

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property: Strayer/Couchman House

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historic name: Couchman House

other name/site number: Susan Couchman House

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2. Location

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street & number: Warm Springs Road not for publication: N/A

city/town: Martinsburg vicinity: Winebrenners Crossroads

State: WV code: WV county: Berkeley code: 003 zip code: 25401

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William O. Lucas
Signature of Certifying Official

10/3/94
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification
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I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

=====
Signature of the Keeper

Date

=====
5. Classification
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Ownership of Property: (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> object

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITH PROPERTY:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		TOTAL

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: N/A

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6. Function or Use

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HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:

Domestic/single dwelling

CURRENT FUNCTIONS:

Domestic/single dwelling

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7. Description

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ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

Mid-19th Century/Greek Revival

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Stone

Walls: Clapboard siding

Roof: Metal

Other: N/A

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

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

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

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

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

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

N/A A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

N/A B removed from its original location.

N/A C a birthplace or grave.

N/A D a cemetery.

N/A E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

N/A F a commemorative property.

N/A G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architecture

Exploration/settlement

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1810 - 1909.

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1810; 1847.

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
X Other

Name of Repository:

Berkeley County Historic Landmark Commission
126 East Race Street
Martinsburg, WV 25401

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: .45 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
18. 250100. 4369440.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheets.)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheets.)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: Michael Gioulis, Historic Preservation Consultant
Don C. Wood, Genealogist & Historian

Organization: N/A

Date: June 1, 1994

Street & Number: 612 Main Street Telephone: (304) 765-5716
126 E. Race Street (304) 267-4713

City or Town: Sutton State: WV ZIP: 26601
Martinsburg WV 25401

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ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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PROPERTY OWNER

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Harry Warner Yoe

Street & Number: Route 3, Box 43 Telephone: (304) 263-2668

City or Town: Martinsburg State: WV ZIP: 25401

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(NPS Form 10-900)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

The Couchman House sits parallel to Warm Springs Road/County Route 36 located in Berkeley County, West Virginia. It is located approximately three miles to the east of Martinsburg. The house sits on a very small rise with mostly rolling hills in pasture surrounding it. Nearby is the alignment of the B & O Railroad and the original spring mentioned in the deeds.

The Couchman House is a two-story, gable roofed, "L" residence. It is of the Greek Revival Style of architecture and was constructed ca. 1850. It is constructed of logs on a stone foundation and covered with clapboard siding. The front, two-story section is five bays wide with large, six over six single hung wood sash windows set in narrow, mitered, and beaded frames. On the east end is a small interior brick chimney. On the west end is a massive, ten foot wide, stone, multi-flue chimney of much earlier origin than the present house. This is topped with a brick chimney. The original period entrance portico is one-story, one bay with side balustrades. The flat roof is supported by squat, square, battered columns. There is a plain frieze. The roof is corrugated metal on the front section and standing seam metal on the rear. Beneath the front metal is wood shingle roofing. The foundation is coursed rubble stone.

The three bay ell is one and one-half-stories with smaller, six over six single hung sash windows in the first floor and eyebrow windows in the second. This section is also of earlier origin, ca. 1810, than the front section and was connected to the front section between 1860 and 1880. A window in the rear log wall of the main section has been filled-in and the logs of the joining facade of the ell have been sheared off at the corners. The stone foundation level is also slightly lower under the ell which has an interior end chimney and brick fireplace. The hewn roof beams are pegged mortise and tenon and are Roman numeraled.

The floor plan of the front section is single pile, one room on each side of a central hall. The hall consists of a small entrance foyer with entrance doors to each room and a single flight, enclosed stair. The two mantels are original, one on each floor, and are much the same having a long shelf with a single

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

cavetto bed molding over a wide plain frieze on plain pilasters. Interior trim is beaded with a backband molding. Trim in the hall has corner blocks. Doors throughout are vertical, two panel with box locks and ceramic knobs.

Finishes in the main section consist of plaster walls and ceilings with carpeting on the floors. The kitchen has vinyl flooring. All trim and doors are painted.

The ell consists of one large room on the first floor. This was divided into two at one time. The second floor was also divided, though only the studs are extant.

The ell section attic has evidence of lath and plaster on the walls and ceiling at one time. The flooring is wide tongue and groove boards.

