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2021 List of Virginia’s Most Endangered Historic Places Announced

RICHMOND, Va. (May 11, 2021) – Each May — National Historic Preservation Month— since 2005, Preservation Virginia releases a list of historic places across the state that face imminent or sustained threats to their integrity to encourage individual citizens, organizations and local and state government to continue advocating for these places while offering solutions for their preservation. This year, a record number of nominations were received.

“This year’s list underscores the diverse and complex history of Virginia,” said Preservation Virginia CEO Elizabeth S. Kostelny. “From connections to George Washington at River Farm in Alexandria to the legacy of Jim Crow laws and Civil Rights as embodied in Green Book Sites, these tangible connections to the past are irreplaceable and offer so many educational opportunities.”

Virginia’s Most Endangered Historic Places list for 2021 includes, in no particular order:

- Association Drive Historic District, Reston
This 20th-century, post-modern business park is threatened by the Soapstone Connector, a major transportation infrastructure project.
- Civil War Battlefields in Which United States Colored Troops Fought, St. Mary’s/Samaria Church and New Market Heights
While many battlefields in Virginia have been preserved and interpreted, two actions east of Richmond that saw significant involvement by United States Colored Troops (USCTs), including 14 medal of honor recipients, still need to be preserved and interpreted. Both sites are threatened by development projects.
- Conner House, Manassas Park
This home once served as a military hospital during the Civil War and is the only surviving historic building in the City of Manassas Park. It is threatened with demolition for the construction of a new city hall.
- Fort Wool, Hampton Roads
Initial building of this fortified island began in 1817 and served as an installation until 1967. As seen from the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, deferred maintenance and inundation threaten this fragile fort island.
- Green Book Sites, Statewide
Over three hundred locations in Virginia were included in Victor Green’s travel guides for African Americans from the 1930s to the 1960s, but estimates show that only one-third of the hotels, homes, nightclubs, gas stations and restaurants listed in Green Books are still standing.
- Turkey Run House, Midlothian

Constructed in the 1830s, Turkey Run House represents rare architecture in Chesterfield County and is connected to a mining accident at nearby Mid-Lothian Mines where many enslaved workers perished. The house is threatened by the construction of a school, though a dedicated group of local volunteers are in discussions to have the house moved.

- Mount Calvary Cemetery Complex, Portsmouth
Mount Calvary Cemetery Complex is one of the oldest African American burial grounds in Portsmouth, but is suffering from flooding and poor drainage due to recent interstate infrastructure projects.
- Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Gainesville
Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, an African American church built in the post-Emancipation community known as The Settlement, survived an arson attempt in 2012 and is rebuilding based on fundraising efforts by the congregation.
- River Farm, Alexandria
Once part of an estate of George Washington, the 27-acre property along the Potomac River contains walking trails and gardens opened to the public. Now on the market with no protections in place, it is at risk for insensitive development.
- Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground, Richmond
With its last recorded burial in 1879, the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground is the resting place of more than 22,000 people. The burials have been disturbed and displaced by insensitive development, including infrastructure projects.

“As we look to the future with hope, Virginia is in the unique position to find solutions that preserve these places while allowing for needed growth,” continued Kostelny. “With collaborations and innovation, each of these sites can be here for the generations that follow.”

For more information on each location, contact the following:

- Association Drive Historic District (Jordan Tannenbaum: tannenbaum@ushmm.org)
- Civil War Battlefields in Which United States Colored Troops Fought
 - Battle of St. Mary’s/Samaria Church (La’Veesha Allen Rollins: loallen15@gmail.com)
 - Battle of New Market Heights (Mary Koik: mkoik@battlefields.org)
- Connor House (John De Pue: 703-791-3389, 703-994-9023)
- Fort Wool (Terry McGovern: tcmcgovern@att.net, 571-228-4193)
- Green Book Sites (Susan Hellman: shellman1852@gmail.com)
- Turkey Run House (Jim Daniels: longestanddaniels@yahoo.com)
- Mount Calvary Cemetery Complex (Mae Breckinridge-Haywood: maebreckenridge456@gmail.com, 757- 393-8591)
- Mount Pleasant Baptist Church (Henry Peterson: henry.peterson.2008@comcast.net, 703-754-4685)
- River Farm (Alan Rowsome: 202-285-8134, arowsome@nvct.org; Ethel Eaton: 757-229-4526, etheleaton@cox.net)
- Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground (Lenora McQueen: lenora.m@prodigy.net)

About Preservation Virginia

Preservation Virginia’s mission is to inspire and engage the public in fostering, supporting and sustaining Virginia’s historic places through leadership in advocacy, education, revitalization and stewardship. Learn more at preservationvirginia.org.