**1. NAME**

- **COMMON:** Fairfax Stone Historical Monument
- **AND/OR HISTORIC:** Fairfax Stone

**2. LOCATION**

- **CITY OR TOWN:** Tucker County
- **STATE:** West Virginia
- **CODE:** 47
- **COUNTY:** Tucker
- **CODE:** 093

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
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<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
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<td>Being Considered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Both</td>
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**PRESENT USE** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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<th>Government</th>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Private Residence</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Scientific</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Other (Specify)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</table>

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

- **OWNER'S NAME:** Department of Natural Resources
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** Capitol Annex
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Charleston
- **STATE:** West Virginia
- **CODE:** 47

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

- **COURTHOUSE,Registry of Deeds, etc.:** Grant County Courthouse
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Petersburg
- **STATE:** West Virginia
- **CODE:** 47

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**

**DATE OF SURVEY:**

- **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

- **STREET AND NUMBER:**

- **CITY OR TOWN:**

- **STATE:**

- **CODE:**
7. DESCRIPTION

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<td>□ Altered</td>
<td>□ Unaltered</td>
<td>□ Moved</td>
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**DESCRIPTION**

**First Fairfax Stone:**
The first Fairfax Stone was planted by Fry and Jefferson at the head spring of the North Branch of the Potomac River in September, 1746.

In 1859, Lieutenant Michler, making a survey on behalf of the boundary commissioner of Maryland and Virginia, had this to report:

The initial point of the work, the oft-mentioned, oft-spoken of 'Fairfax stone,' stands on a spot encircled by several small streams flowing from the springs about it. It consists of a rough piece of sandstone, indifferent and friable, planted to a depth of a few feet in the ground, and raising a foot or more above the surface. Shapeless in form, it would scarcely attract the attention of the passer-by. The finding of it was without difficulty, and its recognition and identification by the inscription 'Ffx,' now almost obliterated by the corroding action of water and air. 1

A Supreme Court report of 1911 notes that "the original Fairfax stone was in existence until about the year 1883, when it was destroyed by vandals and subsequently carried away..." 2

**Second Fairfax Stone:**

Lieutenant Michler, reporting on his 1859 survey, wrote: "In order not to disturb this stone (First Fairfax) the first observatory was built immediately in the rear (south) of it." "Here, later," the Court notes, Michler built his monument, which was about 4 feet in height and made of several hewn stones, the upper ones being conical." 3 An artist in the employ of The Division of Parks has made a rendering similar to the following, basing it upon an 1881 photograph of what appears to be the Michler stone.

In 1910 the Court reports that all but the base of the Michler monument was removed by surveyors.

**Third Fairfax Stone:**

Vandals are said to have destroyed the Michler stone in 1884, and the following year The Davis Coke and Coal Company is said to have erected a marker. We do not know what became of it.

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3. Both of the preceding quotes are taken from the above source, p. 960.
Fourth Fairfax Stone

The surroundings were thus described by surveyors in 1910:
The stone is easily reached by a trail from Fairfax station, which
is ½ mile to the southeast. The large timber all around has been
cut by mill men and fire has destroyed the balance, so that the
immediate spot is now largely covered by brush and briers.¹

On August 12, 1910, during the present work, a new concrete mono-
ment was built, replacing both the previous marks. The new mono-
ment stands 2 feet north of the center of the base of the Michler
monument, which point was marked by a brass bolt bedded level with
surface of the ground. This rock and mark are still left in place,
but are not visible, and the mark is 1 foot north of the point
where original stone stood.²

The base is of concrete, 3½ feet square and 2 feet deep, set
flush with the surface of ground. On this base the monument was
built, utilizing the form which had been designed for, and was
afterwards used in the construction of the monuments along the
Potomac river to the Pennsylvania line. The monument is 22 inches
square at the base and 10 inches square at the top, the latter
being built up a few inches and rounded off. The total height
being 4 feet and 4 inches above the base. The monument contains
3¼ bags of best Portland cement and 6½ bags of white sand. It is
marked as follows: On south face 1746 - north face 1910. The
corners are beveled 1½ inches in width.³

The 1910 concrete marker still stands only a few feet west of the only
spring left in the immediate area (cf. accompanying photo). Trophy hunters
and/or marksmen have chipped away at its surface, but the Fairfax colophon
still remains.

In 1957 the then existing West Virginia Conservation Commission placed a
flat, six-ton sandstone immediately above the spring bearing a plaque with the
following inscription.

This monument at the head spring of the Potomac river, marks one of
the historic spots of America. Its name is derived from Thomas
Lord Fairfax who owned all the land lying between the Potomac and
Rappahannock rivers. The first Fairfax stone, marked "Fx", was set
in 1746 by Thomas Lewis, a surveyor employed by Lord Fairfax. This
is the base point for the western dividing line between Maryland
and West Virginia.

² Ibid., p. 960.
³ Ibid., p. 960.
There have been five Fairfax stones, all located nearly exactly at the same place and utilized in the determination of the western extension of the Fairfax grant, the North-South boundary line between Virginia (West Virginia) and Maryland, and the positioning of Preston, Grant, and Tucker counties in West Virginia and Garrett County in Maryland.

These stones reflect a history going back to the King of England's land grant of 1632 to Lord Baltimore, extending westward to the headwaters of the Potomac, and a grant south of this by Charles II to Lord Thomas Culpeper in 1688, of land between the Potomac and Rappahannock, terminating to the West at a North-South line to be drawn connecting what by common consent were the "first fountains" or sources of these two rivers, Fig. 1.

The happy final reconciliation of these two poorly defined grants was achieved with the Fairfax Stone as the chief point of reference as late as 1912, after two centuries of complicated contentions, disputes, and surveys almost unparalleled in American history.

