

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Beirne, Andrew, House; "Walnut Grove"

AND/OR COMMON

"Walnut Grove" (preferred)

## 2 LOCATION

STREET &amp; NUMBER

U.S. Route 219

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Union

☒ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

West Virginia

CODE

54

COUNTY

Monroe

CODE

063

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES RESTRICTED☐ YES UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mrs. Nancy Miles White

STREET &amp; NUMBER

"Walnut Grove Farm", U.S. Route 219

CITY, TOWN

Union

☒ VICINITY OF

STATE

West Virginia 24983

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Monroe County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Union

STATE

West Virginia

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Volume II, Historic Preservation Plan, State of West Virginia

DATE

1973

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

West Virginia Antiquities Commission

CITY, TOWN

Morgantown

STATE

West Virginia

# DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE.....
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Because the main house at "Walnut Grove" had evolved over a period of fifty years rather than having been designed and built as a single composition, it is a dwelling that has more character and charm than a sense of style. Its varied roofline, irregular fenestration and diverse architectural style reflect this organic process.

In plan, "Walnut Grove" is T-shaped, the base forming the north-south axis (approximately 60 feet) and the top being the east-west axis (approximately 80 feet), and it is really the integration of four separate structures built between about 1780 and 1830. The north-south wing, the oldest section, incorporates two, two-story log buildings constructed end-to-end with end chimneys and a central chimney. A two-story portico carried on five square columns runs the length of this wing; however, the irregular fenestration and randomly placed doors belie the attempted monumentality.

Sometime after 1825, a two-story, brick addition, approximately 24' x 48', was abutted to the northwest wing. It was subsequently connected to the detached kitchen, also a log structure, and this brought the overall depth of the east-west wing to about eighty feet. The two-story, Creek Revival style brick addition is the most architecturally prominent section of "Walnut Grove." The three-bay east facade with center entrance is a well executed exercise in proportioning window area to wall surface. An elliptical overlight, sidelights and paired colonnettes are skillfully incorporated into the entrance that is further emphasized by a one-story porch supported by square columns. The large-paned, 6/6 sash windows have characteristic wood lintels with corner blocks. Two interior side chimneys (north elevation) provide fireplaces for each of the four rooms in this addition.

A certain architectural unity has been brought to "Walnut Grove" by the covering of the log sections with weatherboarding and painting the exterior of the entire house white. This was first done after the brick section was constructed, and the traditional exterior has been retained.

The evolution of the dwelling is important, log construction of early settlement having given way to the brick of an established period. The first two-story log section of four rooms (that abutting the brick house on the south) was probably built before 1783 and that which joins it on the south (also of four rooms) was added around 1800. At the time the building's size was doubled, it is thought that a detached log kitchen (now the west end of the top of the "T") also was added. These were joined after 1825 by the brick section built directly against the old log "houses" and connected to the kitchen by a frame addition.

The interior of the log units is not especially interesting, but that of the brick section has several notable details. The entrance door beneath the portico is surrounded by pilaster-type elements with a reeded effect that is repeated in the cornice both below and above the elliptical overlight. Although the stair in the center hall has plain balusters, its newel post and handrail are attractive, it has brackets in the string and is paneled on the first level to the height of the landing. Mantels are also detailed, as is exemplified in the reeding of the pilasters and around two indentations that flank a center panel with urn in the dining room.

As is usual for a large, nineteenth-century farm of this area, outbuildings proliferate. To the southwest of the dwelling is a two-story, four-room frame building that served as slave quarters and was probably constructed at the same

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time as the brick section of the main house. This unit has been added to recently to provide modern conveniences that allow its use as a guest house. Other dependencies dating from the nineteenth century include a two-room frame office building and brick smokehouse to the west of the old kitchen section and a stone springhouse south of the dwelling.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION-SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS-GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Earnest settlement of what is now southeastern West Virginia began in the second half of the eighteenth century, but the area was still frontier and sparsely populated by 1800. Michael Erskine, Jr., builder of the log sections of "Walnut Grove," was among the pioneers, and Andrew Beirne, builder of the brick section and refiner of the whole, catered to that element and helped bring the area out of the frontier era. Beirne was a merchant who accumulated a sizeable fortune through business ventures that made goods available at the doorsteps of farmers and in general stores located at settlements over a vast stretch of countryside. As Andrew's renown grew so did his influence, and he served Monroe County in several state and national political offices. His son, Oliver, did not have political ambition, but he did continue to expand family holdings and is said to have been one of the wealthiest men in the Virginias after the Civil War.

