



VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

File no. 76-297
Negative no(s). 5172

SURVEY FORM

Historic name Conway Robinson Memorial State Forest	Common name
County/Town/City Prince William County	
Street address or route number Vic. U.S. 29/211 and S.R. 705, near Gainesville	
USGS Quad Gainesville	Date or period Est. 1938
Original owner Unknown	Architect/builder/craftsmen
Original use Probably part of a farm.	
Present owner Commonwealth of Virginia	Source of name Donor's Family Name
Present owner address c/o Division of Forestry Dept. of Conservation and Economic Development Box 3758, Charlottesville, Va. 22903	Source of date
Present use Forest & Wildflower & Wildlife Preserve	Stories N/A
Acreage 400 acres	Foundation and wall const'n N/A
	Roof type N/A

State condition of structure and environs Forest appears to be in good condition, though some tree damage is evident, especially at the two entrances.

State potential threats to structure
 Note any archaeological interest Relic seekers with metal detectors allegedly have found Civil War artifacts on the property. Right-of-way of unfinished railroad may bisect this property from west to east.

Should be investigated for possible register potential? yes ___ no ___

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.)

This 400-acre wooded tract is located on the north side of U.S. 29/211, 1 mile east of Gainesville and about 30 miles west of Washington, D. C. The Forest contains a small recreation area, just off the two entrances on U.S. 29/211. Facilities for picnics are provided, including a large picnic shelter seating about 30-40 people. In the Forest's southeast corner are two small areas set aside for a wildflower preserve. Memorial markers have been erected in this area by the Virginia Federation of Gardening Clubs and the Daughters of American Revolution.

This parcel is bounded in part on the northwest by Little Bull Run. The right-of-way of the unfinished branch of the Manassas Gap Railroad which was planned but never completed probably bisects this property. The parcel is located quite close to the Manassas National Battlefield Park, but there are reportedly no plans for inclusion of this property in the Federally-owned Park.

Interior inspected? N/A

Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)
 In 1938, Miss Agnes Conway Robinson, through the Conway Robinson Memorial Park Association (a non-profit association of the relatives, friends, and family of Conway Robinson), deeded to the Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development 400 acres in Prince William County in memory of her father, Conway Robinson, a noted 19th century jurist and author. Robinson, born in 1805 in Richmond, Va. was a lawyer and scholar. He founded the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society in 1831, was founder and president of the Richmond Frederick and Potomac Railroad in 1836. Robinson was the author of several works on jurisprudence, and was responsible for revising, in 1846-47, Virginia's Criminal and Civil Code. In 1852, he was elected to the State Legislature. Robinson was married to Mary Susan Selden Leigh, and they were the parents of five children. Three of their sons fought on the Confederate side during the Civil War, and two of them were killed. Robinson was at work on the second volume of a major legal treatise when he died in 1884.

According to the terms of the deed of gift, the Division of Forestry was to administer the land "as a State Forest, Wild Flower and Wild Life Preserve." Further, the name of the forest was to be displayed on a sign erected near Lee Highway. The woodland existing at the time of the donation (c300 of the 400 acres) would be preserved in its natural state. The Conservation Commission would cooperate with the Conway Robinson Memorial Park Association, the National Wildflower Preservation Society, the National Audubon Society, and other organizations devoted to fostering and preserving "the growth, maintenance, and propagation of native wildflower and bird life." Finally, the Conway Robinson Memorial Association reserved the right to erect

