

THEME: War for Independence

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME	
COMMON:	General Charles Lee House, "Prato Rio"
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Prato Rio (Hopewell)

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: Smithfield Road (State Route 48) County Route 1			
CITY OR TOWN: Leetown			
STATE West Virginia	CODE	COUNTY: Jefferson	CODE

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 type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Mr. Ily Bratina			
STREET AND NUMBER: Prato Rio - Route 1, Box 28			
CITY OR TOWN: Kearneysville .. 25430	STATE: West Virginia	CODE	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Charles Town	STATE: West Virginia	CODE	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey (1 photo)			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1936 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D.C.	CODE	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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DESCRIPTION	
CONDITION	(Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input 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

Prato Rio, now a L-shaped house with a 64 by 22 feet stone section and a 30 by 18 feet rear long wing, reached its present form in four steps between 1731 and 1840. In 1731 Han Yost Heydt, or Hite, erected a one-story log cabin which was 18 feet square as his residence. The walls were comprised of large square hewn logs clincked with clay; there was one chimney and fireplace, a single large room on the first floor, and a sleeping loft above. Sometime after 1800 this loft was changed into a second story bedroom and the log walls were covered over on the exterior by clapboarding.

About 1733 his son, Jacob, erected a 22 by 32 foot one-story stone house 12 feet to the east of the log cabin and connected the two structures by means of a breezeway. The new addition has field-stone walls, a gable roof, a end chimney in the center of the south end and a second end chimney at the northeast corner. Three-bays wide, there was a center door in the east or front elevation. The first floor consisted of one large room with two fireplaces, the left or attic above was unfinished, and under the stone portion there was a full cellar. This L-shaped house was the structure that Charles Lee purchased in 1774 and made his home until 1782. General Lee lived in the one-room stone section, used the log cabin as his kitchen, and the loft above it as quarters for his servants.

About 1820 board partitions were inserted into the stone section to subdivide the original one large room into a four-with a center hall flanked on either side by a pair of rooms. Probably at this same time a bedroom was also added over the rear breezeway. About 1840 a 22 by 32 foot one-story stone wing was built on the main axis and added to the north end of the 1733 stone house. This new addition, built in the same style as the original, also had field stone walls, was three-bays wide, had a center door in the east facade, and a gable roof. The new addition had two rooms on the first floor, an unfinished attic above, and a full cellar below. The interior walls in both sections of the stone house were (and are) plastered and the ceiling beams were originally exposed. In the 1930's the beams were covered over and the two original fireplaces in the 1733 stone section have been closed up. Prato Rio is in good condition and has never been restored. The structure still includes all of the Revolutionary--period house and the building has been little-altered since the 1840 additions. Used as a private residence, Prato Rio is not open to visitors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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Charles Lee House,
Prate Rio

(Continuation Sheet)

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Boundaries of the General Charles Lee House Property, Prate Rio:

Approximately 160 acres of land, including the General Charles Lee House, "Prate Rio," beginning at the northwest corner at latitude 39° 21' 01" - longitude 77° 57' 00", then going northeast about 4100 feet to the northeast corner at latitude 39° 21' 12" - longitude 77° 56' 10", then going southeast about 1100 feet to a point at latitude 39° 21' 06" - longitude 77° 56' 16", then proceeding south about 900 feet to a point at latitude 39° 20' 58" - longitude 77° 56' 14", hence continuing southeast about 500 feet to a point at latitude 39° 20' 55" - longitude 77° 56' 08", then going southeast about 500 feet to a point located on the northern edge of the Smithfield Road (State Route 48) at latitude 39° 20' 52" - longitude 77° 56' 04", hence going west along the northern edge of Smithfield Road about 1850 feet to a point at latitude 39° 20' 40" - longitude 77° 56' 22", hence going northwest about 100 feet to a point at latitude 39° 20' 45" - longitude 77° 56' 34", then going northeast about 700 feet to a point at latitude 39° 20' 50" - longitude 77° 56' 29", then continuing northwest about 1650 feet to a point at latitude 39° 20' 59" longitude 77° 56' 45", then going southeast about 200 feet to a point at latitude 39° 20' 57" - longitude 77° 56' 48", then going northwest about 1000 feet to the northwest corner, the point of beginning.

