National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2011

Simmons Gap
Shenandoah National Park

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Inventory Summary

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Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

Inventory Unit Description:

Simmons Gap is a maintenance and administrative area for the South District of the 196,000-acre Shenandoah National Park (NP) in Virginia. The nine-acre site is located at Mile Post 73.0 along the 105-mile Skyline Drive, a designated National Historic Landmark District that traces the park's ridgeline and offers panoramic views of the Piedmont Plain to the east and Shenandoah Valley to the west. Simmons Gap also includes a ranger station and serves as a trailhead to the nearby Appalachian Trail and Simmons Gap Trail.

Simmons Gap is reached by a short paved access road that branches off from the east side of Skyline Drive. The road curves through the largely forested area before ending in the maintenance building area, which includes a maintenance shed, maintenance shop, and gas and oil building constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the mid-1930s and early 1940s. Just south of the maintenance area, the road splits after passing over a small stone-faced bridge and leads to the rest of the developed area, which includes the last remaining building of an Episcopal mission community that was at the site prior to establishment of the park. The one-story sandstone Mission Community Hall was built in 1925 and is currently used as a ranger station and office. Other features in this area include a fire cache, ranger office, rescue cache, two contemporary houses, and a trailer/utilitarian shed as well as a small paved parking area, weather station, and flagpole. The buildings and parking lots at Simmons Gap are set within lawns with a few shrubs and several large shade trees.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Prior to its establishment, the Shenandoah National Park area was inhabited by Native Americans, and later settled by European immigrants beginning in the early 1700s and reaching its peak in the nineteenth century. Homesteads were established where families raised a variety of crops and fruit trees and kept pastures for cattle grazing. In the early part of the 1900s, several environmental disasters occurred, diminishing the economic livelihood of many area residents. The chestnut blight brought catastrophic change to the forest ecosystem, decimating chestnut trees that once made up twenty percent of the forest. Chestnuts were a food source for animals and could also be sold for cash. The bark was used for tanning, and the wood was used in the construction of telephone poles, railroad ties, wheel rims, and tools. In addition, the region experienced a severe drought in 1930 causing crops and the apple harvest to fail. Concurrent with the agricultural uses of the mountains were recreational activities, which had begun as early as 1830 with the construction of Black Springs Hotel and the development of Stony Man Camp (later Skyland) in 1894.

Around the same time, Episcopalian missionaries began work in the area. Frederick William Neve, an Englishman, was assigned in 1888 by his church to a parish in Albemarle County. After meeting some of the Blue Ridge mountain residents in his church, the people of the Blue Ridge became his personal crusade. By 1900, Neve had raised enough money through donations to a hire a teacher, Angeline Fitzhugh. She taught local children first in a donated cabin and later in a small frame schoolhouse at Simmons Gap. The schoolhouse doubled as a church on those occasions when a minister was available. Between 1900 and late 1920s, Neve expanded facilities at Simmons Gap. In 1906, a masonry chapel was added to the collection of frame buildings and shortly thereafter, the Simmons Gap

Mission Community Hall was constructed in 1925. With various church-related structures, Simmons Gap by the 1920s and 1930s became a thriving community that also featured a general store and post office.

In 1924, the idea of establishing a national park in the region came about when the U.S. Secretary of the Interior formed the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee, which recognized the potential of locating a scenic drive atop the Blue Ridge Mountains in northern Virginia with dramatic views of the Shenandoah Valley and the Piedmont Plain. In 1926, Congress authorized Shenandoah NP to provide a large, western-type park accessible from the urban centers of the East Coast. However, the act did not provide federal funding to acquire land for the park. Until the park was officially established in 1935, lands were acquired through private donations and funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia. After this time, the mission community was abandoned.

The need to provide economic relief and jobs to the region, already suffering from the crop failures and droughts as well as the Great Depression, moved forward the plan to make the Shenandoah area more accessible by building the scenic motor road. The construction of this road, Skyline Drive, began in 1931 through the coordinated efforts of the National Park Service (NPS) and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Public Roads.

As part of his New Deal legislation, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the CCC in 1933 to help create jobs through natural resource conservation efforts on federal, state, and municipal properties. At Shenandoah, the CCC was involved in erosion control, planting trees and shrubs, and the construction of site amenities at developed areas along the drive, including trails, shelters, overlooks, parking lots, picnic tables, fireplaces, drinking fountains, and other site furnishings. Construction of Skyline Drive occurred in three phases, starting with the Central District, then the North District followed by the South District. Clearing operations in the South District began in late fall of 1933, and the grade finishing operations were completed in November 1937.

Between 1936 and 1937, during construction of Skyline Drive in the South District, the Simmons Gap area was further developed as a park maintenance facility. At that time, the CCC constructed a twenty-foot access road and spurs with culverts, added a garage (now fire cache), maintenance shed, and likely planted new trees and shrubs throughout the site. A weather station and flag pole were later installed, but it is currently unclear when they were added. During this time, the stone chapel was also moved to a location near the community of Free Union, and except for the Mission Community Hall, all other church buildings were dismantled or removed. Although the Simmons Gap area was not included in the park's master plan, it was likely sited to take advantage of the pre-park facilities at this location. The complex was located out of view from the public and included distinct and separate areas for administration and maintenance-related uses. In the ensuing years, new storage and office buildings were added and by 1942 the CCC converted the Mission Community Hall into a ranger station/residence.

After the U.S. entered World War II, development of the park was suspended and visitation plummeted as fuel shortages curbed opportunities for leisurely drives and people were encouraged to conserve

resources for the war effort. Around this time, the NPS moved the storage shed, gas and oil building, and fire cache to their current locations and in 1948 constructed a ranger office.

In the mid-1950s, the NPS was planning "Mission 66," an ambitious ten-year development program designed to upgrade the national park facilities to modern standards to accommodate rising visitation after World War II. The goal was to develop and adequately staff the NPS by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the agency (Lambert 1979:314). The NPS gained Congressional funding for the work in 1956. While many of the developed areas along Skyline Drive—specifically the lodges/cabin, waysides, picnic, and campground areas—added new facilities that were designed in a contemporary modern style, minimal improvements were made in the Simmons Gap area. The only changes made during that time included improvements to the maintenance shed and ranger office.

Between 1970 and 1990, new facilities were developed and improvements were made at Simmons Gap. In 1975, a maintenance shop, originally built in 1939 at Dundo Camp and later moved to Swift Run Gap in the 1940s, was relocated to Simmons Gap. Soon after, the park made exterior improvements to the fire cache and constructed a rescue cache. In 1986 and 1990, employee housing was added to the Simmons Gap area. Changes to accommodate the new residences included the extension of the short access road through the southern portion of the area and the construction of a small parking area. In addition to the residences, four trailers/utilitarian sheds were added to the site.

In 1995, a facility development plan for Simmons Gap identified the following tasks: remove four trailers, rehabilitate historic maintenance structures and community hall, and remove two residences. In recent years, the NPS has implemented many recommendations that were proposed in the development plan including the removal of three trailers/utilitarian sheds and the rehabilitation of the Mission Community Hall. Overall, the layout of the Simmons Gap area has remained much as it did during the period of historic significance.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Simmons Gap is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District, which was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) on October 6, 2008. Skyline Drive, with its adjoining overlooks, waysides, picnic areas, campgrounds, and developed areas, is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 and 4. The period of significance for the Skyline Drive Historic District is 1931-1952. Construction of Skyline Drive began in 1931 and occurred in three distinct phases, and extended to 1952, which recognizes the small amount of work done to complete the guardwalls after World War II and some minor changes that were in keeping with the 1930s plans. Simmons Gap is within the boundaries of the historic district, and therefore shares the same areas and period of significance.

For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory, the historic significance of the Skyline Drive Historic District is evaluated according to the National Register Criteria A and C, which align with NHL Criterion 1 and 4, respectively. The Skyline Drive Historic District is nationally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government for its association with Shenandoah NP as one of the first eastern national parks and is associated with the

early twentieth century movement to accommodate the growing popularity of the automobile while also conserving natural and scenic areas. Skyline Drive was created as a recreational park road that provided motorists with a shifting panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley, and the Piedmont. Located off Skyline Drive in the South District, Simmons Gap was one of several maintenance areas established to house park maintenance facilities. Soon after construction of the drive, a ranger station was also established at Simmons Gap. The Skyline Drive Historic District is also associated with federal government efforts to mitigate widespread unemployment during the Great Depression through work programs, most notably the CCC that constructed many of the site amenities along the drive and throughout Shenandoah NP. The Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall as it now stands was heavily modified by the CCC for its use as a ranger station/residence, and its significance is tied to its association with the park.

The Skyline Drive Historic District is also nationally significant under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture for its association with the rustic style developed by the NPS in the 1930s and 1940s. This style emphasized preserving existing landscapes and restoring landscapes altered by man to their original condition, using native vegetation. It also emphasized the incorporation of scenic views in the layout of buildings and circulation features and sited them to be as inconspicuous as possible. The NPS also encouraged the use of local materials and building traditions in the construction of buildings, structures, and site furnishings. During construction of Skyline Drive in the South District, the Simmons Gap area was developed as a park maintenance facility. At that time, the CCC constructed a twenty-foot-wide access road and spurs with a bridge and culverts, added a garage (now fire cache) and maintenance shed, and likely planted new trees and shrubs throughout the site. The CCC later converted the 1925 Mission Community Hall—itself an example of a vernacular structure typically found in the mountain areas of Virginia when the park was established—into a ranger station/residence and added other maintenance related buildings to the area. The construction of these features used native materials that followed principles of rustic park architecture promoted by the NPS. Although the Simmons Gap area was not included in the park's master plan, it was sited to take advantage of the pre-park facilities at this location. Like other park maintenance areas, the complex was located out of view from the public and included distinct and separate areas for administration and maintenance-related uses.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

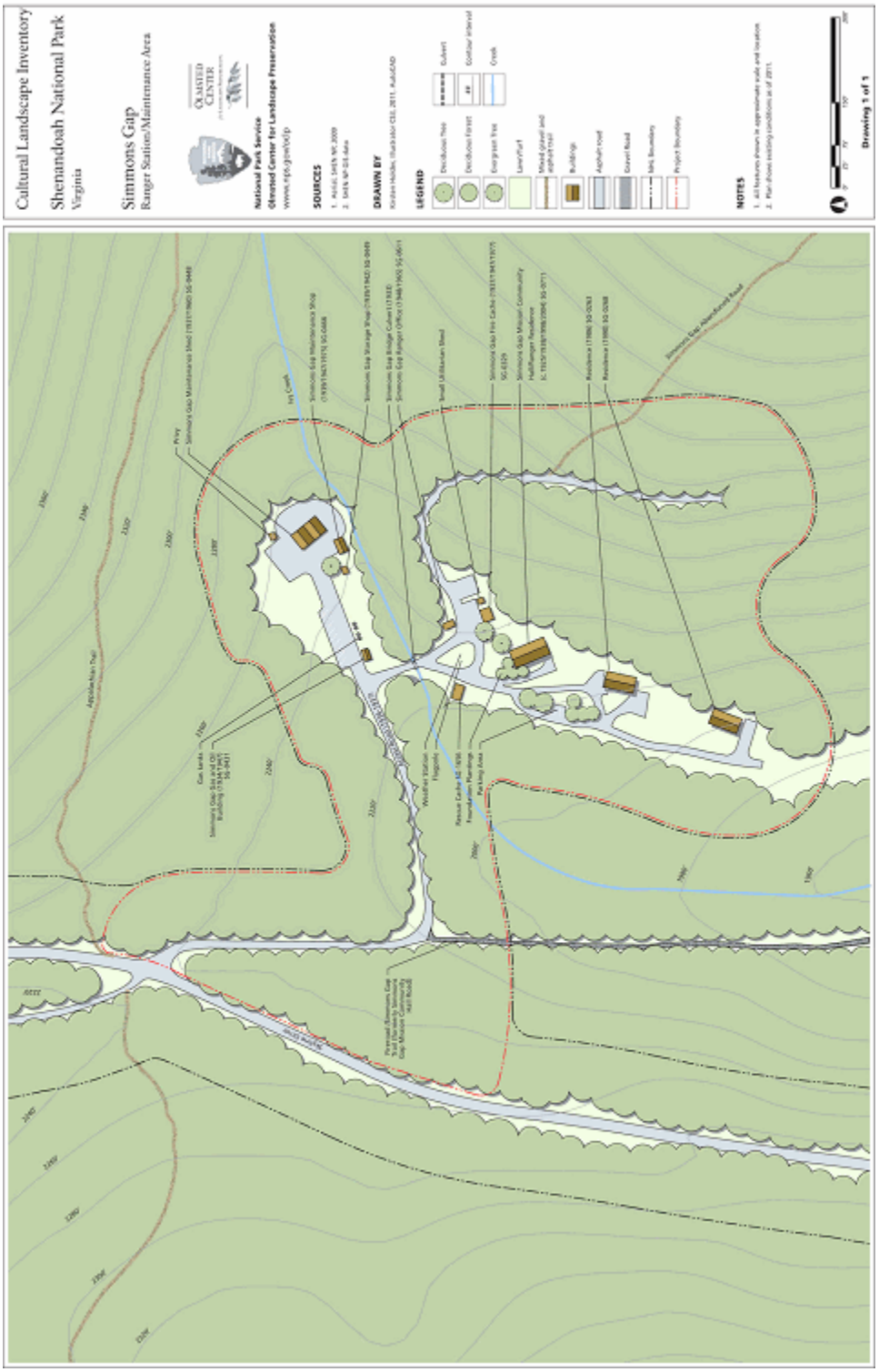
The physical integrity of Simmons Gap is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1931-1952) with current conditions. Many of the site's historic characteristics and features are unchanged. The Simmons Gap area continues to be situated within a forested landscape out of view of the public. It includes a former mission building dating to 1925 and numerous historic utilitarian buildings and structures built by the CCC in the 1930s and 1940s. Connected by a road system that continues to follow the same historic alignment and features a bridge and mortared stone culverts, the maintenance-related facilities are located in the northern portion of the site and include the maintenance shed, maintenance shop, and gas and oil building. The administrative area, located in the southern portion of the site, includes the Mission Community Hall (ranger station), ranger office, and fire cache. The vegetative features such as the

mature tree canopy surrounding the site and open lawn areas remain intact since the historic period.

