NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mechanicsville Historic District
Other names/site number: VDHR# 108-5607
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: Floyd Street; High Street; North Ridge Street; Monroe Street; Upper Street.

City or town: Danville State: Virginia County: Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _x_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _x_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___**national** ___**statewide** _x_ **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

_x_ **A** ___**B** _x_ **C** ___**D**

Julie Langan 3/27/14

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

other (explain:) _____

for Edson H. Beall 5·19·14

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

Private:	X
Public – Local	X
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

Building(s)	
District	X
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
34	8	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
34	8	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
DOMESTIC: secondary structure
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
SOCIAL: meeting hall
SOCIAL: clubhouse
RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
DOMESTIC: secondary structure
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
RELIGION: religious facility
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

NO STYLE
LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Gothic (Carpenter Gothic)
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival, Folk Victorian
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style
MODERN MOVEMENT: Ranch

Materials

FOUNDATION: BRICK, CONCRETE
WALLS: WOOD (weatherboard), BRICK, SYNTHETICS (vinyl), ASBESTOS
ROOF: ASPHALT, METAL (Tin)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Mechanicsville Historic District developed between 1880 and 1963 as an ethnically mixed, working-class neighborhood in Danville, Virginia. The city experienced rapid growth during this period due to the tobacco boom and the expansion of the cotton milling industry along the Dan River. Mechanicsville emerged as a distinctive neighborhood of tradesmen and laborers associated with the nearby industries. The range of dwelling types in this primarily residential district, including detached row houses, duplexes, an apartment building, and single-family detached houses, represents the varied socio-economic levels of the residents. Although most of the dwellings are simple folk houses, some feature architectural detailing influenced by the popular styles of the period, including Italianate, Queen Anne, and Carpenter Gothic. The district also includes two churches, built in the Romanesque Revival and Classical Revival styles. A former tobacco prizery survives in the district, as does the former YMCA for African Americans, and two commercial buildings. The commercial building at 606 High Street (VDHR#: 108-5607-0039) is also a contributing building in the Downtown Danville Historic District. Of the 42 total resources, 34 (81%) are contributing and 8 (19%) are non-contributing. The district boundaries are generally formed by Upper Street on the northwest; North Floyd Street on the northeast; High Street on the southeast; and North Ridge Street on the southwest.

Narrative Description

The Mechanicsville Historic District developed to provide essential housing for workers employed by nearby industries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Situated south of a bend in the Dan River and northwest of downtown Danville, the district was historically proximate to major employment centers. The district is positioned on a hill that descends north and east to the river. Ridge Street is the main thoroughfare, which forms the southwestern boundary. The streets within the district are arranged in a grid pattern. With a few exceptions, the buildings are situated on narrow rectangular lots with uniform setbacks. The paved streets are lined with sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. The coherent nature of the streetscape creates a strong sense of place within the district.

Mechanicsville encompasses 42 total resources within its boundaries. Of these, 39 are considered primary resources. Early residential and commercial development occurred northeast of Ridge Street, on the slope down to the river. The oldest surviving building in the district is a former tobacco prizery, built on Floyd Street ca. 1880. The brick prizery is a vestige of the tobacco industry that was once prominent in the district.

The nine earliest existing district residences were built in the 1890s (23%). Concentrated along Monroe Street, these dwellings include two single-family detached houses and seven duplexes. Most are simple folk houses adorned with Victorian detailing of Italianate or Queen Anne inspiration. The Hughes House at 630 Monroe Street is an excellent example of the Italianate style. It was architecturally related to the Morton House (VDHR# 108-0196) at 543 Monroe Street, which is no longer extant. Both dwellings had similar interior woodwork and featured almost identical plasterwork bas-reliefs on their entrance hall ceilings. The residences at 401-403 and 407-411 Floyd Street are examples of early duplexes built within the district. The identical dwellings feature Italianate detailing, such as bracketed cornices and windows with decorative surrounds and molded crowns. A row of similar duplexes can be found on the southeastern side of Monroe Street.

Residential construction continued in the early twentieth century to accommodate an influx of mill workers. Fourteen dwellings were built between 1900 and 1920 (36%). The Folk Victorian style continued to be popular during this period. Circa 1904, the nearly identical Folk Victorian cottages at 315 and 317 Floyd Street were built with spindlework detailing on their front porches. Around 1910, a more elaborate Folk Victorian residence was built at 300 Ridge Street, with spindlework in its gables and decorative corner boards. On the same block, the Redd House was built ca. 1915 at 324 Ridge Street. Its millwork, which includes decorative trusses in the gables and turned porch columns, was inspired by the Carpenter Gothic style. Although similar to residences built in Danville's Tobacco Warehouse and Residential District in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the residence is unique within Mechanicsville.

