant at Welbourne.

In 1918, the original log building, which served as the school, church, and center of village social life, was destroyed by fire. The community did not have the funds to rebuild and tough decisions followed. Loudoun County's Mercer School District offered to pay for rebuilding if the property's trustees would transfer ownership to the School Board. The Willisville Trustees concluded:

whereas said [founding] Trustees have long since died and the title to said real estate is now in Frank Henderson, Dorsey Warner, and Moses Peters, the present trustees ... and whereas said building has been destroyed by fire. ... In a duly called assembled meeting that is our wish and order ... we decided for school and church purpose to be conveyed by the Trustees to the School Board of Mercer District ... one half acre.¹²⁴

The decision was not unanimous; John Howard opposed the sale of the property, refusing to sign the property over to the School Board and to endorse the insurance check. Local land records recorded that "whereas John Howard ... has refused to carry out the wishes of said colored people ... to convey the property and ... refused to sign the check,"¹²⁵ and he was subsequently taken to court by the community and removed as Trustee. It is not recorded why John Howard voted against the sale; possibly he saw the sale as a loss of autonomy for the Willisville community, something for which the previous generation had fought so hard.

1920 - 1930s: 20th Century Improvements in the Village

By 1920, William and Bitha Evans occupied the **Evans House** and Richard and Zedda (Hackley) Shorts lived in the **Hackley House**. Kate Evans, widow of Thomas Evans, had remarried to Frank Henderson in 1899 and they lived in the **Henderson House**; Frank Henderson worked as a coachman at Welbourne. Kate Evans Henderson died in 1927 and left Frank with life rights to the Henderson House and then to her three children, William Marshall, Julia McIntosh, and Joseph Ellis.¹²⁶

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Some elements of modern infrastructure slowly made its way into rural Loudoun County by the 1920s and early 1930s. The Henderson House boasted the first telephone,¹²⁷ and Dominion Power brought electricity to the village in 1931.¹²⁸ By the 1920s, Middleburg was synonymous with “Hunt County;” the equine industry of racing, foxhunting, and polo provided job and entrepreneurial opportunities for Willisville’s male residents, many of whom worked as hostlers, tending to stables and continuing the legacy of their fathers in the Dulany stables. Robert Neville, Colonel Richard Dulany’s son-in-law, continued with his training operation at Pelham. Dudley Gaskins, who purchased the Willis House in 1925¹²⁹ and who would move to the village in the 1930s, also owned, rode and showed his own horses. The “Colored Colt Show” in Loudoun’s St Louis, one of two horse shows in the county open to African Americans, was a popular venue to show and sell their own stock. Farming the family plot continued to be an option for some Willisville property owners. John Howard, who had kept his three-acre parcel in one piece, had farming as his sole source of income.¹³⁰

The 1920s economic expansion that brought greater prosperity to large swaths of Virginia ended with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. This was followed by a significant drought in Loudoun County that crippled the local agricultural economy. Farms throughout Loudoun were sold at public auction for back taxes, although the large farms around Willisville remained operational as the owners were able to rely on funds in reserve. These farms continued to be the primary source of employment for Willisville residents who worked as gardeners, butlers, and chauffeurs.

The rural store served as the center of the village economy. With limited transportation outside Willisville and Jim Crow segregation laws, the store represented the only area for purchase of items that could not be produced on the farm. In areas that still lacked a modern banking system, rural stores usually operated on credit, becoming their own de-facto banking system.¹³¹ White business owners, however, did not necessarily want to extend credit to African American customers, so it was important that Willisville eventually gained its own store. Thomas Atkinson Jr. and Neville Atkinson built the Willisville Store between 1922 and 1924, after Delia Howard, now a widow, and her son and daughter-in-law, sold a lot to them.¹³² In 1924, Neville Atkinson sold to Henderson Grantland a lot “improved by a frame store building now occupied by the said grantee as tenant.”¹³³

Church

With the sale of Willisville’s schoolhouse to the Loudoun County School Board, the community dedicated itself to building a chapel separate from the school. In 1924, Mary Dulany Neville donated a portion of the “Sophie Carter lot,” carved off of nearby Pelham, to the Willisville community. This was the last expansion of the village boundaries.

Mary Neville is said to have modeled the stone church after a French provincial chapel. The total cost of construction was \$6,500, of which the community raised \$1,000 and Neville funded the balance.¹³⁴ The construction is attributed to the Hall brothers – Albert (b. 1885) and

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William Hall, who were sons of Nathan Hall (1850 - ?). Together, the family operated W.N. Hall and Sons, building notable stone buildings such as the Phoenix Building and the Upperville Post Office, originally built as a bank. During the 1920s and 1930s, W.N. Hall was the largest employer of African Americans in southwestern Loudoun County.¹³⁵

School

Willisville's schoolhouse was rebuilt in 1921 at the cost of \$1,200. The one-room frame building had weatherboard siding and was heated by a stove with a brick flue. The school continued to serve as a center for the community. Teacher Anna Gaskins was known for hosting school plays and chorales.¹³⁶ Mildred Gray, a veteran teacher who had taught at many of Loudoun's elementary schools, was hired to assist, teaching the younger classes. Mildred Gray boarded in Anna Gaskins' house.¹³⁷

The school was built to a standard, and old, construction design, being the same building typology as the Ashburn Colored School, built thirty years prior.¹³⁸ The 1921 schoolhouse appeared to be not as well constructed as the log building constructed by Richard Dulany. In September 1930, only nine years after construction, the community again banded together to advocate for themselves, writing:

We, the patrons of Willisville, feeling and knowing the danger which will befall our children in case a wind storm or some other catastrophe strike the already damaged building, petition the School Board of Loudoun County to give some close attention at once and venture aid by looking after the school building and bracing it or take some other preventative measures to correct further damage to the lives of our children.

The letter was signed by the school trustees, Frank Henderson, Charles Briggs, and W. L. Smith.¹³⁹

Although the school board addressed the Willisville community's concerns, a year later, in February 1931, the trustees petitioned again, this time about over-crowded conditions:

We the patrons of the Willisville School take this opportunity of thanking the Board in answering our petition; straightening up our building and securing more seats thereby relieving our children of a little of their uncomfortableness. But we are not satisfied; we are still desirous of some things. This has been brought to bear upon us by the steady increase, overcrowded conditions. We realize that some re-adjustment is necessary and it must be made if any benefits are to be derived for our children.¹⁴⁰

The petition described a chaotic learning environment, with enrollment of 76 children and daily attendance up to 70 children in the one-room schoolhouse, necessitating that the children share chairs. All seven grades were taught in the same classroom. An over-taxed Anna Gaskins served as both the teacher and principal. Parents from both Willisville and Howardsville signed the petition.¹⁴¹

In 1931, the county school board acknowledged the petition and constructed an addition to create a two-room school. Generously sized windows along the west side provided ample natural light. A stone chimney at the north end provided additional heat. Still, conditions were

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primitive. Children walked to school as far as three miles and brought their own lunches. Without an infirmary or a kitchen, the school was considerably lacking in services that by then were standard at whites' schools. Nearby Foxcroft School periodically lent nursing services.

Aware that further progress would be achieved only through concerted efforts, in 1935, African Americans formed the Countywide League, an all-African-American PTA league who advocated for better education for all children. Their work soon yielded an important result. In 1937, Loudoun offered its first school bus for African American children, nine years after busses had been made available to white children.¹⁴²

1940s: Households and Lifestyles

Judging from the Loudoun County property tax records, the Willisville population continued to remain stable, totaling about fourteen households. Changes in residency occurred as many continued to migrate north for industrial jobs and to evade Jim Crow, which remained pervasive in Virginia.