Following the historic period, the NPS constructed two residences. Changes to accommodate the new residences included the extension of the short access road through the southern portion of the area and the construction of a small parking area. In addition to the residences, trailers/utilitarian sheds were also added. Other changes are primarily associated with NPS visitor facilities, which include parking areas, benches and receptacles, and signs. Despite these changes, the Simmons Gap area retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The condition of the Simmons Gap landscape is evaluated as "good," which indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Site Plan



Site plan for Simmons Gap, 2011.

Property Level and CLI Numbers

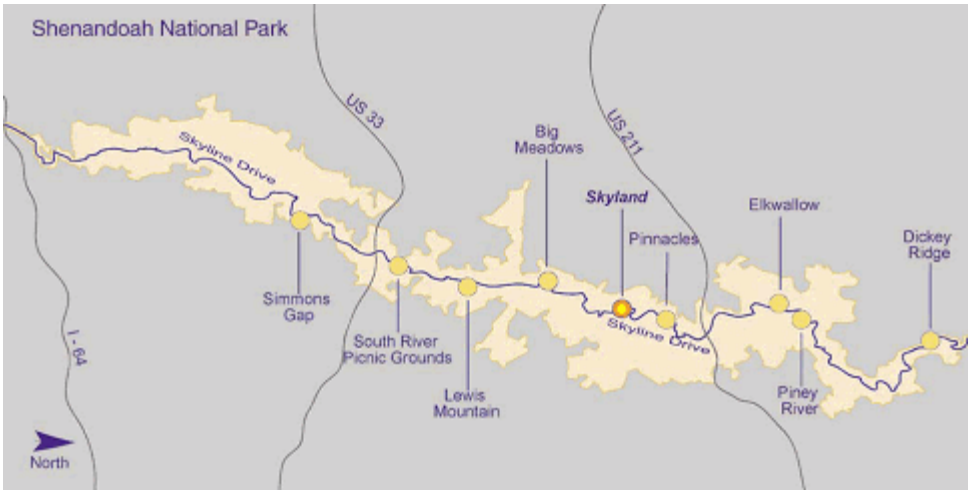
Inventory Unit Name:	Simmons Gap
Property Level:	Component Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	300124
Parent Landscape:	300115

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Shenandoah National Park -SHEN
Park Organization Code:	4840
Park Administrative Unit:	Shenandoah National Park

CLI Hierarchy Description

Simmons Gap is one of nine component landscapes of the Skyline Drive landscape. They include Big Meadows, Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, Lewis Mountain, Piney River, Pinnacles, Skyland, South River Picnic Grounds, and Skyline Drive (North District, Central District, and South District). Shenandoah National Park includes four other landscapes and three component landscapes:
- Rapidan Camp landscape
- Headquarters landscape
- Appalachian Trail landscape with component landscapes: Appalachian Trail North District, Appalachian Trail Central District, and Appalachian Trail South District.



Hierarchy Description. Illustration of the Skyline Drive component landscapes (PHSO 2002).

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

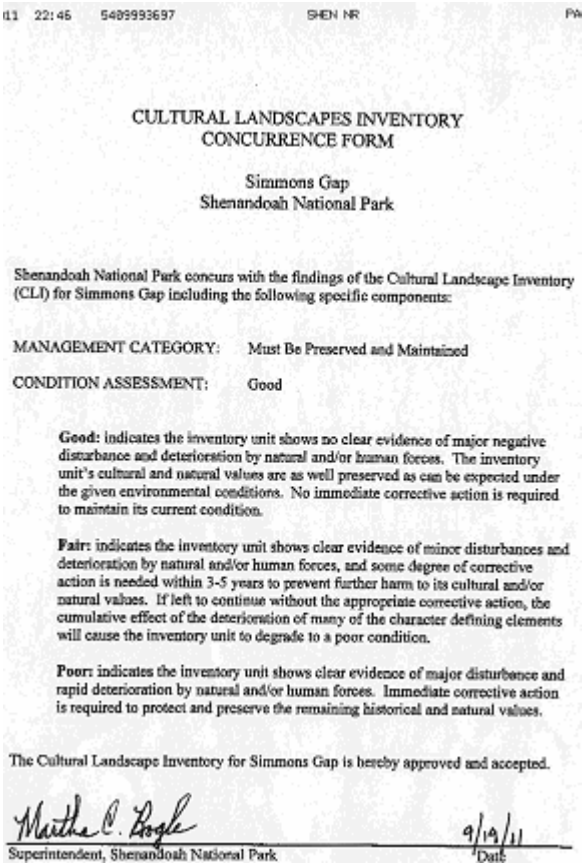
Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Field work for Simmons Gap was conducted by Allison Crosbie and Michael Commisso of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (OCLP) in Boston, Massachusetts in the spring of 2011. Archival research at the park was accomplished with the assistance of Kandace Muller, Museum Specialist. GIS information was provided by the park's GIS Specialist, Dan Hurlburt. The park's Cultural Resource Manager is Ann Kain. She can be reached at 540-999-3500, x3435.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	09/19/2011
Date of Concurrence Determination:	10/06/2008

Concurrence Graphic Information:



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CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Simmons Gap
Shenandoah National Park

Shenandoah National Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for Simmons Gap including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for Simmons Gap is hereby approved and accepted.

Martha C. Boyle 9/19/11

Superintendent, Shenandoah National Park Date

Park concurrence was received on September 19, 2011.

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

Simmons Gap is located at Mile Post 73.1 off Skyline Drive. The nine-acre site is reached by a paved, curving road with forested areas on both sides. The site contains two sub-areas including a maintenance building area and another area comprising the pre-existing mission (ranger station) buildings, offices, and several residences.

The boundary of Simmons Gap is consistent with existing National Register and National Historic Landmark documentation for the Skyline Drive Historic District. The boundary is described as 125 feet on either side of the drive's centerline, creating a 250-foot right-of-way. At ranger stations such as Simmons Gap, the boundary widens. In both the September 1997 and the October 2008 documentation, the boundary for Simmons Gap is described as extending 125 feet beyond all National Park Service-constructed or -used circulation roads and parking areas that were in place in 1950. For Simmons Gap, this specifically includes the access road from Skyline Drive and its spurs.

State and County:

State: VA

County: Greene County

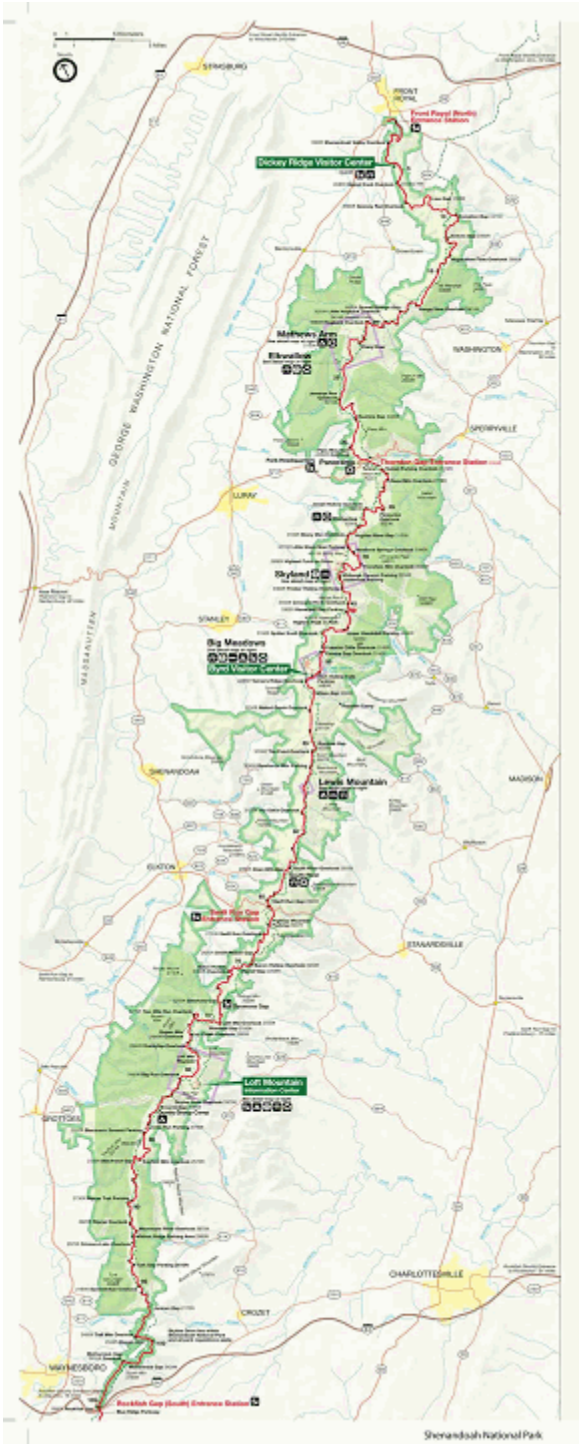
Size (Acres): 9.00

Boundary UTMS:

Source:	USGS Map 1:24,000
Type of Point:	Point
Datum:	NAD 83
UTM Zone:	17
UTM Easting:	4,241,750
UTM Northing:	707,880

Location Map:

Location Map Information. Shenandoah National Park is located in northwest Virginia (Map courtesy of Great Outdoors Recreation pages).



Location Map Information. Map of Shenandoah National Park. Simmons Gap is in the South District, south of the Swift Run Gap Entrance Station (Shenandoah NP website, http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/.jpg).

Regional Context:

Type of Context: Cultural

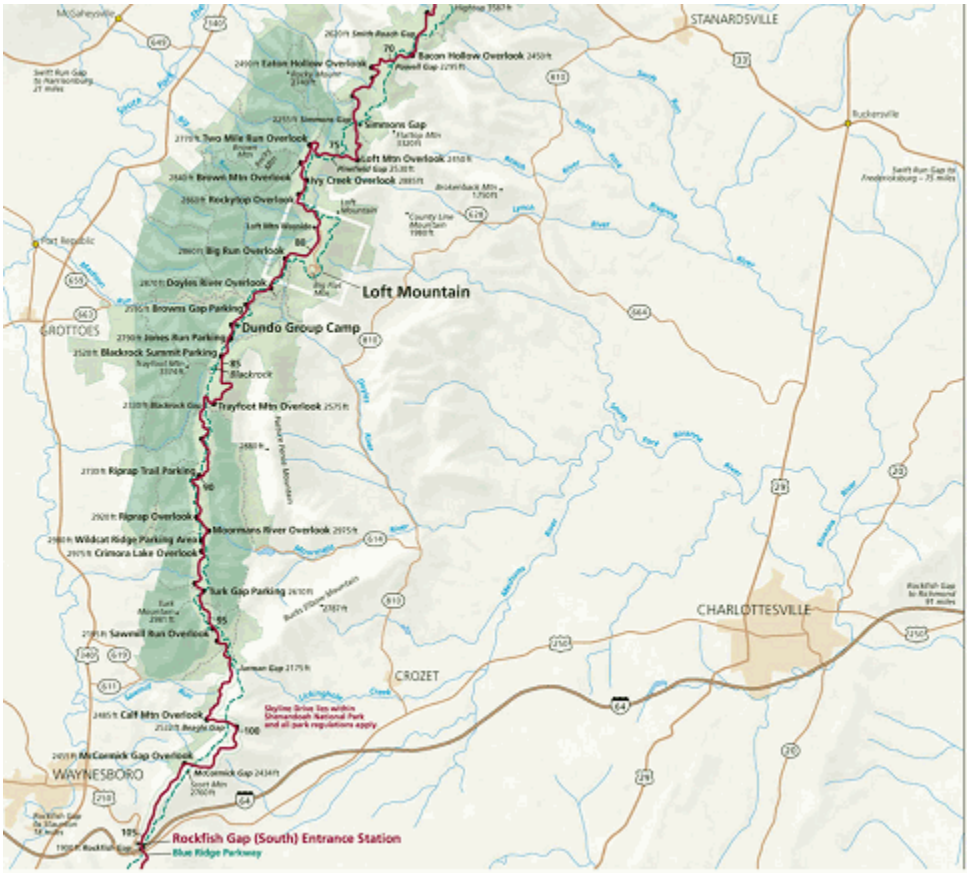
Description:

Simmons Gap is part of Shenandoah NP, where recreation is the primary cultural use. In the surrounding region, tourism is a significant industry. Agriculture, particularly poultry production, is the main industry to the west, with convenient north-south access via Interstate 81 and Route 340. Suburban development in the Washington D.C.-Baltimore metropolitan area dominates the east, with east-west access via Interstate 66 and Routes 7, 50, and 211.

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Simmons Gap is a pass located between Flattop (3,350 feet) and Weaver Mountains (2,850 feet) within Shenandoah National Park (NP), with its highest elevations near Skyline Drive, between 2,200 and 2,300 feet. The site is within the watershed of the Lynch River (Ivy Creek), which empties into the North Fork of the Rivanna River (see Regional Landscape Context graphic).



Regional Landscape Context. Simmons Gap is located in the South District of Shenandoah National Park in Virginia (Shenandoah NP website, http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/south.jpg).