Simpler residences without decorative ornament were also common during this period. Some were built using brick that was likely salvaged from former tobacco warehouses, including the distinctive row of seven detached brick row houses on the southeast end of Floyd Street. The ca. 1915 houses stand on the site of the former JW Holland Dry Prizery. Brick row houses are unusual in Danville, where most are of wood-frame construction. A brick duplex stands on the same block at 345 - 347 Floyd Street, next to the former RV Lynn Prizery. The ca. 1910 residence was built on the site of a former plug tobacco factory, which was associated with the neighboring prizery.

Around 1930, the Ridge Street Apartments were built to provide affordable, temporary housing for laborers. The brick building features Craftsman detailing beneath its eaves. Of several apartment buildings and tenement houses built in the district, this is the only one that remains.

As Mechanicsville grew, churches and social halls were built to serve residents. The High Street Baptist Church, built in 1901, is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival style. The first church to occupy the site was constructed in 1873 for an African-American congregation. The church that exists today is the third to be built on the site, after fires ravaged the previous churches in 1878 and 1901. The ca. 1900 building at the corner of Ridge and High streets once housed offices and commercial space on the first floor and lodge rooms on the second and third floors. A "colored" lodge was located on the second and third floors as of 1910. By 1951, the building was listed on the Sanborn maps as a "colored" YMCA.

On Upper Street, Sledd Memorial Methodist Church was constructed in 1925 to replace the former church, built in 1900. Designed by Heard & Chesterman in the Classical Revival style, the church is distinguished by its classical portico with a pedimented gable. J. Bryant Heard of Heard & Chesterman is notable for his significant contributions to the built environment of Danville. The Lynchburg-based architect established a Danville office in 1915. His early commissions in the city featured classical detailing similar to that of Sledd Memorial Methodist Church. An important example of this is the Danville Municipal Building, completed in 1927. The firm is also responsible for the Art Deco design of the Danville Post Office. Heard went on to design numerous buildings in the city during his prolific career.

Only two commercial buildings exist in the district. The earliest is a small brick building, built ca. 1920, at the northeast end of High Street. The other building is the former Wyatt Grocery Company on Ridge Street. The 1930s building continues to operate as a store. The buildings are simple in design and are without decorative ornament. Most of the commercial development that arose in response to residential growth of the area occurred outside of the district, along what is now Memorial Drive.

Development in Mechanicsville slowed in the 1930s. The decline in construction activity can be attributed in part to the Great Depression and World War II. The next major wave of development did not occur until the late 1960s and early 1970s, on the heels of a major urban renewal effort in the vicinity in 1963. These later buildings, constructed after the Period of Significance, constitute 18 percent of the resources in the district. Most of these buildings are domestic and are in keeping with the scale and residential character of the neighborhood.

Statement of Integrity

The Mechanicsville Historic District retains a relatively high level of integrity with major elements of the historic streetscape intact. Of the 39 primary resources, 32 (82%) contribute to the district and only 7 (18%) are considered non-contributing, due to their dates of construction. While alterations have been made to some of the contributing resources, they are generally limited to the installation of non-historic siding and the replacement of original windows. These alterations do not obscure the original form and style of the resources and tend to be reversible. There are three secondary resources, all of which are sheds, with two determined to be contributing and one listed as non-contributing, due to its date of construction. The Mechanicsville Historic District as a whole retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Inventory

The following inventory lists the contributing resources within the Mechanicsville Historic District. It is organized alphabetically by street name and then numerically by street number. Each entry provides the address, building name (if applicable), date of construction, architectural style, current building use, VDHR File number, and the contributing status within the district. Whether a building is considered contributing or non-contributing was determined based on its integrity as it supports the historic district's significance under Criterion A (Religion, Industry, Ethnic Heritage) and Criterion C (Architecture) during the Period of Significance (1880 - 1963).

High Street

606 High Street **108-0111-0006** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0039*
Primary Resource: **Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1920**
Previously listed in the NRHP **Contributing** *Total:* 1

612 High Street **108-0183** ***Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0015***
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1920**
Contributing *Total:* 1

630 High Street **108-0182** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0016*
Primary Resource: **Church/Chapel (Building), Stories 2, Style: Romanesque Revival/Richardsonian, 1901**
Contributing *Total:* 1

657 High Street **108-0219** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0017*
Primary Resource: **Clubhouse (Building), Stories 3, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1900**
Contributing *Total:* 1

Monroe Street

607 Monroe Street **108-5607-0018** *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Clubhouse (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1994**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1

619 Monroe Street **108-5607-0019** *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Clubhouse (Building), Stories 1, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1983**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1

620 Monroe Street **108-5607-0020** *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1970**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1

626 Monroe Street **108-0206** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0021*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1915**
Contributing *Total:* 1

627 Monroe Street **108-0202** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0022*
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1

630 Monroe Street **108-0207** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0023*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1

634 Monroe Street **108-5607-0024** *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Ranch, Ca 1953** **Contributing** *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: **Shed (Building)** **Contributing** *Total:* 1

639 Monroe Street **108-0203** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0025*
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1895**
Contributing *Total:* 1