In 1940, matriarchs including Zedda Hackley Shorts¹⁴³ (Hackley House), Alice Pettigrew (Evans House),¹⁴⁴ Mary Warner (Warner House),¹⁴⁵ and Mary Waters (Waters House) headed five of Willisville's fourteen households. Most were extended family units composed of adult siblings, adult children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and neighbors. These extended family units exemplified Willisville's strong social and familial network of community support. Few of these women worked outside of the house except for Anna Gaskins (Gaskins House),¹⁴⁶ also a widow by now, who continued to teach at the Willisville School¹⁴⁷ and Virginia Gaskins (Peters Place),¹⁴⁸ who worked as a gardener and supported her father.

The horse industry continued to offer employment for the residents of Willisville. Clifford Moton (1904-2014), a horse trainer, built and owned the newest house in the village, a Sears kit house, likely shipped to The Plains by rail and assembled in Willisville.¹⁴⁹ In 1926, Clifford Moton married Rebecca Hackley, Zedda's daughter. In 1931, the couple purchased a portion of the "Sophie Carter lot"¹⁵⁰ from Elizabeth Briggs, now a widow, who had never built on her lot and had relocated to New Jersey. Moton was originally from Proctor's in Loudoun, near Llangollen, moved to Unionville, Pennsylvania, another horse center, and presumably had returned to Willisville to work for Robert Neville. Dudley Gaskins (age 42) owned the Willis House and supported his wife and children as a hostler. Colonel Knot Brooks (1911- 1993) owned the Brewer House and was listed in the census as a Horseman. At that time, he was still riding races at Pimlico.¹⁵¹

Earnest Brooks (age 65) had moved his family of five children and one grandson from Welbourne to Willisville, renting the Henderson House. While at Welbourne, Brooks had worked in the stables and then transitioned to work at Catesby with their prized show cattle. His children, including Anne Brooks (Lee), attended the Willisville School. His grandson Robert Eugene Brooks (1933-2002) also attended Willisville Elementary and went on to join

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one of the early expeditions to Antarctica.¹⁵²

School

By 1940, the Countywide League, having hit several obstacles to equal standards of education for all races, formed a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Concurrently, African American families continued to advocate for better public education. In Loudoun, a public education was only available through the seventh grade until 1941, when the School Board relented to parents' demands, building Leesburg's Douglass High School (NRHP 1992), the county's first high school for African American children. Conditions for African Americans living in rural areas remained inferior. Students graduating from Willisville had no means of public transport to Leesburg. The Willisville community again, this time with support of neighboring communities of Howardsville, St Louis, Aldie, Middleburg, Bull Run and Gleedsville, submitted a petition requesting transportation for their children to attend the "Loudoun County Training School." The petition included a list of children who had graduated from their respective elementary school and were eligible to attend school in Leesburg.¹⁵³ Four years later in 1945, the School Board relented again to parents' demands, and provided buses for rural students to attend high school in Leesburg.¹⁵⁴

Schooling remained a source of pride for Willisville and Howardsville. Although many parents had not had the opportunity to gain much formal education themselves, they were dedicated to creating better opportunities for their children by supporting a strong PTA and delivering homemade lunches to school. School plays hosted in both the schoolhouse and now sometimes in the new stone chapel continued to be a big part of community life.¹⁵⁵

Insurance documents from 1940 describe the Willisville School as a 24-foot-by-67-foot wood building, heated by "stoves, which are brick of standard construction." The school was described as in "good condition."¹⁵⁶ Judging from an archival photograph, the school looked much as it does today, but without the front porch. The school was two rooms, with grades 4-7 taught in the second room. Children from the surrounding farms and the nearby communities of Rock Hill and Howardsville attended the Willisville school.

1950s: Transition to a New Era

The 1950s closed a chapter on Willisville. Charles Briggs was the last person to be interred in the Old Willisville Cemetery in 1950. In 1951, Gaskins married Bishop Beverly Howard III. Her father, Dudley Gaskins sold the western edge of the old Willis plot to the newlyweds.¹⁵⁷ Bishop Howard was drafted to serve in the army during the Korean War and when he returned in 1954, the Howard family of stonemasons started construction of the one-and-a-half-story solid stone home, which remains in the family today and is the most recently built contributing resource in the historic district. In 1956, Anna Gaskins died, ending her half-century of

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teaching at the Willisville School.

The 1950s also marked a long-overdue recognition of the failure of the “separate but equal” doctrine that had been recognized by the Supreme Court in 1896. During the late 1940s, Virginia Governor John S. Battle included in his biennial budget a request for \$75 million in construction funds to improve the Commonwealth’s African American schools, attempting to demonstrate that “separate but equal” facilities could be realized. Three “equalization” schools in Loudoun County received a portion of these funds, including nearby Banneker, which opened in 1948. Banneker’s amenities included a clinic, kitchen, radiant heat, and indoor plumbing.¹⁵⁸ But even these efforts left schools for African Americans lacking in comparison to those for whites. In the 1954 case *Brown vs Board of Education*, the Supreme Court finally ruled “separate but equal” to be unconstitutional, thus removing the legal cover for state-sanctioned white supremacy. Virginia, along with most southern states, fiercely opposed the decision, with the General Assembly passing a series of laws, collectively known as Massive Resistance, that were designed to prevent integration of public schools. U.S. Senator Harry Byrd acted as ringleader of the effort.

Conditions at the Willisville School had remained sub-standard; it was overcrowded, poorly heated, and without any modern fixtures. In 1953 the Health Department approved expenditures to bring a dentist to local African American schools,¹⁵⁹ but that was all. Willisville parents continued to advocate for better school conditions. In 1959, abysmally unequal in its offerings to schools for whites, the Willisville School finally closed. Willisville students transferred to the nearby Banneker School, which was still segregated but offered better conditions. The Willisville schoolhouse and adjoining Old Willisville Cemetery were auctioned, with the county school board selling the property to a private owner.¹⁶⁰ Now a dwelling, the schoolhouse and adjoining Old Willisville Cemetery, once the center of social activity, remain a symbol of community resilience and pride.

Through the last half of the 20th century and into the 21st, community life in Willisville continued. The Willisville Chapel holds regular services, despite that the size of the congregation has dwindled. Welbourne continues to provide employment, with generations of the same families continuing to work at the horse farm. With the automobile more accessible to many and better pay outside of the village, Willisville’s population remains roughly the same as it always has – roughly fifteen to sixteen families. By 2006, Willisville finally was ushered into the modern age with the installation of a central sewer system.¹⁶¹

After more than 150 years of land ownership by African Americans, it is clear why Willisville is treasured. The right to own property was vital to Willisville’s founding families on numerous levels. Willisville landowners were able to create and transfer wealth; have access to capital; tend a family plot to grow their own food; establish social traditions of baptisms, weddings and funerals; create stable institutions to worship freely and educate their children; establish a democratic society of community self-governance, and create a sense of permanence of place. Today, the village remains a living testament to all of these things.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency: U. S. Census
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA; Loudoun County, VA;
Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #053-5116

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 25.97

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 39.007970 | Longitude: -77.834220 |
| 2. Latitude: 39.007890 | Longitude: -77.832250 |
| 3. Latitude: 39.007250 | Longitude: -77.830650 |
| 4. Latitude: 39.006220 | Longitude: -77.828920 |
| 5. Latitude: 39.004920 | Longitude: -77.829770 |

