

Evaluation of Eligibility For
Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places:
The Historic Residential Suburb of
Highland Springs
Henrico County, Virginia

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Introduction

The combined factors of social history, landscape, transportation, architecture, and institutions meet the criteria set forth by the National Park Service's standards as set forth by the Secretary of Interior. Additionally, Highland Springs possesses the same or similar characteristics as the other local streetcar suburbs on the National Register of Historic Places including Highland Park Plaza, the Town of Barton Heights, Ginter Park, and Woodland Heights.

A National Register listing provides formal recognition of a property's historical, architectural, or archeological significance based on criteria set forth in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. Examining the neighborhood's age, integrity, and significance are required research for providing the necessary information for the nomination. To meet the criteria, a neighborhood must reflect the principles and practices of subdivision design and residential development representative of mainstream national trends from 1830 to 1960. The inclusion of Historic Residential Suburbs as a classification of a Historic District is defined in the standards as:

"A geographic area, usually located outside the central city, that was historically connected to the city by one or modes of transportation; subdivided and developed primarily for residential use according to a plan; and possessing a significant concentration, linkage, and continuity of dwellings on small parcels of land, roads and streets, utilities, and community facilities."¹

A qualifying subdivision would be one whose developmental process started with a parcel of undeveloped land, often formerly agricultural, and large enough to be subdivided into individual lots for detached single-family homes. Infrastructure improvements including streets, drainage, and utilities such as water, sewer, electricity,

¹ National Register of Historic Places, The National Park Service
<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/suburbs/intro.htm>,
accessed 1/6/14.

gas, and telephone lines. Attached dwellings and apartment buildings can be included as well as common areas including walkways, gardens, parks, and playgrounds.

Benefits of a listing on the National Register of Historic Places are numerous including automatic inclusion in the Virginia Landmarks Register, eligibility for certain state and/or federal funding when available, and limited protection against adverse affects of future federal and state funded, licensed or permitted projects. Further advantages and benefits of recognition include increased community pride, citizen interest in preserving community history, and economic revitalization.

The Neighborhood of Highland Springs

Highland Springs is an unincorporated community located in the Seven Pines Quad in the Fairfield Magisterial District in Henrico County. Located 4.5 miles east of the City of Richmond, Highland Springs was one of several streetcar suburbs developed outside of downtown Richmond in the late 19th to early 20th century.

History

The founder of Highland Springs, Edmund Sewell Read of Boston, Massachusetts, moved to Virginia in 1890 in search of a better climate for his ailing wife. With the assistance of surveyors, Read settled on a parcel with the highest elevation of land between Richmond and the Atlantic Coast. Attracted to this location by the nine area springs believed to be capable of improving health, Read decided to name the neighborhood "Highland Springs". The first residents included Read's sons, Frank and Percy, and friends from the northeast that Read persuaded to move south.

Read's purchase of approximately 1000 acres of former farmland was located on a ridge with drainage sloping to the Chickahominy River in the east, and the James River to the west. The property included three miles of frontage on the Richmond City and Seven

Pines Railway. The gridded streets were named for trees and flowers and arranged in alphabetical order .

A speculative developer pursuing a vision to create a neighborhood based on little but a promise of better health was a risky decision. Read took a chance in moving east rather than west where the majority of growth was taking place in Richmond. There was not an amusement park to induce buyers as in the case of some other streetcar developments in the area. To expand the trolley into Highland Springs with affordable housing gave increased numbers of city residents the opportunity to escape the polluted and unsanitary conditions along the James River.

The first area to be divided into lots in May of 1890 was the 360-acre parcel located north of Nine Mile Road (Appendix I). Home lots sold between \$50 and \$300, and with a down payment of \$10 to \$20, buyers could pay the remaining balance in monthly installments.² Purchase of a lot came with a free one-year pass on the railway. Commercial lots on the railway line sold for \$400.³

The streetcar in Richmond was the foundation for early suburban development outside of the central city. Railway access, attractive lot prices with little money down, and low monthly payments over time enticed city dwellers to settle in Highland Springs.

Richmond Dispatch, April 22, 1891:

“Secure a home at Highland Springs, one of the highest, healthiest, pleasantest places near Richmond. Take Seven-Pines railway at corner of P and Twenty-Sixth streets. Five-ride tickets 25 cents.”

² Nelson, Dr. Henry Lee, Jr., *History of Highland Springs School*, The Henrico County Historical Society Magazine, VOLUME SIX, NUMBER ONE, Published by the Henrico County Historical Society, FALL 1982, p.30.

³ Manarin, Louis H., *Images of America: Henrico County*. Arcadia Publishing, Charleston SC, Chicago IL, Portsmouth NH, San Francisco CA, 2006, p.30.

Restrictive Covenants Included in Read's Land Purchases

Read did not initially purchase all of the land that became Highland Springs, but rather made several purchases over the first few years of development. Each deed of sale of the parcels to Read carried restrictive covenants.

Stated in the deed transfer to Read recorded on June 29, 1893:

"This grant is made subject to the forthcoming restrictions which shall remain in force for twenty years. No intoxicating liquors shall be manufactured or sold on the granted premises and no transfers (or sales of any of said land) shall be made to any person or persons of African descent."⁴

Plats

Read's first plat, dated May 1890, showed the Highland Springs subdivision plan containing 50-foot wide lots on the land north of Nine Mile Road. The streets ran from Main Street (Nine Mile Road) to Washington Street, and west to east from Bridge Street to Linden Street. The plan included three parks: Central Park, Winthrop Park, and Fairfield Park. Development progressed quickly and by 1893 there were close to fifty houses, a church, school, library, engine house, and fire equipment.

Read's "Map of Highland Springs" was recorded on April 4th, 1895, and included his additional purchase of the area south of Main Street bound diagonally on the southeast by the Southern Railway and to the west at Bridge Street. Included in the map are Sunnyside Cemetery at the western end of the subdivision as well as Woodside Reservation and Sleepy Hollow Park on either side of the Railway. (Appendix II)

⁴ Deed of Sale from Andrew H. Rohleder and Lillie C. Rohleder to Edmund S. Read, June 28, 1893, Henrico County, Virginia, Deed Book 143A, page 142.

Life in Highland Springs

1890-1920

The earliest residents of Highland Springs were New England natives and friends of Edmund Sewell Read. Cultural and social activities played a large role in the lives of the inhabitants. The small community enjoyed participating in various literary and music clubs, a Women's Club, and the Highland Springs Base-ball Club (Appendix III).

