

Area Landmark Is Recognized

The Leesylvania Archaeological Site, located in Leesylvania State Park, in eastern Prince William County, has been named to the Virginia Landmarks Register.

The recent entry was among several named to the state historic register by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, meeting in Richmond.

Also named to the state's official list of properties deemed to be worthy of recognition and preservation were historic districts in two Rockingham County towns of Bridgewater and Dayton, and Reedville, an important maritime village in Northumberland County on Virginia's Northern Neck.

The Leesylvanis Site qualified due to its associations with the Virginia Lee family and important archaeological potential.

The state park site is located on a small ridge overlooking the Potomac River. Archaeological field investigations have documented the presence of cultural features dating to the second half of the 18th century.

Field investigations by Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission archaeologists indicate that much of the site is in a good state of preservation, and may contain artifacts closely associated with plantation life in that period.

The Leesylvania Plantation stood on land inherited and developed by Henry Lee II. Children of Lee and his wife, Lucy Grymes, who grew up at Leesylvania, include such notable Lee family members as "Lighthorse Harry Lee," Charles Lee, Richard Bland Lee, and Edmund Jennings Lee.

Evidence indicates that the plantation manor house burned late in the 18th century, following the death of Henry Lee II and Lucy Grymes Lee. At least two structures have been located on the site, one of which is likely the mansion house.

Since 1967, the state commission has recognized over 1,100 buildings, structures, sites and districts as important cultural resources of the Commonwealth and worthy of preservation.

According to H. Bryan Mitchell, executive director of the Landmarks Commission, a property or district must be associated with important events, developments, or persons; or possess outstanding architectural or archaeological significance, to be eligible for listing on the register.

"Each site, structure, and district is carefully evaluated and analyzed and researched before we make a formal nomination," Mitchell stressed.

All properties or districts enrolled in the Virginia Register are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Listing on the state and national registers places no legal restrictions on an owner's use of the property. Restrictions such as historic district zoning can only be imposed by the local governing body.

Registration is an official and honorific recognition that a property is an historic and cultrual resource, according to the state commission. It serves as an educational tool, informing the public about the extraordinary legacy from Virginia's past that can be discovered through both the built environment and archaeological sites.

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