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6. Latitude: 39.004710 Longitude: -77.831530
7. Latitude: 39.005810 Longitude: -77.834830
8. Latitude: 39.007840 Longitude: -77.834630

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
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| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary is coterminous with the perimeter parcel lines of the properties within the district. The following tax parcels, as recorded by Loudoun County, Virginia, are within the historic boundary: Brewer House, 658-30-3064-000; Peters Property, 658-30-6465-000; Henderson House, 658-30-7260-000; Briggs Property, 658-30-8453-000; Evans House, 658-30-6614-000; Hackley House, 658-30-7707-000; Howard House, 642-35-0757-000; Willis House, 658-30-8643-000; Store, 642-35-4345-000; Store / Lot, 642-35-3647-000; Anderson House, 642-35-3622-0000; Anderson House/Lot, 642-35-1926-000; Anderson House/Lot, 642-35-0533-000; Moton House, 658-30-7485-000; Gaskins House, 658-30-5286-000; Waters House, 658-30-3593-000; School Cemetery, 658-40-5003-000; Warner House, 658-30-5629-000; Willisville Chapel, 658-30-9380-000; Lewis House, 658-30-3774-000; and Sewer lot, 642-35-0976-000. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Location Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These historic boundary is based on the original and existing boundaries of the parcels within the village, beginning with the first deed of transfer to founding members of the Willisville community in 1868 (schoolhouse lot) and the last deed with the transfer of the Willisville Chapel lot. The boundary therefore encompasses the district historic setting as well as all known associated historic resources.

11. Form Prepared By

Willisville Historic District
Name of Property

Loudoun County, VA
County and State

name/title: Carol Lee and Jane Covington
organization: Jane Covington
street & number: P. O. Box 741
city or town: Middleburg state: VA zip code: 20118
e-mail: jane@janecovington.com
telephone: 434-960-4678
date: August 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Willisville Historic District

City or Vicinity: Willisville, near Upperville

County: Loudoun **State:** VA

Photographer: Jane Covington

Date Photographed: Fall 2018

1 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0001

Facing west along Welbourne Road, store on left in foreground

2 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0002

Facing southeast from Welbourne Road; George Evans House in background

3 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0003

Facing south from Welbourne Road; front elevation of Brewer House

4 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0004

Facing southeast from Welbourne Road towards Carol Lee's House (Peters Property)
Concrete slab of front porch of original dwelling is in the foreground

Willisville Historic District
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5 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0005

Facing southwest from Welbourne Road towards NE elevation of Howard House

6 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0006

Facing northwest from Welbourne Road towards Willisville Chapel

7 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0007

Facing north towards the rear (south elevation) of the Willis House, original stone chimney and gable end of original cabin

8 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0008

Facing southwest from Welbourne Road towards front (north elevation) of Willis House

9 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0009

Facing south towards Willis House Barn

10 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0010

Interior of Willis House showing log cabin and stonework

11 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0011

Old Willisville cemetery facing north

12 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0012

Facing north from Welbourne Road towards front porch of Schoolhouse

13 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0013

Facing southwest towards front elevation of Hackley House,

14 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0014

Facing northwest across Smith and Hackley Cemetery

15 of 15. VA_LoudounCounty_Willisville_0015

Facing southeast towards front of Willisville Store from Welbourne Road

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

ENDNOTES

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Name of Property

Loudoun County, VA

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¹ Kathryn Gettings Smith, Edna Johnston and Megan Glynn, History Matters, LLC History Matters, “Loudoun County African American Historic Architectural Resources Survey,” Sponsored by Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and Black History Committee of the Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, September 2004, p. 27.

² The 1874 deed between Townsend Seaton of Catesby and Lucinda Willis confirmed that she was living on the “Willis” lot prior to the sale. In Ida Dulany’s diary (published under the title *In the Shadow of the Enemy*). Henson is noted as living nearby.

³ The Sarah Jackson House stood where the Loudoun County sewage treatment facility is now, located at 33950 Welbourne Road.

⁴ Kathryn Gettings Smith, et al.

⁵ Kathryn Gettings Smith et al.

⁶ Kathryn Gettings Smith et al.

⁷ Margaret Ann Vogtsberger, *The Dulanys of Welbourne: A Family in Mosby’s Confederacy* (Berryville: Rockbridge Publishing Company, 1995); US Census 1870.

⁸ Loudoun County Deed Book (hereafter abbreviated as LCDB) 7K: 87 (1894).

⁹ Although George Tebbs purchased the land earlier, his family does not appear in the census until 1880 and the building appears in the land tax records in 1881.

¹⁰ Loudoun County Land Tax Records. The property is included in the 3-acre George Evans property, which had not yet been divided.

¹¹ Loudoun County has multiple known and unknown pre-Civil War African American burial grounds, some of which have been lost to neglect or even willful demolition. Until recently, there has been little regard for preservation of African American burial grounds. The Belmont Slave cemetery and the Sycolin Cemetery outside of Leesburg are two recent success stories for preservation.

¹² Kathryn Gettings Smith et al., see Appendix C– Cemetery List.

¹³ Willis House (mid 19th c); Evans House (mid 19th c); Warner House (mid 19th c); Brewer House (1875); Anderson House (1878); Gaskins House (1880); first Waters House (1890) Henderson House (1890); William Peters House (circa 1890). No longer standing: Sarah Jackson House, burned c. 1910.

¹⁴ Loudoun County Land Tax Records (1920).

¹⁵ Kevin Grigsby, *Dulany Howardsville: The Journey of An African-American Community in Loudoun County, Virginia* (Copyright: Kevin Grigsby, 2008), p. 298.

¹⁶ Grigsby, p. 300. The congregation originally met in private homes starting in 1872.

¹⁷ The Crescent was sold between 1921 and 1933.

¹⁸ Original Land Grants of Loudoun County, September 12, 2017; as seen at <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=a410a0c8756d411abe8d28422c6b4209>. It was common for many early roads to follow these property divisions.

¹⁹ LCDB 7D:40 (1890).

²⁰ Also see “*Historic African American Communities and Sites in Loudoun County*,” as seen at <http://loudoungis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapTools/index.html?appid=cc137c9b5838438199f92214d5e85657>. This count differs from that given in *Historically African- American Communities of Loudoun County Virginia*, prepared by Loudoun County office of mapping, May 15, 2001 (Map 2001-015). The 2001 map includes white settlements with African American enclaves and documents approximately 39 separate African American communities. See Kathryn Gettings Smith et al., p. 5.

²¹ Kathryn Gettings Smith et al., p. 11.

²² Willard was condemned in 1958. For further reading, see <http://www.loudounhistory.org/history/dulles-airport-history/>.

²³ Original Land Grants of Loudoun County, September 12, 2017, as seen at <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=a410a0c8756d411abe8d28422c6b4209>.

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²⁴ LCDB 7D:40, (1890)

²⁵ Johnah Tavener's District, Loudoun County Land Tax Records. Tavener enumerates 73 families in his personal property records in 1856. Of those 73, five were landowners: Wiatt Allen, Frances Furr, Forest Griffith, and Henly Heaters [sic] were living in the northern part of western Loudoun. In Southwestern Loudoun, Barry Nickens and Richard Nickens were "Free Negroes" living near Unison.

²⁶ Kathryn Gettings Smith, et al.

²⁷ US Census 1870.

²⁸ Spelling of names varied. Willis is also recorded in Loudoun County's "Record of Free Negroes" as "Hughes [sic] Willis," manumitted by a William Carr, as seen at <https://lfportal.loudoun.gov/LFPortalInternet/0/edoc/326222/Record%20of%20Free%20Negroes%201844-1861.pdf>.