Temperance was practiced and religion was an integral part of the life of community residents. For a small neighborhood, numerous churches had been constructed by the early 1920s.

The earliest residents of Highland Springs were mostly wealthier citizens who purchased multiple lots and owned relatively spacious homes. With few exceptions, these were located in the two to three blocks to the north and south of Nine Mile Road and from Bridge Street to Linden Avenue. However, the population soon became more economically diverse as represented by the variety of occupations. The 1910 U.S. Census listed occupations of Highland Springs' residents as bookkeeper, merchant, woodworker, tailor, house builder, foreman, doctor, secretary, real estate, farmer, factory workers (shoe, paper mill, tobacco, box), laborer, minister, painter, wagon driver, and carpenter. Later during WWI, a munitions manufacturing plant constructed in Sandston created local employment, drawing more people to the growing neighborhood.

By 1920, Edmund Sewell Read was listed in the U.S. Census as a widower and resident of Washington, DC. He died May 11, 1927 and was interred in National Memorial Park,

in Fairfax, Virginia.⁵ Read's memory was honored at the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of Highland Springs when his portrait was unveiled at Highland Springs School.

The 1920s – 1940s

By 1921, the number of churches, institutional buildings and commercial structures included the Highland Springs Fire Department, Highland Springs School, Highland Springs M. E. (Methodist) Church, Highland Springs Tennis Club, Highland Springs Unitarian Church, Holy Roller Church (Pentecostal), Babcock Temple, St. John's Catholic Chapel, and Wackley's Wood Yard. In 1922 Nine Mile Road was paved, enabling travel by motor vehicle.⁶ Bus service began in July 1, 1933⁷ and by 1936, additional commercial development included a bus garage, drugstore, and an auto dealership.⁸

Mid-20th c. to Present

On November 25th, 1949, buses replaced the only streetcars that were still on the Hull-Highland Park line⁹, following the former streetcar route. Despite the increased use of automobiles as transportation, Highland Springs residents, particularly the younger generation, utilized public transportation to travel to the City of Richmond for entertainment and shopping at the larger department stores.

⁵ <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=Read&GSfn=Edmund&GSmn=Sewell&GSby=1839&GSbyrel=in&GSdy=1927&GSdyrel=in&GSst=48&GScty=2831&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=36643151&df=all&>

Accessed October 7, 2013

⁶ O'Dell, Jeffrey Marshall, *Inventory of Early Architecture & Historic Sites: The County of Henrico, Virginia*. County of Henrico, Virginia, 1976, p. 89.

⁷ Roberts, Allen E. *The Diamond Years: The History of Babcock Lodge No. 322, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Highland Springs Virginia*, Anchor Communications, Highland Springs, VA, 1987 p. 49.

⁸ *Highland Springs, Virginia* [map]. 1921. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Highland Spring (Henrico Co.) June 1921. <http://sanborn.umi.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu/va/9030/dateid-000001.htm?CCSI=9830n>.

⁹ Ibid, p. 67

As the population in Highland Springs continued to rise, Nine Mile Road became a thriving commercial corridor. The post-WWII boom filled the neighborhood to its northern and southern limits with modest, one-story frame or brick ranch-style homes. These houses, mostly built by the Groome Realty Company, came to be referred to by area residents as “Groome boxes” due to their similarity and simplicity of style.

The increased population created a demand for local retail and service establishments. By the end of the decade, grocery stores, restaurants, drugstores, a department store, two car dealerships, movie theatre, bowling alley, and numerous other service-related businesses lined Nine Mile Road.¹⁰ Door-to-door mail delivery service began in 1953¹¹ and the post office was located on the first floor of Babcock Masonic Lodge.

Over the next twenty years, business development pushed further east along the Nine Mile Road commercial corridor and residents moved farther out into the suburbs, attracted by newer and larger homes. The owner of Hechler Chevrolet, descendant of one of the original inhabitants of Highland Springs, moved his automobile dealership outside of town to Laburnum and Nine Mile Road on the land of his former dairy farm. Soon came the subdivision, Hechler Village, and Eastgate Mall, one of the first enclosed malls in the Richmond area. Eastgate Mall, built in the late 1960s, and anchored by the popular department store Sears and the locally owned Thalhimers, led to the eventual demise of many of the small businesses in Highland Springs.

Hechler Village expanded in the early 1970s with, larger, modern Colonial Revival style houses. Numerous residents moved to Hechler Village and other newer suburban

¹⁰ 1959 *Hill's Richmond Suburban (Chesterfield and Henrico Counties, Va.) Directory*, Hill Directory Co., 1959.

¹¹ Roberts, Allen E. *The Diamond Years: The History of Babcock Lodge No. 322, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Highland Springs Virginia*, Anchor Communications, Highland Springs, VA, 1987, p. 71.

developments. When the younger generation graduated from college and returned to the Richmond area, they also chose to move further out of Highland Springs.

African Americans in Highland Springs

African Americans were denied property ownership in the original settlement of Highland Springs and that covenant was included in all of Read's deeds. There were no African Americans listed as residents of Highland Springs in the 1910 census, however several were listed as living in the rural areas surrounding the neighborhood and were employed mostly as servants or laborers.

In the early 20th c., African American children did not attend Highland Springs High School but instead were educated at one of the eighteen Henrico County "Industrial Colored Schools" in canning, poultry, and farming. In the 1930s, Virginia Randolph School in Glen Allen became the only black high school in the county. As a result, Highland Springs' African American students had to travel approximately twenty miles to attend school.

In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that all students were allowed educational "freedom of choice", but in reality this was not practiced. Separate districts for black students and white students continued to exist. Further federal pressure in 1969 resulted in some former black schools becoming integrated but many were closed.¹²

By 1972, schools were still not fully integrated in the City of Richmond or surrounding counties. In January of 1972, U.S. Circuit Court Judge, Robert Mehrige, Jr. granted the request by the City of Richmond to combine the predominately black Richmond City public school students with the students of Henrico and Chesterfield counties. The plan called for the cross busing of 78,000 students.¹³ There was extreme and very vocal

¹² Manarin, p. 475

¹³ Daytona Beach Morning Journal, January 11, 1972, *Consolidation of Virginia School Systems Ordered*, Richmond, VA (AP)

opposition by the counties to the plan and by June of 1972 the decision was overturned.

As a result the student population of county schools including Highland Springs High School, with very few exceptions remained white.

As the Henrico County population grew, there was a need for more space to educate its youth. For economic reasons, the decision was made to make additions to the existing high schools and broaden the districts rather than build new schools.