The first floor also was once plastered and the original logs whitewashed.

Doors are two panel vertical with box locks. The winder stair is enclosed and the paneling is vertical wide beaded boards.

(NPS Form 10-900)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

The Couchman House is significant under Criterion A for its association with Nicholas and Adam Strayer, Sr. and George Couchman, who helped to settle the area and the county. It is significant under Criterion C as a good representation of the Greek Revival Style of architecture and for its representation of two different periods of log construction. The period of significance, 1810 to 1909, is represented by the 1810 construction date of the earliest extant portion of the house and the death of Mary Couchman in 1909.

The Couchman House is associated with John Covenhaver, an early settler of the region and the county. John married Lydia Predmore in Middlesex County, New Jersey in 1752. Together they moved to Pennsylvania and then on to Berkeley County in 1772. 1772 was the year that Berkeley County was taken from Frederick County, Virginia. On June 16, 1772 John purchased 374 acres from John and Ann Borden. The deed lists the spring on the property. This was a section taken from a 424 acre land grant to John Lindsay, granted in March of 1752. John and Lydia had five sons and four daughters at the time of John's death in the spring of 1778. His will dictated that his wife, Lydia, receive 1/3 of his estate and "one negro" during her life. He gave the home plantation of 150 acres to his sons, Joseph and Daniel. John's other three sons were only named in the will but the four daughters were to receive fifty pounds each. Lydia is said to have furnished supplies to the Revolutionary Army and son, Joseph, served in Captain William Morgan's Company in 1776.

The Couchman House is significant under Criterion A for its association with Nicholas Strayer, Sr., an early settler and prosperous farmer of the region. Nicholas was born in Germany in 1733. The Strayer family emigrated to York County, Pennsylvania, near Dover, PA, in 1740. Nicholas then moved to Berkeley County. He purchased 174 acres from Joseph and Daniel Covenhaver on December 21, 1784 for 450 pounds. This is listed in the deed as the land where John Covenhaver previously resided. Strayer became a farmer and enlarged his land holdings by purchasing 400 acres near Opequon Creek, 252 acres on Dry Run, and a 250 acre plantation in Kentucky. He married Maria Catherine and they had four

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

sons and one daughter. His son, Nicholas, Jr. lived with his family on the Dry Run plantation and preceded his father in death, leaving a wife and five children. Nicholas, Sr. died in the spring of 1809 and is buried in the Lutheran Cemetery in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. His will stated that his wife, Maria Catherine, was to receive 1/3 of his estate and that his sons, Michael and Adam, were to "deliver to her 1/3 of all the produce raised on the plantation where I now reside yearly." At her death Michael and Adam were to receive the home plantation plus the annexed "Three Ton" which Nicholas Strayer, Sr. had purchased from John Lyon. Michael and Adam also received the Kentucky plantation which had been purchased from David Snider. Nicholas, Sr. left the Dry Run plantation to his son's children and wife. The wife to make her living from the plantation and raise the children. Once the children were of age they were to buy the land for \$2,100.00 from his son, John, and daughter, Susannah.

Michael Strayer died without issue. Consequently, his half of the plantation was divided between his brothers and sister. 154 acres with the house and spring, along with an additional adjoining 54 acres, was assigned to Adam Strayer. The 1810 section of the house dates from this period of residence.

The Couchman House is significant under Criterion A for its association with George Couchman, Jr. and Susan Couchman, who helped settle the county. Adam Strayer sold 226 acres to George Couchman, Jr. on April 26, 1831, "the same tracts where the said Adam Strayer now resides." The Couchman family was another group of German immigrants who came to the area. They settled along the Opequon Creek. When Benedict Couchman, the patriarch, died in 1797 he owned 300 acres located along the west side of Opequon Creek. Most of the Couchman land was sold to neighbor, George Tabler, another German settler from Pennsylvania. Benedict's son, Andrew, left to help settle Kentucky. Benedict and his wife, Catherine, had nine children. Sons, George and Henry, remained in Berkeley County and became well known. George Couchman, Sr. married Susannah Strayer, daughter of Nicholas Strayer. George Couchman, Jr. married Susan Rush, daughter of Jacob Rush, on May

(NPS Form 10-900)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

10, 1832. On December 27, 1847, George Jr. inexplicably burned to death while he was chained in the Couchman House. The front, Greek Revival, section of the house was constructed following the fire. The earlier chimney on this section indicates that the current appearance is a result of extensive rehabilitation of the original house, rather than a completely new building. At the least, the chimney was incorporated into the new house. Susan lived in the house and farmed the land with her children.