643 Monroe Street **108-0204** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0026*
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1

646 Monroe Street **108-0208** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0027*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Victorian, Folk, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1

647 Monroe Street **108-0205** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0028*
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1895**
Contributing *Total:* 1

North Floyd Street

301 North Floyd Street **108-0184** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0001*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1915**
Contributing *Total:* 1

303 North Floyd Street **108-0185** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0002*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1915**
Contributing *Total:* 1

305 North Floyd Street **108-0186** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0003*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1915**
Contributing *Total:* 1

307 North Floyd Street **108-0187** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0004*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1915**
Contributing *Total:* 1

309 North Floyd Street **108-0188** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0005*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1915**
Contributing *Total:* 1

311 North Floyd Street **108-0189** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0006*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1920**
Contributing *Total:* 1

313 North Floyd Street **108-0190** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0007*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1915**
Contributing *Total:* 1

315 North Floyd Street **108-0191** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0008*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Victorian, Folk, Ca 1904**
Contributing *Total:* 1

317 North Floyd Street **108-0192** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0009*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Victorian, Folk, Ca 1904**
Contributing *Total:* 1

335 North Floyd Street **108-0193** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0010*
Primary Resource: **Prizery (Building), Stories 4, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1880**
Contributing *Total:* 1

345 North Floyd Street **108-0194** *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0011*

Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 1, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1910**
Contributing *Total:* 1

401-405 North Floyd Street 108-0197 *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0012*
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1

407-411 North Floyd Street 108-0198 *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0013*
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1

425 North Floyd Street 108-5607-0014 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1968**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1

North Ridge Street

300 North Ridge Street 108-0209 *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0029*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Victorian, Folk, Ca 1910**
Contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: **Shed (Building)** **Contributing** *Total:* 1

320 North Ridge Street 108-0213 *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0030*
Primary Resource: **Mixed: Commerce/Domestic (Other), Stories, Style: Commercial Style, Ca 1930**
Contributing *Total:* 1

324 North Ridge Street 108-0214 *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0031*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Victorian, Folk; Ca 1915**
Carpenter Gothic Contributing *Total:* 1

338 North Ridge Street 108-0217 *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0032*
Primary Resource: **Apartment Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1930**
Contributing *Total:* 1

342 North Ridge Street 108-0218 *Other DHR Id#: 108-5607-0033*
Primary Resource: **Double House (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1890**
Contributing *Total:* 1

Upper Street

605 Upper Street 108-5607-0034 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1967**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1

608 Upper Street 108-5607-0035 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Church/Chapel (Building), Stories 2, Style: Classical Revival, Ca 1925**
Contributing *Total:* 1

610 Upper Street 108-5607-0036 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Office/Office Building. (Building), Stories 1, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1967**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1

624 Upper Street 108-5607-0037 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, Ca 1968**
Non-contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: **Shed (Building)** **Non-contributing** *Total:* 1

626 Upper Street 108-5607-0038 *Other DHR Id#:*
Primary Resource: **Clubhouse (Building), Stories 2, Style: No Discernible Style, Ca 1900**
Contributing *Total:* 1

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[ ] B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[X] C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

[ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

[ ] B. Removed from its original location

[ ] C. A birthplace or grave

[ ] D. A cemetery

[ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

[ ] F. A commemorative property

[ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY
ARCHITECTURE
ETHNIC HERITAGE: AFRICAN AMERICAN
RELIGION

Period of Significance

1880 – 1963

Significant Dates

1880
1901
1925
1963

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Heard & Chesterman

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Mechanicsville Historic District emerged as a distinctive neighborhood of tradesmen, educators, skilled workmen, and laborers associated with the cotton milling industry to the north and Danville's downtown commercial district to the east. The district includes a mix of residential building types, as well as resources significant for their association with the religious and social practices of this ethnically mixed neighborhood. The Mechanicsville Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of Religion, Industry, and Ethnic Heritage: African American and Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The Period of Significance for the district extends from 1880, the construction date of the earliest surviving building, to ca. 1963, the height of the Civil Rights Movement in Danville and the start of urban renewal in the immediate vicinity.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Criteria Justification

Criterion A: Industry
The Mechanicsville Historic District developed during a period of industrial growth, attributable to the tobacco boom and the expansion of the cotton milling industry along the Dan River. The growth of Danville's tobacco and textile industries played a major role in the development of the district, as it fueled the demand for additional worker housing. While most of the industries that employed district residents have disappeared, the houses within the district remain as important reminders of Danville's once-flourishing industrial sector. The remaining prizery and brick houses constructed from the remnants of tobacco warehouses further serve as testimony to the significance of the Mechanicsville Historic District in industry.

