

Shrine Mont History

For over seventy-five years, Shrine Mont Conference Center — part of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia — has welcomed those who seek “a place apart for rest, devotion and fellowship”. Located in the quiet village of Orkney Springs, Virginia, it is at the foot of the Great North Mountain — part of the Appalachian chain of the Allegheny Mountains.

From the mid-1800s, the historic Orkney Springs Hotel, was visited by hundreds of persons seeking recreation and the “medicinal benefits” of the mineral rich water from numerous springs found in the area.

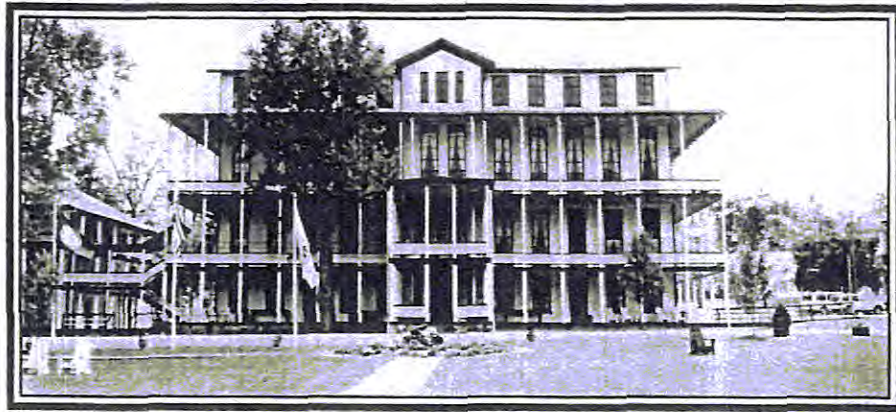
Shrine Mont has its beginnings in the early part of the 20th century through the vision and hard work of Dr. Edmund Lee Woodward. Dr. Woodward had served as a medical missionary in China and upon his return to the States served as the Rector of Grace Church in The Plains, Virginia. His introduction to the Orkney Springs area was through his wife, Frances Peyton Gibson. Her father, the Rt. Reverend Robert Atkinson Gibson was Bishop of Virginia. The Gibson family maintained a summer cottage called “Tanglewood” located near the village square.

Dr. and Mrs. Woodward spent part of their vacation each year at Orkney Springs and by the mid-1920s made it their permanent home. Here, Dr. Woodward began to realize his dream of accommodating guests in a natural setting for worship and reflection from which they could return to their every-day life rested and “inspired to serve Christ and His Church”. The outdoor Cathedral Shrine of the Transfiguration was completed and consecrated in 1925. The Woodwards deeded the property on which the Shrine is located to the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and Dr. Woodward was appointed director of “Shrine Mont”.

During the years of his endeavors at Shrine Mont, Dr. Woodward had the able assistance of a young local man named Wilmer Moomaw. Through his close association with Dr. Woodward, Mr. Moomaw shared the vision of Shrine Mont’s mission. After the death of Dr. Woodward in 1948, Mr. Moomaw became the manager and was named Director in 1950. From that time until he retired in 1988, his work at Shrine Mont was of enormous achievement including the purchase of the 19th century four-story Orkney Springs Hotel and other hotel buildings in 1979. Also included in the purchase were 950 acres of land. The renovation of the Virginia House, Maryland House, and the smaller cottages took almost 10 years, and is still an ongoing project. The addition of the Orkney Springs Hotel complex enabled Shrine Mont to grow into a conference center that has the capacity of accommodating up to 600 guests — for church retreats, summer camps for children, meetings, family reunions, and conferences for religious and secular groups. In addition, Shrine Mont is the host each year to the Shenandoah Valley Music Festival. Another important musical event is the annual Bishop’s Fourth of July Bluegrass Festival.

The management tradition of the Moomaws continued after Wilmer’s retirement. His sons Dick and John were the Director and Assistant Director until their retirement in 2006. Their wives Thelma (Dick’s wife) and Judi (John’s wife) managed the two kitchens. Their dedication and valued service to Shrine Mont was greatly noted and cherished by all. Today, the third generation of the Moomaw family serving Shrine Mont is represented by Kevin Moomaw and his wife Mary, son and daughter in-law of Dick and Thelma. Kevin assumed the position of Executive Director in 2007.