Precise boundaries, as described above, are on record on a copy of U.S. Geological Survey Map: Middleway Quadrangle, West Virginia, 1955, 7.5 Minute Series, on file with the Historic Sites Survey, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service.

SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1774-1782			
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 type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input 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	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			
<p>Prato Rio was the home from 1774 to his death in 1782 of Charles Lee, an important major-general of the Continental Army during the War for Independence. The house is the only extant structure that is significantly associated with General Lee. The farmhouse now has a floor plan that dates from 1820 and the northern half of the stone portion was added in 1840.</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>HISTORY</u></p> <p>Charles Lee was born at Dernhall, Cheshire, England in 1731. He became an ensign in 1747 and a lieutenant in 1751. He was on the Braddock expedition of 1755 against Fort Duquesne, and became a captain and served in the Mohawk Valley in 1756. He was badly wounded in Abercrombie's disastrous attack on Fort Ticonderoga in July 1758. Recovering, Lee was present at the capture of Fort Niagara in 1759 and with Amherst at the capture of Montreal in September 1760. Returning on leave to England, he became a major in 1761. In 1762 he accompanied the British expeditionary force to Portugal, where he became a lieutenant colonel and served ably under Brigadier General John Burgoyne in the campaign of Villa Velha. On October 5, 1762 Lee performed a brilliant feat of arms when he led a night attack on a Spanish post in Portugal, crossing the Tagus River and carrying his objective at the point of the bayonet. With peace, Lee was retired and put on half-pay in November 1763.</p> <p>Seeking military service elsewhere, Lee was well received by Frederick the Great and became aide-de-camp to Stanislaus, King of Poland, in whose army he attained the rank of major general in 1765. In 1766 he returned to England and received a grant of 20,000 acres in Florida for his military services. In 1769 Lee fought with the Russian army against the Turks, lived in England and France in 1771-72, and came to North America in 1773, where, in 1774, he took up land in Berkeley County, Virginia (now Jefferson County, West Virginia).</p>			

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General Charles Lee House
"Prato Rio" (Continuation Sheet)

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(1)

8. Significance (Continued)

Naturally a radical, Lee fully endorsed the patriot side and, because of his military reputation and wide experience, was highly regarded by both the Continental Congress and Washington. On June 17 the Congress made Lee the second ranking major general of the army besieging Boston. Lee was witty and satirical, cynical, sarcastic and irascible in his disposition. He was also positive and dogmatic in his manner of speaking, egotistical, vain, petulant, captious, ill-mannered, profane, violently changeable in his opinions, excitable, and ambitious. In short, a genuine eccentric, Lee never married, but poured out his affection on a pack of dogs that accompanied him everywhere. In anger he had little control over either his tongue or his pen. On the other hand, he was extremely generous to his friends and considerate of his soldiers, and he had a genius for making loyal friends of important people.

Regarded as a "prodigious acquisition" by both Washington and Congress, Lee probably lived up to these high expectations during the first 16 months of war. In July 1775 Lee joined the American camp before Boston, taking command of one of the three divisions comprising Washington's army. Lee, the experienced professional soldier amid hundreds of amateur Continental officers, brought the organizational, tactical, and engineering skills that were so badly needed. In the winter of 1775-76 Washington sent Lee to lay out defensive positions at Newport, Rhode Island, and in February-March 1776, he prepared similar plans for New York City. After first ordering Lee to assume command of the American army invading Canada, Congress countermanded this order, and on March 1, 1776 directed Lee to take command of the Southern Department. At Baltimore, Norfolk, and Williamsburg, and at Wilmington, N.C., Lee did all he could to strengthen defenses and organize cooperative efforts among the States. On June 4 he reached Charleston, S.C., where Governor John Rutledge put the South Carolina troops under his command. Lee's arrival greatly encouraged the Southern officers and troops. Noting the weak position of the half-finished fort on Sullivan's Island to the east of Charleston, Lee wished to abandon the fort. However, too much labor and prestige was already invested in Fort Moultrie (then known as Fort Sullivan), and the hour was late, so Lee finally agreed to complete the fort and make it as defensive as possible. When the British launched their poorly planned and executed naval assault on the fort on June 28, they were driven off with heavy losses. In his report to Congress, Lee gave full credit to the Carolinians for the victory.