Criterion A: Religion
As Mechanicsville's residential population grew, churches were built to serve the neighborhood. Three churches existed in the district by 1910, including High Street Baptist Church and Sledd Memorial Methodist Church. Both of these churches still stand today. The third church was located on High Street, on the second story of a former tobacco factory. High Street Baptist Church is locally significant as the first African-American church in Danville. Members of its congregation included the black residents living in worker housing near the mills and tobacco warehouses. The church also acted as the social center of the African-American community, serving as a venue for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak in 1963. These churches reflect the racial diversity of the neighborhood as well as its identity as a distinct neighborhood with its own churches.

Criterion A: African-American Ethnic Heritage
Mechanicsville developed as an ethnically mixed neighborhood in the early twentieth century, inhabited by residents employed by the textile mills and tobacco companies situated on nearby blocks. African-American residents lived on Monroe Street, High Street, and Boisseau Alley. High Street emerged as the center of religious and social practices for black residents. The churches and fraternal organizations located along this street were the anchors of the African-American community. High Street Baptist Church has strong associations with the Civil Rights Movement. Its former pastor, Reverend Lendell W. Chase, was a civil rights activist and president of the Danville Christian Progressive Association (DCPA). The church served as the headquarters for the Student Nonviolent

Coordinating Committee (SNCC) while they helped to organize protesters in Danville. When the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his speech at High Street Baptist Church in 1963, it was the height of the movement. His presence ties Mechanicsville to a pivotal era in American history.

Criterion C: Architecture

The district comprises a cohesive collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century resources that reflect the development of this working-class neighborhood. While most of the industries that historically employed district residents have disappeared, the buildings within the district remain as important reminders of the city's once flourishing industrial sector. The range of dwelling types in this primarily residential district, including detached row houses, duplexes, and modest single-family detached houses, represents the varied socio-economic levels of the working-class residents. The simple folk houses feature architectural detailing influenced by the popular styles of the period, including Italianate, Queen Anne, and Carpenter Gothic. Ecclesiastical buildings in the district feature more extravagant styles, like Romanesque Revival and Classical Revival. While most of the resources within the district lack outstanding individual merit, they are components of a cohesive historic streetscape and contribute to the integrity of the district as a whole.

Historical Background

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF DANVILLE

Danville emerged as a prominent tobacco market at the close of the eighteenth century with the establishment by the General Assembly of a tobacco inspection warehouse at Wynne's Falls in 1793. The inspection point served the farmers of the Dan River Valley who had previously traveled great distances to Lynchburg or Petersburg. A town soon developed on the south side of the Dan River to support the warehouse. The community grew in the early nineteenth century as regional tobacco production expanded and transportation improvements were made to facilitate the movement of tobacco to the markets.[1]

Danville was established as a city in 1833. It continued to grow and prosper as an important tobacco-manufacturing center with the continued popularity of the bright leaf tobacco cultivated in the Dan River Valley. Compared to the heavier and darker varieties of tobacco, the bright leaf was fragile and was often bruised when compressed in wooden hogsheads for shipment to market. Once packed in the barrels, examination of the entire lot for damaged or inferior leaves proved difficult. Thus, the Danville System was established in 1858, where the tobacco leaves were laid out in loose piles for easier quality inspection by buyers. The rise of the system contributed to the growth of the city as a tobacco market and manufacturing center.[2]

Danville experienced a period of intense growth after the Civil War. Essentially unharmed by the conflict, Danville gained a competitive advantage over the devastated tobacco centers of Richmond and Petersburg.[3] The city seized the opportunity to become the dominant tobacco market in the region. New tobacco factories and warehouses were built during this period to keep pace with demand. These buildings were concentrated south of Main Street and along High Street. Around a hundred buildings related to the tobacco industry existed in Danville in 1878, corresponding with the increase in tobacco sales from 10.6 million pounds in 1870 to 30.5 million pounds in 1880.[4]

Danville's industrial economy began its transition from tobacco to textiles in the late nineteenth century. Affluent tobacconists began to invest their profits into the textile manufacturing industry in

the 1880s.[5] Riverside Cotton Mills was opened along the banks of the Dan River in 1882. The company later became Dan River Mills, the largest textile mill in the American South. The Morotock Manufacturing Company opened in the same year as Riverside Cotton Mills. By the turn of the twentieth century, textiles had grown to be a driving force of the local economy and large brick mills lined the river. The population swelled as the industrial sector flourished.