²⁹ Mary L. Mackall, Stevan F. Meserve and Ann Mackall Sasscer, eds., *In the Shadow of the Enemy* (diary of Ida Dulany) (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 2009), p. 158,176,178,181, 184, 187, 197, 226, 253.

³⁰ Diary of Rebecca Dulany, red cover, private property of Nathaniel Morison family. Bitha also is referred to as Bertha.

³¹ Loudoun County's "Record of Free Negroes, as seen at <https://lfportal.loudoun.gov/LFPortalInternet/0/edoc/326222/Record%20of%20Free%20Negroes%201844-1861.pdf>.

³² U. S. Census 1890.

³³ Also listed as Nickings and Nickenson. James Henry Nickens, "FN" appears in the 1851 county personal property records; Jn. Nickenson, "FN" appears in the 1856 personal property records. James H. Nickens appears in Loudoun County's Record of Free Negroes 1844-1861. In 1850, Joseph Nickens is living next to Daniel Kinchloe, the Green Garden Miller. In 1860, Joseph Nickings is living next to Jesse Richards, the owner of Green Garden mill, so likely he was still a tenant on Green Garden farm. Living in close proximity to a mill indicates that Nickens was a skilled labor, therefore able to afford his freedom. In 1870, Lewis Nickens is living next to John Newlon, a miller. Lewis Nickens is a property owner by 1876 living near Union. Amanda Hampton Nicken (1850-1874), daughter of Caroline and Marcus Hampton who lived at Old Welbourne, is buried in Willisville.

³⁴ Alfred Hoe's birth year is listed in 1870 census. Spelling of his surname varies in local records and also is seen as Hooe and Howe.

³⁵ Priscilla may have been imported by John P. Dulany in 1812. On the Certificate of Import in 1812, Priscilla is listed as a "girl age 10," giving her an approximate birth year of 1802

³⁶ Loudoun County Road Cases, Fletcher Road Case.

³⁷ Vogtsberger, p. 223.

³⁸ U S Census, Slave Schedules. John A Carter (of Crednal plantation) enslaved 25 people. John P Dulany and Richard Dulany (of Welbourne plantation) enslaved 50 people. Nancy Seaton and Townsend Seaton enslaved 32 people. Thomas Glascock (of Rose Hill plantation) enslaved 24 people. Joshua Fletcher (of Clifton plantation) enslaved at least 11 people.

³⁹ Denis Pogue and Douglas Sanford, "Slave Housing in Virginia," https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Slave_Housing_in_Virginia#start_entry, published by Virginia Humanities in partnership with Library of Virginia.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), p. 155.

⁴³ Kathryn Gettings Smith et al.

⁴⁴ VCRIS record at Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

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⁴⁵ Edward Ayres, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press 2007), p. 53.

⁴⁶ Scheel, Eugene M. *Middleburg and the Vicinity. Honoring the 200th Anniversary of the Town of Middleburg 1787-1987* (Middleburg Bicentennial Committee, 1987), p. 71.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Also see LCDB 6V:479 (1885).

⁴⁸ Dulaney Morrison, "Willisville Historic District," Preliminary Information Form at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 2018.

⁴⁹ Vogtsberger, p. 35. In the 1863 diary, Armistead (Corbin) and Henry (Jackson) were enslaved, left Welbourne, and later returned. Henry was imported as a young boy (age 8) in 1812 by John P. Dulany [LCDB 2Q:112]

⁵⁰ Julia Evans, George Evans's wife, is buried at Crednal. It is possible that Julia was enslaved by the Carters but it cannot be confirmed if George Evans was also.

⁵¹ John Howard was a signatory on Seaton's documents, indicating a close relationship.

⁵² National Museum of African American History and Culture, "Records of the Field Offices for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865–1872" (Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives, 2019), as seen at <https://sova.si.edu/record/NMAAHC.FB.M1913>.

⁵³ Reportedly, African Americans enslaved by the Dulany family were allowed to worship in a church located on Welbourne. This building remains today and is known as the "Church House." Most of the enslaved were illiterate because Virginia law forbade teaching enslaved people to read and write. Alfred Hoe, Colonel Dulany's personal servant, was taught a skill, but not to read or write. In later census records, Hoe is listed as a carpenter.

⁵⁴ There was a private white "academy" along Welbourne Road located at today's Catesby Driveway. A second white school was located at the corner of Green Garden and the Millsville Road.

⁵⁵ McGill Pierce came from Baltimore and was likely associated with the Methodist Church. In the 1860 U. S. Census, McGill Pierce (b. 1835) is living in Washington D. C. working as a waiter. He is listed as illiterate and living with his wife, Ellen Pierce, a washerwoman. He is living in Ward 4 of the District, which was then also listed as Maryland. African Americans would have been living free in Washington D.C. before the Civil War. After his service in Willisville, Pierce attends Howard University and studies law (1874). By 1887, Pierce is listed in the D.C. City Directory as a lawyer. By 1890, Pierce is listed as a minister.

⁵⁶ Janet Hagen, "Willisville Schoolhouse," private files.

⁵⁷ LCDB 5Y:208, John A. Carter to George Evans, Garner Peters, and Benjamin Berry, 1868. Evans had been enslaved by the Carters or Dulany family. Garner Peters was formerly enslaved by the Dulany family. Benjamin Berry's residence prior to Emancipation is not known.

⁵⁸ LCDB 5Y:208 JAC to Trustees, 1868.

⁵⁹ Janet Hagen, private files.

⁶⁰ Gregory S. Schneider, "A Powerful Story: How freed slaves helped shape Virginia after the Civil War." *Washington Post* (March 26, 2018), as seen at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2018/03/26/powerful-and-forgotten-how-freed-slaves-helped-shape-virginia-after-the-civil-war/?utm_term=.11cd3e67aa85.

⁶¹ US Census 1870.

⁶² Charlotte Hagen, "Willisville Schoolhouse," private files; Freedman's Bureau office records, November 5, 1868, W. S. Chase Esq. to ASA Commissioner 3rd Division, Manassas, from S.P. Lee.

⁶³ Robert Pollard et al., "The History of the County Courthouse and Its Role in the Path to Freedom, Justice and Racial Equality in Loudoun County," Prepared by the Heritage Commission's Courthouse Grounds Subcommittee, June 4, 2019, as seen at

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<https://www.loudoun.gov/DocumentCenter/View/151802/Heritage-Commission-Report-With-Cover-Page>, p. 6.

⁶⁴ US Census 1870 lists George Evans, Henry Jackson, Alfred Hoe, and Hanson Willis. Loudoun land tax records in 1878 list as living “nr Clifton” Richard Corum [sic, Corbin], Corbin Willis, Marshall Dorsey, Wm. H. Peters, Henry Jeter [sic, Peter], John Howard, and Lucinda Willis.

⁶⁵ LCDB 2Q:112. In the 1870 census, Alfred Hoe is recorded as married to Priscilla. Judging by age, this is possibly the same Priscilla who was imported in 1812 and enslaved by John P. Dulany. In the 1860 census, Alfred is living on Welbourne as a “Free Negro” with children but Priscilla is not recorded in his household. It is possible Priscilla remained enslaved at that time.

⁶⁶ Clifton Mill was destroyed during the Civil War and presumably, with no mill traffic, there was no need for the road or its public maintenance. An 1887 road case for the “public road from Clifton Mill to Union” states that the road had been abandoned for many years and it would not benefit the public for it to be put back into working condition.