Type of Context: Political

Description:

In 1926, Congress first authorized Shenandoah NP but without funds for land purchases. In the following years, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was responsible for programs and initiatives to aid the unemployed, reform businesses and financial practices, and assist in the recovery of the economy during the Great Depression. These programs were collectively known as the New Deal, and a critical aspect of the initiative for Shenandoah NP was the use of the CCC to develop and construct many of the park's features, including those at Simmons Gap. Congress officially established the park in 1935 from land purchased through private donations and by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The construction of the Simmons Gap area beginning in the mid- 1930s exemplifies the rustic design principles used by the NPS for developed areas along Skyline Drive and executed through the CCC's labor efforts.

Management Unit: South District

Tract Numbers: 157 (portion)
180 (portion)

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/19/2011

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Simmons Gap falls within the management category, "Must Be Preserved and Maintained," because it is nationally significant as defined by National Historic Landmark (NHL) criteria. The site is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District, which was designated as a National Historic Landmark on October 6, 2008. The district meets NHL criteria 1 and 4.

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Public Access:

Type of Access: Other Restrictions

Explanatory Narrative:

Skyline Drive, the only public road through the park, is periodically closed during inclement weather and at night during deer hunting season. Visitors can still enter the park on foot to hike even when the road is closed. With exception to an occasional hiker passing through the area via the nearby Appalachian Trail or Simmons Gap Trail (along the historic Simmons Gap Mission Hall Road), the Simmons Gap area and Mission Community Hall (ranger station) receive very few visitors throughout the year; it is mostly accessed by park staff.

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

Adjacent Lands Description:

Simmons Gap is surrounded by a vast, forested area of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The site was developed as a maintenance and administration area, and although it eventually included a ranger station, there is no evidence to suggest that outward views to lands beyond the park's boundaries were considered as important at Simmons Gap.

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Entered Documented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

Simmons Gap is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District in Shenandoah National Park (NP). On October 6, 2008, the district was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) under NHL Criterion 1 and 4, with the period of significance extending from 1931 to 1952. The areas of significance were identified as community planning and development, conservation, entertainment/recreation, politics/government, social history, architecture, engineering, and landscape architecture. In the NHL documentation, the Simmons Gap area encompasses approximately nine acres and includes a ranger station (a former Episcopal Mission Community Hall), new residential buildings, and a handful of 1930s and 1940s storage buildings and offices associated with the maintenance area.

The NHL documentation is consistent with the National Register of Historic Places documentation for the historic district, entered on April 28, 1997. The drive's resources were identified by their corresponding Mile Post markers through this effort and the Simmons Gap access road, described as 2,255 feet in length, was identified as a contributing structure. Additional resources in the Simmons Gap area were added to the Skyline Drive Historic District as part of a Boundary Increase on September 19, 1997. Significance was identified under Criterion A in the areas of community planning/development, conservation, entertainment/recreation, politics/government, social history, and transportation, and Criterion C in the areas of architecture, engineering, and landscape architecture, for the period of 1931 to 1952. Contributing resources identified included the Mission/Residence (SG-0711), fire cache (SG-0329), Gas/Oil Building (SG-0431), maintenance shed (SG-0448), storage shed (SG-0449), maintenance shop (SG-0466), ranger office (SG-0611), and bridge (culvert). Non-contributing resources included two residences (SG-0263 and SG-0268), rescue cache (SG-1656), and three small utilitarian sheds (SG-0451, SG-0478, SG-0488) and two pit privies (SG-2426 and SG-2460). In addition to its significance related to the park as a whole, the district's boundary increase also conveyed significance relating to the specific developed areas. The documentation also notes that the Simmons Gap area was the site of one of the last remaining Episcopal Church mission buildings in this section of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the areas and periods of significance for Simmons Gap are adequately documented in existing National Historic Landmark and National Register of Historic Places documentation. The existing documentation also adequately describes the site's numerous historic resources that contribute to its significance. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, Simmons Gap is considered "Entered-Documented."

Existing NRIS Information:

Name in National Register:	Skyline Drive Historic District
NRIS Number:	97000375
Primary Certification Date:	10/06/2008
Name in National Register:	Skyline Drive Historic District (Boundary Increase)
NRIS Number:	97001112
Primary Certification Date:	09/19/1997

National Register Eligibility

Contributing/Individual:	Contributing
National Register Classification:	District
Significance Level:	National
Significance Criteria:	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
Significance Criteria:	C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Period of Significance:

Time Period:	AD 1931 - 1952
Historic Context Theme:	Expressing Cultural Values
Subtheme:	Landscape Architecture
Facet:	The 1930's: Era Of Public Works
Time Period:	AD 1931 - 1952
Historic Context Theme:	Creating Social Institutions and Movements
Subtheme:	Recreation
Facet:	General Recreation
Time Period:	AD 1931 - 1952
Historic Context Theme:	Transforming the Environment
Subtheme:	Conservation of Natural Resources
Facet:	The Great Depression And Conservation
Time Period:	AD 1931 - 1952
Historic Context Theme:	Developing the American Economy
Subtheme:	Transportation by Land and Air
Facet:	Carriage Roads, Touring Roads and Parkways

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category:	Architecture
Area of Significance Category:	Entertainment - Recreation
Area of Significance Category:	Landscape Architecture
Area of Significance Category:	Politics - Government

Statement of Significance:

Shenandoah NP was one of the first and largest national parks established in the eastern United States, and raised national and regional awareness of the importance of the government's role in preserving large portions of the environment for public recreation and enjoyment. From the park's early history, a key feature has been Skyline Drive, designed and constructed primarily from 1930 to 1942, which

traces the mountaintop ridges and offers panoramic views of the Piedmont to the east and the Shenandoah Valley to the west. As stated in the National Historic Landmark (NHL) documentation, Skyline Drive, with its adjoining overlooks, waysides, picnic areas, campgrounds, and developed areas, is nationally significant under NHL criteria 1 and 4:
"Because of the pivotal role that the Skyline Drive Historic District played in the history of the national park system and the evolution of park road design, federal policies in conservation and recreation, and the employment of relief measures of the New Deal, Skyline Drive is nationally significant under the NHL theme Transforming the Environment. For its exemplary expression of the principles and practices of NPS road design, landscape naturalization, and rustic architectural design and as a showcase of the landscape conservation work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the park road and its associated features are also nationally important under the theme Expressing Cultural Values (planning, landscape architecture, and architecture)."

The NHL documentation identifies the period of significance for Skyline Drive Historic District as 1931-1952. Construction of the road began in 1931 and occurred in three distinct phases, and extended to 1952, which recognizes the small amount of work done to complete the guardwalls after World War II and some minor changes that were in keeping with the 1930s plans. Although Simmons Gap was developed as an Episcopal mission prior to the establishment of Skyline Drive, the area was redeveloped according to the national park standards as a maintenance area and ranger station in the mid-1930s and early 1940s. The site is within the boundaries of the Skyline Drive Historic District, and therefore shares the same areas and period of significance.

For the purposes of this CLI, the significance of the landscape is evaluated according to National Register Criterion A, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 1, and National Register Criterion C, which corresponds to NHL Criterion 4. As such, Skyline Drive is nationally significant under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and politics/government, and nationally significant under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION A

The Skyline Drive Historic District is nationally significant under Criterion A for its association with Shenandoah NP as one of the first eastern national parks and is associated with the early twentieth century movement to accommodate the growing popularity of the automobile while also conserving natural and scenic areas. Skyline Drive was created as a recreational park road that provided motorists with a shifting panorama of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley, and the Piedmont. Located off Skyline Drive in the South District, Simmons Gap was one of several maintenance areas established to house park maintenance facilities. Soon after construction of the drive, a ranger station was also established at Simmons Gap.

The Skyline Drive Historic District is also associated with efforts of the federal government to provide economic relief in the form of employment for both skilled and unskilled labor during the Great Depression. These efforts included a special allocation in 1931 for drought relief funds for road construction in national parks, and the extensive economic relief programs of the New Deal era (1933

to 1942) which included the CCC, Public Works Administration (PWA), and Works Progress Administration (WPA), and Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The programs not only promoted economic stability but also reflected the social-humanitarian purposes of the New Deal by advancing the conservation of natural areas and expanding the recreational resources of the nation, while creating employment for thousands of skilled and unskilled workers. Within the Skyline Drive Historic District, Simmons Gap typifies the work of CCC laborers who were employed to install trees and other plantings, rehabilitate a former Episcopal mission building into a ranger station/residence, and construct site features including an access road and spurs, bridge and culverts, fire cache, gas/oil building, two sheds, and a maintenance shop.

The Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall as it now stands was heavily modified by the National Park Service and the CCC for its use as a residence. The building has been in use by the National Park Service since the park's opening, and the building's significance is tied to its association with the park. It, like the handful of other pre-1930s buildings in the park, illustrates the effort to return the park to its condition before human occupation. Because the building was present during the period of significance, relates to the documented significance of the district, and possesses historic integrity, it is considered a contributing resource to the Skyline Drive Historic District (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28).

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION C

The Skyline Drive Historic District is nationally significant under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture for its association with the rustic design style developed by the NPS and implemented by the CCC. In the rustic design style, constructed features utilized labor-intensive methods that created a rugged, frontier-like quality appropriate to a wilderness setting. Though general design standards remained the same throughout the NPS, features were typically customized with local materials, such as stone or wood, to fit the environment in which they were constructed. At Shenandoah NP, the rustic design style echoed the early regional building traditions of the Blue Ridge Mountains and conveyed the nineteenth-century rusticity of the region.

During construction of Skyline Drive in the South District, the Simmons Gap area was developed as a park maintenance facility. At that time, the CCC constructed a twenty-foot-wide access road system with a small bridge and culverts, added a garage (now fire cache) and maintenance shed, and likely planted new trees and shrubs throughout the site. The CCC later converted the 1925 Mission Community Hall—itself an example of a vernacular structure typically found in the mountain areas of Virginia when the park was established—into a ranger station/residence and added other maintenance related buildings to the area. The construction of these features used native materials that followed principles of rustic park architecture promoted by the NPS. Although the Simmons Gap area was not included in the park's master plan and it was likely sited to take advantage of the pre-park facilities at this location, the complex was located out of view from the public and included distinct and separate areas for administration and maintenance-related facilities.

Simmons Gap retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance to the architecture and landscape architecture themes. Resources that illustrate the rustic design philosophy include the layout and design

of the access road and spurs, bridge and culverts, gas and oil building, fire cache, maintenance shed, maintenance shop, and ranger office. Plantings by the CCC have matured and blend in with the surrounding forest and provide accent around the ranger station. Although a small parking area, two residences, and a rescue cache were added after the historic period, overall the site retains its historic appearance and function.

State Register Information

Identification Number:	69-0234
Date Listed:	07/02/1997
Name:	Skyline Drive Historic District

Explanatory Narrative:

Simmons Gap is part of the Skyline Drive Historic District.

National Historic Landmark Information

National Historic Landmark Status:	Yes
Date Determined Landmark:	10/06/2008
Landmark Theme:	III. Expressing Cultural Values, VII. Transforming the Environr

World Heritage Site Information

World Heritage Site Status:	No

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Designed

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function: Maintenance Facility

Primary Current Use: Maintenance Facility

Other Use/Function	Other Type of Use or Function
Department Store (General Store)	Historic
NPS Class III Special Purpose Road	Both Current And Historic
NPS Class IV Primitive Road	Historic
NPS Class V Administrative Access Road	Both Current And Historic
Ranger Station	Both Current And Historic
Religious Structure (church)	Historic
Single Family House	Current
School	Historic

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type of Name
Simmons Gap	Both Current And Historic
Simmons Gap Episcopal Mission	Historic
Simmons Gap Mission Hall	Historic

Ethnographic Study Conducted: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Significance Description:

As with most areas of Shenandoah National Park (NP), it is quite possible that Native American tribes used this site at one time. The Monacan and Manahoac tribes used the general park area, but no other information was found on their use of the area currently known as Simmons Gap.

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
1600 - 900 BC	Established	First human habitation in Blue Ridge Mountains takes place about 11,000 years ago as seasonal encampments.

AD 1000	Established	Native American use of the mountains is mainly for game hunting (Resource Management Plan 1998: 23). The Monacan and Manahoac tribes inhabit the area (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1669	Explored	Dr. John Lederer, from Germany, is the first European to record exploration in this area of Blue Ridge Mountains, describing a forest full of game and a large open area believed to be Big Meadows (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1700 - 1799	Settled	Immigrants from Tidewater area come to Piedmont region and from Pennsylvania to Shenandoah Valley, leading to the disappearance or departure of Native Americans from the area (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1716	Explored	Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, leads a party across the Blue Ridge to try to extend the boundaries of Virginia and promote trading to the west (Historic Resources Study 1997:7).
AD 1750 - 1830	Settled	Settlers move from lower elevations into mountain hollows, where they pursue farming, grazing, timbering, and hunting game (Pinnacles CLI 2007:13).
AD 1880 - 1890	Built	A road is constructed that will eventually lead to the Episcopal Mission Community Hall, roughly eight to ten feet wide (LCS, Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall Road).
AD 1899 - 1900	Established	A schoolhouse is established at Simmons Gap in an existing building (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8: 41).
AD 1899 - 1928	Established	Frederick William Neve, an Episcopal missionary from England, settles in the Blue Ridge Mountains and establishes a school and various community outreach efforts in the Blue Ridge Mountains (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:41).
AD 1905 - 1906	Built	A masonry chapel is constructed at Simmons Gap for Episcopal services (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:41).
AD 1924	Established	The Secretary of the Interior assembles Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC) to study the issues regarding establishing a national park (SHEN website, Historical Overview).