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General Charles Lee House
"Prato Rio" (Continuation Sheet)

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8. Significance (Continued)

On August 8 Congress ordered Lee to return to New York City, where the main British army had landed and was pressing Washington. Lee reached the main army and assumed command of a division on October 14, 1776. At a council of war held two days later, Lee vehemently urged Washington to retreat to a safer position and to abandon Fort Washington on the Hudson. Washington did retreat to White Plains, but decided to hold on to Fort Washington in an effort to block the navigation of the Hudson as long as possible. On November 12 Washington crossed to the west bank of the Hudson and entered New Jersey, leaving Lee on the east shore with three divisions or about 5,500 effective troops under his command. On October 16 Lee wrote to General Horatio Gates that he disliked the position of the army and that Congress was a herd of stumbling cattle. Washington was wrong, he continued, to let these legislators interfere with military operations (they had passed a resolution on October 11 calling on Washington to hold Fort Washington). On November 15 the British stormed Fort Washington, killing or taking prisoner 2,818 Americans in the fort. Joseph Reed, Washington's adjutant general, and Lee now entered into a correspondence that was highly critical of these blunders of Washington and which ended with Reed's suggestion that the army believed Lee should supercede Washington as the commander-in-chief. By November 21 Lee had become insubordinate and refused to obey Washington's repeated orders to his divisions to New Jersey. Lee did not cross the Hudson until December 5 and then moved very slowly towards Washington. On December 12, taking up quarters at a inn located 4 miles from his troops, Lee wrote his famous letter to Gates, condemning Washington for the loss of Fort Washington and remarking "entre nous, a certain great man is most damnably deficient." On the following morning Lee was surprised and taken prisoner at the inn by a detachment of British dragoons, ironically enough, the very unit that Lee had led to glory in 1762. Lee's capture, however, was regarded by both Washington and Congress as a great loss.

Lee was taken to New York City and kept there for a year in close and exasperating confinement. After a winter's imprisonment, he apparently became so intimate with General Howe, the British commander-in-chief, that he drew up a plan, dated March 29, 1777, for defeating the Americans. At the same time Lee was sending insistent notes to Washington and to Congress requesting that a committee of Congress be sent to confer with him and the two Howes, with veiled hints that great things might be expected from such a conference. Congress and Washington refused to accede to this suggestion and it is possible that Lee never saw this giving of information to the British as treason.

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8. Significance (Continued)

Lee was exchanged for General Richard Prescott in April 1778 and on May 20, 1778 rejoined the army at Valley Forge, where he was welcomed by Washington and the soldiers almost as a conquering hero. At councils of war held on June 17 and 24, when Washington suggested aggressive action against Sir Henry Clinton's army as the Monmouth campaign opened, Lee replied it would be "criminal" to hazard an engagement and most of the general officers present agreed with Lee. On June 27 Washington decided to attack the British army then retreating overland from Philadelphia to New York; the command of the advance guard of the American army, because of seniority, should have fallen to Lee, but he declined and Lafayette was then given the honor of leading the attack. But when Lee learned that Washington had built up the advance corps to include some 6,400 men, or nearly half the army, he asked for and received the command.

On the morning of June 28 Lee advanced cautiously as neither he or Washington had much accurate information about the terrain. Lee crossed three ravines or morrasses, one of them bridged only by a narrow caseway, and then came into contact with the British rear guard. The Americans attacked but there was no formal line of battle or order and the generals did what they pleased. Meanwhile Sir Henry Clinton stopped his retreat, faced his main army about, and advanced to attack in line of battle. Lee ordered Lafayette into position to form the American line of battle, but when the latter fell back to adjust his position, other brigades did likewise. Lafayette again pulled back, probably without orders—then orders came from Lee to retire. The retreat now became general, with some regiments in good order and others in disorder as they recrossed the ravines. Lee himself seemed to be altogether self-possessed. The advance guard had passed two of the three ravines when Washington rode up well in advance of his own troops. His last message from Lee had indicated probable victory and Washington was amazed and furious to find the troops retreating. He and Lee exchanged hot words and Washington took command. He stopped the retreat, formed a new line of battle behind the third ravine as the remaining part of the army came up, and fought the drawn battle of Monmouth.