During the 1970s, the African American population grew in the immediate areas surrounding Highland Springs. As larger numbers of white residents continued to move out to developments further away from Highland Springs, African Americans began to move into Highland Springs in greater numbers.

During the middle of the decade Highland Springs High School began to become integrated. At present, the majority of the student population is African American.

Recent Statistics: Population, Demographics & Housing¹⁴

	Highland Springs	Henrico County	Virginia
Population, 2010 U.S. Census	15,711	306,935	8,001,024
Persons under 5 years, percent, 2012	7.0%	6.4%	6.2%
Persons under 18 years, percent, 2012	26.7%	23.6%	22.7%
Persons 65 years and over, percent, 2012	10.2%	13.0%	13.0%
Female persons, percent, 2012	55.5%	52.9%	50.9%
White alone, percent, 2012 (a)	29.7%	60.2%	71.1%
Black or African American alone, percent, 2012 (a)	66.1%	30.1%	19.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, 2012 (a)	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Asian alone, percent, 2012 (a)	0.5%	7.2%	6.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent, 2012 (a)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races, percent, 2012	2.3%	2.1%	2.6%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2012 (b)	2.1%	5.2%	8.4%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2012	29.2%	56.2%	64.1%
Living in same house 1 year & over, percent, 2008-2012	84.3%	83.0%	84.7%
Foreign born persons, percent, 2008-2012	3.4%	11.2%	11.1%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2008-2012	5.9%	13.8%	14.7%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2008-2012	79.7%	89.7%	86.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25+, 2008-2012	14.1%	39.5%	34.7%
Veterans, 2008-2012	1,228	22,930	734,151
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16+, 2008-2012	23.1	21.8	27.5
Housing units, 2012	6,621	133,648	3,398,286
Homeownership rate, 2008-2012	63.6%	65.8%	67.8%
Housing units in multi-unit structures, percent, 2008-2012	23.3%	28.7%	21.5%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2008-2012	\$155,800	\$226,500	\$249,700
Households, 2008-2012	6,109	123,392	3,006,219
Persons per household, 2008-2012	2.69	2.47	2.59
Per capita money income in past 12 months (2012 dollars), 2008-2012	\$21,037	\$33,343	\$33,326
Median household income, 2008-2012	\$43,892	\$61,300	\$63,636
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2008-2012	15.0%	10.5%	11.1%
Unemployment Rate, 2012 ¹⁵	11.9%	3.9%	6.9%

Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates
Last Revised: Tuesday, 17-Dec-2013 12:03:34 EST

¹⁴ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/51/51087.html>, accessed 1/4/14

¹⁵ Economic Facts, American Community Survey
<http://acs-economic-state.findthedata.org>, accessed 1/7/14.

Places of Significance

Highland Springs Churches

Becoming a member of the congregation of one of the churches in Highland Springs played an important role in the lives of early residents. Establishment of churches immediately followed home construction.

1892 – Highland Springs Baptist Church located at Kalmia & Vine St.

1895 – Highland Springs Methodist Church. The congregation was organized by Dr. Granville Collins and met in the early years at the Odd Fellows Hall on Fern Avenue. The church, constructed in 1909 at Holly Avenue between Vine and Nine Mile Road, is still standing and an active church.

1900 - Highland Springs Unitarian Church located at the corner of Fern & Nine Mile Road was built in honor of Thomas Jefferson. Highland Springs founder Edmund Sewell Read was a Unitarian and member of this church.

1920 – Church of the Messiah Episcopal Church, formed in 1920. Building for the church began May 23, 1921 and the first service was held November 22, 1922. The church was demolished in 1967.

St. John's Catholic Chapel (appears on the 1921 Sanborn map) was located south of Nine Mile Road and west of Battery Street and demolished in 1976¹⁶. Currently, Catholic mass in both English and Spanish is held in St. John Catholic Church located at 813 W. Nine Mile Road.

¹⁶ O'Dell, Jeffrey Marshall, *Inventory of Early Architecture & Historic Sites: The County of Henrico, Virginia*. County of Henrico, Virginia, 1976, p 233.

Babcock Lodge/Temple

Named for Capt. Alexander Babcock, one of the early residents of Highland Springs, Babcock Lodge (lodge refers to a group of Masons) was formed in 1911 and the temple (temple refers to the building where they meet)¹⁷ was built in 1913.

Edmund S. Read, founder of Highland Springs and a Mason from Winthrop Lodge in Massachusetts, was one of the signers of the 1911 Dispensation for Babcock Lodge.¹⁸ He also sold the lot on Main Street (Nine Mile Road) to the Building Committee to build the Temple in 1913.

The site of many community functions and meetings, Babcock Temple was significant to the neighborhood. At one time, the Highland Springs Post Office was located on the first floor.

“Babcock’s Temple has always been open for wholesome use to non-Masonic associations.”¹⁹

During the 1980s, Lodge membership began to decline due to the lack of interest and support from the younger generation. The Lodge still owns the building and currently meets on the second floor. The first story frontage is rented to other commercial interests. Currently there are 138 members, however only about 25 are active.²⁰

Highland Springs School

The original Highland Springs School located at Stop No. 31 on Nine Mile Road was a one-room schoolhouse established in 1891 by Miss Ollie Johnson and Miss Sadie Steigleder with five students and one teacher. Edmund S. Read donated the land, building and the thirty-dollar per week salary for the first nine months of operation. By

¹⁷<http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org>,

Accessed November 23, 2013.

¹⁸ Roberts, Allen E. *The Diamond Years: The History of Babcock Lodge No. 322, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Highland Springs Virginia*, Anchor Communications, Highland Springs, VA, 1987, Appendix i.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 107.

²⁰Phone Interview – Brother Thomas G. Lacy, II, Worshipful Master of Babcock Lodge No. 322, December 3, 2013.

1905 it had grown to 27 students, aged seven to sixteen. The students were transferred to Fairfield High School at Howards' Grove in Fairmont after they had completed six grades.

By 1907, the one room schoolhouse was replaced with a four room building where Miss Lottie served as the principal. The original one-room schoolhouse was moved four blocks west to the south side of Nine Mile Road at Stop 29, and served as the annex of the Unitarian Church. The first graduating class of the new school in 1907 consisted of six young women.

Rapid growth in the community led to the building of many additions to the school over the years. A larger building constructed in 1912 was destroyed by fire. The 1914 rebuilt school building was destroyed by fire on St. Patrick's Day in 1965.²¹

The present high school on Oak Lane opened in 1951. Additions and renovations were made in 1956, 1957, 1970, 1991, and 2006.