❧ VIRGINIA HOUSE ❧

After the completion of Maryland House and Pennsylvania House, the Orkney Springs Mineral Company wished to crown their achievement by building a five-story hotel that would contain a ballroom, a large parlor and a spacious dining room. Construction started in the winter of 1872, but met with disaster during a late spring snowstorm. The uncompleted structure could not sustain the weight of the snow and collapsed. It was rebuilt into the remarkable four-story wooden building that we see today. The common areas were furnished with beautiful walnut desks, chairs, tables and sofas of period design. Many of these antiques are still used today. The Orkney Springs Hotel reached its peak of popularity during the 1870s and 1880s. It continued to operate as a resort although receding into "genteel decline" during the 1900s through World War II. After that time, the resort was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Miles Portlock who managed the property as a resort through the 1960s. By the 1970s, outside developers began to investigate the purchase of the old hotel and buildings. Through the efforts of Mr. Wilmer Moomaw and the desire of Mr. and Mrs. Portlock for the property to become part of Shrine Mont if possible, a sale was negotiated in 1979. Orkney Springs Hotel officially became a part of the Diocese of Virginia. Renovation soon began and is completed for most of the hotel buildings, although repair and maintenance of these old buildings is ongoing. Architectural historians believe that Virginia House may be the oldest, largest wooden structure in the state of Virginia.



❧ Maryland House ❧

In the 1850s, the Orkney Mineral Springs company was formed to meet the demand for larger and more comfortable accommodations as more and more people traveled to the village of Orkney Springs to partake of the mineral waters found in numerous springs in the area. At that time, the first building of the Orkney Springs Hotel complex was constructed. It was a two-story building, built on a classical plan and was named "Maryland House". The outbreak of the Civil War stopped construction on further buildings. According to local tradition, Maryland house was used as a place of recuperation and rehabilitation for Confederate soldiers. Today, this gracious old building (completely renovated, of course!) has fifty rooms, each with a private bath. Porches surround the building on both the lower and upper levels.

Stairway To Heaven - Shrine Mont/Orkney Springs, VA

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
6.2 mls	★	★	★	★	★

Hiking Time: 4.0 hours plus 30 minutes for lunch

Elev. Gain: 1,820 ft

Parking: Turn left at the parking sign just before the Virginia House and park behind the pavilion in the large parking area.