On June 30 Lee wrote to Washington, demanding an explanation of the treatment accorded on the 28th. Washington curtly refused to apologize. Demanding a court of inquiry, Lee immediately got a court martial, which sat at Brunswick, N.J., from July 4 to August 12, 1778. He was found guilty of disobedience of orders by not attacking, misbehavior before the enemy, and disrespect to the commander-in-chief, and was then mildly sentenced to be suspended from the army for 12 months. Lee left the army in September for Philadelphia, where he wrote numerous letters to Congress complaining of ill treatment. On December 3, 1778 he published his "Vindication," which was so abusive of Washington that Colonel John

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General Charles Lee House
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8. Significance (Continued)

Laurens challenged Lee to a duel and seriously wounded the general. By July 1779 Lee had retired to his estate, "Prato Rio" in Virginia, whence he continued to write frequent and querulous letters to Congress, the newspapers, and all his friends. On January 10, 1780, in consequence of a particularly insulting letter to Congress, this body resolved that it had "no further occasion for his services in the army of the United States." His dismissal took effect on January 18, 1780.

Lee retired to his Virginia farm and vented his spleen for the rest of his life. Two years later he returned to Philadelphia where, on October 2, 1782, he died. Despite his express desire that in death he be spared association with any church, he was buried in the Christ Church graveyard in Philadelphia.

HISTORY OF PRATO RIO

In 1731 Han Yost Heydt, or Hite, acquired a large plantation which he named "Hopewell" at the future site of Leetown and here in the same year he erected a one-story 18-foot square log cabin. In 1733 his son, Jacob, enlarged the cabin by erecting a 22 by 32 foot one-story stone house and connected the former structure with the latter by means of a 12-foot breezeway. In 1774 Jacob Hite sold his 3,000-acre Hopewell plantation and house to Charles Lee (deed recorded November 21, 1775), who renamed the estate "Prato Rio." This was to be General Lee's home until his death in 1782. Sometime after 1800 a second story was added to the log cabin, which still forms the rear wing, and its exterior was also covered with clapboarding. About 1820 the stone house, which originally consisted of one large room was subdivided by means of board partitions into four rooms (its present plan) and about 1840 a one-story stone addition, 22 by 32 feet in size was built on the main axis and added to the north end of the 1733 stone house.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

West Virginia, A Guide to the Mountain State (American Guide Series) (New York, 1941), 312-13.

Dictionary of American Biography, XI, 98-101.

John W. Shy, "Charles Lee: The Soldier as Radical," in George A. Billas, ed.,

George Washington's Generals (New York, 1964), 22-53.

John R. Alden, Charles Lee, Traitor or Patriot (Baton Rouge, 1951).

Christopher Ward, The War of the Revolution (2 vols., New York, 1952).

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				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	39°	21'	01"	77°	57'	00"	39°	20'	49"
NE	39°	21'	12"	77°	56'	10"	10/246920		
SE	39°	20'	49"	77°	55'	55"	4359200		
SW	39°	20'	33"	77°	56'	45"	location of house		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 160 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
		XX	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service

DATE: 7/27/72

STREET AND NUMBER: 801 - 19th Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE: D.C.

CODE:

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

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

CONSERVATION PLAN

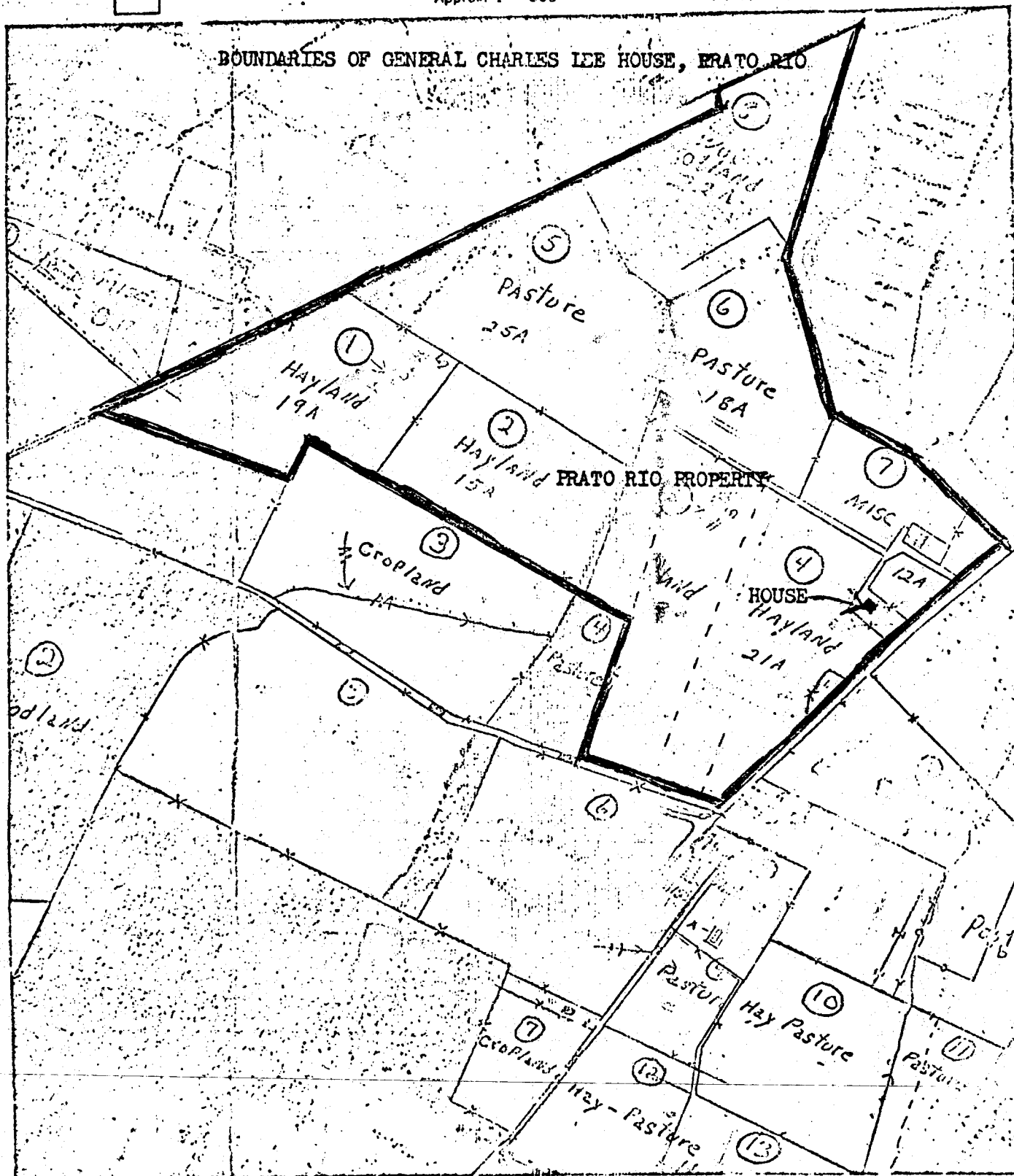
Prepared by U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, cooperating with
Soil Conservation District

Owner _____ Address _____ Phone _____
Operator _____ Address _____ Phone _____
Township _____ County _____ State _____ Plan No. _____
Photo No. _____ Acres _____ Planner _____ Date Prepared **1972**

☐ = 1 Acre (Approx.)

Map Scale:
Approx. 1" = 660'

Scale, (Approx.)
500' 1000'



U.S.G.S. 7.5 Minute Series,
Middleway Quadrangle,
West Virginia,
1955
Charles Lee House, Prate Rio

	Latitude	Longitude
NW	39° 21' 01"	77° 57' 00"
NE	39° 21' 12"	77° 56' 10"
SE	39° 20' 49"	77° 55' 55"
SW	39° 20' 33"	77° 56' 45"