⁶⁷ LCDB 6H:135 (1875), JAC to Sarah Jackson (recorded as “colored”).

⁶⁸ LCDB 6K:323, John A. Carter owned 28 enslaved African Americans in 1840, 13 enslaved people in 1850, and 25 enslaved people in 1860, according to the Federal Slave Census for Loudoun County. In 1876, George Tebbs is living at Welbourne with his wife, Ellen; an infant died at Welbourne in 1877, according to Loudoun County birth and death records.

⁶⁹ This community possibly was located at the old crossroads at the north end of Quaker Lane.

⁷⁰ Prior to 1878, in the 1870 census, William H Gaskins is living in the same household with the Dulanys.

⁷¹ All three men are buried in the Willisville cemetery.

⁷² LCDB 6V:479. John Dulany’s mills on Goose Creek and the surrounding area was known as Millsville. The road from Middleburg was known as the “Millsville to Upperville” road. The road left Middleburg heading west, crossed Goose Creek at the ford below Millsville, then came past Welbourne, then through Clifton, continuing on to Upperville. The “Turnpike,” today’s route 50, went directly west to Upperville. Today, the road name has been shortened to Millville Road. Although Dulany’s mills were destroyed during the Civil War, a deed of partnership from 1885 confirms that the mills were rebuilt.

⁷³ Diary of Rebecca Dulany, red cover, private collection Nathaniel Morison family. These few pages are a reflection of daily activities and also Rebecca Dulany’s recording of the enslaved workforce, whom she refers to as ‘hands,’ receiving clothing allowances for each season. For families, cloth, either linsey (coarse wool and cotton woven fabric), cotton, or flannel (soft wool woven fabric), was given to the matriarch of each family unit.

⁷⁴ Loudoun County Land Tax Records (1860). Charles Turner, Patrick Wallace and others are living “nr Millsville” and own small plots.

⁷⁵ William Taylor is living ‘adj Jno P. Dulany.’ The Dulanys of Welbourne owned 1,004 acres and also owned an area south of St. Louis along Goose Creek. The exact location of ‘Adj Jn Dulany’ is not known.

⁷⁶ Maral S. Kalbian et al., “Unison Battlefield Historic District,” National Register nomination form (2011), as seen at https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/053-6087_Unison_Battlefield_HD_2011_NRHP_FINAL.pdf.

⁷⁷ Bellfield was the home of Elizabeth Carter; now Anne Thompson’s house.

⁷⁸ Grigsby, p. 77.

⁷⁹ LCDB 6D:263, Wm. Benton to Thos. Glascock (1871).

⁸⁰ LCDB 6S:41 Glascock to Chas. Tebbs; 6S:111 to Sarah R. Hoo (sic); 6R:146 to Anne Gillison; 6S:224 to Moses Peters; 6S:261, to Gustavus Cook; 6S:335 to Thomas S. Moore; 6U:67 to Obedia Valentine; 6U:143 to Shelton Allen; 6Y:379 John Strother; and 7P:7 to Alfred Hoe Jr.

⁸¹ Vogtsberger, *Dulanys of Welbourne*. Her [late] husband, Billie Gillison, was a Dulany slave.

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⁸² In the absence of an established banking system, H. Grafton Dulany, like his father John P. Dulany, acted as a local “banker.” Even before the collapse of the local economy after the Civil War, Grafton Dulany lent money to many neighbors, using their property as collateral.

⁸³ LCDB 6W:1. In the 1880 federal census, Thomas Moore was a Baptist minister living in Willisville. Alfred Moore was interred in the Willisville cemetery. John Moore was later a trustee of the Willisville chapel.

⁸⁴ Scheel, *Middleburg and the Vicinity*, p. 80.

⁸⁵ Eugene M. Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered: Communities, Corners and Crossroads Volume Four: Quaker Country and the Loudoun Valley* (Leesburg: The Friends of Thomas Balch Library, 2002), p. 223.

⁸⁶ Pollard et al., p. 6.

⁸⁷ Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns. The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), Location 746, kindle version.

⁸⁸ Garner Peters worked in the Welbourne stables while enslaved. Diaries record Peters safely hiding the prized Dulany stallion, Scrivington, in Maryland during the Civil War and returning to Welbourne at the end of the war. The Dulanys owned breeding stock and the position of hostler would have been respectable employment and a coveted position. William (Billy) Gillison (b. 1820) was also formerly enslaved at Welbourne and remained in the area. By 1880, Gillison was literate and his children were attending school. Billy and his son William also worked in the Welbourne stables.

⁸⁹ The George Tebbs and William Gaskins families are sharing the Gaskins House, built by George Tebbs before 1881.

⁹⁰ Carol Lee, personal communication, March 26. William Peters made shoes at Welbourne before the Civil War.

⁹¹ LCDB M:221. Grafton Dulany was the wealthy brother of Colonel Richard Dulany. Having been sole heir to his mother’s fortune, Grafton provided liquidity to many of his neighbors – whites and African Americans – after the Civil War.

⁹² LCDB 6W:1, 1884, Willis to Methodist Church.

⁹³ LCDB 6W:2 Trust of Willis to Burrell (1884). R. Welby Carter of Crednal is listed as trustee. The land is on the Millsville to Upperville public road, bounded on the west by the half-acre church lot; the east by Seaton and John Howard, and the south by William Evans and George Evans. The lot contains 2A, 3R, 7P less the lot sold to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which contains a half acre.

⁹⁴ [lcdb 7C:271].

⁹⁵ U. S. Census, Wm. H. Peters (1829 -) is living with Nellie (1834 - ?), his wife, and their children Henry (1860-), Emma [Peters] Gaskins (1868 - ?), William (1871- ?), Elizabeth (1874 -?), and William Brent (1840 - ?), also a shoemaker.

⁹⁶ Sophie Robinson (1830 -?) lived with her daughter Josephine Robinson (1846 -?). Sophie was illiterate and Josephine was literate. Daniel (1835 -) and Sarah (1849 - ?) Robinson and their children, Edward, Mary, and James, were living in a household with George and Chrissi Brewer. It is not known if this Robinson family was related to Sophie. The amount of the transaction is not recorded. This was possibly a gift. In the 1880 census, Sophie Robinson was living as a servant with Townsend Seaton’s family.

⁹⁷ 6R:372, Tebbs to Gaskins 1880.

⁹⁸ 6K:323, JAC to George Tebbs 1875.

⁹⁹ Land tax records 1875-1881.

¹⁰⁰ LCDB 6X:82 (1884), Jackson to Bruer.

¹⁰¹ Each of the four Dulany children were gifted a large house and tract of land, carved from Dulany property, as a wedding gift.

¹⁰² In the census, the last name is spelled “Honce.” This is assumed to be Hoe.

¹⁰³ U. S. Census 1880. It is not known where they lived at Old Welbourne.

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¹⁰⁴ Wilkerson, p. 828.

¹⁰⁵ US Census 1880, 1900, 1920, 1930.

¹⁰⁶ The name appears in the 1890 land tax records and the 1930 census.

¹⁰⁷ Lucy Peters eventually moved to Richmond. In the 1920 census, she is living in Jackson Ward in a boardinghouse and working as a servant for a private family.

¹⁰⁸ The location of the school is shown as “Welbourne Post office,” presumably Willisville. The original Welbourne post office was located near the blacksmith shop along Quaker Lane. It ceased to exist in the 20th century.

¹⁰⁹ Carol Lee, private files.