AD 1925	Established	February 21, Congress passes legislation allocating $20,000 for survey and evaluation of Shenandoah and other parks (SHEN website, Historical Overview).
	Built	The Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall is constructed and used by parishioners for various church functions and community meetings, and social activities (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:41).
AD 1926	Established	Congress first authorizes Shenandoah National Park (NP) on May 22, but without funds for land purchases.
AD 1931	Designed	March 25, map of "Proposed Shenandoah National Park" is issued by the Department of the Interior (Engle 2006:34).
	Built	July 18 marks the official groundbreaking of Skyline Drive at Thornton Gap, heading south to Swift Run Gap (NHL 2008:8).
AD 1933	Established	In December, President Franklin Roosevelt establishes the CCC, and six CCC camps are set up in Shenandoah (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:50).
AD 1933 - 1934	Built	Preliminary survey work begins on Section 3-B-1 of the Skyline Drive South District in late fall of 1933, followed by the other three sections in early 1934.
AD 1934	Built	The CCC constructs gas and oil building with a craftsman style entry ((National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:86; LCS, Simmons Gap Gas and Oil Building).
AD 1936	Established	Franklin Roosevelt dedicates Shenandoah NP on July 3.
AD 1936 - 1937	Built	Construction on Section 3-A begins near the former location of the interchange with U.S. Route 33. By November 1937, Section 3-A is completed.
AD 1936	Altered	The NPS alters the road leading to the Mission Community Hall (LCS, Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall Road).

AD 1936 - 1937	Built	The CCC constructs a twenty-foot wide asphalt access road leading to the maintenance facilities and offices being built at Simmons Gap (LCS, Simmons Gap Maintenance Road System).
	Built	As part of the surface drainage system for Skyline Drive, the CCC construct a culvert with coursed, mortared stone head and end walls at a bridge and along the maintenance road (LCS, Simmons Gap Maintenance Road Culverts and Simmons Gap Bridge Culvert).
AD 1937	Built	A garage (now fire cache) and maintenance shed are constructed at Simmons Gap by the CCC (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:86).
AD 1937 - 1948	Built	The NPS establishes a weather station and installs a flagpole.
	Removed	After the park is established, the stone chapel is moved to a location near Free Union and except for the Mission Community Hall other church related buildings are dismantled or demolished.
AD 1939	Built	The CCC constructs a storage shed at Simmons Gap (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:86).
	Built	A maintenance shop is constructed at Simmons Gap (LCS, Simmons Gap Maintenance Shop).
	Built	Final paving of the South District portion of Skyline Drive is completed.
	Built	On August 29, the South District is opened to the public and connected to the northernmost segment of the Blue Ridge Parkway.
AD 1942	Altered	The CCC makes alterations to the Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall (LCS, Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall).
	Moved	The NPS moves the storage shop to its present location (LCS, Simmons Gap Storage Shop).
AD 1947	Moved	The NPS moves the gas and oil building and fire cache to its present location at Simmons Gap (LCS, Simmons Gap Gas and Oil Building and Fire Cache).

AD 1948	Built	The NPS constructs a one-story ranger office in 1948 (LCS, Simmons Gap Ranger Office).
AD 1960 - 1970	Altered	The NPS alters the maintenance shed (LCS, Simmons Gap Maintenance Shed).
AD 1965 - 1970	Altered	The NPS alters the ranger office between 1965 and 1970 (LCS, Simmons Gap Ranger Office).
AD 1975	Moved	The NPS relocates a maintenance shop, previously moved from Dundo Camp to Swift Run Gap in the 1940s, to Simmons Gap (LCS, Simmons Gap Maintenance Shop).
AD 1977	Altered	The NPS alters the façade of the fire cache by replacing the four swinging doors with a single sliding entry door and installing six light casement windows (LCS, Simmons Gap Fire Cache).
AD 1978	Built	The NPS constructs a rescue cache (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:86).
AD 1986 - 1990	Built	The NPS constructs two residences in the Simmons Gap area for park staff in 1986 and 1990. Four trailers/utilitarian sheds are also added at this time (National Register 9/1997, Sec 8:86).
AD 1998 - 2001	Preserved	The park preserves the Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall (LCS, Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall).
AD 2004	Rehabilitated	Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall is rehabilitated (LCS, Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall).

Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods.

9000 BC TO 17TH CENTURY: NATIVE AMERICAN USE

This area of the Blue Ridge Mountains was known and used by Paleo-Indians for many centuries, with the first human habitation taking place about 11,000 years ago, sometime after the last Ice Age. The Paleo-Indians were hunters and gatherers who used the mountains for seasonal camps. With the development of farming in the valleys by 1000 AD, Native American use of the mountains focused on game hunting (Resource Management Plan 1998:23). The Monocan tribe settled in most of the Piedmont region and portions of the Blue Ridge Mountains while Manahoac tribe inhabited the area east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and along the Rappahannock River (http://indians.vipnet.org/tribes/monacan.cfm).

1669 TO 1923: EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

Dr. John Lederer, a German immigrant, was the first European to record exploration of this area of the Blue Ridge Mountains in 1669, describing the woods as wild and full of game. In 1716, Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, led an expedition across the Blue Ridge Mountains to encourage settlement and extend the boundaries of the colony. The crossing place was probably Swift Run Gap or the Big Meadows area (Lambert 1989:32-33). The land Spotswood claimed was soon bought up by investors, but disputes over ownership led to court cases that went unresolved well into the early nineteenth century (Historic Resources Study 1997:7-8).

Most of the first European settlers were English immigrants, followed by a large number of Germans and Scotch-Irish by the mid-eighteenth century (Historic Resources Study 1997:9). Settlers moved from the Tidewater area to the Piedmont region, and from Pennsylvania to the Shenandoah Valley. Even before European settlement started here, local Native Americans were dying of introduced diseases, and by 1800 they had disappeared completely or moved away (Lambert 1989:21-22; Resource Management Plan 1998:23). As the better farming land was taken, new settlers moved into the mountain hollows where they developed a life reliant on hunting, farming, grazing, and timbering that led to extensive clearing of the land (Resource Management Plan 1998:23 cited in Skyland CLI). Industrial use also developed in some areas, such as the Mt. Vernon Iron Furnace and the Stony Man Mountain Tract, where copper was mined and charcoal was produced for smelting occurred from 1845 to 1850 (Engle 1994:1).

Large plantation-like farms typically cultivated tobacco for a few years, followed by corn crops and then were eventually left fallow. In addition, many smaller scale farms existed in the area, comprised of gardens with corn, rye, and other vegetables, and small orchards. Other land uses included cattle grazing, especially from 1830 to 1845, and lumbering that provided material for rebuilding after the Civil War, such as for railroad expansion. Tanneries were another important industry, utilizing chestnut bark for the source of tannin in the process (Historic Resources Study 1997:13-15). The chestnut blight that began in the United States around 1904 put an end to local reliance on the chestnut tree, which at one time made up twenty percent of

the Appalachian forest (http://www.virginiaplaces.org/natural/chestnut.html).

In 1894, George Freeman Pollock created a popular resort initially called Stony Man Camp and later renamed Skyland. It was a destination and summer residence for middle and upper middle classes mostly from Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Philadelphia. Pollock was known as a showman who held theatrical events, such as bonfires, Indian "pow-wows," and medieval jousts for guest entertainment (Lambert 1979: i and Uhler http://www.shenandoah.national-park.com/info.htm). Pollock strongly supported the establishment of a park and would play a key role in this effort (Historic Resources Study 1997:44).

Simmons Gap Development:
The first missionaries to concentrate their efforts on the Shenandoah area, and those with the greatest impact on the area of the Blue Ridge, were the Episcopalians, who began work in the area in the early 1880s. Frederick William Neve, an Englishman, was assigned in 1888 by his church to a parish in Albemarle County. Following conversations with parishioners of his church and their concern for the mountain people living in the Blue Ridge with little or no access to churches, schools, or medical treatment, Neve soon traveled into the hollows to find out for himself. Passing through Shifflett's Hollow, Neve followed an eight to ten foot dirt road (now referred to as Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall Road), which eventually led to a small community known as Simmons Gap (Historic Resource Study, 1997: 22).

When Frederick Neve expressed interest in helping the community, a school was the residents' highest priority. By 1900, Neve had raised enough money through donations to hire a teacher, Angeline Fitzhugh. The residents of the small community offered the use of two empty cabins—one for a schoolhouse, and the other for Angeline Fitzhugh to live in. Fitzhugh taught the local children in the cabin, but it was soon replaced by a small wood frame schoolhouse (Figure 1). The school doubled as a church on those occasions when a minister was available. The "schoolhouse chapel" later became part of a network of missions created by Neve approximately every ten miles in the Blue Ridge Mountains to serve families living in remote areas (Historic Resource Study, 1997: 22).

Between 1900 and 1928, Neve expanded facilities at Simmons Gap. In 1906, a masonry chapel was added to the collection of frame buildings. (Although some sources indicate that this was a stone building, some photographs [c.1904-13] of what was called "Holy Innocent's Church" at Simmons Gap show a rock-faced concrete building.) In 1925, a building variously called the Mission or Mission Community Hall was constructed. It was a one-story rectangular fieldstone building with a central stone chimney and a raised open porch at one end. The building was used by parishioners for various church functions as well as community meetings and social activities. By the 1920s and 1930s, Simmons Gap was a thriving community that also featured a clothing bureau building, a springhouse, garage, reservoir, woodshed, general store, and post office (Figures 2 and 3) (Historic Resource Study, 1997: 22 and National Register Nomination for Simmons Gap Mission, 1983).

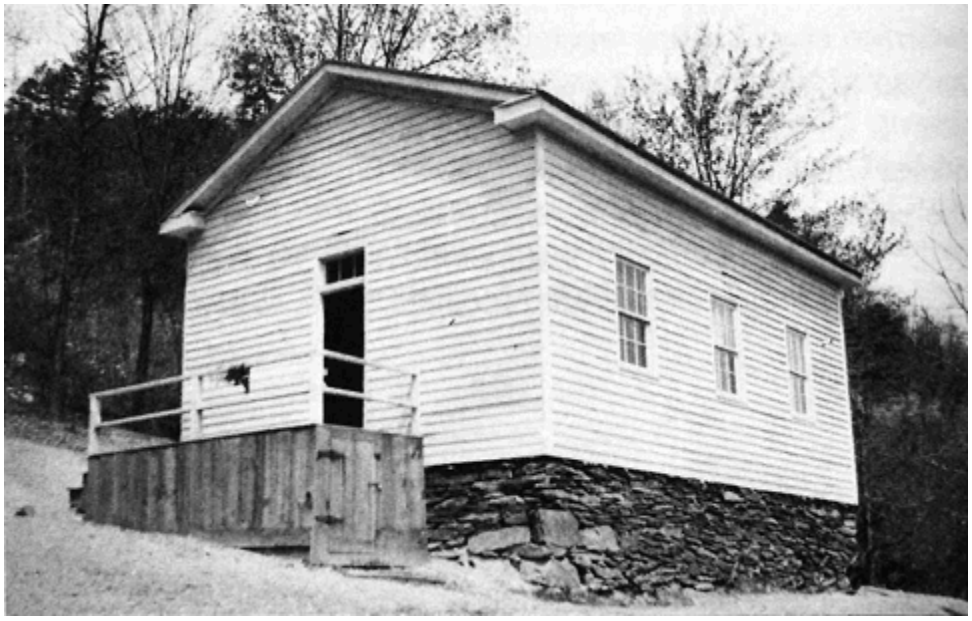


Figure 1. An undated image of the Simmons Gap school, constructed in the early 1900s. Angeline Fitzhugh taught local children in this schoolhouse, which was also used occasionally as a church (SHEN Archives).

Figure 2. View looking southwest at the 1925 Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall. This building was used by parishioners for various church functions as well as community meetings and social activities (SHEN Archives).

Figure 3. This image shows PATC hikers and community members on the porch of the Simmons Gap store and post office in c.1928. The store and post office were removed by 1940 (SHEN archives).

1924-1952: PARK DEVELOPMENT

Shenandoah National Park:
In 1924, Hubert Work, the United States Secretary of the Interior, assembled a five-member group, called the Southern Appalachian National Park Committee (SANPC), to study the issues regarding establishing a national park in the region, authorized by Congress. The Committee distributed a questionnaire to gain public input into suggested sites for a new national park (SHEN website, Historical Overview). George Pollock filled out the questionnaire with the aid of several colleagues, promoting the establishment of a park near Skyland. Pollock personally met with the members of the SANPC, and his enthusiasm and persuasive manner convinced the committee of the merits of his proposal (Historic Resources Study 1997:46).

In February 1925, Congress passed legislation allocating $20,000 for survey and evaluation of proposed parks, including Shenandoah. It also stipulated that the Commonwealth of Virginia purchase the land and present it to the federal government for such purpose (SHEN website, Historical Overview). In April 1926, Virginia Governor Harry F. Byrd established the Commission on Conservation and Development, headed by William Carson, to take over management of funds collected for the park's creation. On May 22, Congress authorized Shenandoah National Park (NP), but without funds for land purchases. Land owner resistance caused conflicts and court challenges, delaying the clearance of deeds (NHL Documentation 2008:6 and SHEN website, Historical Overview).

In 1927, Pollock helped organize the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) in Washington D.C. in order to develop and maintain the Appalachian Trail in the mid-Atlantic Region. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy had been formed two years earlier by Benton MacKaye, a

forester for the U.S. Division of Forestry (a forerunner of the Forest Service), with the aim of establishing a continuous recreational route along the mountain crests of eastern United States. One of Pollock's underlying goals in forming the PATC was to further promote the establishment of Shenandoah NP (NHL Documentation 2008:30). Members of the PATC constructed a trail on weekend visits during the next four years, with some of the trail traversing property that was later developed for Skyline Drive. A portion of the Appalachian Trail passed just north of the future Simmons Gap site.