THE EMERGENCE OF MECHANICSVILLE

Development spread northwest of the downtown commercial district as the population grew. Mechanicsville first emerged in the area concentrated south of the canal, between Floyd Street and Union Street (today Memorial Drive).[6] Development later expanded to the sparsely populated blocks between Floyd and Ridge streets, the area that comprises the historic district. Although the first lots within these blocks had been laid out by 1854, they were not immediately developed. Fewer than ten buildings were in existence by 1877.[7]

The post-Civil War tobacco boom stimulated the development of Mechanicsville. By 1886, at least four tobacco prizeries and a tobacco factory had been constructed along Floyd and High streets. Similar enterprises lined the streets to the north and east. Numerous dwellings were built to provide worker housing. Simple duplexes sprang up along Monroe Street during this period. A tenement house on High Street offered temporary and economical accommodations. The High Street Baptist Church was built ca. 1878. Its African-American congregation was likely composed of the primarily African American labor force employed by the tobacco industry.[8]

By the 1890s, Mechanicsville had developed as a mixed-use neighborhood, with single and multi-family dwellings, intermixed with tobacco factories and prizeries. The district continued to grow into the early twentieth century as the burgeoning textile industry fueled additional residential development. A few mills were established within blocks of the district. In 1907, the Morotock Manufacturing Company built a mill at the southeast corner of Floyd and Spring streets. The mill employed 125 people by 1913.[9] Dan River Mill No. 8 was also located close by on the south bank of the Dan River. The four-story building, known as the White Mill, was completed in 1921. The proximity of Mechanicsville to major industries and the downtown commercial district made it a desirable neighborhood for working-class residents.

MECHANICSVILLE RESIDENTS

The name “Mechanicsville” suggests the type of work and social standing of its residents. In the antebellum period, mechanics typically were skilled artisans or tradesmen such as barbers, blacksmiths, cabinetmakers, and shoemakers.[10] Mechanics were generally white non-slaveholders, though both free black and enslaved artisans also existed. Mechanics seldom could afford to own bondsmen and hired slave assistants instead, many of whom received valuable training this way.[11] Mechanics were usually lower middle- and middle-class whites who had the resources to establish families and purchase or build their own residences.

Until the turn of the twentieth century, the inhabitants of Mechanicsville were primarily white and middle-class.12 Residents included businessmen, tradesmen and physicians.13 By the time of the 1910 federal census, residents included tradesman, skilled and unskilled laborers, factory workers, and clerks. Most white residents of the district worked in the cotton mills as weavers. A handful of residents were still employed by the tobacco factories and prizeries. Many people employed by the

mills or the tobacco industry were classified as boarders in the census. Ridge Street residents had professions that differed from other district inhabitants. They generally held professional positions as salesmen, clerks, and merchants. Others were carpenters and seamstresses.

Although Mechanicsville was predominately white at the outset, there were early African-American residents. The houses at 531 and 543 Monroe Street, which are no longer extant, were built by black freedmen in the late nineteenth century. Pickett Scott, a freedman from Richmond, built 531 Monroe Street as early as 1870. His descendants, the Motleys, became active members of the High Street Baptist Church and Danville's African-American community. Another freedman, Andrew Morton, built 543 Monroe Street ca. 1882. Morton became a successful barber and a prominent member of the black community, helping to establish Calvary Baptist Church in 1892. Members of the Motley family moved into the house in the 1940s. An African-American family also lived at 630 Monroe Street. The head of household, Mary E. West, was a schoolteacher. She lived with her two daughters, her mother, and two male lodgers. Her lodgers were employed as a life insurance agent and a barber.[14] In the 1920s and 1930s, the house belonged to E.E. Motley, an insurance agent, and his schoolteacher wife. Other African-American residents of the neighborhood lived in houses along High Street and Boisseau Alley, formerly located off Monroe Street. They worked mostly as tobacco factory and brickyard laborers.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

Development of Mechanicsville continued in the early twentieth century. As the tobacco industry declined, the brick warehouses in the neighborhood were demolished to make room for additional worker housing or were converted for new uses. A W.G. Lynn tobacco warehouse on Floyd Street was demolished between 1904 and 1910, and a brick duplex was erected in its place. The trend continued with the demolition of the prizery at the corner of High and Floyd streets between 1910 and 1915, and the construction of seven brick detached row houses on the site. Not all of the tobacco warehouses in the district were demolished. The Thomas & McAdams Tobacco and Cigar Factory on High Street was converted for use as a grocery store and a church between 1904 and 1910.

Numerous single-family dwellings and duplexes were also built on vacant lots throughout the district between 1900 and 1920. To serve the needs of residents, two grocery stores had been built along Ridge Street by 1910. Another commercial building was built on High Street ca. 1920. Most commercial development associated with the growth of the residential neighborhood occurred outside of the boundaries of the historic district, south of the canal along Union Street. In 1904, nine grocery stores and a meat market were situated on Union Street, interspersed with dwellings, a boarding house, and tenements.[15]

CHURCHES & SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mechanicsville's growth led to the proliferation of social and religious institutions in the district. These institutions reflect the mixed ethnic and working-class population. The churches and social institutions associated with Mechanicsville's white residents were located on Upper Street. The first Sledd Memorial Methodist Church was constructed ca. 1900 at the corner of Upper and Floyd streets. A new church was built on the same lot in 1925 to replace the original. A former tenement house up the street became a clubhouse as early as 1910.

