

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: West Virginia	
COUNTY: Pocahontas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Pearl Buck House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
The Stulting Home, or more recently, "My Mother's House."

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route 219

CITY OR TOWN:
Hillsboro

STATE: West Virginia CODE: 47 COUNTY: Pocahontas CODE: 075

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			Yes:
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments In process of becoming culture center

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:
Route U. S. 219

CITY OR TOWN:
Hillsboro

STATE:
West Virginia

CODE:
47

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
The Pocahontas County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Marlinton

STATE:
West Virginia

CODE:
47

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
West Virginia Cultural Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: March 28, 1966 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
West Virginia Council on the Arts

STREET AND NUMBER:
State Capitol Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Charleston

STATE:
West Virginia

CODE:
47

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Present Condition:

Pearl Buck's birthplace is an attractive white frame house sitting well back from U. S. 219, in a delightful rural environment close to the eastern boundary of the little country village of Hillsboro.* The house shields from view the outbuildings: barn, garage, and two sheds. The outbuildings are run down, but the house is in fair to good condition. Aside from the basement with its fireplace and six rooms, where the Stultings had their kitchen, the home consists of 14 rooms, large and small, six of them in the rear addition to the building. (See Exhibit 1, floor plans and elevations of the house as it now exists.) The house as it stands today is described room for room by Mrs. Betsey Jordan Edgar in a publication entitled Our House because for years it was occupied by her husband's parents. (See Exhibit 2.) Much of the flooring, paneling, and other woodwork still in the building dates back to the original structure.

Original Condition:

The Stultings felled and hewed the beams, made the brick by hand, and built the house mainly with their own labor. No slave labor was employed unless paid for. When the first floor of the house was completed the family moved in; then they accumulated more money, lumber, and brick and built the next. The woodwork of the front portion of the house is hand-rubbed walnut. The staircases, banisters, and everything about them, are hand-tooled. The floors are of hardwood boards, about 8 inches wide. In the front parlor are two cabinets, or "presses," with large glass doors and ornamented with overlapped striping. The outer and inner construction of the house is brick, the exterior being covered with Jenny Lind siding. All in all, the home is representative not only of the people who sought freedom in America, but of the self-reliance and self-sufficiency that characterized early American life. As originally built, the home did not have the six-room addition at the rear nor did it have the side porch recently added on the southwest side.

Plans for Restoration:

The Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation created by the West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs has engaged Robert E. Martens, AIA, as project architect to restore house and property. As Mrs. Fred Hurt of Beckley, past president, has said, "The Federation's Foundation agrees to maintain integrity of site and to manage it in manner consistent with accepted preservation and use practices." Aquisition of a three-acre plot to the south will bring the property to its original dimension; trees, shrubbery and the original outbuildings will conform as nearly as possible to the original in external appearances, as recalled by Mrs. Grace Stulting Smith and others; the barn will become a theater; the nearby shed a craft shop; and a library-museum will be constructed near the rear of the house. The plans have the enthusiastic backing of Miss Buck (Exhibits 3 and 4) and the additional sponsorship, as of May 25, of all the Lions Clubs of West Virginia. The restoration is included in the BOR plan for West Virginia, now in final stages of preparation, and in the State Plan for Historic Preservation being prepared by the West Virginia Antiquities Commission.

*Construction is more accurately described as "brick knobbed."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1858, date of original construction			
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			
<p>The home built by a Dutch refugee from religious persecution in 1858 became the birthplace of his great-granddaughter, Pearl Buck (nee Sydenstricker), on June 26, 1892, near the village of Hillsboro, W. Va.</p> <p>The home, with its surrounding land and buildings, has been purchased by the West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs and turned over to the Pearl S. Buck Birthplace Foundation to own and administer. Plans are being carried forward to restore the property to its 1890 state, while at the same time developing it as an important center of art and culture.</p> <p>Pearl Buck herself needs scarcely any introduction. Author of more than seventy books, she is the most translated writer in the world, the only American woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, recipient of a Pulitzer Prize, the William Dean Howells medal, and more than two hundred humanitarian awards.</p> <p>As impressive as her literary career, has been her effort to care for Asian children fathered by American servicemen through the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. Her personal involvement in this project in heart as well as means is evidenced by her adoption of nine of these abandoned children.</p> <p>The restoration of the attractive wooden frame house built by Mynheer Stulting and his family has become one of Pearl Buck's chief preoccupations, not only for its significance to her personally, but for its meaning to her mother during the long years her family lived as missionaries in China, and for what it symbolizes concerning the American freedom that gave new life and hope to oppressed migrants from the European countries.</p> <p>In 1936 Miss Buck was moved to write <u>The Exile</u>, telling the story of her mother, Caroline Stulting, growing up in this home in "The Levels," a lovely section of Pocahontas County, and as a bride being transplanted to the alien land of China. Of her mother's recollections she wrote:</p> <p>"Her earliest memories were of this new house and of its big, square, empty rooms. This house, then, spacious, dignified, beautiful, fashioned out of the mind of Mynheer, her grandfather, and finished by the eager young hands of her brother, went into the making of this American woman."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(more)</p>			