¹¹⁰ The 1884 congregation trustees were John W. Howard, John Moore, and Robert Brent, all of Willisville; John W. Lewis, Calvin Nickens, and Peter Webb, all of Mount Gilead; and Jacob MacKenzie of Upperville. James S. Addison and John H. Strother of Baltimore represented the Conference.

¹¹¹ LCDB 6W:1 (1884), Willis to church. The half-acre lot is bounded by George Evans and Lucinda Willis and the public road from Millsville to “the Colored School.”

¹¹² Charlotte Hagen, “Willisville Schoolhouse,” private files.

¹¹³ Pollard et al., p. 61 and 64.

¹¹⁴ Estimate based on comparison of census to land tax records and personal property records.

¹¹⁵ LCDB 6Y:417 (1886). Before Julia’s death, the Evanses sold a quarter-acre to Sophie Robinson, relationship unknown but assumed to be a daughter. The balance of the lot is transferred both through purchase, deed and will. In 1875, George Evans purchased 3 acres 3 rods and seven perches (3.06 acres) from Townsend Seaton. In 1886, George and Julia sold a quarter-acre to Sophie Robinson. In his will, George stated he had about 4 acres and he allocated a half-acre to his granddaughter Mary Evans (location of the Henderson House); a half-acre to William Evans (location of the Evans House) and 3 acres to Mary Warner (location of the Warner House) totaling 4.25 acres; this was 1.2 acres more than recorded in land records.

¹¹⁶ LCDB 7O:398, George Evans to Mary Evans, his granddaughter. William Peter(s) was living in a small house on the site of the current Howard House.

¹¹⁷ The Loudoun County land tax records (1895) indicate the Evans, Warner and Henderson houses were valued at an aggregate of \$400. In 1890, the Evans and Warner houses had combined worth of \$300, after the sale of the Henderson House to Kate and Thomas Evans. This confirms an 1890-1895 date range for construction of the Henderson House. In 1876, Thomas Evans married Kate Marshall (1855-1927). At that time, Kate had a daughter, Julia Marshall (b. 1875). It is not clear if Thomas Evans ever occupied the Henderson House (based on US Census). In 1870, Evans was single and living in the household of Mary (Dulany) Whiting (1818-1895?). Evans was literate and working as a grocer, but living apart from his family. It is not clear where Kate was living. By 1880, Thomas Evans was working in Richie (b. 1857) and Eva Dulany’s stables at Old Welbourne.

¹¹⁸ LCDB 7S:476, George Evans Sr. to William Evans, son, 1899.

¹¹⁹ U.S. Census 1880. The 1890 census is not available. William married Bitha Willis (1855-1927) in 1873. Bitha was the daughter of Henson Willis and his first wife, Bertha, who was enslaved by the Dulanys.

¹²⁰ LCWB 3S:95 Will of George Evans.

¹²¹ U. S. Census 1900.

¹²² 8R:38 (1912) John Peyton DeButts to Zedda Hackley.

¹²³ LCWB 3S:182 (1906) Will of Colonel Richard Henry Dulany.

¹²⁴ Larry Roeder, et al., Edwin Washington Project, as seen at <https://edwinwashingtonproject.org/willisville-colored-school-loudoun/>.

¹²⁵ LCDB 9K-410. Also see Order Book No. 11, p. 99, 1919.

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¹²⁶ LCWB 3V:411 (1927). Thomas Atkinson was a witness to her will.

¹²⁷ Carol Lee recounts a payphone in the Henderson house dining room, which communally served the village.

¹²⁸ LCDB: Various.

¹²⁹ LCDB 9V:296 (1925).

¹³⁰ The Negro Farmer as seen on You Tube at <https://youtu.be/bd1ROfEGkrQ?t=129>.

¹³¹ Ayres, *Promise of a New South*, p. 13.

¹³² LCDB 9P:396 (1922) Delia Howard to Thomas Atkinson Jr. and Neville Atkinson.

¹³³ LCDB (1924), Atkinson to Grantland Henderson, who had moved to Willisville from Mississippi.

¹³⁴ Charlotte Hagen, "Willisville Chapel," private files.

¹³⁵ Eugene M. Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered: Communities, Corners and Crossroads Volume Three: The Hunt Country and Middleburg* (Leesburg: The Friends of Thomas Balch Library, 2002), p. 116.

¹³⁶ Conversations with Carol Lee, spring 2019.

¹³⁷ Roeder et al. Gray retired from Willisville during World War II in 1942 when gas rationing eliminated her commute. Other teachers were Ethel R Stewart Smith (1927 - ?) and Mary C Jackson.

¹³⁸ A 1940 LCSB insurance document describes a similar building in Ashburn: "A one story, detached, frame building with metal roof, on stone foundation, containing only one room. This building is heated by a stove, the flue to which is brick of standard construction. The building is approximately 20 ½' x 32 ½' and is in good condition. Insurable value \$400." The Ashburn Colored School, as it was then called, was built in 1892; the second Willisville school was built in 1921.

¹³⁹ Charlotte Hagen, "Willisville Schoolhouse," private files.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Pollard et al., p. 7.

¹⁴³ Zedda Hackley Shorts was living with her daughter Julia Hackley (b.1913), her brother Irvin Hill, and her granddaughter Recca (Rebecca) Carter (b. 1930). No one was working outside the house.

¹⁴⁴ Some of these houses are jointly owned by the adult siblings, such as the Evans House, inherited from their parents, Williams and Bitha (Willis) Evans. Alice (Evans) Pettigrew (b. 1880) was listed as a laundress. She was head of the household and living with her sister, Georgia (Evans) Allen (b. 1882), who worked as a "beauty parlor," presumably a service to her neighbors. Also in the household were the adult siblings Hansen Evans (b. 1884) and William Evans (b. 1886). Hansen was not working and William was listed as a laborer and working as the Welbourne butler. These are the grandchildren of George and Julia Evans and of Hansen and Lucinda Willis. They are the four oldest of the eleven children of William D. and Bitha (Willis) Evans.

¹⁴⁵ Mary Waters, in the Waters House, supported her household by working as a laundress with the help of her two daughters working as maids. There were seven grandchildren.

¹⁴⁶ Anna Shorts Gaskins (1881-1956) married Lucius Gaskins in 1902 and they lived in the Gaskins House. They were married in the old schoolhouse, which was then used as Willisville's church. Anna was the principal of the two-room school as well as teaching grades 4-7; she worked at the school for 52 years.

¹⁴⁷ Anna Gaskins supplemented her income with boarders in her later years. In addition to Mildred Gray, Richard Shorts (b. 1883) and his granddaughter, Evelyn Carter (b. 1928), also boarded. Richard Shorts was divorced from Virginia Hackley and was no longer living in the Hackley House.

¹⁴⁸ Virginia was also known as Toliver or Tolbert Gaskins. Virginia and her father Richard Gaskins were living in the original two-room dwelling at the Peters Place

¹⁴⁹ The Moton House appears in the 1940 land tax records valued at \$700. It does not appear in the 1930 records.

Willisville Historic District

Name of Property

Loudoun County, VA

County and State

¹⁵⁰ Sophie Carter was the daughter of John Armistead Carter, who had sold the original Willisville Schoolhouse lot to the trustees in 1868.

¹⁵¹ Colonel Brooks grew up in Upperville, son of Joseph Brooks, who worked as a stableman, and Susie Pinkett, who worked for Rozier Dulany, the Colonel's nephew. Oral history states that Dulany gave Colonel Knot Brooks his peculiar name. Colonel Brooks made national news in 1926 riding and winning as a teenager a horserace at Laurel. Susie Pinkett was the daughter of Virginia and Sydney Pinkett, who were enslaved.

