Historic name: Signal Hill

Common name: A.K.A. Roseberry Farm, Wilcoxon Farm

County/Town/City: Prince William County

Street address or route number: vic. S.R. 616 & S.R. 689 (vic. Interex. Signal Hill Rd. & Blooms Drive)

USGS Quad: Manassas & Independent Hill

Date or period: 1861

Original owner: Hoee family

Original use: Farm

Present owner: City of Manassas Park (+others)

Present use: Not in use

Acreage: 100 acres

USGS plat (D.B. 56, p. 431) divided the area off into a grid containing 25 blocks of 10 acres on the east side of S.R. 616, running northeast to southwest, skirts the western edge of the Signal Hill ridge and separates the 13-acre fortification site from a 90-acre adjacent parcel on the west side of S.R. 616. Another 10 acres on the east side of the ridge are privately owned, as is a small parcel on the southwest side of the breastworks.

The ridge is approximately 1200 feet long and 300 feet wide at the 340-to-350-foot elevation point. A c5-foot-wide, undulating trench encircles the whole ridge at that elevation.

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Here and there the trench forms an extra outer loop, presumably for gun emplacements. There are no guns present, but the earth works are said to be remarkably intact, considering their age. Trees and underbrush are growing in the trenches, and there is evidence of a well-worn footpath meandering along the upper edge of the trench. A wire fence runs along the ridge's center, separating the Manassas Park-owned 13-acre portion of the hill from the privately-owned 10-acre western parcel. Access to the trenches is along the west side of S.R. 616, at the base of the hill.

There are no historical structures on the part of the ridge owned by Manassas Park. On the eastern portion of the ridge is a 20th century farm house and complex built on the site of the old Arrington farm, known as the Signal Hill Farm. Within that property's boundaries, reached by a private road off Birmingham Drive, is the Arrington family cemetery. The cemetery, which contains about 27 graves, seven of them marked, is enclosed by a decorative iron fence. The marked burials are of members of the Arrington, Davis and Brown families. The oldest known burial is of Mary J. Davis, who died in 1860. According to one source, in a field on the property is the grave of a South Carolina soldier who died at Signal Hill during the Civil War.

Historical Significance

up to 76 lots each. The streets were to be named after such local patriots and southern leaders as Grant, Douglass, Turner, Washington, Booker, Lyons and Beauregard.

In 1972, the Town of Manassas Park began to acquire the property it now owns at Signal Hill, through the assistance of the Nature Conservancy, under a purchase-sell-back arrangement. At the same time, the Prince William County Historical Commission and the County Board of Supervisors sought to protect (at first 6 acres, then 105 acres) Signal Hill with an historical overlay zone. Manassas Park hired a consultant to prepare a plan for creation of a park at Signal Hill. Such a park, it was demonstrated, would not only preserve the historically-important ridge and some scenically-valuable open space, it would help fill the current and anticipated recreation needs of western Prince William County. The plan recommended acquisition of 433 acres, about 100 acres of which would form the park's core. The plan laid out an acquisition schedule, suggested ways of financing the purchase, and proposed development of a park meant for passive recreation. Trails, interpretive programs, trench and fortification restoration were some of the facets of the plan, all at a reasonably low cost to implement.

The Historical Commission withdrew its motion to create a local overlay historic district in 1978, the Board of Supervisors having failed to act on the request. The City of Manassas Park has done nothing to adopt the park plan. Meanwhile, Signal Hill is a local dumping ground, the trenches and fortifications are being excavated by relic-seekers, and development is encroaching more and more.
Sources and bibliography
Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.)
Hanson, Joseph Mills, Built upon Reminders (1939), pp. 28, 32.

Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.)
Names and addresses of persons interviewed Joe Rotloff, Planner, Manassas Park; R.J. Ratcliffe, Manassas, Va.; Ann Satterthwaite.

Plan (Indicate locations of rooms, doorways, windows, alterations, etc.)

Site plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies and significant topographical features.)