38.79383, -78.81551

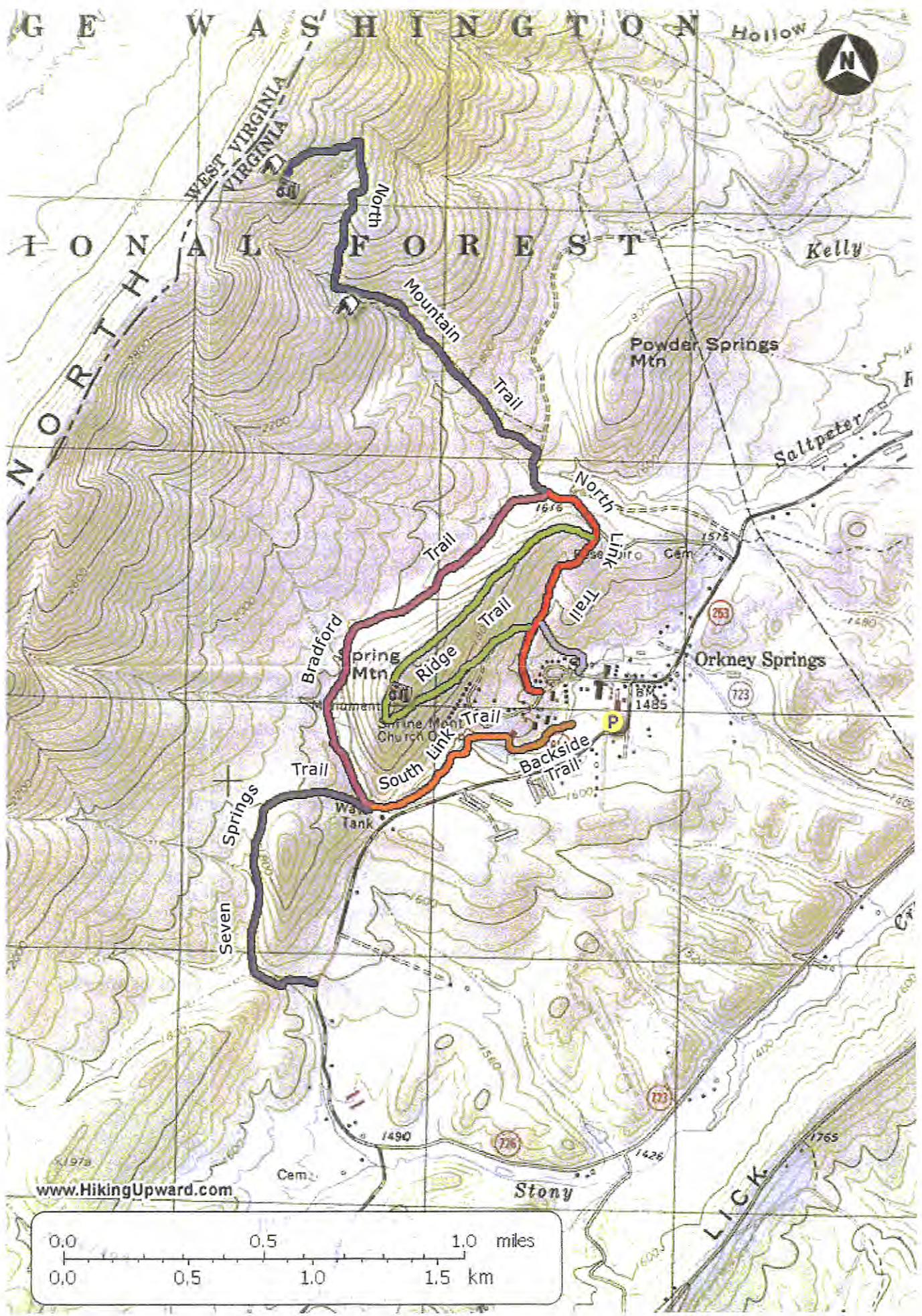
[Click Here For Detailed Location](#)



The Shrine Mont conference center and retreat is located near Orkney Springs Virginia on the VA/WV border. There are several nice trails on the property that pass the Cathedral Shrine of the Transfiguration, and the Ridge Trail up to The Cross on Spring Mountain. The most scenic section is the North Mountain Trail that climbs up Great North Mountain. Passing a large cliff structure, the trail ends at North Mountain Rocks with a spectacular view back towards Orkney Springs and the Shenandoah Valley.

Several nice hikes can be put together using the many trails. Our 6.2 mile hike uses the North Link Trail past the Shrine, The Ridge Trail past the Cross, and then takes the North Mountain Trail up to North Mountain Rocks.