¹⁵² "Robert Eugene 'Bob' Brooks," *The Oklahoman*, June 1, 2002, <https://newsok.com/article/2795109/robert-eugene-bob-brooks>. Others living and working in Willisville included Grantland Henderson (age 52), who was living above the Willisville Store and working as a merchant, and Charles Briggs (age 23), who was living in the Briggs House and working as a painter. Briggs was single. Sarah Jackson's house was vacant, or possibly destroyed by fire. Her daughter, Evangeline Fitzroy, was living in New Jersey and owned the lot.

¹⁵³ Charlotte Hagen, "Willisville Schoolhouse," private files.

¹⁵⁴ See Grigsby, p. 54, for the list of children eligible to graduate; also see Roeder et al.

¹⁵⁵ Grigsby, p. 284. Dorothy Gaskins Ford, Kevin Grigsby's grandmother, attended the Willisville School in 1940.

¹⁵⁶ Charlotte Hagen, "Willisville Schoolhouse," private files. Also see Garrett Insurance Company (Fireman's Fund Insurance Company), Leesburg, Virginia.

¹⁵⁷ LCDB 9V:269 (1925); this is the same plot as conveyed by Burrell to Gaskins.

¹⁵⁸ Loudoun Rural Schools Preliminary Information Form, at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Banneker replaced several nearby African American schools that were in severe disrepair, including the Hamlin School (St Louis), the two-room Grant School in Middleburg, and the school at Marble Quarry.

¹⁵⁹ Charlotte Hagen, "Willisville Schoolhouse," private files. On January 30, 1956, Ethel Smith wrote her now infamous "Dirt Don't Burn" letter; a succinct description of the fallacy of the separate but equal doctrine: "Dear Mr. Emerick, Please send some coal up right away. All we have left is dirt and that doesn't half burn. Thank you. Sincerely yours, Ethel R Stewart [Smith]."

¹⁶⁰ LCDB 388:05 (1959).

¹⁶¹ Amy Gardner, "Willisville Still Waiting for Indoor Plumbing," *Washington Post* (September 24, 2006), as seen in print and also at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/22/AR2006092202002_2.html.

LOCATION MAP

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

- 1. Latitude: 39.007970
Longitude: -77.834220
- 2. Latitude: 39.007890
Longitude: -77.832250
- 3. Latitude: 39.007250
Longitude: -77.830650
- 4. Latitude: 39.006220
Longitude: -77.828920
- 5. Latitude: 39.004920
Longitude: -77.829770
- 6. Latitude: 39.004710
Longitude: -77.831530
- 7. Latitude: 39.005810
Longitude: -77.834830
- 8. Latitude: 39.007840
Longitude: -77.834630



Willisville Historic District Loudoun County, VA; DHR 053-5116

Sources: VDHR 2019, ESRI 2019
Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation data 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. The map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". Contact DHR for the most recent information as data is updated continually.



1 in = 500 feet

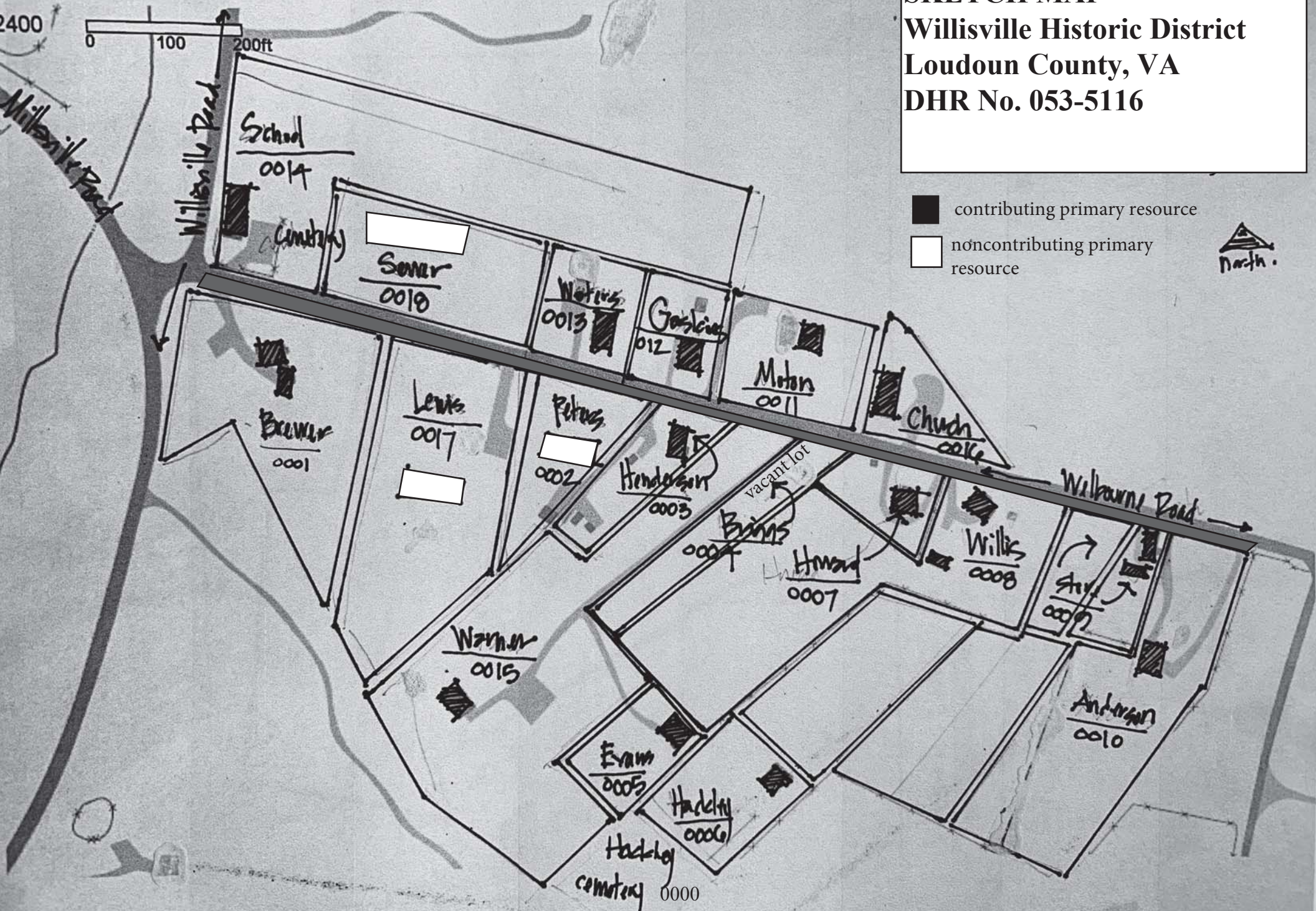


DHR
Department of Historic Resources

Created by: D. Bascone August 02, 2019

SKETCH MAP
Willisville Historic District
Loudoun County, VA
DHR No. 053-5116

-  contributing primary resource
-  noncontributing primary resource





Legend

- USGS GIS Place names
- County Boundaries

PHOTO KEY

Willisville Historic District
 Loudoun County, VA
 DHR No. 053-5116

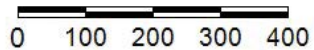


Photo Locations

(#10 is an interior view)



Feet



1:4,514 / 1"=376 Feet

Title:

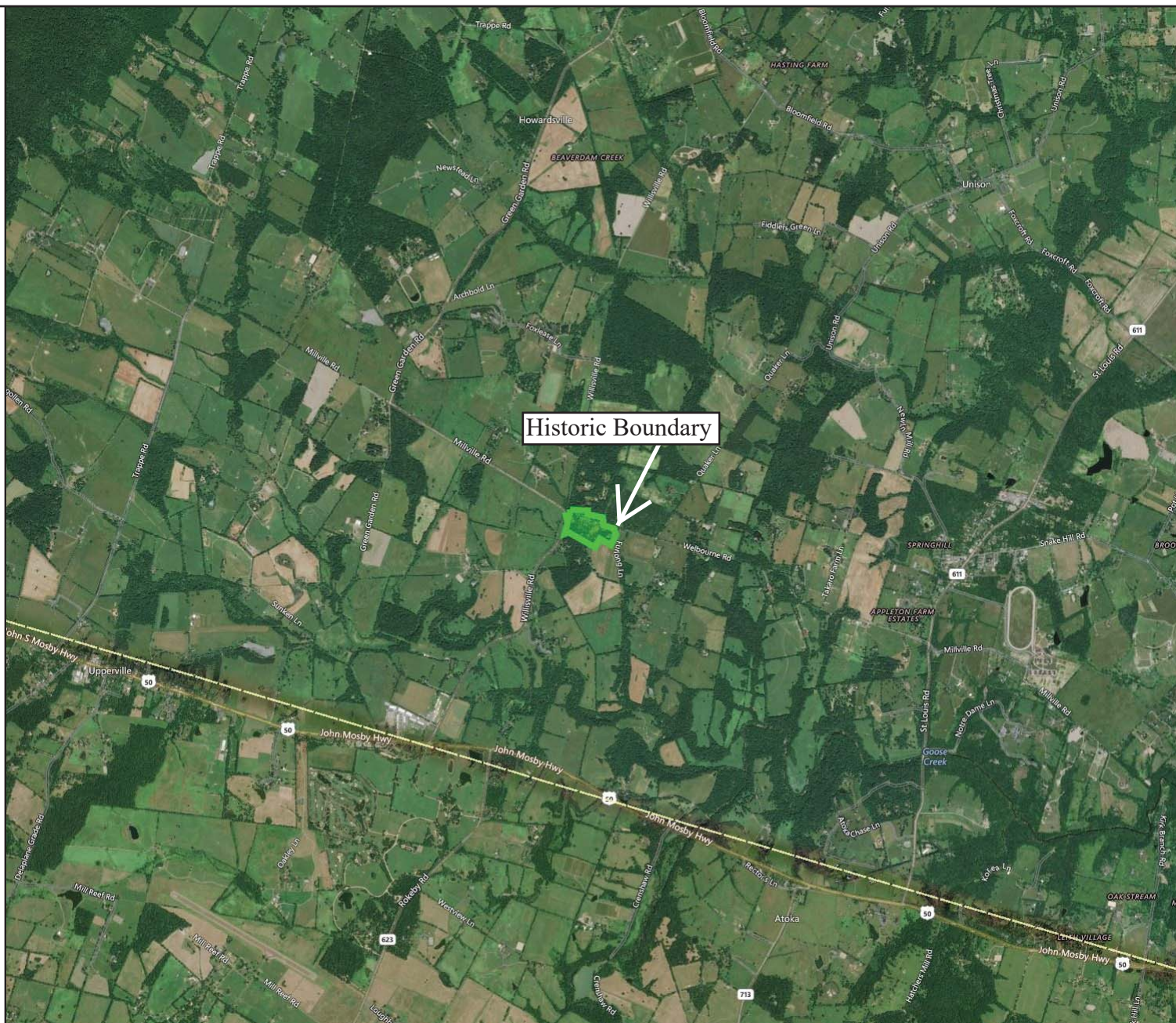
Date: 10/4/2019

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

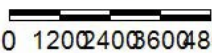
Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.



**AERIAL VIEW - Vicinity of
Willisville Historic District
Loudoun County, VA
DHR No. 053-5116**



Feet



0 120 240 360 480 600 800
1:72,224 / 1"=6,019 Feet

Title:

Date: 10/4/2019

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.













GALLISVILLE CHAPEL
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

















IN LOVING MEMORY

SMITH

WILLIAM NATHANIEL
BORN SEPTEMBER 3, 1930
DIED JULY 24, 2001

ETHEL STEWART
BORN [unclear]
DIED [unclear]



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Willisville Historic District

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: VIRGINIA, Loudoun

Date Received: 10/25/2019 Date of Pending List: 11/14/2019 Date of 16th Day: 11/29/2019 Date of 45th Day: 12/9/2019 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100004746

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review: _____

X Accept Return Reject 12/9/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Locally significant village settled by African Americans, where institutions such as a church, a school, and retail establishment were established as part of a self-contained rural community.

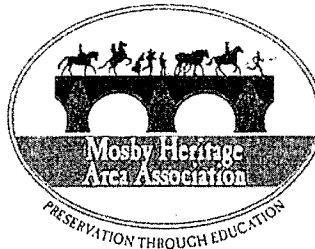
Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Christopher Needels

August 20, 2019

Ms Aubrey Von Lindern

Architectural Historian

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Aubrey.vonlindern@dhr.virginia.gov

Dear Ms Von Lindern,

The Mosby Heritage Area Association strongly supports the nomination of the historic village of Willisville to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The registration form nominates Willisville under Criteria A and C (local) and as the narrative shows, the architectural and historic functions of this village are truly exceptional, and they continue into the 21st century. Our organization has worked closely with the residents and greater Willisville community to raise funds to support this application and we are enthusiastic about the research and findings.

Willisville's fascinating history began as a settlement of persons living free and of the enslaved from local farms. After Emancipation, the community evolved and expanded into a more typical African-American village of the late 1800s with many residents continuing to find employment on neighboring farms. The tightly knit community eventually established a school, church, and store, and these structures still stand today. Willisville witnessed slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow and desegregation, and many descendants of early residents still live in the village. This story is compelling and it represents a significant part of Virginia history that should be properly recognized with these official historic designations.

The Mosby Heritage Area Association (MHAA) encompasses five counties and highlights local history through education, research, and programming. Our involvement with this nomination has been one of our finest preservation efforts and our support of its approval cannot be overstated.

Thank you for your efforts to preserve our Commonwealth and our historic resources.

Sincerely,

C. Dulany Morison

Chair, Board of Directors

The mission of the Mosby Heritage Area Association is to educate about the history and advocate for the preservation of the extraordinary historic landscape, culture, and scenery in the Northern Virginia Piedmont for future generations to enjoy.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Matt Strickler
Secretary of Natural Resources

Julie V. Langan
Director

Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391
www.dhr.virginia.gov

October 24, 2019

Joy Beasley
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service, National Register Program
1849 C St., NW (Mail Stop 7228)
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Willisville Historic District, Loudoun County, Virginia

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Willisville Historic District** to the National Register of Historic Places. Submitted for your review, the nomination has been considered, and approved, by the State Review Board and the Virginia SHPO has recommended it for listing.

This property has 18 owners and the Department of Historic Resources received no letters of objection concerning the nomination. Any letters of comment or objection have been copied at the end of the nomination material, along with any FPO notification letters.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My direct phone line is 804-482-6439.

Sincerely,

Lena Sweeten McDonald
National/State Register Historian

Enclosures

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962 Kime Lane
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Fax: (540) 387-5446

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