For the sake of clarity, it should be stated at this point that the Fairfax Stone is not at the Maryland-West Virginia corner, but determines the corner 3,983 feet to the North, where the N-S line intersects the Potomac, Fig. 2.

The land first historically related to the Fairfax Stone was the 2,450 square miles constituting the "Northern Neck" of Virginia granted to Culpeper and inherited by the Sixth Lord Fairfax in fee simple in 1719. Surveyors representing the Fairfax claims and the colony of Virginia in 1748 determined the straight line, to become known as the "Fairfax Line, uniting the headwater of the Rappahannock on a branch of the subsidiary Coroway River, and the fountainhead of the Potomac a few miles north of Blackwater Falls. Participating in this survey terminating at the Fairfax Stone was Peter Jefferson, map maker and father of Thomas Jefferson. Two years later George Washington began at 15 his survey on Fairfax lands and his self-education in the Fairfax library.

Lord Fairfax had planned to build up a feudal estate in America, virtually a colony all his own. When he came to make his home at Greenway Court near Winchester in 1743, however, the choice Tidewater and Piedmont lands had already been settled, but there was still opportunity of developing ten of the present-day counties of Virginia and West Virginia, three of them in the mountainous western section of the tract. (continued)
8. Significance  Fairfax Stone, cont'd.

Lord Baltimore did not accept the Fairfax Stone as representing the headwaters of the Potomac; consequently he could not accept the Fairfax line as definitive of the western boundary of the Fairfax Tract. Furthermore, he objected that the Fairfax Stone had been placed without his knowledge and consent. The Maryland Governor convinced Lord Baltimore that the South Branch of the Potomac should be considered the fountainhead of the Potomac and determinant of Maryland's southwestern boundary. This would have given Maryland more southern property but less western land and would have greatly altered the configuration of the two colonies. Lord Fairfax agreed to the readjustment, believing it advantageous to him, but the intervening Revolutionary War delayed settlement of this question. Maryland gradually abandoned the idea of the South Branch as the definitive origin of the Potomac.

The dispute about the Fairfax line was mild compared to the controversy over the line drawn from the Fairfax Stone north to Pennsylvania, forming part of the boundary between what is now Maryland and West Virginia. Involved here were faulty surveys; disagreement about whether to start with the Fairfax Stone or the "Brown Monument" erected in 1897 at Potomac Spring about a mile northwest of the Fairfax Stone; and squatters' rights and early patents versus the claims of Revolutionary War soldiers receiving land in recompense for military service. Altercations among confused settlers became frequent.

At least four meridians competed for the honor of being the North-South boundary, three of them beginning with the Fairfax Stone. The first survey was made in 1787 by Deakins for Maryland. Although Maryland had not committed herself to the Fairfax Stone, Deakins nevertheless started his meridian from here, using inadequate surveying instruments and ending up at the Pennsylvania border three-quarters of a mile east of the true meridian.

In 1859 Maryland and Virginia actually collaborated in commissioning Lieutenant Michler of the United States Corps of Engineers, who ran a correct line to the Pennsylvania border but warned that making it the official line would result in great litigation. Virginia's agreement with this opinion and the intervention of the Civil War made the line null and void. In the meantime, West Virginia replaced Virginia as the partner to any disputes with Maryland. In 1891 Maryland filed a suit in equity in the United States Supreme Court charging that West Virginia was exercising jurisdiction over land not belonging to her. This suit was not settled for 21 years. Meantime, Maryland's preferment of the Brown Monument over the Fairfax Stone further complicated affairs. West Virginia countered with a resurvey of the Deakins line. The slightly deviant result is known as the "Fairfax Meridian." This line, marked by 34 monuments, was accepted by the United States Supreme Court.

Two other boundary settlements derived from the same decision. The low-water mark on the south side of the Potomac was to constitute the common northern boundary between Maryland and West Virginia, and the beginning point of the north-south boundary line was to be located where the Fairfax meridian intersected the northern boundary. While this was not precisely where the
8. Significance - Fairfax Stone, cont'd.

Fairfax Stone was located, the stone nevertheless still determined the State corner, even though the Fairfax Stone is now located wholly in Tucker County, West Virginia.
The Decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States at October Term, 1909. (217 U.S. 54, pp. 645-660.)


Cases Argued and Decided in the Supreme Court of the United States, October Terms, 1909, 1910. (217 U.S. 54.)

Stuart E. Brown, Jr., "The Virginia Baron," Valleys of History, Spring, 1966. Published by Potomac Edison, Hagerstown, Md.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES

<table>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
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Approximate acreage of nominated property: 4 acres

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
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FORM PREPARED BY

Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.

Acting for the State Liaison Officer

Street and number:

Wheeling College

CITY OR TOWN: Wheeling

STATE: West Virginia

DATE: Aug. 17, 1970

STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  [x] State  [ ] Local  [ ]

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Email: Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.

Acting for the State Liaison Officer

Date: Aug. 17, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Email: Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.

Date: Aug. 17, 1970

ATTEST:

Email: Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.

Date: Aug. 17, 1970

Keeper of The National Register

Date: Aug. 17, 1970
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

Note that Map is far north of 1

Park 417.42' square.

Latitude 39 deg. 11' 41.92''

These are the readings for the F as reported by surveyors in 1910 making tria
FAIRFAX STONE

This monument at the head spring of the Potomac River, marks one of the historic spots of America. Its name is derived from Thomas Lord Fairfax, who owned all the land lying between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. The first Fairfax stone was set in 1746 by Thomas Lewis, a surveyor employed by Lord Fairfax. This is the base point for the survey of West Virginia and West Virginia.