- ▶ **Mile 0.0** - From the parking area behind the pavilion walk back to the main road and turn left in front of the Virginia House. Follow the road up to the circle and pass through the Shrine Mont entrance. The trailhead for the North Link Trail is located on the right side of the parking area.
- ▶ **Mile 0.21** - Start up the North Link Trail and soon arrive at the Cathedral Shrine of the Transfiguration. Turn right following the signs towards The Cross and North Mountain, then in 0.3 miles arrive at the intersection with the Ridge Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 0.58** - Turn left towards The Cross on the Ridge Trail. The trail becomes increasingly steeper before arriving at an intersection where the Ridge Trail turns sharply to the right following the ridgeline. Stay right towards the Cross on the Ridge Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.19** - Arrive at the Cross at the high point on Spring Mountain. There are limited views to the west and east through the trees from the platform. Now continue downhill towards the north for another 0.7 miles where the Ridge Trail ends at the North Link Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 1.89** - Turn left and follow the North Link Trail and soon pass a forestry road on the right that leads to Orkney Springs. Cross a small stream then shortly arrive at the intersection with the Bradford Trail and North Mountain Trail where the North Link Trail ends.
- ▶ **Mile 2.1** - Stay right on the as the North Mountain Trail follows a forestry road for 0.15 miles then turns left off the forestry road towards the ridge. The trail is rocky and gradually increases in grade. In 0.8 miles pass a campsite and large cliff face on the left. After passing the cliff and stream the North Mountain Trail becomes increasingly steeper joining a ridge spur. The trail then turns more southerly and ends before reaching the Great North Mountain ridge at a campsite and North Mountain Rocks.
- ▶ **Mile 3.8** - On the opposite side of the campsite is the back of North Mountain Rocks. There is a 10ft climb to get to the top of the rocks where there is a spectacular view of the Shenandoah Valley. From North Mountain Rocks retrace your route back down the North Mountain Trail, rejoin the North Link Trail crossing the stream and arrive back at the intersection with the Ridge Trail.
- ▶ **Mile 5.7** - Continue straight on the North Link Trail to the next intersection on the left with a sign for Shrine Mont.
- ▶ **Mile 5.9** - Turn left downhill towards Shrine Mont as the trail passes behind cabins, then turns right and ends back at the the Virginia House. Pass back around the Virginia House to the parking area.
- ▶ **Mile 6.2** - Arrive back at the parking area.



www.HikingUpward.com

0.0 0.5 1.0 miles
0.0 0.5 1.0 1.5 km

WALKING & RUNNING ROUTES

LAKE LAURA LOOP

This 4 1/2 -5 mile loop on a packed dirt horse trail circles the lake. This trail can be muddy in early spring or after a heavy rain. The easiest way to get to the beginning of this loop is to drive down to Orkney Springs Volunteer Fire department, turn left on Happy Valley Road until it forks, make a left onto dirt road, continue pass barn. Take the footbridge and follow the path around the lake and, if you're lucky, you may see beavers on the north side of this man-made lake.

ORKNEY LOOP

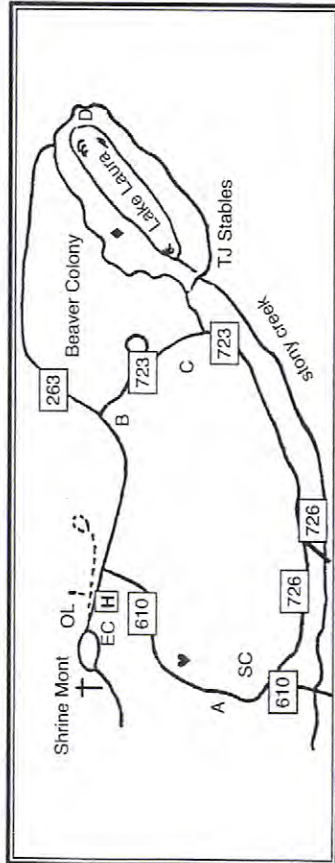
This 4.65 mile loop starts at the bridge next to Orkney Springs. You follow the directions below to complete this rolling loop where you will face "Heartbreak Hill" at the 3 1/2 mile point where you will climb 200 feet in the 3/4 mile ascent. This hike is a combination surface of asphalt and gravel.

STONY CREEK BOTTOM RUN

If you want a scenic and relatively flat run you should drive your car to the intersection of routes 726 and 610 which is approximately a mile from the Virginia House. Run or walk along this gravel road which parallels Stony Creek. You can make this up to a 4 mile route by going up and back.

