

## Visit Louisa County and the Green Springs National Historic Landmark District



The Green Springs National Historic Landmark District contains 14,000 acres of fertile agricultural land and more than 250 original eighteenth and nineteenth century homes, barns and other outbuildings. Bounded by Route 15 and Route 22 in the western end of the county, the area is six and one-half miles long, four and one-half miles wide. There was an early Quaker settlement in the 1720's on Camp Creek. Soon after, several families moved up from Hanover county, established major farms and, over succeeding generations, intermarried, adding farmhouses and manors through the mid-1860's. A drive through Green Springs today reveals pastoral vistas and "an assemblage of rural architecture that is unique in Virginia," according to the Virginia Landmarks Commission.

One of the earliest settlers, Richard Morris, built the house at Green Springs Plantation in 1772 (visible on route 617). The house is a fine example of Virginia formal vernacular style, with four exterior chimneys. Here Morris entertained his good friend, Patrick Henry. In the 1790's Morris developed the springs for which the district is named into a popular spa. Ionia Farm on Route 640 was built by Major James Watson in 1770. It is one of the best preserved story-and-a-half plantation houses of its type in Virginia.

Another historically significant structure is Boswell's Tavern, on Route 22 just north of the intersection with Route 15. Lafayette camped there in June of 1781 while moving south to intercept Cornwallis. A number of political figures, including Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and James Madison, frequented the Tavern.

Other architecturally noteworthy houses in the district are: Brackets (Route 640), Grassdale and Hawkwood (both visible from Route 15), West End (Route 638) and Kenmuir and Glen Burnie (both visible from Route 613). Hawkwood, which was partially damaged in a fire in 1982, is one of the most important romantic country houses in America, designed as a Tuscan villa by the well-known architect, Alexander Jackson Davis, for Richard Overton Morris in the early 1850's. The home of the Overton family is now a country inn, Prospect Hill, on Route 613.

At the intersection of Route 640 and Route 613 is St. John's Chapel, built in Carpenter Gothic style in 1888 by the Overton, Morris and Watson families. After the Civil War, when coaches and carriages, as well as money were less abundant, a neighborhood place of worship became necessary.

The area has been farmed continuously for over two hundred years and the fertility of the land has made possible its remaining unspoiled today. In the nineteenth century Green Springs was famous for its abundant wheat crops. In 1841 Cyrus McCormick chose to test his reapers on the wheat fields of Green Springs.

Guided tours are available for individuals and groups. For information, you may contact Historic Green Springs, Inc. at (540) 967-0096.