Skyline Drive and the New Deal:
In 1930, a severe drought hit the Piedmont region of Virginia, drastically reducing the livelihood of many farmers and apple pickers (SHEN website, Skyline Drive History). Coinciding with the drought disaster were the effects of the Great Depression caused by the stock market crash in October 1929. As economic conditions continued to look bleak, it became more imperative to bring jobs to the area. William Carson promoted a plan to both create jobs and make the Shenandoah area more accessible by building a road. As described in the Report of the SANCP from June 30, 1931: "the greatest single feature, however, is a possible skyline drive along the mountaintop, following a continuous ridge and looking down westerly on the Shenandoah Valley…and commanding a view [to the east] of the Piedmont Plain…Few scenic drives in the world could surpass it (Engle, 1999:15). That same year, President Hoover authorized drought relief funds to finance the work of building Skyline Drive, provided that much of the labor be done by locals using traditional hand tools and farm implements (HAER 1996:1).

The NPS prepared a map showing the proposed route of the new roadway and it was sent to Hoover for review (Figure 4). The designers selected the location of the road and developed numerous overlooks based on scenic vistas of the ridge and the valley. The road was envisioned as a scenic drive on the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. It was to be the backbone of a national park and become an essential link in the park-to-park highway envisioned in the eastern United States to connect the Shenandoah and Great Smokey Mountains parks. The restoration of woodlands from former clearings, fields, and pasture to a natural mixed hardwood forest also figured prominently in the design of the road (National Register 4/1997, Sec 8:112). The President agreed with what was proposed. At this time, the road through what would become the South District was identified as future expansion.

Construction of the major roads in national parks at this time was carried out cooperatively by an interbureau agreement between the NPS and the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Public Roads (BPR), combining the expertise of BPR's civil engineers with NPS standards for protection of natural scenery in parks. NPS staff selected the route of Skyline Drive and located the scenic overlooks and recreational waysides. BPR personnel oversaw the surveying, awarding of contracts, and actual construction. Road builders were required to fit the roadway into the surveyed route, and the grade was not to exceed 8 percent or the curves to have radii less than 200 feet (NHL Documentation 2008:15).

The official groundbreaking of Skyline Drive occurred in the Central District, at Thornton Gap heading south toward Swift Run Gap, on July 18, 1931, and work continued through the summer

and stopped in winter. Construction of the road occurred in three phases starting with Central District, then North District followed by South District (NHL Documentation 2008:8). Project One was the Central District, from Thornton Gap to Swift Run Gap. Project Two, or the second phase of the construction, comprised the North District, from Front Royal to Thornton Gap. Project Three comprised the South District, from Swift Run Gap to Jarman Gap (NHL Documentation 2008:6, 16).

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States. In March, one of his first presidential acts was to freeze all federal funding. Not until he visited the Shenandoah area in April did he release funding, and construction of Skyline Drive resumed (National Register 4/1997, Sec7:7). As part of his New Deal legislation, Roosevelt initially established the Public Works Administration (PWA) as the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works under the authority of the National Industrial Recovery Act. It later became a part of the Federal Works Agency. The PWA was involved with a comprehensive program for federal and nonfederal public works projects. The program's objectives were to reduce unemployment, increase consumers' purchasing power, improve standards of labor, and conserve natural resources. The organization supplied funding and hired inspectors to ensure that projects were being constructed according to plans and specifications. The NPS received a substantial amount of funds from the program (Historic Resource Study 1997:73).

Roosevelt also established the CCC, originally part of the Emergency Conservation Work initiative, created to help relieve high unemployment and carry out a broad program of natural resource conservation on federal, state, and municipal lands. Under the program, the Department of Labor recruited workers, the Army trained and transported the recruits and operated work camps, and the NPS and Forest Service directed their work assignments (Historic Resource Study 1997: 74). Six CCC camps were set up in Shenandoah where workers undertook a wide range of projects including erosion control, planting trees and shrubs, the construction of trails, shelters, and picnic areas (SHEN website, Historical Overview).

Skyline Drive-South District:
The South District was constructed in four sections, including 3-A-1 from Swift Run Gap to Simmons Gap; 3-B-1 from Simmons Gap to Brown's Gap; 3-C-1 from Brown's Gap to Black Rock Gap; and 3-D-1 from Black Rock Gap to Jarman Gap. Preliminary survey work began on Section 3-B-1 in late fall of 1933, followed by the other three sections in early 1934 (Figure 5) (National Register 4/1997, Sec 7:28).

As with the other two districts, the design, engineering, and construction of the drive was a joint venture between the NPS and the BPR. This area of the park was particularly rugged with steep hillsides and precipitous ravines. As a consequence, the terrain posed a challenge to both agencies as they tried to select the best road alignment that could provide the desired scenic qualites without extensive scarring to the mountainsides. The NPS and BPR conducted studies by staking out alternative routes to determine the best alignment. As a result of their careful analysis, they reduced the road section from thirty-four feet to thirty feet and increased the size of the overlooks in order for cars and buses to be able to maneuver more easily (NHL Documentation 2008:19).

Slopes were also stabilized by hand laid rock embankments. After a slope face was thoroughly compacted and adequate footing prepared at the base, stone rubble taken from adjacent roadway excavations was hand-placed without mortar up the embankment. These hand-laid rock embankments reduced excavation quantities, minimized unsightly landscape scars, and protected newly planted vegetation (HAER 1996:7-18). Toe walls were also constructed, consisting of low stone walls built at the bottom of an embankment. In the South District, a toe wall was constructed at Mile Post 82 toward Brown's Gap.

Section 3-A construction bids were advertised in January 1935, but all the respondents were rejected (National Register 4/1997, Sec 7:28). The project was readvertised the following March, but another delay occurred because the right-of-way for this section had not been secured (National Register 4/1997, Sec 7:29). Construction finally started in April 1936 near the former location of the interchange with U.S. Route 33. Excavation of the roadbed commenced the following May at Mile Post 66.7 and extended to the area near Smith Roach Gap. Work stopped in December 1936 because of bad weather and resumed in April 1937 and completed by the following June. The roadbed was surfaced with crushed stone paving material that was stockpiled along the road. Paving began in October 1936 just south of Swift Run Gap. Work soon stopped because of winter weather conditions and resumed in April 1937. By the following November, the base and second courses had been laid.

Development of Simmons Gap as a Maintenance Area:
Simmons Gap and neighboring areas were encompassed by the area authorized in 1926 to become Shenandoah NP. As lands were purchased and donated to the Commonwealth of Virginia for later transfer to the federal government to create Shenandoah NP, there was a shift in population away from the mountains. By the mid-1930s, so few people remained in the area that there was no need for the mission to stay in operation. Shortly thereafter, the park relocated the stone chapel from Simmons Gap to the town of Free Union. Other buildings were also removed by the church and later by the NPS. Because it was well constructed, the Mission Community Hall was the only building preserved.

Between 1936 and 1937, during construction of Section 3-A of the Skyline Drive, the Simmons Gap area was developed as a park maintenance facility for the South District, at Mile Post 73. At that time, the CCC constructed a twenty-foot-wide access road with a bridge and culverts, added a garage (now fire cache) and maintenance shed, and likely planted new trees and shrubs throughout the site. A weather station and flag pole were later installed, but it is currently unclear when they were established. Although the Simmons Gap area was not included in the park's master plan, it was likely sited to take advantage of the pre-park facilities at this location. The complex was located out of view from the public and included distinct and separate areas for administration and maintenance-related facilities. In the ensuing years, new storage and office buildings were added to the site and by 1942, the CCC converted the Mission Community Hall into a ranger station/residence. The north façade of the structure was altered by the removal of the double Gothic arch door, porch, and staircase. Extremely well-executed workmanship when filling-in the doorway with similar fieldstone design resulted in the opening blending into the walls. Only close inspection of the walls revealed the ghosts of

the former door location. All other architectural features on the exterior of the structure were essentially the same as when the mission as operating.

Closure of the CCC Camps and Post-War Visitation:
The CCC provided invaluable assistance in the development of both the Simmons Gap area by constructing roads, buildings, and planting trees and shrubs (NHL Documentation 2008:78). After the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II, ending most development in Shenandoah NP until after the war. As the country directed all manpower toward the war effort, the CCC camps were closed by the end of March 1942 (Engle 1999:30). With the decline of visitation due to the war, the park's concessions were also closed that year and the workforce shrank to 1/20th of its size (Lambert 2001:263). By 1943, park visitation was the lowest in history, at 42,000 for the year, and was the most drastic drop of any national park (Lambert 1979:289). This decline in visitation was also due to the fuel shortages caused by the war, as most families had to curtail sightseeing by automobile (Lambert 1979:289).

In August 1942, the Civilian Public Service (CPS) established a camp for conscientious objectors in the park, at former CCC camp NP-10. The CPS provided work for men unwilling to serve in the military based on religious upbringing or belief. At Shenandoah, the CPS took over fire and erosion control projects previously done by the CCC, continued the revegetation efforts, installed utilities, and built trails, roads, and park structures. They were also assigned to raze pre-park structures. CPS workers did not receive wages and were financially supported by their churches or families. Around this time, the NPS moved the storage shed and fire cache to its current location. Other changes that followed included the relocation of a 1934 gas and oil building to Simmons Gap in 1947 and the construction of a ranger office in 1948.

In 1951, Guy D. Edwards succeeded Edward D. Freeland as the third Superintendent at Shenandoah. Shortly thereafter, Mile Posts were installed along Skyline Drive and guardwalls were completed at the South District, marking the official completion of the drive (National Register 4/1997, Sec 8:91; NHL Documentation 2008:6).

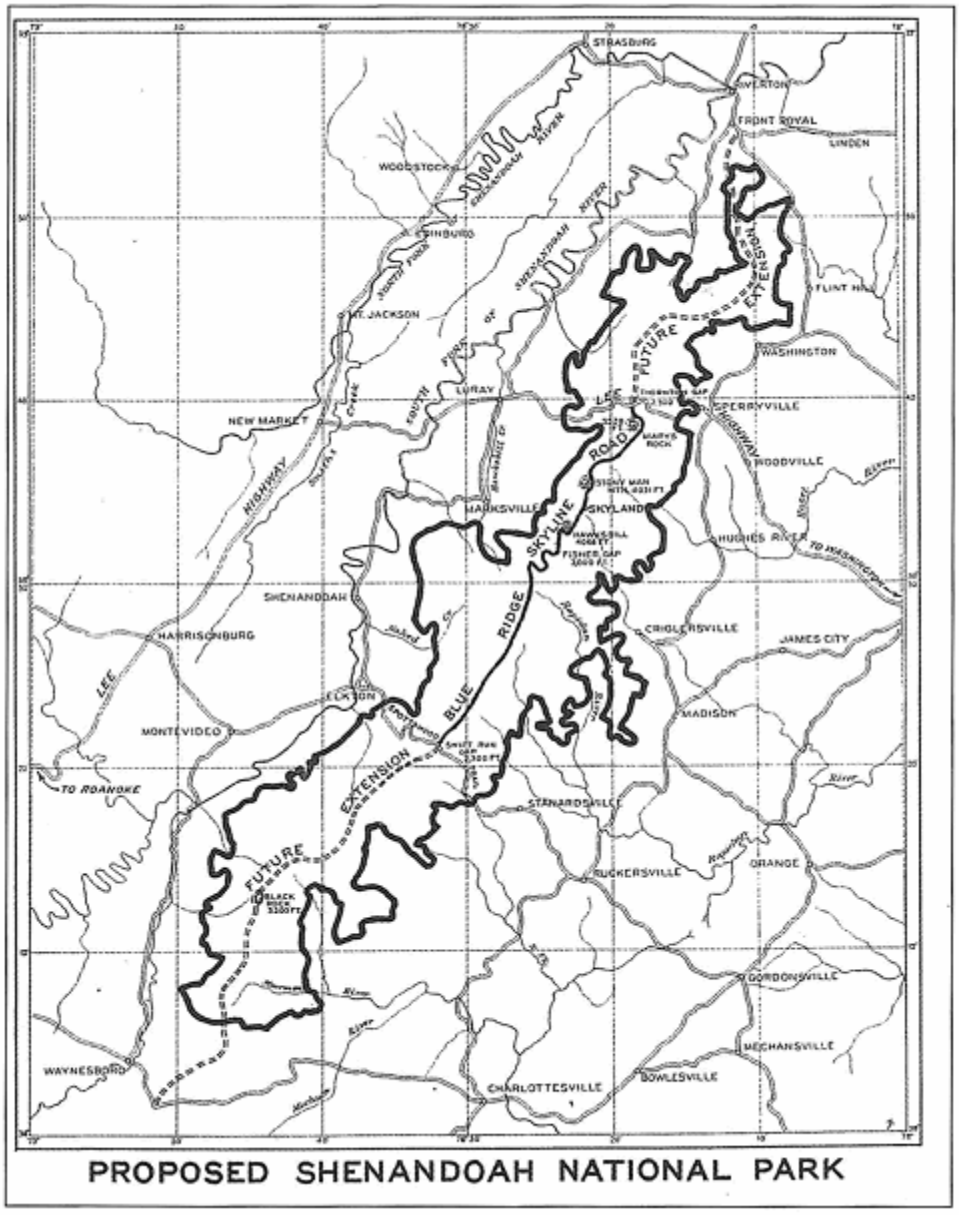


Figure 4. Map of proposed Shenandoah National Park issued by the Department of the Interior in 1931. The plan illustrates the proposed South District portion of Skyline Drive from Swift Run to Rockfish Gap as a dotted line (Engle 2006:34).