EXER-CENTER

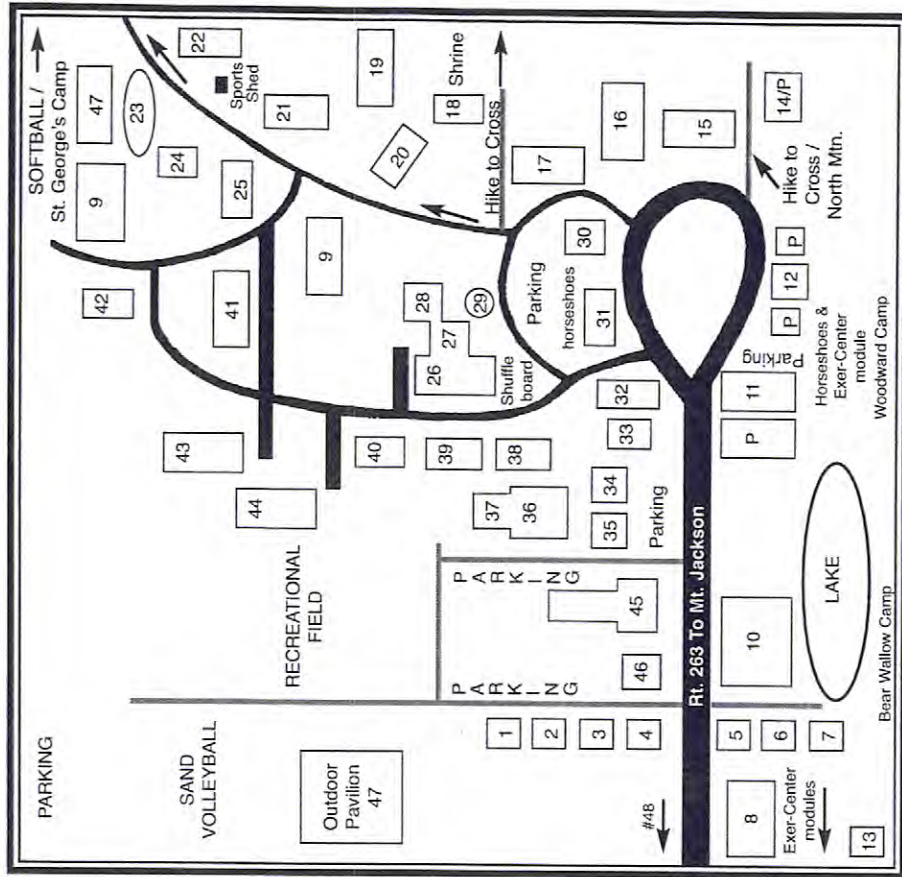
You may want to "warm-down" on the EXER-CENTER which is located below Orkney Springs at the entrance to Shrine Mont. The EXER-CENTER has 13 exercise stations which develop total fitness at 4 fitness modules.



KEY

- † Shrine
- [H] Virginia House
- A Pump House
- B Orkney Vol. Fire Dept.
- C TJ Stables
- D Dam
- ♥ Heart Break Hill
- ◆ Beaver Colony
- EC Exer-Center
- Start / Finish Line:
- SC Stony Creek
- C Lake Laura
- OL Orkney Loop

SHRINE MONT RETREAT CENTER Facilities and Hiking Guide



KEY

- 1. Washington
- 2. Williamsburg
- 3. Alexandria
- 4. Richmond
- 5. Fairfax
- 6. Arlington
- 7. Norfolk
- 8. Tennis Court
- 9. Swimming Pool
- 10. Maryland House
- 11. Akesson
- 12. DeRossi
- 13. Portlock
- 14. Boxhill Private
- 15. Stribling
- 16. Harrison
- 17. Woodward House
- 18. The Shrine
- 19. Rectory
- 20. Gibson
- 21. Laundry
- 22. Infirmary
- 23. Play Ground
- 24. Chilton
- 25. Lloyd
- 26. Tucker Dining Room
- 27. Brown Hall
- 28. Art Hall
- 29. Bird Cage / Gazebo
- 30. Scott
- 31. Warner
- 32. Peterkin
- 33. Meade
- 34. Vienna
- 35. Lexington
- 36. BOOKSTORE
- 37. Bishop's Hall House
- 38. St. Andrew's
- 39. Goodwin
- 40. Miller
- 41. Crenshaw
- 42. Dorris 1, 2, & 3
- 43. Old Recreational Hall
- 44. Staff House
- 45. Virginia House & Dining room
- 46. Pennsylvania House
- 47. Outdoor Pavilions
- 48. Stidley

HIKING AND CLIMBING ROUTES

(X)