The buildings associated with the religious and social practices of African-American residents were concentrated along High Street. One of the most important community institutions was the YMCA, at the corner of High and Ridge streets. The building housed office and commercial space on the first floor and lodge space on the second and third floors. The High Street Baptist Church was the focal point of the streetscape. The church was rebuilt after a fire ravaged the original building in 1901. Farther down the street, the Morning Star Elk Lodge was housed in the former Thomas & McAdams Tobacco and Cigar Factory at 608 High Street (now demolished). The tobacco factory was likely converted to a fraternal lodge in the 1930s, after serving for years as a church. It is listed in the 1941 Danville city directory as "Independent Lodge 1479," followed by the abbreviation (c) for "colored."[16] The conversion of the factory building to an African-American fraternal lodge reflects the rise and decline of nineteenth-century industry in Mechanicsville as well as the early-twentieth century social history and ethnicity of the Mechanicsville community.

Churches and social welfare organizations, such as fraternal lodges, were lynchpins of African American community life. During the Jim Crow era of legal segregation, such organizations provided vital support to African Americans, ranging from religious expression to financial assistance, and social organizing to mutual aid. African American churches often played crucial roles in the Civil Rights Movement, providing meeting space, volunteers, financial resources, and support to organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1963, the High Street Baptist Church served as a venue for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to speak. Occurring a year before Freedom Summer and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and two years prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, this event took place at the height of the Civil Rights Movement.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

By the mid-twentieth century, the Civil Rights Movement was active across the South. The goal of the movement was to change the laws and policies that institutionalized racial segregation. Civil resistance campaigns used forms of nonviolent protest, such as sit-ins, marches, and boycotts, to call attention to the issue of racial inequality. In Danville, black citizens waged their own fight for equal rights on the local level. The city received a great deal of national attention during the summer of 1963, when it laid claim to the most violent episode of the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia.[17]

In the decades following the Civil War, the number of African Americans in Danville was greater than the number of whites. In 1880, African Americans in Danville constituted 77 percent of the population.[18] They established churches, schools, businesses, and social welfare organizations. For several months in 1883, African Americans were even appointed to serve as aldermen and policemen. However, a riot later that year, that left four black men dead and four wounded, forced these men to resign.[19] For decades after, African Americans in Danville could not hold key positions in the municipal government, hold most professional jobs, or eat at most restaurants in the city.[20] Jim Crow segregation called for separate schools, hospitals, and other public facilities.

A couple of months after the Woolworth sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, in February 1960, sixteen high school students tried to integrate the Danville Memorial Library. The demonstration was unsuccessful, but a few weeks later the Danville Christian Progressive Association (DCPA) was formed, as an affiliate of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC).[21] The DCPA, founded by local black clergy, considered the strategy of the local

NAACP to be too slow and conservative. The DCPA favored direct action and organized a number of protests and demonstrations against racial bias in employment in the summer of 1963.[22]

The televised images of the civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama, spread across the nation in April and May 1963. Following suit, DCPA leaders soon began a series of non-violent protests of their own in Danville. Reverend Lawrence Campbell of Bible Way Church and Reverend Alexander Dunlap of Saint Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church marched to city hall from May 31 to June 5, 1963, demanding equal representation in municipal employment.[23]

On June 5, 1963, the demonstrators peacefully occupied the offices of the mayor and the city manager. The demonstrators were arrested after refusing to vacate the building. Three DCPA leaders were indicted by Judge Archibald Aiken under the "John Brown" statue of 1859, for "conspiring to incite the colored population of the State to acts of violence and war against the white population." Aiken also issued an anti-demonstration injunction to limit future protests. More than 300 people would be arrested by August in violation of this ruling.[24] Due to the arrests of key members, DCPA leaders invited the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to help organize demonstrations. The organization sent 15 workers to aid the local movement.[25] The SNCC field operation in Danville was headquartered in Mechanicsville, at the High Street Baptist Church.

On Monday, June 10, 1963, a group of high school students marched to city hall. They were met by a police force armed with clubs and fire hoses. Arrests numbered around 38.[26] That evening, a prayer vigil was held at the city jail on behalf of those incarcerated earlier that day. The group, which included women and students, was halted by police. As the group continued to pray, the police and deputized garbage collectors beat the demonstrators with clubs and sprayed them with fire hoses.[27] In total, 47 people were injured.[28] The violent day, which became known as "Bloody Monday," drew national media attention. Dorothy Miller Zellner of the SNCC asserted that Danville was "running a close race with Birmingham for top honors in police brutality."[29]

Reverend Lendell W. Chase of High Street Baptist Church, and president of the DCPA, led a group of 200 people to city hall the day after Bloody Monday, to protest the violence. When he returned on June 13 with 250 protesters, he was met with locked doors.[30]

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., arrived in Danville on July 11, 1963, in the wake of Bloody Monday. He spoke to a group of protesters at High Street Baptist Church and condemned the recent police violence. "I've seen some brutal things on the part of policeman all across the south but very seldom, if ever, have I heard of a police force being as brutal and vicious as the police force here in Danville, Virginia," Dr. King said.[31] Although King offered his support for the movement in Danville, he declined to lead a march.