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(Continuation Sheet)

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Sadly, Mynheer took a chill and died while watching the progress on his house, which was completed by his slender son Hermanus with the help of Caroline's fifteen-year-old brother, Cornelius.* "Carie" herself was but two at the time, and her family had been in America about fifteen years.

Mynheer Stulting had been in a Utrecht Dutch Reformed congregation of some three hundred exiles when they left Holland. In New York, people took advantage of their inexperience, selling them a worthless swamp in Pennsylvania. Mynheer then led a move to western Virginia, and to Pocahontas County came a hundred settlers, soon to be reduced to half that number when many of them decided to migrate still farther. Here in the Hillsboro community the remaining Dutch immigrants built their log cabins and log church.

Here too was born the kind of fortitude which sent forth to China Pearl Buck's father, Absolum Sydenstricker, ordained a Presbyterian minister in the historic Old Stone Church in Lewisburg, W. Va. Sydenstricker was from a German family which had also sought religious freedom in America--even before the American Revolution.

The house in Hillsboro has more significance in the eyes of Pearl Buck than a mere birthplace. Although she was born during a furlough of her missionary parents and was taken back to China when she was only three or four months old, she has had several subsequent contacts with her birthplace down through the years. When she was nine years old her parents again returned for a visit to America, and Pearl enjoyed a whole summer in the home where she was born. Her next trip to America was to attend Randolph-Macon College in Lynchburg, Va., and to teach there until called to China by the illness of her mother. During this time she visited her Hillsboro home. The home in Hillsboro came into the possession of a cousin, Claude Stulting, who sold it to George P. Edgar in 1922, and during the Edgar proprietorship Pearl Buck called at the home and made an unsuccessful attempt to purchase it. Ultimately, George Edgar's son, Thomas, and his wife, Betsey, came to live in the house. In recent years Miss Buck has made several visits to the home and has written a small book (My Mother's House) to promote the restoration of her birthplace. As she has written in this book,

"If it (the house) ever lives again, and God grant it may for my Mother's memory, I hope it will life a new life, not for myself or for my family but for people. I would like it to belong to everyone who cares to go there. From that home has come so much life that it ought never to die or fall into ruin.

"For my ancestors it provided shelter and home in a new land, a house where they lived their new lives with traditional dignity . . . For my mother it provided a home, living forever in her thought and memory, though she made dwelling places in a far country. For me it is a living heart in the country I knew was my own but which was strange to me until I returned to the house where I was born. For me that house was a gateway to America. May it live again, my Mother's house, and may it prove for others, too, a gateway to new thoughts and dreams and ways of life."

*These names are more often given as Cornelis and Harmanius.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pearl Buck, The Exile. Reynal & Hitchcock, 1936.
 " " , My Mother's House. Appalachian Press, Richwood, W. Va., 1965.
 Betsy Jordan Edgar, Our House: The Birthplace of Pearl S. Buck. McClain Printing Co., Parsons, W. Va.
 Charles Carpenter, "The Birthplace of Pearl Buck." The West Virginia Review, January, 1937.
 "Clubwomen Gaining on Goal," Charleston Daily Mail, March 11, 1969.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38 ° 8 .17.59 "	80 ° 12 .30.4 "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	38 ° 8 .25.92 "	80 ° 12 .17.005 "				
SE	38 ° 8 .18.15 "	80 ° 12 .11.73 "				
SW	38 ° 8 .11.19 "	80 ° 12 .23.88 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 16.4 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Clifford M. Lewis, S.J., Research Analyst at time of State Board approval

ORGANIZATION: West Virginia Antiquities Commission DATE: 5-25-70

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Old Mountainlair, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va.

CITY OR TOWN: Morgantown STATE: West Virginia CODE: 47

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name: Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.

Title: Acting for the State Liaison Officer

Date: May 25, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SUMMERSVILLE JUNC. U.S. 191.47 MI.
RICHWOOD 23 MI.

LOBELIA 5.5 MI.

LEWISBURG JUNC. U.S. 601.28 MI.
REINICK 12 MI.

SE COR.
LONG.
30° 12' 11.73"
NE COR.
30° 12' 17.00"
NW COR.
30° 12' 20.01"
SW COR.
30° 12' 23.22"