Susan's daughter, Mary, married George McWilliams on September 18, 1851. Tradition states that in 1859 George left for Martinsburg in his buggy one day and never returned. Following his disappearance, she stayed on the property and managed the farm and raised her children. She is listed in the 1860 census as living with her children "next door" to Susan, her mother. Also in the household is a laborer. This reference is to the 1810 section of the house. By 1880, following the death of Susan, her mother, Mary and her now grown son reside in the house and operate the farm. The two structures were connected sometime in this time period. Mary Couchman McWilliams died in 1909 at the age of 75. She had had four children. On April 6, 1910, Sue M. Miller, the daughter of Mary Couchman, deeded her half interest in the farm and house to her brother, Robert B. McWilliams.

Susan Couchman remained on the home plantation until her death on January 6, 1879 at the age of 68. Susan and George, Jr. had two children, Mary and Jacob. The house and 91 acres was assigned to daughter, Mary, and 103 acres was assigned to Jacob's widow, Rosetta.

Jacob had married Rosetta on September 19, 1876. He, at the age of 39, and she, 31. Rosetta was the daughter of Thomas and Mary VanMetre. Jacob was killed in an accident on the railroad. He and Rosetta had no children.

The Couchman House is significant under Criterion C as a good example of the Greek Revival Style of architecture in Berkeley County and as an example of the blending of two different periods of log house construction. The house contains many of the charac-

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

teristics of typical Greek Revival architecture. The roof is broad and shallow. The front entrance portico has classical columns supporting an entablature and a flat roof. The house is symmetrical. There is no overhang on the rake of the roof and there is a small corbel or cornice at the roof line. On the interior, the simple detailing and the simple architraves of the trim are also common elements.

The Couchman House is also significant for the connection of the two styles of log house construction. The front portion, constructed ca. 1850, is an interesting use of log construction. Without knowing the structure of the house it would be possible to assume that the building were brick or frame. Greek Revival architecture in the county has often been brick, and this would not have been unusual in this case. It is interesting to see the level of interior and exterior finish applied to the house to cover the log construction. The interior walls are well plastered and the exterior is sided. In this case, the structure is secondary to the style of the house.

The older rear portion, ca. 1810, is more recognizable as a log structure. The plan is more similar to the early settlement period log houses. It consists of one divided large room on the first floor with a very large fireplace and an enclosed stair in one gable end wall. The second floor is also typical of this period. The dividing wall in the center of the plan was common for attic spaces. The massing of the house is also typical, being a one and one-half-story house, rather than a true two-story. Even though the interior of the ell was covered at one time with lath and plaster, it was still recognizable as a log house.

To see the two types juxtaposed as they are in one building is a good illustration of the development of building types and building technology through the early years of Berkeley County's settlement.

In summary, the Couchman House is significant under Criterion A for its association with Nicholas Strayer, Sr., Adam Strayer, and George Couchman, early settlers of the region and county. The

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

Couchman House is also significant under Criterion C as a good example of the Greek Revival Style of architecture and under Criterion C as a good representation of two different log construction techniques and stylistic representations of two different time periods.

(NPS Form 10-900)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ruth, Frances D. Susan Couchman Log House Unpublished manuscript. 2/21/80.

Wood, Don C. Strayer-Couchman House Unpublished manuscript.

(NPS Form 10-900)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Couchman House
Berkeley County, WV

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

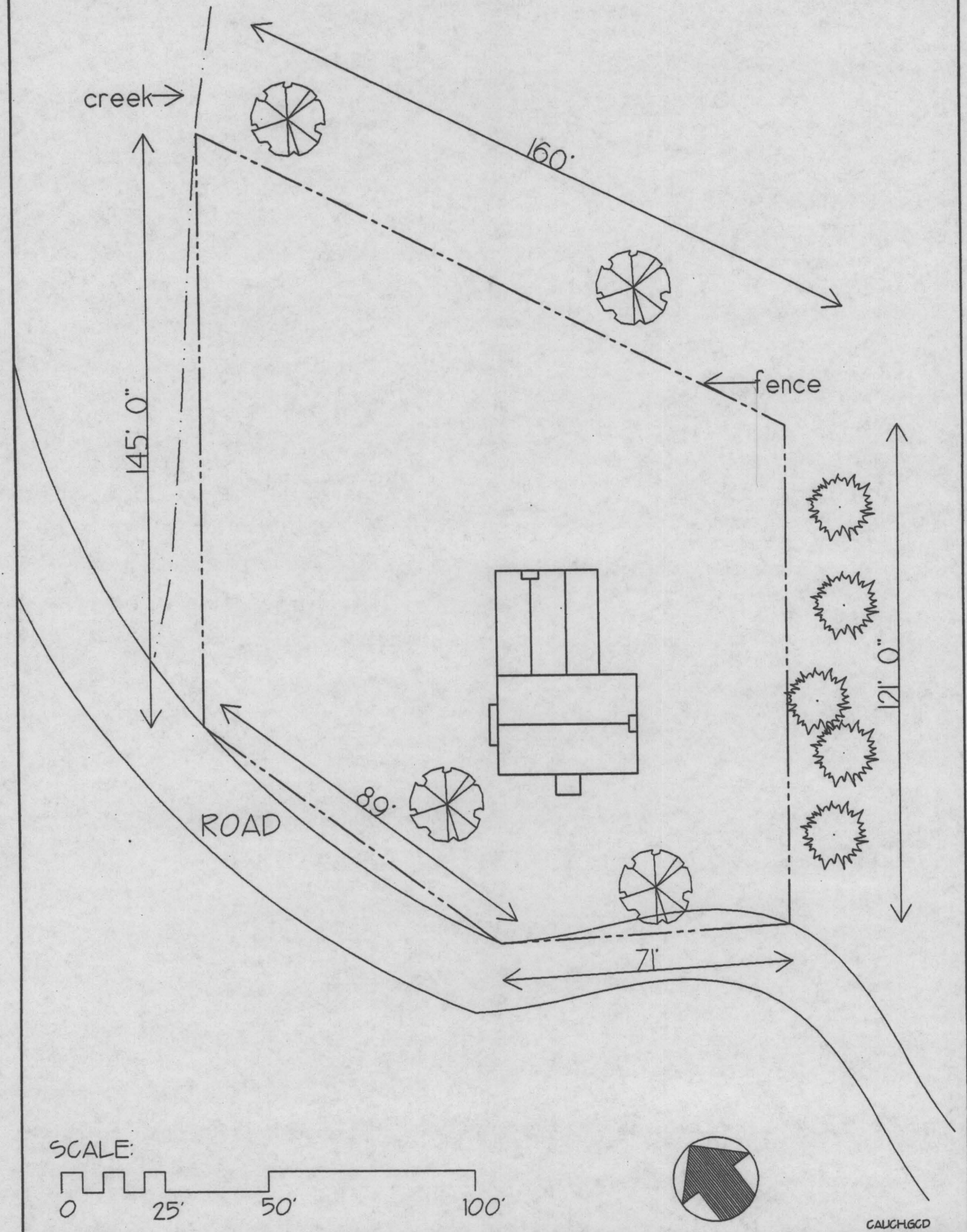
The boundaries of the Couchman House National Register nomination is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map titled "SITE PLAN COUCHMAN HOUSE BERKELEY COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA" dated March, 1994.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

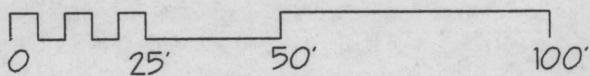
The boundary encompasses the only extant building on the farm which dates from the period of significance of the property.

KEY:

— National Register Boundaries



SCALE:



CALCHGCD

1 of 2

DWG. NO.

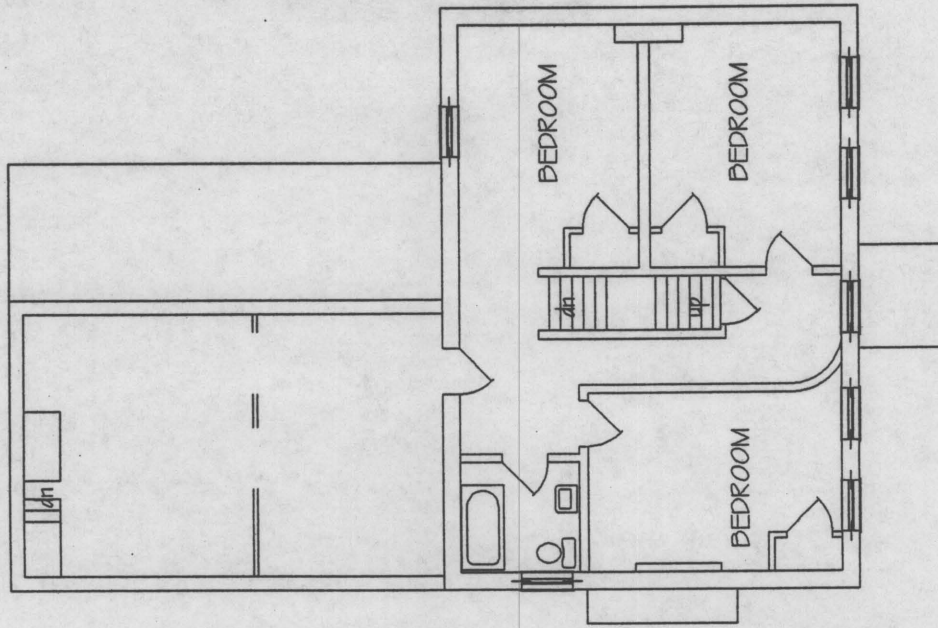
SITE PLAN
 COUCHMAN HOUSE
 BERKELEY COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

MICHAEL GIULIS
 HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 CONSULTANT
 612 MAIN STREET
 SUTTON, WV 25901
 304 785-8716

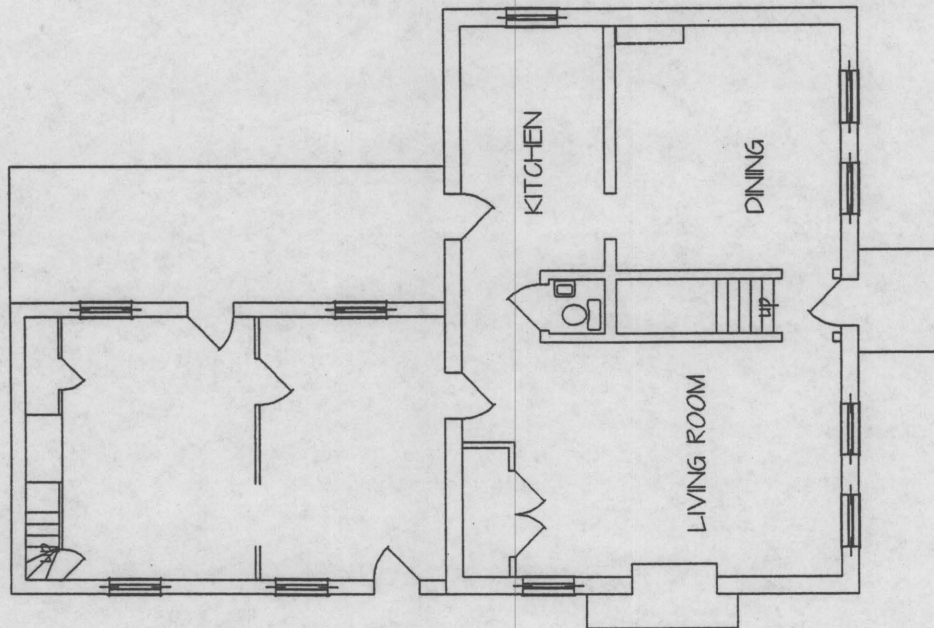
REV.

DATE

MAR. 1994

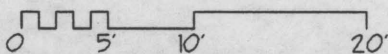


SECOND FLOOR



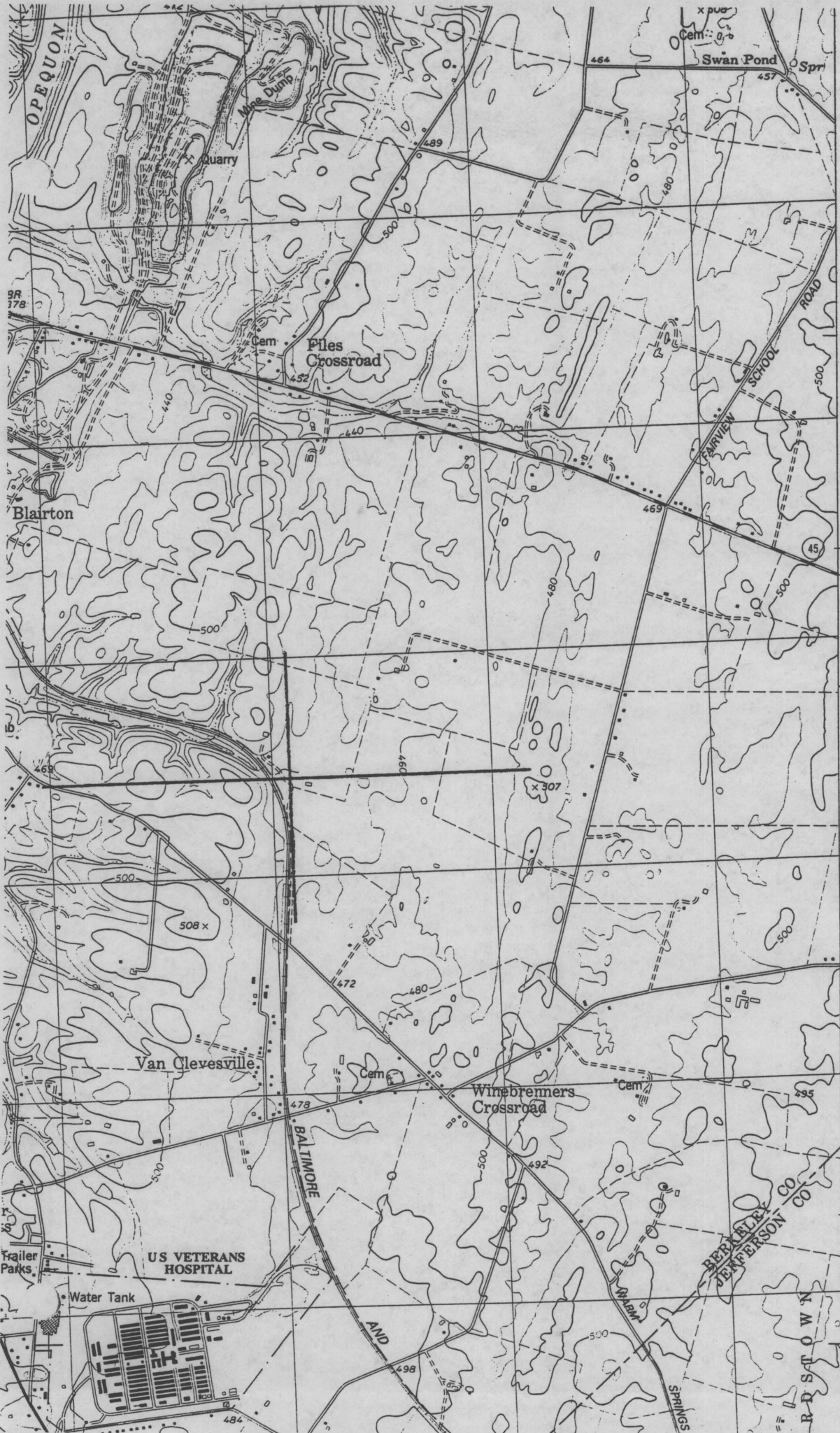
FIRST FLOOR

SCALE:



CAUCH516CD

DWG. NO. 2 of 2	FLOOR PLANS COUCHMAN HOUSE BERKELEY COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA	MICHAEL GIOULIS HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANT 612 MAIN STREET SUTTON, WV 26001 304 765-5716	REV.	DATE MAR. 1984
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COUCHMAN HOUSE
 BERKELEY COUNTY,
 KY
 UTM REFERENCES:
 18.250100.4369440
 MARTINSBOURG QUAD

4372
 27'30"
 4371
 4370
 4368
 4367
 25'

(SHEPHERDSTOWN)
 5462 N NE

SHEPHERDSTOWN 4 MI.

3-R-D-S-T-O-W-N