Highland Springs High School currently houses the Henrico County Specialty Center for Engineering.

²¹ Nelson, Dr. Henry Lee, Jr., *History of Highland Springs School*, The Henrico County Historical Society Magazine, VOLUME SIX, NUMBER ONE, Published by the Henrico County Historical Society, FALL 1982, p.30



Highland Springs School, as it appeared in 1893 (Photo: *Images of America: Henrico County*, p. 30)



Highland Springs School, First School Bus, (photo taken in front of the four-room schoolhouse, 1907). owned by Alvin Hechler and driven by Ed Hechler. Pictured in the photo are Robert Taylor, Wray Hechler, Eddie Wood Taylor, Ethlyn Hechler Perry, Myrtle Hechler Perry, Ann Allen, Eleanor Allen and Ed Hechler.²²

²² *School Days*, Henrico County, Virginia Schools, Volume 1, No. 3, November 1968.

Other Notable Highland Springs Residents

In addition to Highland Springs' founder, Edmund Sewell Read, other residents made significant contributions to the development of the community.

Alexander Gulick Babcock

Capt. Alexander Gulick Babcock, for whom the Babcock Lodge was named, moved to Richmond in 1862. Sympathetic to the causes of the South in the Civil War, one of his more significant contributions to the neighborhood was his vocal and financial assistance in 1899 facilitating the vote to establish a "Masonic Orphan Asylum"²³, west of Highland Springs, known as The Masonic Home of Virginia. The Masonic home was located on Nine Mile Road and the Seven Pines Railroad passed in front of it. Babcock was appointed to the first Board of Governors and then elected President.²⁴

Horace Rowe Hicks

Dr. Horace Rowe Hicks, a physician who resided on Nine Mile Road, practiced medicine in Highland Springs from 1935 until 1988. He also served as a Henrico County District Supervisor and was responsible for the installation of a sewerage disposal system in Highland Springs and improvements to recreational facilities. Additionally during his tenure, a fire department was established and a four-lane divided highway was built from the Richmond city limits to the edge of the community.²⁵

²³ Roberts, Allen E. *The Diamond Years: The History of Babcock Lodge No. 322, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Highland Springs Virginia*, Anchor Communications, Highland Springs, VA, 1987, Appendix iv.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 120

²⁵ Notable Henricoans Database, <http://www.henricolibrary.org/nhdb/Search2.asp?FS=display&ID=170>, Accessed October 14, 2013.

The Significance of The Seven Pines Railway

The industrial revolution brought crowded conditions and pollution to cities of all sizes. By the end of the century, streetcar lines contributed greatly to suburban expansion across the United States.

The introduction of the first electric-powered streetcar system in Richmond, Virginia, in 1887 by Frank J. Sprague ushered in a new period of suburbanization. The electric streetcar, or trolley, allowed people to travel in 10 minutes as far they could walk in 30 minutes.²⁶

Richmond's first trolley in 1888 enabled city residents to live outside the unpleasantness of the urban environment yet be able to travel back to the city for work and shopping. The pollution of the James River and poor air quality not only was unpleasant, but unsanitary and hazardous to health. Initial suburban developments rapidly cropped up to the west and north of the city with promises of homes on spacious lots, neighborhood parks, and more healthy living conditions. When, in the late 1890s, Edmund Sewell Read laid the plan for the subdivision of Highland Springs on land east of the city, its accessibility to the Seven Pines railway route was a major factor. The destination, "A row of seven pine trees at the intersection of the Williamsburg stage road with Nine Mile Road gave the site the name Seven Pines."²⁷ The route included a stop at the important and well-visited Seven Pines National Cemetery. The cemetery, where over 1,300

²⁶ National Park Service: US Department of the Interior
<http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/64500838.pdf>, p. 4
accessed 1/6/14

²⁷ McKenney, Carlton Norris, *Rails in Richmond*, Interurban Press, Glendale, California, 1986, p. 107

Confederate soldiers are buried, was located on a portion of land where the Battle of Fair Oaks occurred²⁸.

The Charter for the Seven Pines Railway was issued on February 3, 1888. Included among the incorporators were Thomas B. Murphy, C.I. Miller, Isaiah J. Hawkes, and Alexander G. Babcock, area landowners who later sold to Edmund S. Read the property that became Highland Springs²⁹.

The first train consisting of a steam locomotive and two 15 bench open cars ran its first route on April 21, 1889. The Seven Pines line ran from the terminal at 26th & Q in Richmond to Williamsburg Road. The route included stops at the Masonic Home at Holly Avenue, (Stop 11), Cedar Lane (Stop 20), Peaco's Siding (Stop 23), Oak Avenue in Highland Springs (Stop 32), and Fair Oaks (Stop 37).

By 1888, Richmond began using electric streetcars. The cars were connected to an overhead wire called a "troller", so the cars became referred to as "trolleys".³⁰ The first trolley lines were expanded to the western and northern suburbs. In 1892 the owners of the Seven Pines Railway applied for the formerly steam powered train to be electrified and the first electric streetcar departed the station on March 16, 1893. In Highland Springs a wall and boardwalk were built to protect travelers from dust and mud while they waited for the trolley to arrive.

At this time Read began to sell lots. One of the inducements to potential buyers was a one-year free pass on the railway.

²⁸ Seven Pines National Cemetery:
http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/Virginia/Seven_Pines_National_Cemetery.html. Accessed December 4, 2013.

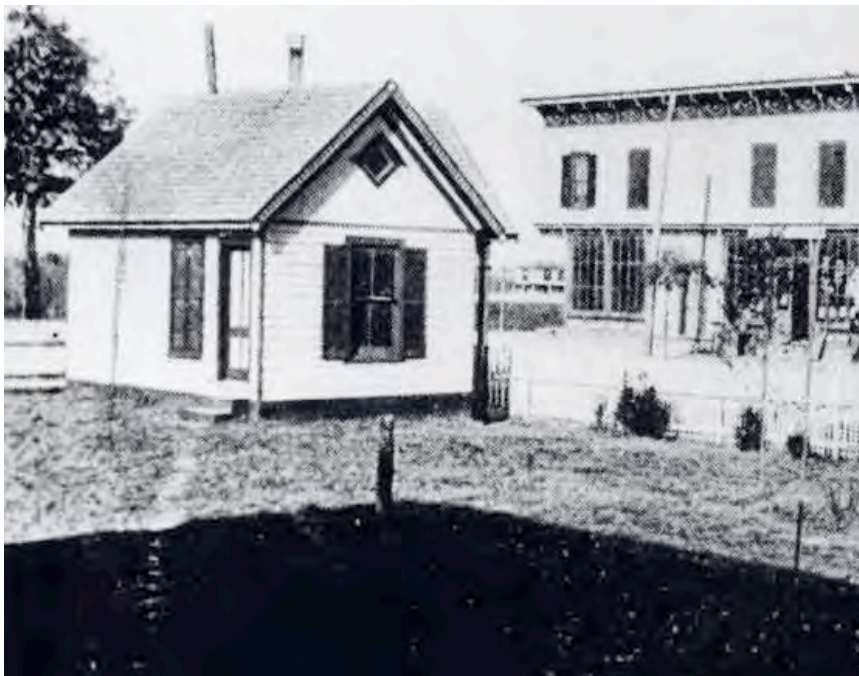
²⁹ McKenney, p. 107.

