

VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

File no.76-161 4361 Negative no(s).

SURVEY FORM

Historic name Catharpin Store & Post Office Common name Alvey's Community Store & Catharpin Post Office County/Town/City Prince William County

Street address or route number Catharpin, Va., Interex Sudley Rd. (SR234) and Sanders Lane

USGS Quad Gainesville

Original ownerGeorge W. Sanders

Original use General Store & Post Office

Present owner Robert W. Alvey

Present owner address 4606 Sanders Lane

Catharpin, Va. Present use Store & Post Office

Acreage -1 acre

Date or period C1875 and later Architect/builder/craftsmen George W. Sanders

Source of name Catharpin Run, nearby.

Source of date Local history

Stories 2,1

Foundation and wall const'n Concrete foundation, concrete

& frame walls.

Roof type Gable--metal & Asphalt shingle-covered.

State condition of structure and environs Buildings are in good condition, though much renovated.

State potential threats to structure Note any archaeological interest

Should be investigated for possible register potential? yes_

Architectural description (Note significant features of plan, structural system and interior and exterior decoration, taking care to point out aspects not visible or clear from photographs. Explain nature and period of all alterations and additions. List any outbuildings and their approximate ages, cemeteries, etc.)

First store and post office was a 2-story, frame, clapboarded building having the entrance in the gable end, facing Sudley Road. The cheese factory, which had been constructed in 1922 and operated until 1926, beside the store, in 1926 became a warehouse for the store. store was turned on its foundation in 1943 and the entrance relocated to the side. New siding was added then, and additions were built.

In 1974, the store was remodeled again, and brick was applied to the lower stories of the store and the old cheese factory. At that time, the post office was moved into the latter building. Walls of the old cheese factory incorporate a solid concrete-walled storeroom for ripening cheese.

Interior inspected?

Yes

Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)

Geroge W. Sanders built the store at Catharpin (pronounced Cat-har-pin) in 1874 or 75, about the same time that he was appointed postmaster of the post office which was established at Catharpin in 1875. Sanders, a tenant farmer who had sold his crops to Gen. J.E.B. Stuart when the Confederate forces camped overnight in the area in 1863, worked as a clerk in a store in Gainesville after the war, until he had saved enough money to establish his own business. After George Sanders' untimely death in July 1875, only 12 days after he had been appointed to the position of postmaster, his son Frederick H. Sanders took the job and continued as storekeeper and postmaster until his death in 1932. He was followed by his daughter, Pearl Sanders Alvey, who operated the post office, while her husband J.W. Alvey operated the store. Unpo Mrs. Alvey's death in 1956, her son James W. Alvey, Jr., the present postmaster took over the duties.

The first Sanders Store and post office was a 2-story frame building, having its gable end facing the road and a broad porch extending across the front. The store was located on the north side of Sudley Road, in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of a private lane (now Sanders Lane, SR 705), and had a 1-story shed-roofed frame addition on the right side.

Between 1875 and the early 1900s, several other buildings were erected at Catharpin. is supposed that the original Sanders house, built probably in the 1870s to the west of the store, burned in 1893. In about 1885 Frederick Sanders built a 2-story frame house northwest of this earlier house. This house, later known as the Davis house was still standing though Sources and bibliography

Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.) E.R. Conner, III, Catharpin, Virginia, A Trading Center of Western Prince William County," in Echoes of History, Nov. 1975, pp.66-70. Ratcliff, This Was Prince William (c1978).

Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.)

Names and addresses of persons interviewed James W. Alvey, Jr. Catharpin, Va. E.R. Conner, Manassas

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Name, address and title of recorder Frances Jones, Architectural Historian - Surveyor, NVPDC

Date

CATHARPIN STORE & POST OFFICE

Historical significance continued

in ruinous condition in 1975. In about 1895 Frederick Sanders built a larger, 2-story frame house to the west of the store and east of the site of the old Sanders house. This house is the residence of Robert W. Alvey. In the late 19th century, a combined blacksmith/wheelwright shop was built just southeast of the store. This shop was later converted to a barn and demolished sometime after World War I. In 1874 the first Catharpin School was built, a 1-room structure which was later replaced by a larger building. Upon the completion of the larger school in about 1898, the original school was moved to Sanders' property and used as a chicken coop, later a dwelling and finally, after being moved a second time, a storehouse for Sanders' mill. The mill, a kerosene-powered grist mill, which was built about 1905, has been demolished, along with the storehouse. From about 1900 to about 1910 there was a cattle scale and pen located west of the school. In 1910, Frederick Sanders' nephew, Emmett N. Pattie, who had clerked in both the store and post office, built a store/residence on the south side of Sudley Road, across from the school and began his own business. He also built a large warehouse east of the store, the upper floor of which became the local Lodge Hall where meetings and entertainments were held.

In 1922 a local farmers' cooperative, the Farm Products Corporation, established a cheese factory on 16/100 of an acre purchased from Frederick Sanders adjacent to his store. A 1½-story frame building, the cheese factory was equipped to handle 6,000 lbs of milk per day and produced two kinds of cheese, "longhorn" and "daisy," for markets in Manassas and Washington, D.C. The plant was closed, owing to a lack of patronage, and in 1926 Sanders bought the property back and converted the cheese factory to a warehouse. In 1974 the post office was moved into the building.

The Sanders (later Alvey) Store retained the same general outward appearance until 1943 when owner J.W. Alvey turned the store so that the broad side faced the road, and moved the entrance from the end to the side. New siding was put on, and additions were made to the right. Sanders' grist mill and the storehouse which had been the original school building were torn down. Pattie's store, which had closed in 1930, was reopened in 1934, and was moved to its present location (on a new cinder block foundation) in 1940 and operated until 1943. This store was vacant from 1943 to 1956 and in recent years was remodeled as a residence. The Catharpin School, which was closed in 1935, remained unused for many years but has recently been converted for use as the salesroom for a lawn and gardening center.

Alvey's store and the Catharpin Post Office assumed their present outward appearance in 1974 when brick veneer was applied to the store, post office and connecting building. The store, though it is probably the oldest building in Catharpin, has lost much of its character through remodeling.

ROBER GAINESVILLE QUAD. CATHARPIN STORE UNITED STATES Ellen Vei (16-182) DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR 6. Pattie House 76-160 (ARCOLA) GEOLOGICAL 'SURVEY 77*37'30" 38*52'30" 4305000 . SITE 76.41 6-202-6-162 16-163 16-163 SE 76-215 E 76-766 int 76-HU:C

in the main room held 4,500 lbs. of milk at a time. Steam pipes ran under this vat to heat the milk and form curd, as well as to separate the whey and pipe it to the upper floor by means of steam jets. After draining, cutting, and pressing, cheese was ripened in a storeroom which had solid concrete walls.

Most of the cheese found its way to locker plants in Manassas and Washington, D.C., for storage. Two types of cheese, "longhorn" and "daisy," were made here, as were the round wooden cheeseboxes. Edward Allison recalled that he spent a summer here bending wood for the cheeseboxes, and that the master cheesemakers were William Ellicott and Luther Pearson. According to Luther Lynn, a former director of the corporation, farmers eventually became annoyed at the time and trouble required to transport milk to Catharpin by wagon: Patronage dropped, and the plant was closed. In 1926 Sanders bought the property back and converted the cheese factory to a warehouse. In 1974 the post office was moved into this building.

The 1930s were times of trouble for Catharpin. In the summer of 1930 the worst drought ever to strike northern Virginia dried up all the streams except Catamount Creek, which is fed by three perpetual springs. It was possible to walk for miles along the beds of Catharpin and Bull Runs. J. W. Alvey, Jr., remembers standing in the dust in front of his grandfather's store, seeing how long he could remain in one spot before the dust burned his feet. Crops dried up in the fields and cattle died of thirst. Pattie's store closed, although the business was reorganized by Emmett Pattie and Lyndon Anderson in the spring of 1934 and lasted nine more years. In 1935 the new district elementary school at Haymarket was completed, and Catharpin was among the local elementary schools closed. In 1932 Sudley Road was realigned from Manassas to Catharpin, and the road leading from Catharpin to Loudoun County was taken over by the State, widened, and routed over an iron truss bridge at Putnam's Ford. In 1940 the Sudley Road was completed to Woolsey on its present alignment. Pattie's store was moved to the east and the longabandoned lodge hall was torn down. The highway department paid for the cinder block basement required at the store's new location, the first instance of cinder block construction in the area.

In the summer of 1943, Sanders' store, then owned by J. W. Alvey, a native of

Maryland, was turned on its foundations to its present location. Sanders' grist mill, operated until 1940 by Luther Lynn, was torn down along with the original school building which had been moved a second time to be used as a store-room for the mill, and the lumber was used to build the rear addition to the present Alvey's store. In 1974 brick facades were applied to the lower stories of the store and the old cheese factory, and the post office, which had recently become a third-class installation, were moved into the latter building.

This year, Catharpin Post Office and J. W. Alvey Sons General Merchandise observe their hundredth year of continuous operation in the same family. Pattie's old store, vacant from 1943 to 1956, has been remodeled for a dwelling. The Sanders-Downs house, at least ninety year old, is in imminent danger of collapse; restoration at this late stage is impossible. Catharpin School, since the removal of the precinct voting place to Sudley Church, is unused and has recently been acquired by land speculators. At this writing it seems only a matter of time until it will be demolished to make way for commercial development. Thus, although most of the major buildings that contributed to the growth of Catharpin still stand, albeit in modified form in some cases, their future is very precarious.

Leesburg, Virginia

An "Architectural Survey of the Original Nicholas Minor Section of Leesburg, Virginia," has been completed by John G. Lewis, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission representative in Loudoun County, and Calder C. Loth, Senior Architectural Historian for the Landmarks Commission.

This was done to make a complete photographic record of all the existing standing structures, regardless of age, style, or condition, in the original Nicholas Minor section. It comprises over three hundred photographs, and a brief paragraph about each structure, its period, and an architectural rating as to its importance in the community. This section was laid out in 1757.

There is also a section of photos of the various buildings which have been torm down, with a listing of the structures which were torn down before 1950 (18), since 1950 (12), and since 1973, or with permission granted to do so (7). The report includes a letter to the Chairman of the Town Board of Architectural Review with some thoughts and recommendations as to developing a design criteria for the restoration, remodeling, and/or new construction within this area, and approaches to parking (so essential to