At the SCLC annual convention held in Richmond that September, King expressed a preference that the organization should concentrate its forces in Danville or Birmingham. Representatives were sent to Danville soon after, and negotiated the hiring of an African American police officer in October.[32] King made two visits to Danville in November, likely associated with an SCLC voter registration drive. However, the SCLC suspended efforts in Danville after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Although the Civil Rights Act was passed the following year, the legal proceedings against Danville's civil rights demonstrators continued until 1973.[33]

LATE-TWENTIETH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

In 1963, the same year that racial tensions erupted in Danville, a Federal Housing Redevelopment Project condemned the area west of Monroe Street, which contained many late nineteenth and early twentieth century residences. The condemned area bordered the district to the northwest. The redevelopment project demolished the historic houses and constructed new low-cost houses in their place. Further demolition occurred along Union Street in the 1970s, when the road was replaced by Memorial Drive. Other demolitions have occurred since in the area northeast of the district, along Monroe Street. The areas affected by these demolitions were closely related to Mechanicsville, due to their proximity and period of development.

Today, the Mechanicsville Historic District is a primarily African-American neighborhood. Rental properties predominate, but owners continue to occupy a few of the single-family residences.[34] New infill development has been built on nine of the lots within the district. Vacant buildings are also common. The built environment reflects the significant social and economic changes that transpired in Danville during the early to mid-twentieth century. Originally a mixed neighborhood of whites and African Americans who included skilled artisans, white collar professionals, and blue collar industrial workers, Mechanicsville gradually transitioned to a majority-African American, working class neighborhood. Urban renewal programs in the immediate vicinity truncated Mechanicsville's historical association with nearby industrial areas and Danville's commercial downtown. Yet major elements of the historic streetscape remain intact. In Mechanicsville's cultural landscape, the skilled eye can read the legacies of industrial growth supplanted by residential development, which in turn was shaped by the major community redevelopment programs of the 1960s. The cohesive district is distinguishable from the late twentieth century development in the surrounding area. The Mechanicsville Historic District survives as a solid example of an ethnically mixed, working-class neighborhood in the City of Danville.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Acknowledgements
The description, significance statement, and historical background above were largely adapted and updated directly from the Phase Ib Archaeological - Survey and Phase II Historic Architectural Survey for the U.S. Route 29 City of Danville Bridge Study prepared by John Milner Associates, Inc. for the Virginia Department of Transportation in July 1993. This report is on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR File No. 108-5607

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 14.346 acres (approx.)

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.591228 Longitude: - 79.399586
2. Latitude: 36.590734 Longitude: - 79.394890
3. Latitude: 36.587405 Longitude: - 79.395579
4. Latitude: 36.587833 Longitude: - 79.399691

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary includes all tax parcels indicated within the boundary line on the attached Mechanicsville Historic District Tax Parcel Map and the Boundary Map & Photo Key.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The district boundaries include a collection of resources that relate to the historic context of Mechanicsville. These resources are important components of a cohesive historic streetscape and contribute to the integrity of the district as a distinguishable entity. There is a clear contrast between the residential character of the Mechanicsville Historic District and the area between High Street and Main Street, which is filled with old tobacco factories and warehouses, as well as commercial and public buildings. The areas to the northwest and northeast of the district are not included due to a difference in scale and architectural character of the buildings. The architectural integrity of the latter two adjoining areas has also been compromised by major alterations, demolition, and infill with commercial and residential buildings, and parking lots.

11. Form Prepared By

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organization: Hill Studio, PC
street & number: 120 Campbell Avenue SW
city or town: Roanoke state: Virginia zip code: 24011
e-mail: ablanton@hillstudio.com
telephone: 540-342-5263
date: October 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mechanicsville Historic District
City or Vicinity: Danville (City)
County: State: Virginia
Photographer: Katie Coffield
Date Photographed: September 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 10: Upper Street, view SW
Photo 2 of 10: Upper Street, view NE
Photo 3 of 10: Monroe Street, view SW
Photo 4 of 10: Monroe Street, view W
Photo 5 of 10: High Street, view SW
Photo 6 of 10: North Floyd Street, north end, view W
Photo 7 of 10: North Floyd Street, south end, view NW
Photo 8 of 10: North Floyd Street, view SE
Photo 9 of 10: North Ridge Street, north end, view SE
Photo 10 of 10: North Ridge Street, south end, view SE

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Endnotes

[1] Pezzoni
[2] Ibid
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid
[5] Ibid
[6] Beers Map
[7] John Milner Associates
[8] Pezzoni
[9] Ibid
[10] John Milner Associates
[11] Ibid
[12] John Milner Associates
[13] Ibid
[14] US Census, 1910
[15] Sanborn, 1904
[16] Hill Directory Co, 1941
[17] Virginia Historical Society
[18] Blanton
[19] Hershman
[20] Miller
[21] Bearinger
[22] Thomas, UVA
[23] Miller
[24] Bearinger
[25] Miller
[26] Ibid
[27] Ibid
[28] Bearinger
[29] Miller
[30] Ibid
[31] Thomas
[32] Hershman
[33] Bearinger
[34] John Milner Associates