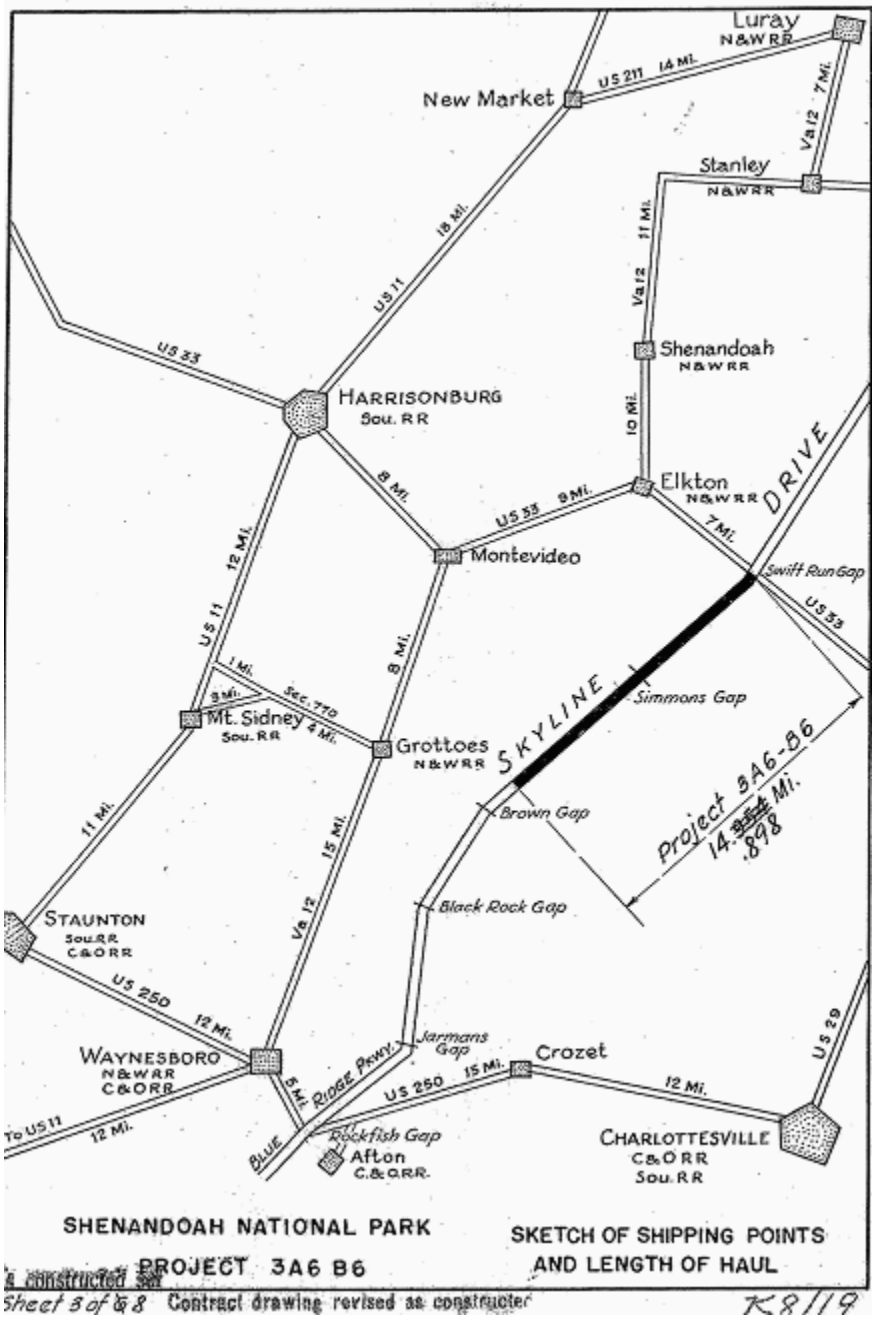


Figure 5. Plan illustrating the proposed sections for the construction of Skyline Drive in the South District. South District work was completed by November 1937 (SHEN Archives).

1953 – PRESENT: LATER DEVELOPMENT

In the mid-1950s, the NPS was planning "Mission 66," an ambitious ten-year development

program designed to upgrade the national park facilities to modern standards to accommodate rising visitation after World War II. The goal was to develop and adequately staff the NPS by 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the agency (Lambert 1979:314). The NPS gained Congressional funding for the work in 1956. While many of the developed areas along Skyline Drive—specifically the lodges/cabins, waysides, picnic, and campground areas—added new facilities that were designed in a contemporary modern style, minimal improvements were made in the Simmons Gap area. The only changes made during that time included improvements to the maintenance shed and ranger office.

In 1951 an inventory was taken of the Simmons Gap area. In addition to the structures that are currently extant, a bunkhouse, generator house, and spring house were also identified (SHEN archives Catalog # 11290 and 11289). Research conducted for this cultural landscape inventory has provided little information on the construction and removal dates of these structures. These features are no longer present in the landscape (Figures 6 and 7).

New facilities have been developed and improvements made in the years since the 1960s. In 1975, a maintenance shop, originally built in 1939 at Dundo Camp and later moved to Swift Run Gap in the 1940s, was relocated to Simmons Gap. The NPS later altered the façade of the fire cache by replacing the four swinging doors with a sliding entry door and installing six light casement windows. In 1978, the park constructed a rescue cache adjacent to the Mission Community Hall. In the 1980s, employee housing was added to the Simmons Gap area. Between 1986 and 1990, the NPS constructed two residences. They were prefabricated, wood frame, ranch-style buildings. Changes to accommodate the new residences included the extension of the short access road through the southern portion of the maintenance area and the construction of a small parking area. In addition to the residences, four trailers/utilitarian sheds were also added to the site during this time.

In 1995, a facility development plan was developed for Simmons Gap. The plan identified the following tasks: remove four trailers; rehabilitate historic maintenance structures and community hall; and remove two residences (Figure 8). In recent years, the NPS has implemented many recommendations that were proposed in the development plan including the removal of three trailers/utilitarian sheds and the rehabilitation of the Mission Community Hall.

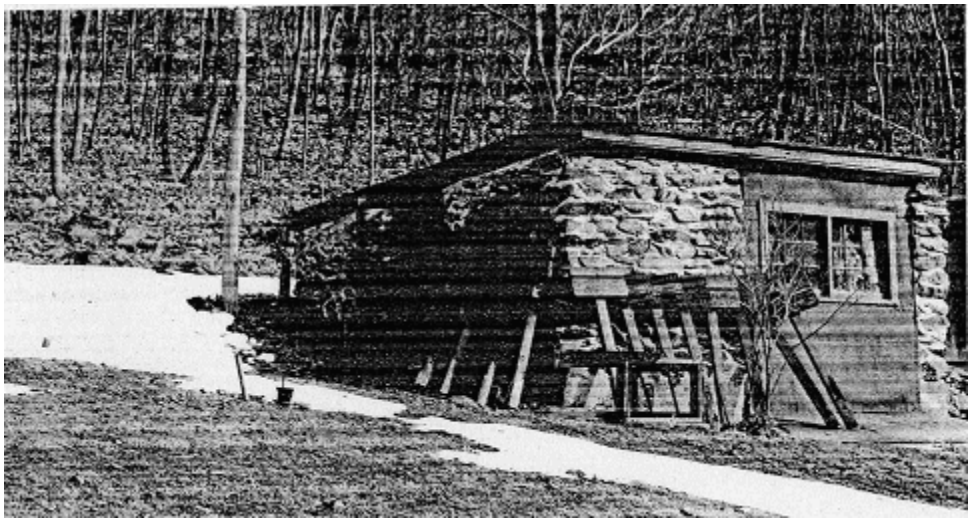


Figure 6. In 1951 an inventory was taken of the Simmons Gap area. In addition to the structures that are currently extant, a generator house was also identified. This feature is no longer present in the landscape (SHEN archives Catalog #11289).

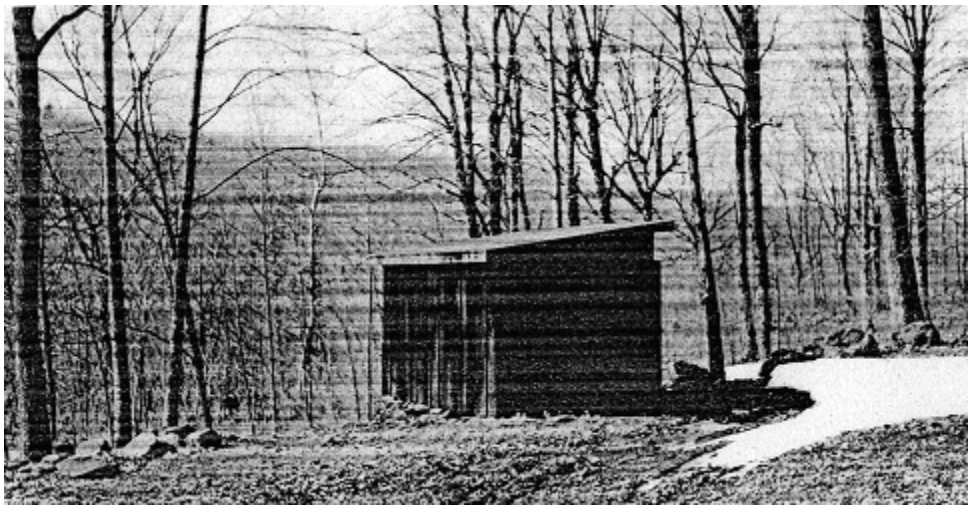


Figure 7. The bunkhouse shown above was identified in the 1951 site inventory. Research conducted for this inventory has provided little information on the construction and removal dates. It is no longer present (SHEN archives Catalog #11289).

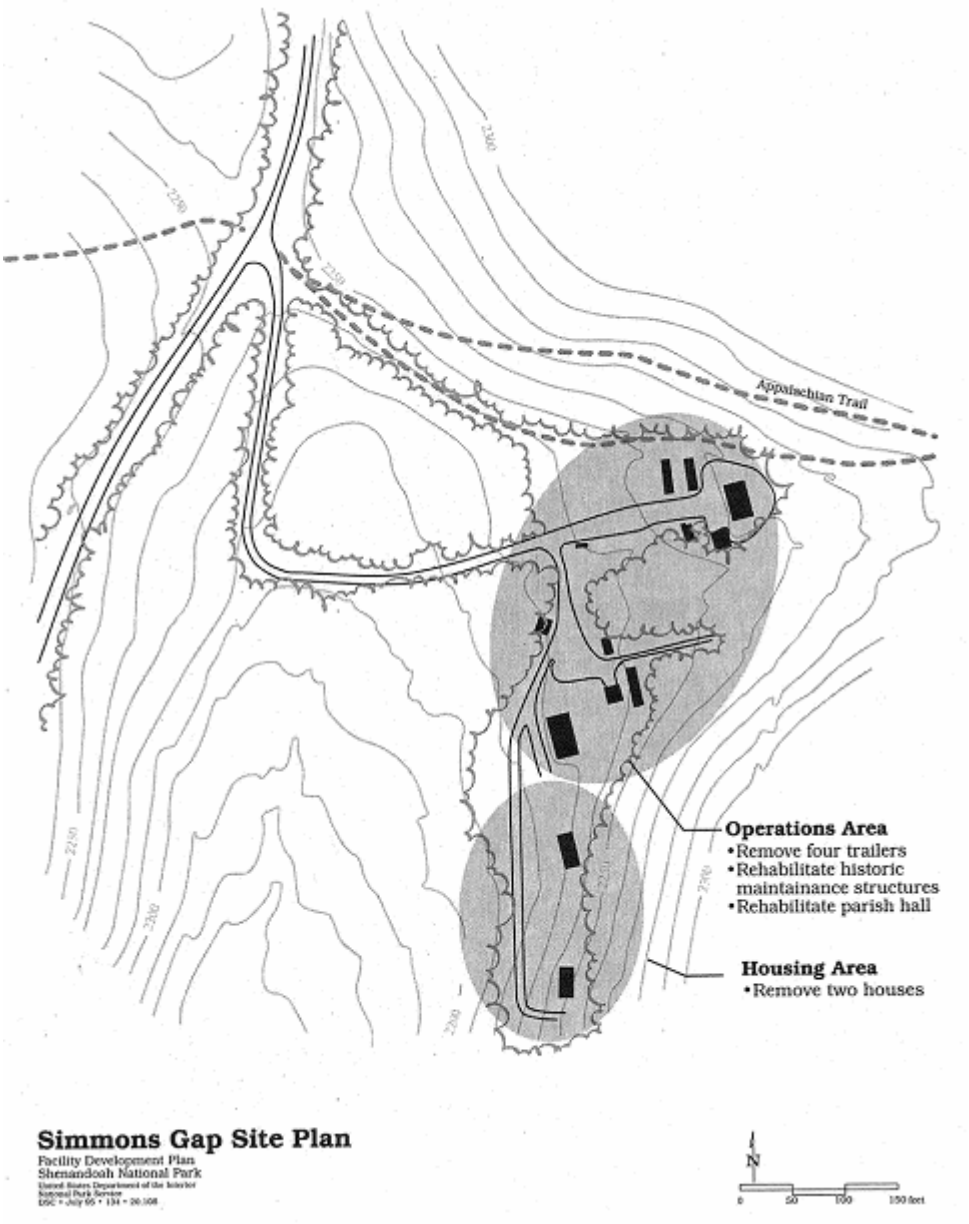


Figure 8. In 1995, a facility development plan was developed for Simmons Gap. In recent years, the park has implemented many recommendations that were proposed in the development plan, but the houses have not yet been removed (SHEN Archives).