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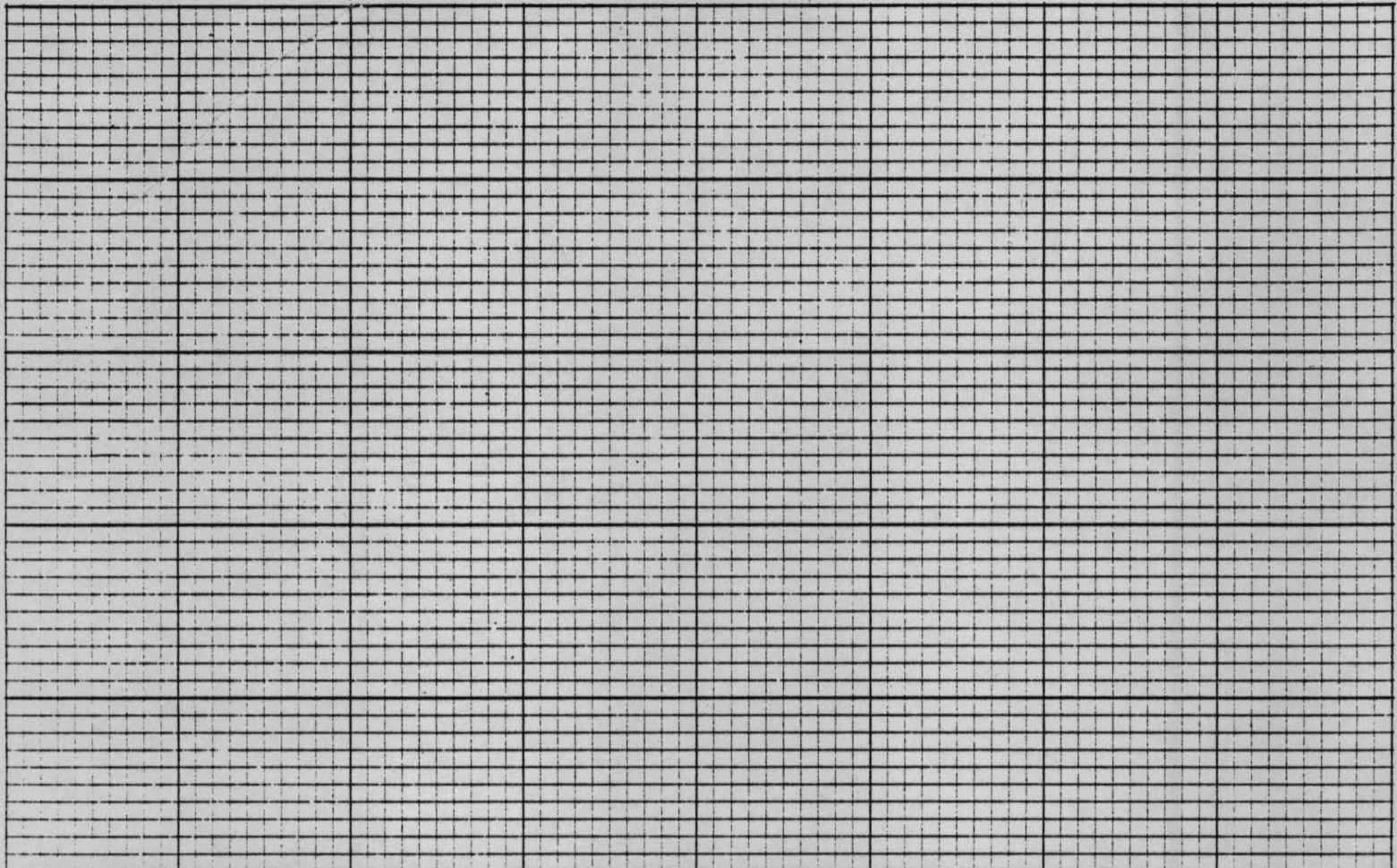
Sources and bibliography

Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.) WPA, Writers Project, Prince William, The Story of Its People and Its Places (c1941), p. 167. Filley, Frances K., "The Fernstrom Memorial Forest," in Garden Gossip, July 1956.

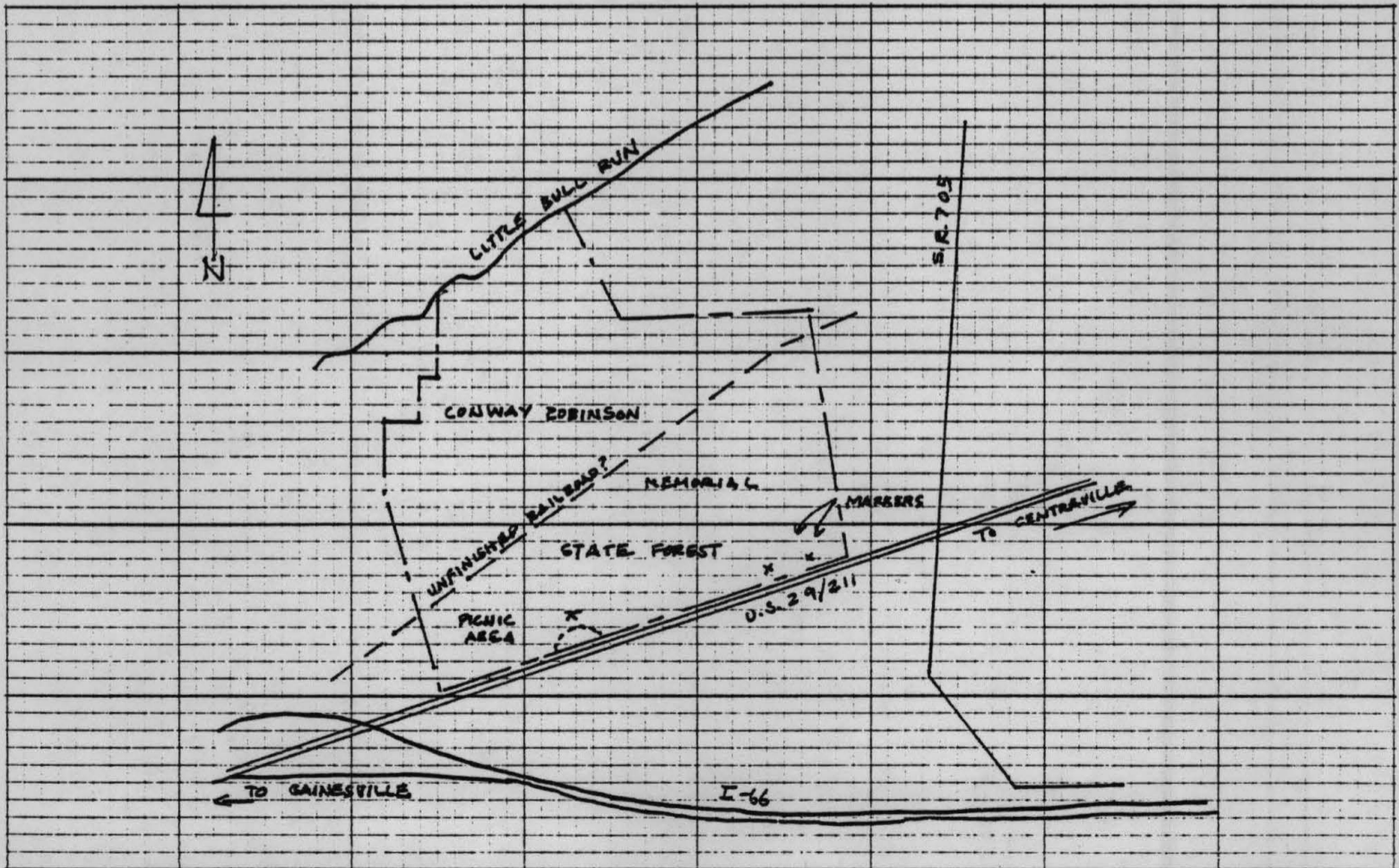
Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.) Deed from Conway Robinson Park Mem. Assn. to Commonwealth of Va., 14 Feb. 1938, in possession of Division of Forestry. Xerox copy of description of property (5 July 1961) made avail. to surveyor by Div. of Forestry.