Mechanicsville HD - Danville, VA

LOCATION MAP

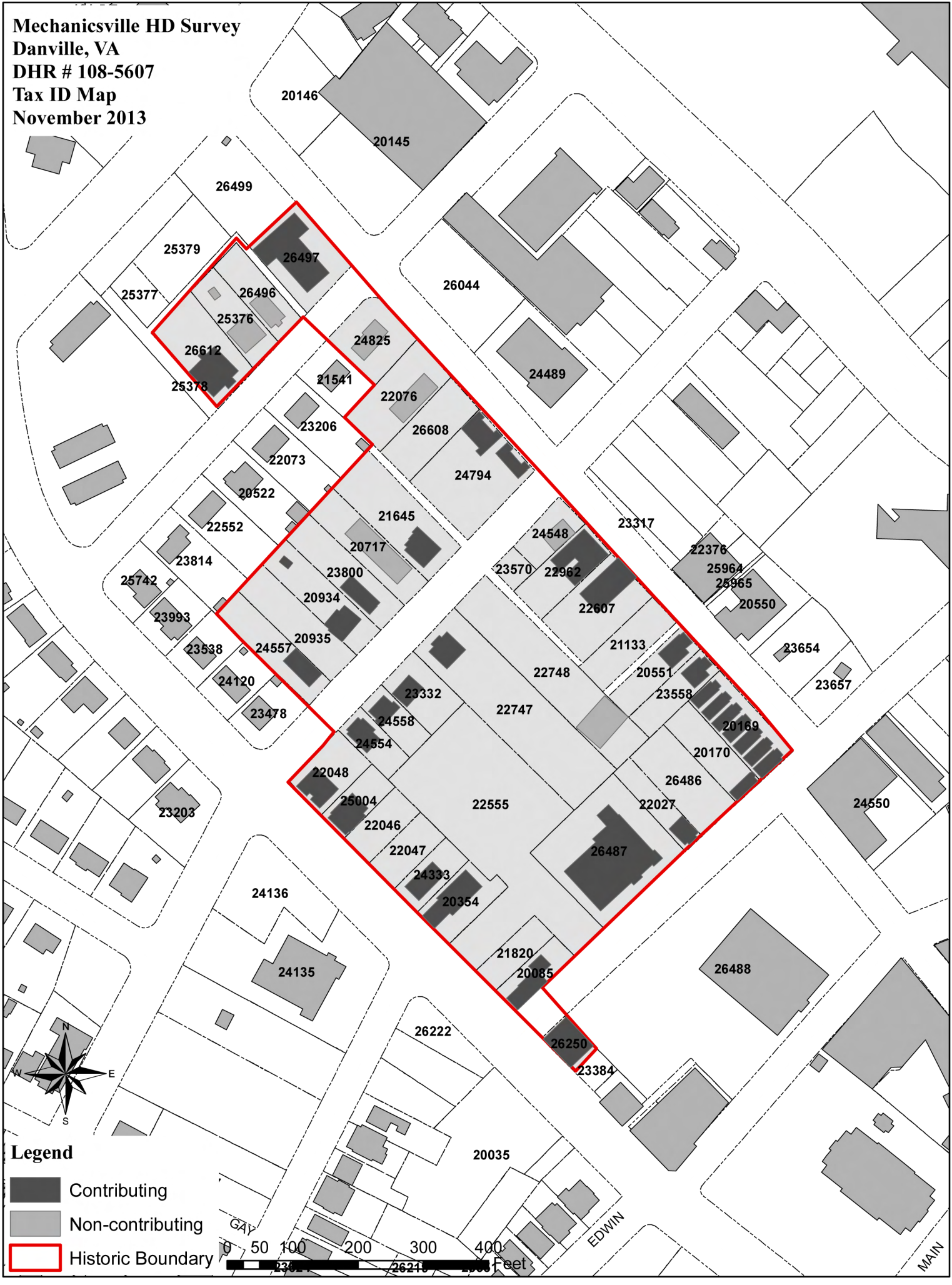
WGS84

NW Corner - Lat. 36.591228
Long. -79.399586

NE Corner - Lat. 36.590734
Long. -79.394890

SE Corner - Lat. 36.587405
Long. -79.395579

SW Corner - Lat. 36.587833
Long. -79.399691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DHR # 108-5607
Tax ID Map
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Mechanicsville HD Survey
Danville, VA
DHR # 108-5607
Boundary Map & Photo Key
November 2013
UPPER
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MEMORIAL
MEMORIAL
FLOYD
FLOYD
RIDGE
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401-405
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