³⁰ McGraw, Marie Tyler, *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia and Its People*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1994, p. 201.



Photo of Highland Springs in 1894, Roberts, Allen E., *The Diamond Years*, p. 2. "Post Office Block and Stores" (Trolley Station on the left), inset portrait is Edmund Sewell Read.

The trolley depot was the first public building to be built in Highland Springs. It stood for over 100 years and eventually a portion of the station was moved slightly south of its former location and was incorporated into a residence on Holly Avenue³¹.



The Trolley Depot (Photo: Manarin, Louis H., *Images of America: Henrico County*, p. 30)

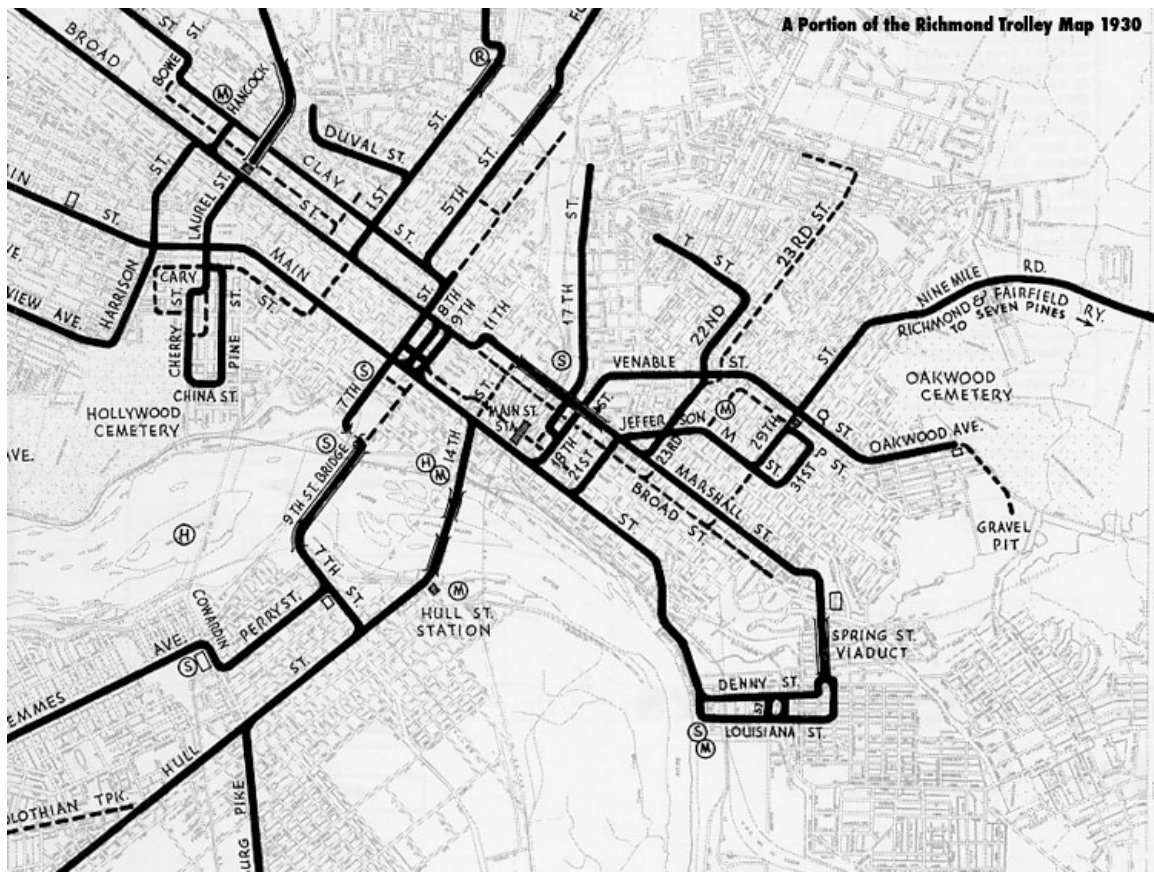
³¹ McKenney, Carlton Norris, *Rails in Richmond*, Interurban Press, Glendale, California, 1986.



5 S. Holly Street – The center section of this house contains the old trolley depot.

In 1912, the line was expanded and the company purchased by the Virginia Passenger and Power Co.³²

³² The Times Dispatch, February 6, 1912.
<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038615/1912-02-06/ed-1/seq-1/#date1=1911&index=0&rows=20&words=Approved+Pines+Sale+Seven&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=Virginia&date2=1912&proxtext=Seven+Pines+Sale+Approved&y=12&x=12&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1>. Accessed October 15, 2013.



1930 Trolley Map. The right side of the map depicts the path of the trolley to Nine Mile Road in Highland Springs. (Carlton McKenney, *Rails in Richmond*)

Architecture

The Highland Springs neighborhood includes numerous houses, churches, and institutional architectural examples spanning over a century, many retaining their historic physical appearance and character.

Early dwellings are mostly located throughout the neighborhood from east to west and in the first couple of blocks north and south of Nine Mile Road (Appendix IV). Because Read's initial area of development was north of Nine Mile Road, the overwhelming majority of early homes were built in those blocks.

Early styles include Queen Anne Victorian (both brick and frame), Craftsman Bungalow, and American Foursquare. Beginning in the 1930s, various styles of Colonial Revival houses were built and in the middle of the 20th century, the neighborhood was filled to its outer boundaries with Minimal Traditional style homes.

The current condition of the dwellings in Highland Springs is varied. Most existing century-old homes have been well maintained or accurately restored, however several are in need of minor to substantial repairs. Later homes, particularly, mid-20th century ones, appear not to be as sturdy as their predecessors and could also benefit from some needed maintenance.