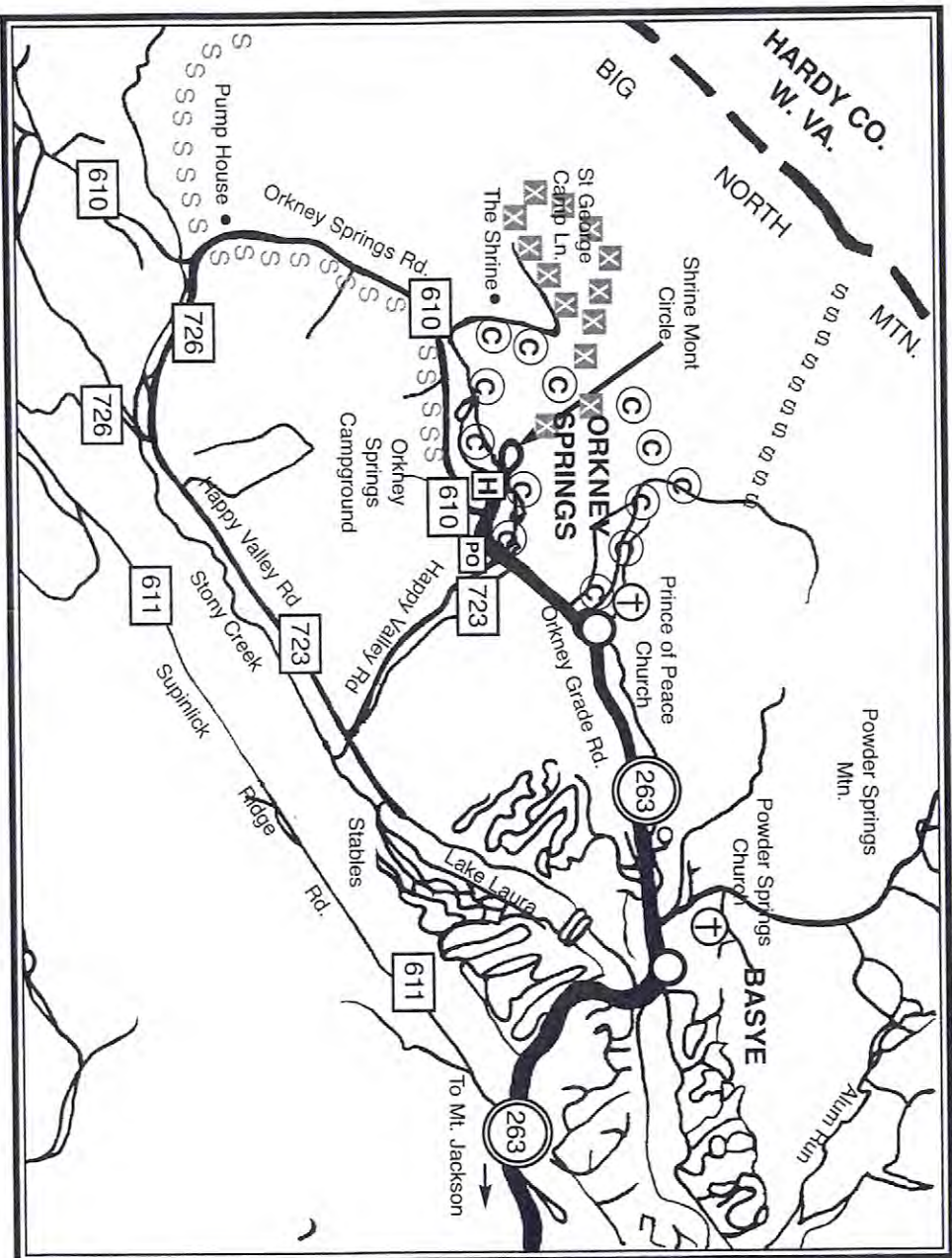
CROSS CLIMB

If you are going to do only one hike select this one. This is moderately difficult with a scenic climb up Shrine Mont (Yellow Spring) Mountain to the Cross which was rebuilt by Wilmer Moonaw in 1957. A nice panoramic view from the Cross Monument rewards your 500 foot climb to an approximate 2,000 foot elevation. Look for the giant ant hills on top. You may want to return using the logging/fire road which intersects the church loop walk. Estimated total time of the round trip ranges from 1-1&1/2 hours. You may choose to begin at the Shrine, St. Georges Camp or off the SM Circle.

(C)

LUTHERAN CHURCH LOOP

This is a medium length hike with minimum climbs of only 300 feet for the entire loop. The beginning of the hike follows the North Mountain hike, but takes the road to the right just before crossing the stream which leads you on an easy descent back to the church. An interesting detour is to add the 3/4 mile loop of the archery course on the left. Be sure and remember to bring some money, so you can stop at one of Orkney's General Stores for food or drink. Estimated total time of the round trip ranges from 1-1&1/2 hours.



(S)

SEVEN SPRINGS HIKE

Take a right onto Rt. 610 at Post Office. Enjoy strolling a country road. At the brick pump house on the right begin your nature walk which scrambles on uneven terrain along a mountain stream. Highlights include some small pools and cascading waterfalls, and the remains of the Orkney Springs Aqueduct. A shorter hike for young kids is to drive to the pump house (right on 610, just past the Virginia House). Kids will probably get their feet wet, so be prepared. Estimated total time from the pump house is 45 minutes; or from the Va. House approximately 1y1-1&1/2 hours.

(S)

NORTH MOUNTAIN

This is the most challenging hike or climb. The vertical climb totals 1,200 feet from Orkney Springs to the rock croppings which are at 2,800 feet, with a spectacular view back into Virginia. The last half mile is particularly tough with an 800 foot climb. Enjoy the view for awhile, you've earned it. Estimated total time of the round trip ranges from 3-5 hours. You should be in good physical condition to complete this hike.

KEY

(C) Lutheran Church Loop

S Seven Springs Hike

(X) Cross Climb

(H) Hotel Virginia & Penn. House

S North Mountain

(+) Churches

() Indicate tree markings on various hikes.

"THE BOY WITH THE LEAKING BOOT"

During this century, dozens of individuals have been involved in the attempt to resolve the mystery of who was the sculptor...where did it begin, what is the correct title, when did the "Boy" first appear...what was the model's name. The mystery story of this statue/fountain seems to begin during the late 1800s (although some information refers to a date of 1868). Credit must go to Mrs. Emma B. Towsley and Mr. Alex Fleck who, over the years, continued to search for clues and information to identify the "Boy." She corresponded with 40 of the 48 states and several European countries and no records could be located. References are noted indicating seven of fifteen copies were sent from Germany to the United States in 1872. No one in Germany or the United States has records to verify this activity.

Newspaper headlines began to appear such as in "The Fresno Guide" on April 30, 1959 stating "Boy with the Boot has Brothers Across Nation Depicting Saga of Changing America." Several stories have developed. The most often used is that the boy was believed to be a drummer boy in the Civil War who was charged with providing water to injured and dying soldiers. The boy would fill his boot from a stream, place a finger in the hole in the toe of the boot and carry the water to the soldiers.

The "Boy" has been standing in many places for over fifty (or ninety) years yet no one has identified the sculptor or the model. A copy of this fountain has reportedly been standing in parks, gardens, courthouse grounds, etc. around the world. Some 24 have been mentioned in various cities in the United States and eleven in foreign countries. Many are still standing and on display—but others have been damaged by weather, automobiles or vandalized or stolen.

This "Boy" came to live at Shrine Mont in Orkney Springs, Virginia sometime before 1944 (54 years). However, no information has been found as to the source or the background establishing his arrival.

Copies of this fountain have been reported in the following cities in the United States and eleven have been identified in foreign cities:

Baker, OR
Biloxi, MS
Chicago, IL
Cincinnati, OH
Council Bluffs, IA
Fresno, CA
Ellenville, NY
El Dorado, TX

El Paso, TX
Helena, MT
Hershey, PA
Houlton, ME
Menomonie Falls, WI
New Orleans, LA
New York, NY
Omaha, NE

Paterson, NJ
Sandusky, OH
Seattle, WA
Unadella, NY
Wallingford, VT
Wasau, WI
Wellsville, OH
Wichita, KS

Please share any information you might have with Bill Shubatt at 703/971-9572.