Names and addresses of persons interviewed Joe Kemper (ret. forest warden), 7517 Old Davis Rd., Manassas, Va. Candace Wyman, Forester, Div. of Forestry, Dept. Conserv. & Econ. Dev., Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

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



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



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

Date DEC 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET
CONWAY ROBINSON MEMORIAL STATE FOREST

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

a monument or marker to the late Conway Robinson, the design and placement location of the marker subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission.

At the time of the donation, there were approximately 100 acres in abandoned fields and unused land. Under the direction of the Division of Forestry, in 1938, the Civilian Conservation Corp. planted the unused land in trees. The tree-planting, which was completed in 1939, consisted of 65 acres in loblolly pine, 20 acres in white pine, and 15 acres in shortleaf pine. Small plantings for experimental purposes were made in slash pine, yellow poplar, Norway spruce, sawtooth oak, and exotic chestnut. Other small plantings were later made with sycamore, white ash, eastern red cedar, red pine, and Scotch pine. In 1958-59, 65 acres of loblolly pine, then about 20 years old, were thinned for commercial pulpwood. Other thinning of the 1938-39 plantings were also made, but no commercial sales of any of the hardwoods that already existed on the property in 1938 have ever been made.

There is a small recreational area at the entrance to the forest on U.S. 29/211, with picnic shelter, tables and other facilities. At the southeast corner of the parcel, there are two small areas set aside, one for the C.H. Fernstrom memorial, erected by the Federation of Garden Clubs, and the other part exhibiting a plaque erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Ornamental plantings have been made around the markers erected by these two organizations.*

Cornelia Hodgeman Fernstrom founded the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs in 1933. She was president of the Federation of Garden Clubs of Norfolk and a member of the Garden Club of Virginia. The memorial to Mrs. Fernstrom, a bronze plaque set on a large stone, is about 125 feet from the highway. Landscaping around the plaque includes plantings of pine trees, dogwood, and rhododendron. In 1956, the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs engaged landscape architect Dr. J. Morton Franklin to draw up a plan for further improvement of the Fernstrom Forest tract of 25 acres, but it is not known whether the plan was ever implemented.

The D.A.R. marker is a bronze and stone marker bearing the inscription:

1890 1940
Golden Jubilee Project
"Penny Pines"
planted by the District of Columbia
Daughters of the American Revolution
Dedicated March 1939

The marker is located about 100 feet from U.S. 29/211 and east of the Fernstrom memorial. It is situated at the end of a flagstone path. Halfway along the walk is a concrete memorial marker to Mrs. William A. Hartman, Chairman of Conservation, 1938-39, of the D.A.R.

During the Civil War, the property was close to the scenes of the first and second Battles of Manassas. Troop movements probably occurred in the area, according to Manassas Park historians. The land was predominately wooded, as can be seen on contemporary maps, and the property is not known to have had any houses or other structures. The right-of-way for the unfinished line of the Manassas Gap Railroad, a railroad which was under construction when the Civil War began, may bisect this property.

*According to the WPA guide, Prince William, a 50-acre field was set aside as a wildflower sanctuary, 25 acres allotted to the Virginia Garden Club and 25 to the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1940, the markers had been erected, but there had so far been no wildflower plantings.

CONWAY ROBINSON
MEMORIAL STATE
FOREST 76-297

GAINESVILLE QUAD 30"

CULPEPER 35 MI.
BUCKLAND 2.8 MI.

FRONT ROYAL 35 MI.
HAYMARKET 0.7 MI.

5451 I SW
(THOROUGHFARE GAP)