Early Highland Springs Architecture

By 1921, institutional and commercial buildings included the following:

Highland Springs Tennis Club – Located at Main and Fern. Tennis was a popular sport in the 1920s enjoyed mostly by the wealthier classes and clubs opened up in many U.S. cities.³³ The club building was demolished in the early 1960s and a department store was built in its place.³⁴

Highland Springs Unitarian Church – Located at Fern Avenue and Nine Mile Road

³³ A Short History: United States Court Tennis.

<http://www.uscourttennis.org/index.php?id=48>, accessed November 25, 2013.

³⁴ Roberts, Allen E. *The Diamond Years: The History of Babcock Lodge No. 322, Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, Highland Springs Virginia*, Anchor Communications, Highland Springs, VA, 1987, p. 69.

Highland Springs School – Located on Nine Mile Road between Juniper Avenue and Kalmia Avenue

Auto Repair Shop – Located at the corner of Nine Mile Road and Holly Avenue

Holy Roller Church – Located at the corner of Willow Avenue and Juniper Avenue

Highland Springs Methodist Church – Located on Holly Avenue between Vine and Nine Mile Road³⁵

Commercial Architecture

Few older, commercial buildings are still standing. As commercial growth progressed on Nine Mile Road, most of the older storefronts were demolished and replaced with newer, modern buildings. It was short lived however. Beginning in the 1970s, many residents and businesses moved out of the central commercial district as growth pushed further out into newer suburbs.



Commercial Building, W. Nine Mile Road and North Cedar Avenue
Italianate storefront with overhanging shed roof with modillions, flat façade, with two six-over-six windows on the second story and a bracketed cornice at the roofline. First story with single center door flanked by display windows. Right single story wing with side gabled roof and single door to the left of a display window.

³⁵ *Highland Springs, Virginia* [map]. 1921. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Highland Spring (Henrico Co.) June 1921.
<http://sanborn.umi.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu/va/9030/dateid-000001.htm?CCSI=9830n>.

Institutional & Public Buildings

Henrico Theatre – 305 E. Nine Mile Road, c.1936

The Art Deco style Henrico Theatre was designed by architect Edward F. Sinnot, Sr. Constructed in only seven months, builder Charles Somma also built the Byrd Theatre in Richmond's Carytown. The Henrico Theatre opened with the film "Thin Ice" on April 25, 1936.

With most development occurring in the western portion of Henrico County, the building of the theatre in Highland Springs was a significant addition to the neighborhood and a great source of pride to area residents. It was the first air-conditioned theatre in the Richmond area.

After the theatre fell into disrepair, the last owner, Randy Horne, sold the theatre to Henrico County in 1999. The theatre has since been restored and is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Henrico Theatre

Babcock Lodge, 1 S. Holly Avenue, c. 1913

Babcock Lodge is a two-story brick building with symmetrical façade and a low-pitched hipped roof with wide eaves. The Mission-shaped dormer has two molded, top, 12-pane windows with mullions flanking a center top louver. On the second story there are six brick filled window openings. The second story windows were bricked in 1975 due to traffic noise from Nine Mile Road. The first story has two center windows flanked by doors. The windows have segmental arched heads with keystone over arched wood pediments; the doors have semi-circular arches with keystone over semi-circular wood pediments.



Babcock Lodge

Highland Springs Methodist Church, 22 N. Holly Avenue, c. 1909

The congregation of Highland Springs Methodist Church was originally known as Chickahominy Mission. The church was organized in 1895 by Dr. Granville T. Collins, a physician who settled in Highland Springs in 1894 at the request of Edmund Sewell Read. In 1899 the church purchased a two-story frame building on Nine Mile Road between Fern Avenue and Elm Street that they sold in 1909.

In 1906, the church purchased the property on North Holly Avenue where the present church is located. The church has been remodeled several times³⁶ and the Tudor Revival-style crenellation has been removed from the wing and bell tower.



Highland Springs Methodist Church (Photo, *Inventory of Early Architecture and Historic Sites*, O'Dell, 1976, p. 90.



Highland Springs Methodist Church

³⁶ Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey Form File 43-286, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, accessed 9/24/13.

Residential Architecture

Late-Nineteenth Century Victorian and Revival Styles

Combining elements of earlier architectural styles, the late 19th and early 20th century period is characterized by eclecticism. Styles include Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival, and Second Empire.

Edmund Sewell Read House, 5 W. Nine Mile Road, c. 1896

Founder Edmund Sewell Read's house is a Tudor Revival-style dwelling built in 1896 to replace his first home, a frame dwelling, which was destroyed by fire. ³⁷

The two-story brick house has a steeply-pitched, parapeted cross-gabled slate roof and crenellated tower at the intersection. There is a two-story round bay with three windows on each story and a corbelled brick cornice on the projecting front gable. There is a wrap-around porch on the first story with a flat roof and a molded cornice supported by four pairs of Tuscan columns set on brick piers and single engaged columns at the face of the dwelling. The primary entrance, located to the right of the round bay, has double-leaf doors with a segmental-arched lintel. On the second story, there is a single-leaf door with segmental-arched lintel centered over the primary entrance. The double hung windows have segmental-arched lintels.



³⁷ *A Community's Spirit: Historic Tales of Highland Springs*, Video, 2008, County of Henrico, VA Public Relations and Media Services, Producer/Director Steven Dunn.

Edmund S. Read House (Now Highland Springs Primary Care & Renaissance Med Spa)



Brick Detail of Left Facing Side of Read House



Read House Brick Detail Front – Bow Window

Example of a Queen Anne-style Dwelling:

Queen Anne was one of the most popular styles of the Victorian Period. Originating in England, Queen Anne dwellings are typically asymmetrical with a forward facing gable, steeply pitched roof, towers or turrets, spindle work, full front porches, and an abundance of decorative treatments. Side materials were predominantly wood, but are also found in patterned brick or stone, and occasionally stucco. Single-story Queen Anne dwellings are known as Folk Victorians or Queen Anne cottages.



Queen Anne House, 4 S. Daisy Avenue – A typical Queen Anne dwelling

Early-Twentieth Century Architectural Styles

CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOWS

Many examples of this style still exist and are characterized by low pitched, hip and gable roofs with wide eaves with exposed rafters, gabled or shed dormer, double-hung windows and full front porches with tapered posts on brick piers or Tuscan order columns.