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Significant landscape characteristics identified for Simmons Gap include natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, circulation, buildings and structures, vegetation, and small-scale features. Many of these characteristics have associated with them features that contribute to the site's overall historic significance and identity, as well as features that do not contribute or are undetermined.

The physical integrity of Simmons Gap is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (1931-1952) with current conditions. Many of the site's historic characteristics and features are unchanged. The Simmons Gap site continues to be situated within a forested landscape out of view of the public. It includes a former mission building dating to 1925 and numerous historic utilitarian buildings and structures built by the CCC in the 1930s and 1940s. Connected by a road system that continues to follow the same historic alignment and features a bridge and mortared stone culverts, the maintenance-related facilities are located in the northern portion of the site and include the maintenance shed, maintenance shop, and gas and oil building. The administrative area, located in the southern portion of the site, includes the Mission Community Hall (ranger station), ranger office, and fire cache. The vegetative features such as the mature tree canopy surrounding the site and open lawn areas remain intact since the historic period. A weather station and flagpole also exist at the site, but their contribution to the significance of the area is yet to be determined.

Following the historic period, the NPS constructed two residences. Changes to accommodate the new residences included the extension of the short access road through the southern portion of the maintenance area and the construction of a small parking area. In addition to the residences, trailers/utilitarian sheds were also added. Other changes are primarily associated with NPS visitor facilities, which include parking areas, benches and receptacles, and signs. Despite these changes, the Simmons Gap area retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

INTEGRITY

Location:
The relationship between Simmons Gap and its location along Skyline Drive is still intact and evident. The development's location within the former site of an Episcopal mission influenced the physical arrangement of buildings and structures and their connection to Skyline Drive. Specifically, the Simmons Gap area was informally sited to take advantage of the pre-park facilities at this location. In addition, the location of the site within Shenandoah NP has remained unaffected by any adjacent land uses. Except for the addition of a utilitarian shed and two residences at the site, the principal buildings at Simmons Gap that were present at the end of the period of significance are in their original locations.

Design:

Design refers to the combination of elements that characterize the built landscape at Simmons Gap, recognized today as the NPS rustic style. The physical factors, such as natural features and Skyline Drive itself, which influenced where roads, walkways, buildings, and structures were located, are still evident. At Simmons Gap, the numerous utilitarian wood frame buildings continue to reflect the rustic architectural style used by the NPS and CCC during the period of significance. In addition, other elements that contribute to the historic rustic style of the Simmons Gap landscape consist of the bridge, culverts, and curving roads.

Setting:
The setting of Simmons Gap as a rustic NPS developed area along Skyline Drive is still intact. In addition, the relationships between the maintenance and administrative areas, and Skyline Drive are also still intact, with maintenance access roads weaving these areas together.

Materials:
The use of local materials is a characteristic of the pre-park vernacular style of architecture in the mountain areas of Virginia and is evident in the Mission Community Hall. The use of local materials is also a characteristic of the rustic style employed by the NPS and is evident in buildings in the maintenance and administrative areas. Other extant original materials also include the bridge and culverts along the access road. The maintenance and administrative areas both contain shade trees and shrubs that date from the period of significance. Open lawn areas are also maintained within these areas and along the shoulders of the access roads in keeping with the historic character of the landscape.

Workmanship:
Workmanship refers to the physical evidence of the construction techniques at Simmons Gap. The construction of the utilitarian wood frame buildings with gable roofs and German siding, continue to exemplify the typical rustic style that was adopted by the NPS and CCC during the period of significance. The CCC also built the access road and associated bridge and culverts in keeping with the NPS rustic style. The Mission Community Hall has been significantly modified by the NPS since its use as a mission in the 1920s and early 1930s. However, it does retain much of its original workmanship as well as changes made by the CCC.

Feeling:
Besides the limited employee housing at the site, the Simmons Gap area continues to be used for park –related maintenance and ranger functions for the South District of Shenandoah NP. The presence of the historic utilitarian buildings—some of which constructed by the CCC, as well roads and trails, combine to convey the historic character of Simmons Gap. The trees and shrubs have matured to provide shade and woodland scenery, and the area around the maintenance and administrative areas remains unaltered except for the added parking and employee housing.

Association:
The mission building and a handful of 1930s and 1940s utilitarian wood frame storage and office buildings, as well as the historic circulation features are still present to directly link the site to the

creation of Shenandoah NP and construction of Skyline Drive, the work of the CCC, and the rustic architectural style used by the NPS during the period of significance.

The following section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1931-1952), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource.

Landscape Characteristic:

Natural Systems and Features

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Natural systems and features at Simmons Gap are evident in the mountains, valleys, watersheds, and rock outcrops. Shenandoah NP and Skyline Drive lie astride the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia, part of the Appalachian Mountains that stretch from Georgia to Pennsylvania. The mountains separate the Shenandoah Valley on the west and the rolling hills of the Piedmont Plain on the east. Simmons Gap is situated within a pass located between Flattop (3,350 feet) and Weaver Mountains (2,850 feet) within the park, with its highest elevations near Skyline Drive, between 2,200 and 2,300 feet. The site's surrounding terrain falls away to the south and east toward Lynch River (Ivy Creek), which empties into the North Fork of the Rivanna River. A portion of Ivy Creek tributary passes through the Simmons Gap area.

The site's rock material, gneiss and granite, is among the oldest in the park. These rocks are over one billion years old and are found in the northern one-third of Shenandoah NP. Soils at Simmons Gap are thin and rocky, especially at the top of the ridge where natural outcroppings form ledges and the forest of oak and cherry are open and scattered (Figure 9). In contrast, the forest surrounding the developed area at Simmons Gap is in a secondary growth stage of oak, cherry, hickory, locust, and pine with a dense shrub layer.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Rock Outcroppings

Feature Identification Number: 153895

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Figure 9. View looking southwest at a large outcropping near the Mission Community Hall. Soils at Simmons Gap are thin and rocky, especially at the top of the ridge where natural outcroppings are found throughout many developed areas (OCLP, 2011).

Spatial Organization

Historic Condition and Existing Conditions:
Beginning in the early 1900s, Simmons Gap was originally the site of an Episcopal mission that consisted of various church-related structures—such as a small frame schoolhouse, masonry chapel, and mission hall, as well as a general store, and post office. The park chose the Simmons Gap area as the site for a park maintenance facility and administrative/ranger station because of the pre-existing buildings that were located within the area and associated with the Episcopal mission community.

Although the Simmons Gap area was not included in the park's master plan, the complex still featured elements that were identified in other master plans for maintenance areas within the park, which were generally located on side roads out of view from the public with buildings grouped together by function in separate areas. At Simmons Gap, the operations and maintenance-related facilities were located in the northern portion of the site, while the administrative area was situated at the southern end. Both areas were separated by extant vegetation and new native plantings were installed by the CCC.

Today, the spatial organization at Simmons Gap remains largely unchanged since the historic period. The property remains bounded by woodland vegetation, the administrative and maintenance areas are still mostly open, and the circulation systems continue to follow the same historic alignment within the landscape. Changes since the historic period include the addition of employee housing at the southern end of the administrative area.

Land Use

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Prior to the creation of Shenandoah NP, land use practices throughout the Blue Ridge Mountains varied—from small-scale subsistence farming, to large-scale market-driven agriculture, to iron and copper mining, timber harvesting, and in a number of areas resort development and operation. In the Simmons Gap area, an Episcopal mission was established in the early 1900s. The mission encompassed a variety of church-related structures, a general store, and post office. In 1926, Congress authorized Shenandoah NP, and the removal of buildings and structures on the future park lands began. However, as there was no funding for land acquisition, land was acquired through private donations and funding from the Commonwealth of Virginia. As a result, the park was not officially established until 1935.

Recreational land use around Simmons Gap began in the 1930s when the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club began constructing the Appalachian Trail (AT) along the park's ridgeline. A section of the AT passed north and east of the Simmons Gap. Construction of Skyline Drive, the park's main motor road that traced the park's ridgeline, also began during this time. Envisioned as the park's most important feature, Skyline Drive provided numerous overlooks and conveniently located picnic, wayside, and lodging areas to serve the motoring public. Construction of the road occurred in three phases starting in the park's Central District, followed by the North District and then the South District. The South District segment, where Simmons Gap was located, ran from Swift Run Gap to Jarmans Gap. Construction in the South District began between 1933 and 1934 with paving mostly completed in the fall of 1937.

The Episcopal mission remained active at Simmons Gap until the mid-1930s, when the park decided to use the area as a maintenance facility and ranger station for the South District. At that time, the CCC planted new trees and shrubs along the foundation of the Mission Community Hall, which was eventually transformed into a ranger station/residence (now used as the ranger station and office). The CCC moved or dismantled the remaining mission buildings, and at the same time built the access road and spurs and constructed numerous maintenance and storage facilities. Most features at Simmons Gap were in place by the end of the 1940s.

Today, the land use of the Simmons Gap area is consistent with that of the end of the historic period of significance, with exception of two houses that were added and now serve as park residences. The Mission Community Hall continues to function as a ranger station and the maintenance area still serves its utilitarian purpose.

Circulation

Historic Condition and Existing Conditions:
Prior to the establishment of Shenandoah NP and the development of Skyline Drive, a network of roads were interwoven within the Blue Ridge Mountains. Many of these routes provided access to the hollows, went between farms, and led to towns. One such route, currently referred to as the Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall Road, led to Simmons Gap, the site of an Episcopal mission. The road was surfaced in dirt and gravel and was approximately eight to

ten feet in width. By the mid-1930s, construction of Skyline Drive within the South District had begun. During this time, the Simmons Gap area was developed as a park maintenance facility and the CCC carried out numerous projects, which included the construction of a twenty-foot-wide access road with a bridge and culverts. Shortly thereafter, the Mission Community Hall Road was closed to public vehicular traffic.

Today, the overall vehicular circulation systems within the Simmons Gap area remain largely intact since the historic period. Beginning at the intersection at Skyline Drive, the access road, curves through the wooded landscape—at times following the historic alignment of the Mission Community Hall Road—before ending in an area dominated by maintenance related facilities. Just south of this area, the access road branches off and extends south to administrative area that includes the original Mission Community Hall and other office and storage buildings. Since the historic period, the access road has been extended in the southern portion of the property and a parking area has been added to accommodate employee housing (Figures 10-12). In addition to the vehicular circulation at the site, the Simmons Gap area also serves as a trailhead for the Appalachian and Simmons Gap trails. The Simmons Gap trail follows the historic Mission Community Hall Road trace.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall Road

Feature Identification Number: 154157

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82973

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall Road

LCS Structure Number: SG01A

Feature: Simmons Gap Access Road and Spurs

Feature Identification Number: 154159

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82976

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Maintenance Road System

LCS Structure Number: SG01C

Feature: Parking Area in Housing Area

Feature Identification Number: 154161

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Figure 10. View looking south at the large oval lawn area that is bounded by the access road developed in the mid-1930s. Note the weather station and flagpole in the lawn area (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 11. View looking northeast at the access road that was extended to accommodate the employee housing added in 1986 and 1990 (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 12. View looking southwest at a section of the access road that crosses a small stream within the Simmons Gap area. Shown above is the bridge culvert that was constructed by the CCC in the mid-1930s (OCLP, 2011).

Buildings and Structures

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Prior to the establishment of Shenandoah NP, Simmons Gap was the site of an Episcopal mission that included a collection of frame buildings, a stone chapel, general store and post office, and community hall (parish house). With the development of the park, and subsequent acquisition of all lands and structures within the site, church-related structures were removed or dismantled by 1940, such as the stone chapel that was dismantled and moved to the town of Free Union. Following completion of the Skyline Drive in 1937, Simmons Gap was one of several maintenance areas established in the South District to house park maintenance facilities. Around this time, an access road, culverts, and utilitarian buildings were constructed at the site by the CCC in the NPS rustic style. By c.1942, the Mission Community Hall, the last remaining Episcopal mission building, was converted into a ranger station and residence. In the following years, additional buildings were constructed or relocated within the Simmons Gap area.

Today, the Simmons Gap area includes the Mission Community Hall (1925), also referred to as the ranger station, and six small utilitarian wood frame buildings with gable roofs and German siding. All have green roll asphalt roofing, are painted brown, and are relatively unaltered. The earliest of these were constructed by the CCC and include the storage shop (1939), gas and oil building (1934), maintenance shop (1939), fire cache (1937), and maintenance shed (1939). A ranger's office (1948) and two culverts also contribute to the significance of the site. Noncontributing resources include two residences (1986 and 1990), a rescue cache (1978),

utilitarian shed, and privy.

Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall, SG-0711.
The building was constructed in 1925 and adapted to its current use in c.1942. This simple rectangular one-story building is of fieldstone construction and features a gabled roof with asbestos shingle and six-over-six double-hung sash windows. A central stone chimney is located in the center of the building at the roofline. The entrance to the building is through the west side and is reached via a raised open porch. A wood porch with a garage below located on the south side of the building is believed to date from the late 1930s. On the north facade of the building, a Gothic arched entrance has been filled in. Although the ghost of the former entrance is visible, the patching was competently done and does not significantly affect the historic integrity of the structure. The structure as it now stands was heavily modified by the NPS for its use as an office. The building has been used by the NPS since the park's opening, and its significance is tied to its association with park operations (Figure 13) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

Storage Shop, SG-0449.
This small utilitarian wood frame building was built in 1939 and features a gable roof, German siding, and six-over six double-hung sash windows. The building has a standing-seam metal roof and has been painted brown. A cross-gabled addition to the rear of the building roughly doubled the size of the building. The addition was constructed before 1966 (Figure 14) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

Gas and Oil Building, SG-0431.
A small utilitarian wood frame building with a gable roof and German siding, built in 1934. It has a concrete-block foundation and a fixed nine-pane wood frame window. The building has green roll asphalt roofing and has been painted brown. A small roof supported by two knee braces protects the front entrance door (Figure 15) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

Maintenance Shop, SG-0466.
This small, rectangular, wood frame building was built in 1939 and features a gable roof and German siding. The building has green roll asphalt roofing and has been painted brown, and is constructed on a concrete-block foundation. The front of the building has been altered and is now covered with vertical board-and-batten wood siding. It now has a large wood sliding door on one side and the entrance door and a fixed-pane window on the other. The building was moved in 1975 from Swift Run, prior to which it was located at Dundo Camp (Figure 16) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

The Fire Cache, SG-0329.
This small wood building with a shed roof dates to 1937. Three sides of the building have vertical siding. The front of the building features a large plywood utility door that pivots from the top, a front entrance door, and a fixed-pane window. Surrounding these is vertical board-and-batten siding. The building was originally used as a garage, and the front had two

sets of paired doors that opened together (Figure 17) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

Maintenance Shed, SG-0448.
This building consists of the original garage structure dating to 1937 and a later addition. The addition, a second garage added onto the side of the original building, roughly doubled its size. Both parts of the building are wood-frame. The original section of the building has German siding and three vehicle bays each with double hinged doors. The new section of the building is roughly four feet higher than the original section. It has a single entrance bay and horizontal wood siding. The two sections of the building have separate gable roofs (Figure 18) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

Ranger Office, SG-0611.
The small, rectangular, wood frame building with German siding on three sides, was constructed in 1948. The front of the building has apparently been altered, and it is covered with vertical board-and-batten siding and features three six-over six double-hung sash windows. The gabled roof is covered with asbestos shingles (Figure 19) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

Simmons Gap Bridge and Maintenance Road Culverts.
These structures were built in conjunction with the access road and spurs, and were built to carry water from one side of the road to the other so as not to undermine the subgrade and crushed stone roadbed. Both culverts were created by the CCC and are of mortared stone construction. As stated in the National Register documentation, no specific information is available about the date of the bridge. However, it was presumably built at the same time as the access road and spurs. The stonework appears to date from the at least the 1930s, and it is considered a contributing element to the historic district (see Figure 12) (National Register 9/1997, Sec 7:28-30).

Noncontributing Resources.
These include two employee houses and a number of recent utilitarian structures. All fall outside the period of significance for the Historic District and have been evaluated by the NPS and VASHPO and found not eligible for the National Register. Among these are two residences: Residence, SG-0263 (1986), and Residence, SG-0268 (1990). These are pre-fabricated, wood frame, ranch style-buildings (Figures 20 and 21). The rescue cache, SG-1656 (1978) is a frame structure originally constructed as an open carport (Figure 22). It was enclosed in the 1980s. A utilitarian shed and privy are also of recent construction.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall

Feature Identification Number: 154163

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81836

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall

LCS Structure Number: SG01

Feature: Simmons Gap Storage Shop

Feature Identification Number: 154165

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81837

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Storage Shop

LCS Structure Number: SG03

Feature: Simmons Gap Gas and Oil Building

Feature Identification Number: 154167

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81838

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Gas and Oil Building

LCS Structure Number: SG03A

Feature: Simmons Gap Maintenance Shop

Feature Identification Number: 154175

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81839

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Maintenance Shop

LCS Structure Number: SG03B

Feature: Simmons Gap Fire Cache

Feature Identification Number: 154171

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81840

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Fire Cache

LCS Structure Number: SG03C

Feature: Simmons Gap Maintenance Shed

Feature Identification Number: 154179

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 81841

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Maintenance Shed

LCS Structure Number: SG03D

Feature: Simmons Gap Ranger Office

Feature Identification Number: 154181

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82974

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Ranger Office

LCS Structure Number: SG01B

Feature: Simmons Gap Maintenance Road Culverts

Feature Identification Number: 154183

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82977

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Maintenance Road Culverts

LCS Structure Number: SG01D

Feature: Simmons Gap Bridge Culvert

Feature Identification Number: 154185

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 82978

LCS Structure Name: Simmons Gap Bridge Culvert

LCS Structure Number: SG01E

Feature: Residences (2)

Feature Identification Number: 154187

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Rescue Cache

Feature Identification Number: 154169

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Small Utilitarian Shed

Feature Identification Number: 154177

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Privy

Feature Identification Number: 154173

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Figure 13. Views looking south (top) and northeast (bottom) at the 1925 Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall. The building as it now stands was heavily modified by the National Park Service in 1942 for use as a ranger residence/station (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 14. View looking northeast at the storage shop, constructed in 1939. It was moved to its current location in 1942. The storage shop is a small utilitarian wood frame building with a gable roof and German siding (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 15. View looking northeast at the gas and oil building, built in 1934 and moved to Simmons Gap in 1947. It is a small utilitarian wood frame building with a gable roof and German siding (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 16. View looking northeast at the maintenance shop, built in 1939, and moved to Simmons Gap from Swift Run in 1975 (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 17. View looking southeast at the fire cache, constructed in 1937 and moved to its current location in 1947, and a recently added utilitarian shed. The fire cache was originally used as a garage (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 18. View looking northeast at the maintenance Shed. The building consists of the original garage structure, constructed in 1937 and an addition, built in 1960. Both parts of the building are wood-frame (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 19. View looking north at the ranger office, constructed in 1948. The front of the building has apparently been altered, and it is covered with vertical board-and-batten siding (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 20. View looking southeast at one of the two houses at Simmons Gap (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 21. View looking southeast at the prefabricated wood frame, ranch-style house built in 1990 (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 22. View looking southeast at the rescue cache. The building is a wood frame structure originally constructed as an open carport. It was enclosed in the 1980s (OCLP, 2011).

Vegetation

Historic Condition and Existing Conditions:
Forests of oak (Quercus spp.), hickory (Carya spp.), and American chestnut (Castanea dentata) once covered the Blue Ridge Mountains, but tree cutting for lumber, tanbark, and firewood reduced the density considerably. In addition, by the 1930s few living American chestnuts remained because of chestnut blight, a tiny and devastating fungus introduced from Asia. Other changes came from frequent wild fires. Between 1930 and 1937, more than 44,000 acres, or 25.7 percent, of park land had burned. While a few patches of mature forest existed, as much as a third of the parkland along the Skyline Drive was pasture in the 1930s and two thirds was early second-growth forest (National Register 4/1997, Sec 7:14).

Both forest and open land conditions were present in and around the site when it was developed, although no specific vegetation records have been found. Historic photographs of the buildings, however, indicate that the area was wooded. Dead chestnuts at the site were likely removed and used in the construction of the developed areas and guardwalls along Skyline Drive, while oaks and other trees were allowed to grow undisturbed. Although no planting plan has been found for the site, the CCC engaged in extensive planting projects throughout the park and likely did so at Simmons Gap as well, though no specific information has been found. By the mid-1950s, the tree canopy at Simmons Gap was likely dense and offered many shady areas. Maintained turf areas along the maintenance road likely limited understory plantings to scattered masses of shrubs. Beyond the maintained area of road, understory vegetation was probably more dense.

Since the 1950s, the park's forest has continued to mature, but several infestations have had a major impact. By 1990, fifty-nine percent of the forest had been affected by gypsy moth infestation (Shenandoah NP staff, 2006). Many hemlocks (Tsuga canadensis) have also been killed by the hemlock wooly adelgid. Today, nearly ninety-five percent of the park is forested, with large portions officially designated as wilderness. This second growth forest is the result of seven decades of regeneration, designed reforestry, beautification, and fire control.

Today, the Simmons Gap area remains wooded. However, breaks in the tree canopy still allow for turf to grow within the maintenance and administrative areas and along the road shoulders. Other trees and vegetation at the site are part of the second-growth forest ecosystem that extends throughout Shenandoah NP. Species observed at Simmons Gap include hickory, black locust (Robinia pseudoacacia), tulip poplar (Liriodendron tulipifera), pine (Pinus spp.), and black cherry (Prunus serotina) with an understory of striped maple (Acer pensylvanicum), sumac (Rhus spp.), mountain laurel (Kalmia latifolia), witch hazel (Hamamelis virginiana), blueberry (Vaccinum spp.), ferns, and various perennials and vines. Masses of hay-scented fern (Dennstaedtia punctilobula) soften the woodland character in some areas of the site.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: CCC Plantings at Site

Feature Identification Number: 153919

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Small Scale Features

Historic Condition and Existing Conditions:
Because of its use as a park maintenance facility, the Simmons Gap area includes minimal site features that were typical at other developed areas along Skyline Drive, such as log and rock barriers; boulder, log, and stacked stone water fountains; rusticated log-framed signage; wood picnic tables; and stacked-stone grills. With exception to a weather station and flagpole—installed at an unknown date, the majority of the small- scale features at Simmons Gap are contemporary site furnishings that include metal trash receptacles, dumpsters, and moveable metal and wood picnic tables. Two gas pumps are also located adjacent to the gas and oil building. Most of today's signage consists of brown-painted wood with the classic Shenandoah 1930s-style lettering etched in and painted white. These signs include the entrance signs, directional/informational signs, and trailhead signs (Figures 23-24).

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Weather Station

Feature Identification Number: 154195

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Feature: Flagpole

Feature Identification Number: 154197

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Feature: Picnic Tables

Feature Identification Number: 154199

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Simmons Gap Entrance Sign

Feature Identification Number: 154193

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Feature: Gas Tanks (2)

Feature Identification Number: 154191

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Figure 23. View looking south at the weather station, installed at unknown date (OCLP, 2011).

Figure 24. View looking southeast at the metal and wood picnic tables in the Simmons Gap area. The majority of the small-scale features at Simmons Gap are contemporary site furnishings (OCLP, 2011).

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/19/2011

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of the Simmons Gap landscape is evaluated as "good," which indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Pests/Diseases

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Description: Continued spread of the gypsy moth and wooly adelgid diseases, as well as the sudden oak disease, may impact trees within the site's boundaries and beyond them, and should be monitored.

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Undetermined

Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:

The General Management Plan and Development Concept Plan were completed in 1983. However, these documents are considered out of date and the park superintendent now signs off on the treatment of all buildings and structures as they are added to or updated in the List of Classified Structures (LCS). A memo from the Superintendent states that all structures listed on National Register of Historic Places will be classified under the "Must Be Preserved and Maintained" management category. For resources listed in the LCS, the superintendent approved the management category on April 25, 2005, September 5, 2006, and May 24, 2007.

The LCS identifies preservation as the treatment for the Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall (081836). However, treatment is not identified in the LCS for the following resources: Simmons Gap Mission Community Hall Road (082973), Simmons Gap Ranger Station (082974), Simmons Gap Maintenance Road System (082976), Simmons Gap Maintenance Road Culverts (082977), Simmons Gap Bridge Culvert (082978), Simmons Gap Storage Shop (081837), Simmons Gap Gas and Oil Building (081838), Simmons Gap Maintenance Shop (08189), and Simmons Gap Fire Cache (081840).

There is currently a project in the Project Management Information System (PMIS) related to the rehabilitation of the historic buildings within the Simmons Gap area. The project, "Rehabilitate Historic Visitor Contact Buildings at Simmons Gap Developed Area" (PMIS # 175056), identifies eight historic buildings that are in need of repairs. The work includes exterior and interior painting; replacing roofs, wood doors, window screens, steps, and siding; and repointing the Mission Hall Building (ranger station) stone walls.

Approved Treatment Completed: No

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography

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Citation Author:	Engle, Reed L.
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Citation Publisher:	http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/historicaloverview.htm
Citation Author:	Engle, Reed L.
Citation Title:	"The Single Greatest Feature…A SKYLINE DRIVE: 75 years of Mountaintop Motorway"
Year of Publication:	2006
Citation Publisher:	Shenandoah National Park Association, Inc.
Citation Author:	Engle, Reed L.
Citation Title:	Skyline Drive
Citation Publisher:	http://www.nps.gov/shen/historyculture/skylinedrive.htm
Citation Author:	Good, Albert H.
Citation Title:	"Park and Recreation Structures"
Year of Publication:	1999
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Year of Publication: 1984
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Citation Author:	NPS
Citation Title:	National Historic Landmark Documentation
Year of Publication:	2008
Citation Publisher:	Unpublished
Citation Author:	NPS
Citation Title:	Skyline Drive Historic District National Register
Year of Publication:	1997
Citation Publisher:	Unpublished
Citation Author:	NPS
Citation Title:	Skyline Drive Historic District Boundary Increase
Year of Publication:	1997
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Citation Author:	Reeder, Carolyn and Jack
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Citation Author:	Robinson & Associates and EDAW, Inc.
Citation Title:	Shenandoah National Park: Historic Resources Study
Year of Publication:	1997
Citation Publisher:	n/a
Citation Author:	Spelman, H. J.
Citation Title:	Building Roads in Shenandoah National Park: Area in Virginia Blue Ridge Made Accessible by Recreational Parkway"
Year of Publication:	1935
Citation Publisher:	Civil Engineering
Citation Author:	n/a
Citation Title:	Monacan Indian Nation
Citation Publisher:	http://indians.vipnet.org/tribes/monacan.cfm
Citation Author:	n/a
Citation Title:	"Chestnuts in Virginia"
Citation Publisher:	http://www.virginiaplaces.org/natural/chestnut.html

Supplemental Information

Title:	Regional Context graphic showing the North District
Description:	Shenandoah NP website, http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/north.jpg
Title:	Simmons Gap Site Plan-Facility Development Plan (SHEN 134 20108), 07/07/1995
Description:	Site plan showing locations of buildings, structures, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems.