

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Old Watson Homestead House

and/or common Rowe Residence

**2. Location**

street & number WV Route 73 \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Smithtown \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district

state West Virginia code 54 county Monongalia code 061

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Larry and Rose Rowe

street & number Route 8, Box 256

city, town Fairmont \_\_\_ vicinity of state West Virginia 26554

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk Office

street & number Monongalia County Court House

city, town Morgantown state West Virginia

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Watson Homestead House is undoubtedly one of the finest and oldest homes in the county. It is a unique mixture of the Federal style with the embellishments of the Italianate motif. These varying styles mark the two periods of the home's construction. This two-story stretcher bond brick home is based on an L-shaped floor plan. The home's main segment, running east-west, is the original structure, constructed circa 1803 by Issac Riggs and resting on an ashlar rough-faced stone foundation. The rear section, running north-south, consists of two additions, one completed circa 1843 and another around the late 1850s by the Watsons and resting on a stretcher bond brick foundation. The front section has a hipped asphalt shingle roof, while the rear section has a gable asphalt shingle roof. The hipped-roof portion is topped by a lantern, part of the 1850s addition, and it appears that this roof was remodelled to accommodate the 1850s porch and lantern.

The main (north) facade faces on the remnant of the Old Morgantown-Fairmont Road and present-day WV Route 73 and shows the Federal influence of the original building. It consists of the original structure's five bays, with the Italianate embellishments. The first floor has four double-hung 2/2 windows with plain-brick surrounds, smooth stone sills and black wood shutters. Second-floor 2/2 windows are being replaced by more appropriate (to the Federal period) 6/6 windows. The main door, in typical Federal style, is in the center bay of the first floor and is recessed with panels surrounding the entire opening. Set in an arched round opening, the door is accented by a fanlight, while the door itself is a multi-panelled hardwood door, with its original lock hardware intact. The roof trim is part of the late 1850s addition; this decorative frieze with paired S-shaped brackets and corresponding dentils forms part of the cornice on all sides of the house and helps unify the house. Atop the hipped roof rests a lantern. Each of its sides consists of a fixed 2/2 sash, set in decorative window mouldings. The lantern itself is constructed of wooden shiplap siding and is decorated with S-shaped brackets and dentils similar to the roof trim. The lantern's roof is flat, topped by an iron weathervane.

The west facade faces White Day Creek, which passes through the Rowe's property. This portion of the home is divisible into three parts: the original structure, the 1843 addition, and the late 1850s extension. The north end of the facade (the original structure) has no openings, nor does the north end of the east facade; only the embellishments are notable. One of two flushed gable chimneys is visible. The 1843 addition is composed of two bays: the first floor has a side door with plain moulding and a recessed transom, while the adjacent window on the first floor is identical to those on the second floor (double-hung 2/2 sashes with stone sills, brick surrounds and wooden shutters). The 1850s addition begins at the center chimney and consists of four bays. The first story is notable for the bay window composed of a main 2/2 double-hung window flanked by two double-hung 1/1 windows. The bay windows roof is hipped with a decorative wood frieze with brackets below. The remainder of the first story consists of two 2/2 double-hung windows flanking a recessed door with transom; the door itself is composed of eight lights. The second story is made-up of four 2/2 double-hung windows.

The south facade of the original house is mostly hidden by the addition of the 1840s. The southeast portion, adjacent to the secondary road, is the only visible portion. A two-story verandah, added in the 1850s, dominates the rear facade, extending over four 2/2 double-hung windows. The balustrade and balusters originally extended along this south wall and continued along the east wall. Only the south

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section is intact now because the east part has been enclosed, but that was done in such a way that the porch framework is still in place and the balustrade and balusters are in storage on the property. The first floor of the verandah consists of four, slightly fluted wood posts supporting the upper porch. The posts on the second floor of the verandah are somewhat different, with three of the four decorative capitals topped by S-shaped brackets. The fourth post is slightly fluted on its sides, but is otherwise non-descript.

The east facade fronts the secondary road running between the Old Watson Homestead House and the log cabin on the adjacent lot. This side is almost identical to the west facade, since the additions are one-room deep from east to west. The only major post-19th century alteration was made on this side when the verandah running the length of this facade was enclosed (see above). Formerly the bedrooms opened onto the open porch; in 1972 the weatherboard siding was added, along with two 4/4 double-hung windows, positioned side by side. In addition, a 12-light door was added on the north end, opening on to the verandah. A wooden balustrade, identical to that of the remaining verandah surrounds the two windows. The first floor consists of the remaining posts, similar to those on the existing verandah, three recessed doors with transoms, and a double-hung 2/2 window, situated between the two doors.

The only existing outbuilding is the carriage house located to the back of the house. This original structure is constructed of weather board siding and is notable for the over hanging loft area.

The log cabin seen in the corner of the photograph of the east facade was moved on to the property in the 1980s and is therefore not included in the nomination.

The Old Watson Homestead House's interior is well preserved, reflecting past owners' efforts to respect its originality. The woodwork and interior masonry are intact, and the few alterations are sympathetic with the original interior. The four rooms of Riggs' structure still have oak flooring, with poplar mantles and cupboards. Bullseye woodwork on the door and window frames were probably added later, while the Lyttletons installed hardwood panelling in the card room, the first floor northeast room of the original section. The woodwork around the main door is original, as is the curved staircase leading to the second story in the original section. The Riggs' structure's second-story bedrooms are identical to the sitting and card rooms on the first floor of this center hall house plan.

The dining room, on the first floor, has cupboards and a fireplace, with carved wood details on the mantle and door frames. The floor boards in the dining room run north-south, as opposed to east-west in the original structure. The three bedrooms of the north-south section open onto the enclosed porch; the (now) inside wall of the porch still has the exterior windows and shutter in place. A back staircase, leading into the kitchen, was added after the porch was enclosed.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1803 **Builder/Architect** Issac Riggs

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old Watson Homestead House is significant as one of Monongalia County's oldest and finest homes, with the original house dating from 1803 and the Italianate remodelling (one of the best in the county) dating from the 1850s. It is also significant as the home of the Watson family, large landowners and ancestors of the Watson coal family of Marion County. The house represents the early 1800s when families from the East came westward into the Monongahela and Ohio River Valleys, acquiring large tracts of land from original land grant holders for farming and further speculation and expressed their wealth in land, houses and (sometimes) slaves. Henry Green Watson acquired this structure as the homestead for his 900-acre plantation, which included a minimum of 14-15 slaves housed in three slave quarters on the property (see Watson's will for division of the property).

Henry Green Watson emigrated from Charles County, Maryland to Monongalia County in the early 1800s, first settling near the Cheat River. This "fine specimen of the Old Virginia gentlemen" (Core II: 338-339) created a plantation by first acquiring, on February 27, 1805, 550 acres of the 1000-acre tract granted to Robert Ferrel in 1786 by the Commonwealth of Virginia. This included a two-story, four room brick, Federal style home. This structure was constructed by Issac Riggs, a local stagecoach operator, circa 1803 on land owned by Ferrel. After a stint as sergeant in the War of 1812, Watson purchased the remainder of his 900-acre farm upon Ferrel's death in 1815 when he acquired 380 more acres of Ferrel's land for delinquent taxes. This was the beginning of the Watson family ownership, which lasted 132 years.

After Henry Green Watson's death in 1837 several additions were made to Riggs' original structure. The first addition was done ca. 1843; the land book notes a jump in the building's value from \$300 in 1828 to \$450 in 1843. The final addition, including the Italianate embellishment, was done between 1856-1859, when the building's value rose to \$1,000.

These changes occurred during a period of growth for Smittown, a development on Richard Smith's lands adjacent to the Watsons' land. The space the additions created and the status of the Watson family undoubtedly made the home a place for social gatherings. Stagecoaches carrying prominent individuals along "The Old State Road" linking Winchester and Clarksburg, Virginia, via Morgantown and Smittown, would have rested at this, one of the county's finer homes.

After Henry G. Watson's death in 1837, the estate was divided among his heirs. Thomas F. Watson, executor of the estate, became its principal owner; however, a portion of the land and slaves were divided among all the sons and daughters. In the years following Henry Watson's death, much of the land was sold off, yet the house remained a Watson possession until 1937.

On March 27, 1937 Dora S. Watson, Leigh F. Watson (husband), and Rose Watson conveyed the Old Watson Homestead House and the property it occupies to R.R. Bunner, A.A. Bunner, and Cayon Bunner. The Bunnors would own the home for twenty-one years, before selling it to Huston Thomas Lyttleton and his wife Rebecca Fields on March 15, 1958; the Bunnors retained much of the Watsons' original tract of land. The

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Lyttletons sold the home on August 23, 1971 to James M. Stevenson and his wife Imolda. On July 1, 1976 the Stevensons conveyed the property to Peter and Jane Thrush, who sold it on June 7, 1978 to Larry and Rose Rowe, the present owners. All the owners of the Old Watson Homestead House resided in this, one of Monongalia County's oldest and most significant homes.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Core, Earl L. The Monongalia Story, vol. II.  
Wiley, Samuel T. History of Monongalia County.  
Monongalia County Records of Deeds and Wills  
Larry Rowe

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 5.80 acres

Quadrangle name Rivesville

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation sheet

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

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory S. Wright

organization History Department, West Virginia Univ.

date July 1984

street & number 202 Woodburn Hall

telephone 304-293-2421

city or town Morgantown

state West Virginia 26506

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

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

date \_\_\_\_\_

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
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Beginning at a hub in the right-of-way line of the Old West Virginia Route No. 73, being the Old Morgantown to Fairmont Road and running thence approximately in the middle of a secondary road S. 9° 05' W 97.23 feet to a point; thence S. 12° 03' W 153.36 feet to a point; thence S. 1° 51' E. 77.85 feet to a point; thence S. 21° 44' E. 59.95 feet to a point; thence S. 30° 50' E 300 feet to a point; thence S. 22° 55' E 76.15 feet to a point, thence S. 13° 11' E. 108.65 feet to an iron pin in said secondary road; thence leaving said road, S. 82° 37' 112' W passing a ten-inch white oak on creek bank a distance of 137 feet to a point in White Day Creek; thence approximately with the center of said creek, N. 78° 14' W. 266 feet to a point; thence N. 85° 60' W 108.50 feet to a point; thence N. 21° 30' W 87 feet to a point; thence N. 7° 40' E. 77 feet to a point; thence N. 15° 42' E. 310 feet to a point; thence N. 13° 55' E. 340.41 feet to a point approximately in the center of said creek and running with said right-of-way line, S. 83° 43' E. 176 feet to the beginning and containing 5.80 acres, more or less (Deed Book 807, page 617).

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The Old Watson  
Homestead House

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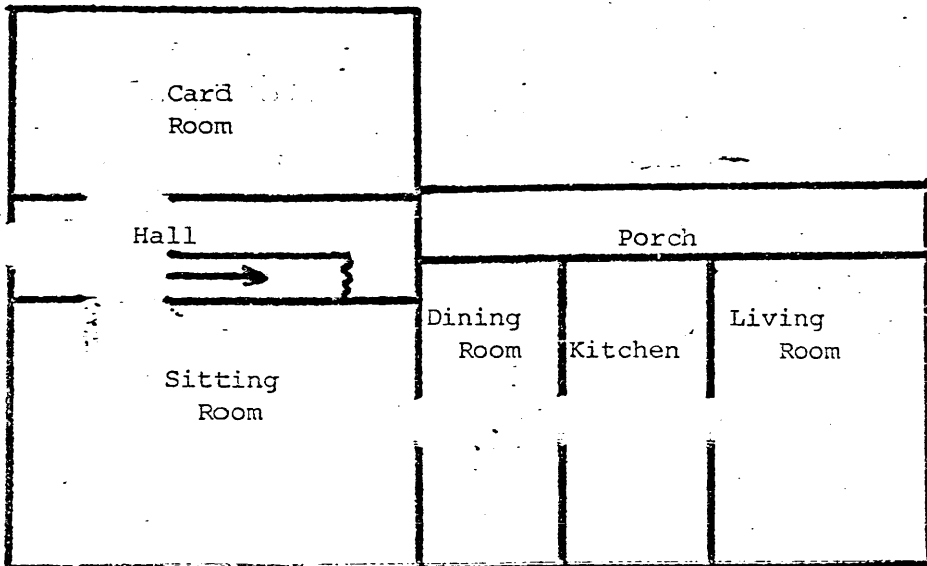
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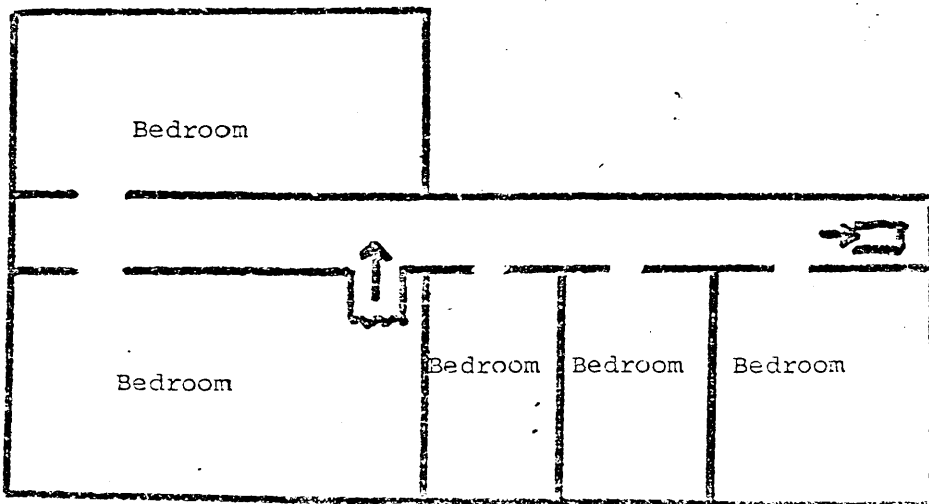
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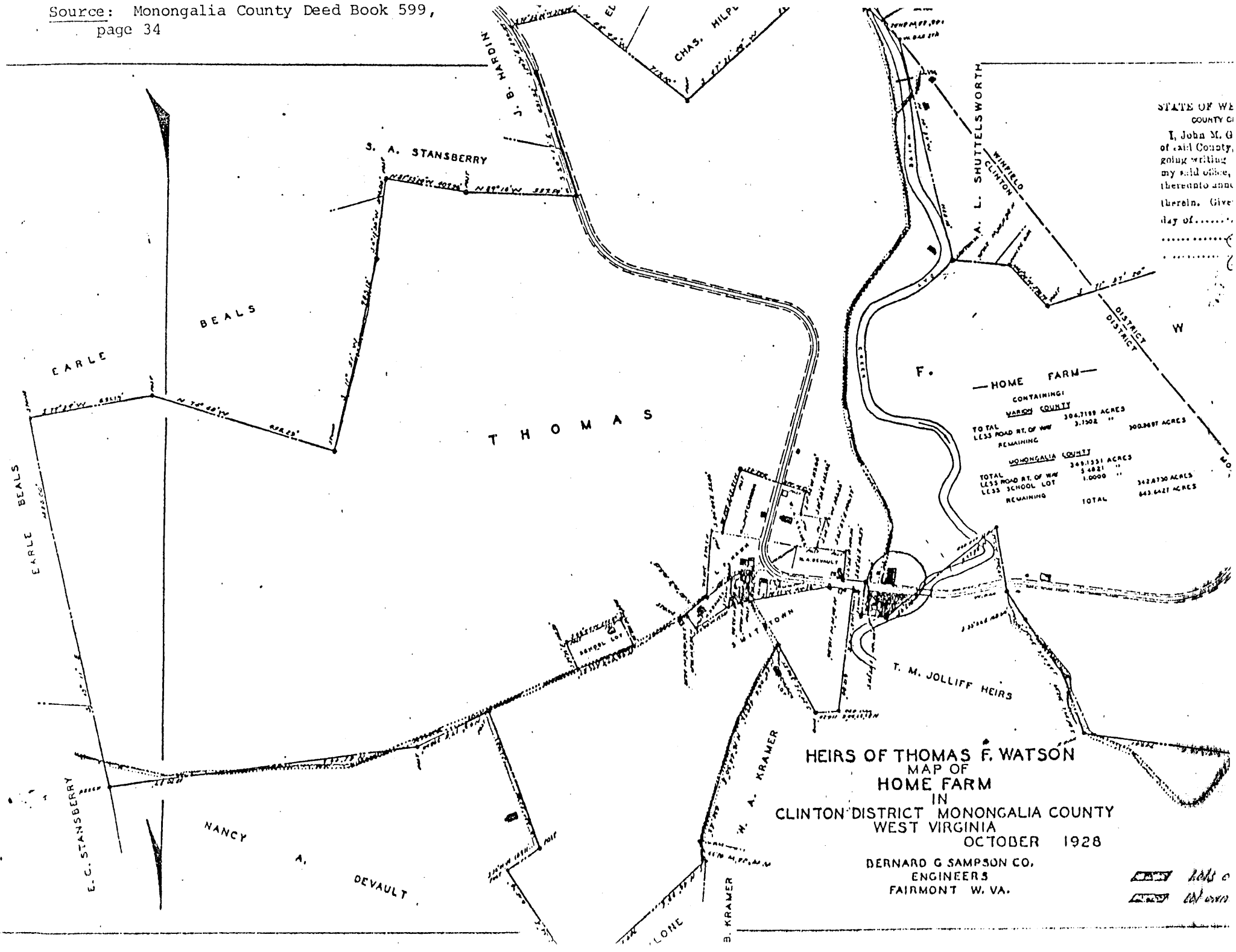
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR







STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
COUNTY OF MONONGALIA  
I, John M. G. of said County, going writing my said office, thereunto and therein. Give day of.....

**HOME FARM**  
CONTAINING:  
**MONONGALIA COUNTY**  
TOTAL 304,718 ACRES  
LESS ROAD RT. OF HWY 3,702 " 100,987 ACRES  
REMAINING  
**MONONGALIA COUNTY**  
TOTAL 342,135 ACRES  
LESS SCHOOL LOT 1,000 " 342,130 ACRES  
REMAINING TOTAL 643,647 ACRES

**HEIRS OF THOMAS F. WATSON**  
MAP OF  
**HOME FARM**  
IN  
CLINTON DISTRICT MONONGALIA COUNTY  
WEST VIRGINIA  
OCTOBER 1928

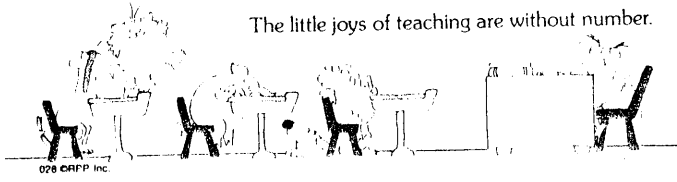
BERNARD G. SAMPSON CO.  
ENGINEERS  
FAIRMONT W. VA.

*Handwritten notes:*  
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*Waston House  
circle of below*

The little joys of teaching are without number.



I N