Craftsman Bungalow with gabled dormer and tapered posts on brick piers located at 101 N. Pine St.



Craftsman Bungalow with Shed Dormer and Tuscan Columns, 22 S. Elm St.

AMERICAN FOURSQUARE

The early 20th c. American Foursquare, influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Style houses, is characterized by a plain, square design with details inspired by the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. American Foursquare houses are usually two stories high and constructed of brick, frame, stucco, or textured concrete blocks. Common elements include a hipped roof, central dormer, and a full front porch. Often the houses were assembled from a mail order kit consisting of thousands of pieces shipped by train.



American Foursquare, 2 S. Beech St.

Two-story, metal hipped roof, full-width porch supported by Tuscan columns, door with rectangular transom and sidelights, and double hung windows with louvered shutters.



American Foursquare with stucco walls, 5 N. Beech Ave.

Mid-Twentieth Century Styles

COLONIAL REVIVAL



Spanish Eclectic, 205 N. Kalmia

One-story with low pitched, metal hipped roof with ridge and wide overhang, exposed rafters, stucco walls, and full-width arcade style porch with archways, supported by square piers.



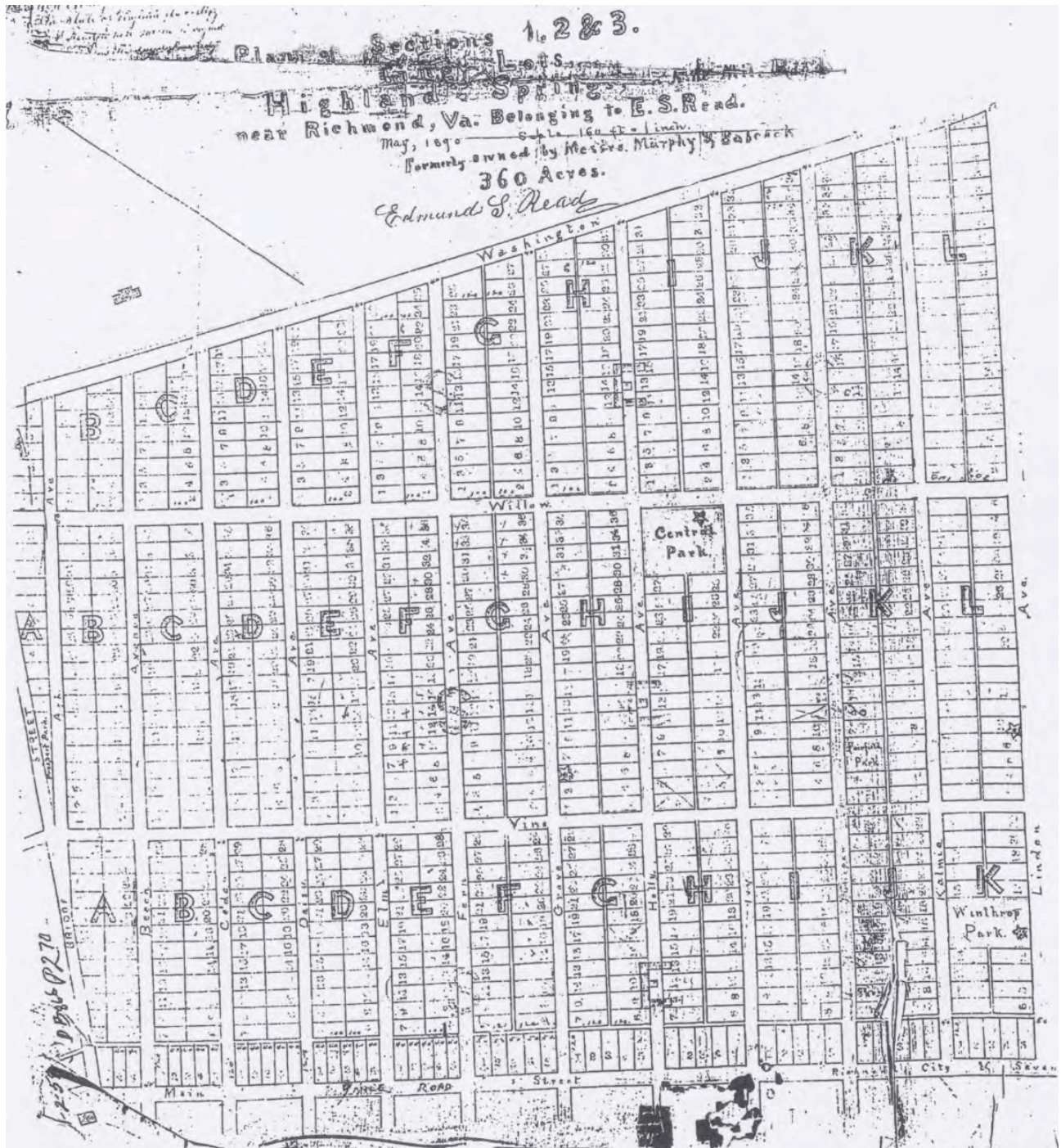
Colonial Revival Cape Cod, S. Holly Avenue
MINIMAL TRADITIONAL



One-story ranch style houses, brick, wood, or vinyl siding.

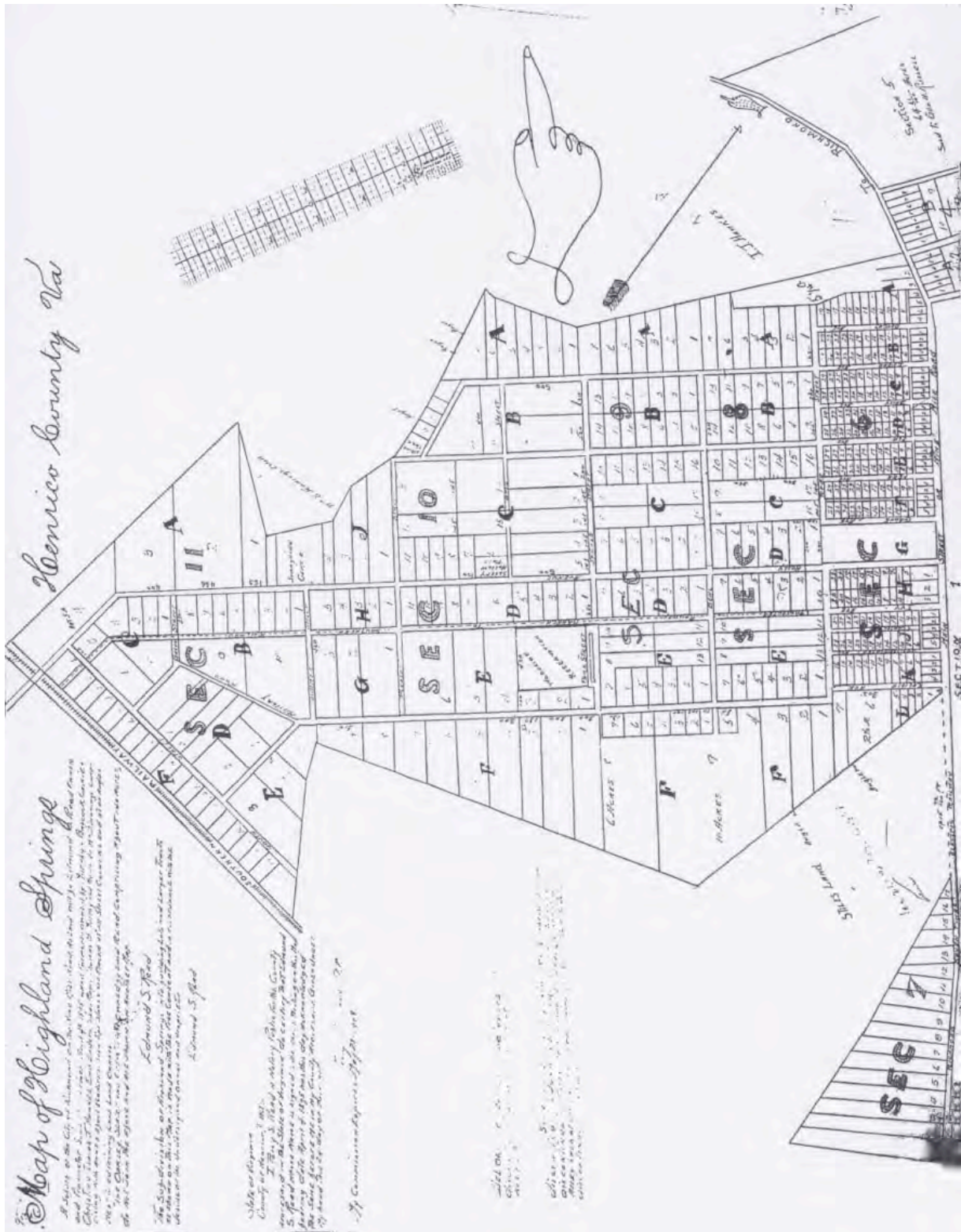
Appendix I

Plan of Highland Springs, May, 1890



Appendix II

Map of Highland Springs, April 4, 1895



Appendix III

Newspaper Articles, Richmond Dispatch

NOTES FROM HIGHLAND SPRINGS.

The W. C. T. U.'s Temperance Tea-Literary Meeting—Personal Notes.

Monday evening the Woman's Christian Temperance Union gave a temperance tea at the Odd-Fellows' Hall. The tea was delightful, and the concert a splendid success. Among the numbers on the programme were two charming recitations by Miss Sadie Seigleider, instrumental music by Professor Elmer Newell, a selection by Highland Springs male quartette, a negro temperance speech, and song, with banjo accompaniment, Mr. Jacques, mandolin and guitar duet, Messrs. Gebhardt. After the concert Mr. Samuel Borten was called forward, and presented with a handsome Bible, as a testimonial of the love and esteem in which he is held. He was also presented with a handsome cup and saucer.

The Ladies' Aid Society held a meeting at the residence of Mrs. Matthews, and report a good meeting.

Mr. P. S. Read has opened a store in the block, and will keep a fine stock of general merchandise.

The Richmond District Convention was attended by Mesdames J. O. Allwood, R. G. Garnett, J. B. Newell, James Davis, and Miss Newell. Mrs. K. Raabe, the recording secretary, was prevented from attending by the sudden illness of a little daughter.

The Literary and Musical Association met, as usual, in the Library. The attendance was not so large as generally. There was a short, but well-rendered programme. Final arrangements to meet the Grady Literary Society, of Richmond, were made. Highland Springs colors will be blue and white. The Grady colors will be old gold and red. Here's to the white and blue.

Thursday evening a free lecture was given by J. O. Reams, Deputy State Councillor of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, at the Library. Owing to many adverse circumstances the audience was discouragingly small. We hope to have Mr. Reams another time.

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The condition of Mr. Straight's two children who have been quite sick, is such as to warrant a return to school life shortly.

Professor Elmer Newell has had several flattering offers from northern parties, who wish to secure his services as organist and musical director, but we are making every endeavor to keep this talented young musician with us, and think we shall succeed.

The Rev. Mr. Scott preached a fine sermon Sunday morning at the lodge-room from the text, "Vanity of Vanities; All is Vanity."

Richmond Dispatch, March 8, 1896

Leigh, and stealing a pistol, two razors, and a considerable amount of wearing apparel, all of the value of \$12.50. The goods were all recovered.

Was the Reverse.
RICHMOND, VA., July 26, 1892.
To the Editor of the Dispatch:
I noticed in the DISPATCH this morning that the Randolph's Base-Ball Club defeated the Highland-Spring Club. But that is a big mistake. The Highland Springs defeated the said club 11 to 6, and you would do us a great favor if you would have it corrected. Respectfully,
HIGHLAND-SPRING BASE-BALL CLUB.

If you
to the D
Will give
prices
Hundre
appetizer
The D
facilities
Send us y
ly furnish

Richmond Dispatch, July 26, 1892

Provided by Henrico County Department of Revitalization



Conclusion

Evaluation and comparison of factors including period of significance, social history, and physical characteristics qualify Highland Springs as a Historic Residential Suburb eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The key to the successful settlement of the neighborhood enabled by the electric streetcar along with affordable lots led quickly to a thriving suburban development. Numerous houses and institutional buildings exemplify many styles of architecture and architectural significance and retain their historic physical appearance and character. Read's Victorian-era house, the Henrico Theatre, the Masonic Temple and Highland Springs Methodist Church possess both architectural and cultural significance.

The thriving commercial corridor of the mid-century contributed to further residential development and increased population. More retail and service oriented businesses, as well as social and religious institutions made Highland Springs a significant neighborhood in Henrico County.

Although the commercial corridor had declined by the end of the century, Highland Springs still maintains its historic character through the existence of historic architecture and cultural integrity.

Tax incentives for necessary rehabilitation and restoration of residential and remaining commercial dwellings would further protect the integrity of the neighborhood.

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