Michael Erskine, Jr., and his brother-in-law, James Alexander, were among the first permanent settlers in what became Union District of Monroe County, having arrived from Augusta County, Virginia, in 1774. Alexander sold Erskine 221 acres of land that became the location of a farm and the site of the beginnings of "Walnut Grove." Here Erskine built the first two-story, four-room log house about 1783 and settled with his new wife, Margaret Hanly Paulee, a woman who had been captured by Shawnee Indians in 1779 while passing through the vicinity and was ransomed and returned some four years later. This man was among the leaders of a developing section; after Monroe County was formed in 1799, he played a part in having the county seat established near his home at the new town of Union, a community that numbered Erskine among its first trustees.

In 1825 the property was sold to Andrew Beirne, a man who came to the United States from Ireland in 1793 and soon embarked on a business career as peddler-merchant. Ambitious and hard working, he channeled his Philadelphia beginnings into widespread operations on the fringes of settlement in Virginia, becoming wealthy through the dealings he had with farmers and artisans. Beirne had business connections in many established areas and traveled a great deal, obtaining goods in eastern cities and selling or trading them in the interior. Soon he set up stores at fixed locations while continuing to provide door-to-door services for the scattered populace. His type of activity was needed on the frontier, but those who ended in debt to this keen merchant often had to turn over some or all of their land. Beirne accumulated a sizeable acreage in Monroe County under circumstances that some would call less than honorable and others would refer to as sound business enterprise. His field of operation expanded to the west and south as he opened additional stores; eventually he even established a wholesale grocery outlet in New Orleans.

Andrew Beirne amassed a fortune of over one million dollars value as an

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outstanding merchant, and the impetus of his undertakings helped develop his home area. Service to the community included the building of a grist mill and working on three turnpike commissions that helped open transportation links. He was a colonel of Monroe militia, member of the Virginia House of Delegates, State Senator, delegate to the constitutional convention of 1829-30, Presidential elector and twice a United States Congressman.

While Andrew set the foundation of Beirne family influence in western Virginia, it was his son Oliver, next owner of "Walnut Grove," who carried the name to its height in terms of economic and social standing. Like his father he had a head for business, or at least for amassing wealth through business dealings. Although a college graduate in medicine, he never practiced. It was his association with John Burnside in the New Orleans wholesale enterprise that proved most propitious, especially in its expansion to sugar planting. When John Burnside died in 1881, it is said that he left Beirne an estate in Texas and Louisiana that was valued at approximately \$6,000,000. Spending most of his time in Monroe County, Oliver undertook ventures with several prominent residents that ultimately brought him ownership of the nearby Old Sweet Springs Hotel and control of this fashionable resort at which he lived during and after the Civil War. He had large Virginia landholdings and provided sizeable estates for his children. The Beirne mystique, however, apparently ended with him, and much of the accumulated wealth and property dissipated over succeeding generations. "Walnut Grove," though, remained intact, and the house and surrounding farmland still belong to Beirne descendants.

1. West Virginia Geological Survey, Vol. 1, Charleston, W. Va.: 1916, 1917, 1918.  
 (pp. 66, 67)  
 2. Allen, Owen R. A History of Monroe County, West Virginia. Raleigh: Raleigh Publishing Co., 1974. (Originally published at Stanton, W. Va., 1916.) (pp. 220-21, 202-04)  
 3. Tracy, Charles S. Chronicle of Monroe County, West Virginia. Raleigh, N.C.: Cornerstone Press, Inc., 1973. (pp. 176, 180)

**TECHNICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF DESIGNATED PROPERTY: 5 ACRES  
 REFERENCES:

4 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE

C. E. Torley, Research Assistant and James E. Harding, Historian

ORGANIZATION

West Virginia Antiquities Commission

DATE

November 4, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 630

TELEPHONE

(304) 296-1791

CITY OR TOWN

Morgantown

STATE

West Virginia

**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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*James E. Harding*

TITLE West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE January 7, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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White, Edward T. "Andrew and Oliver Beirne of Monroe County," West Virginia  
History, XX (October 1958), 16-23.

WEST VIRGINIA  
UNITED BY THE  
MINIA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
STATE AGENCIES

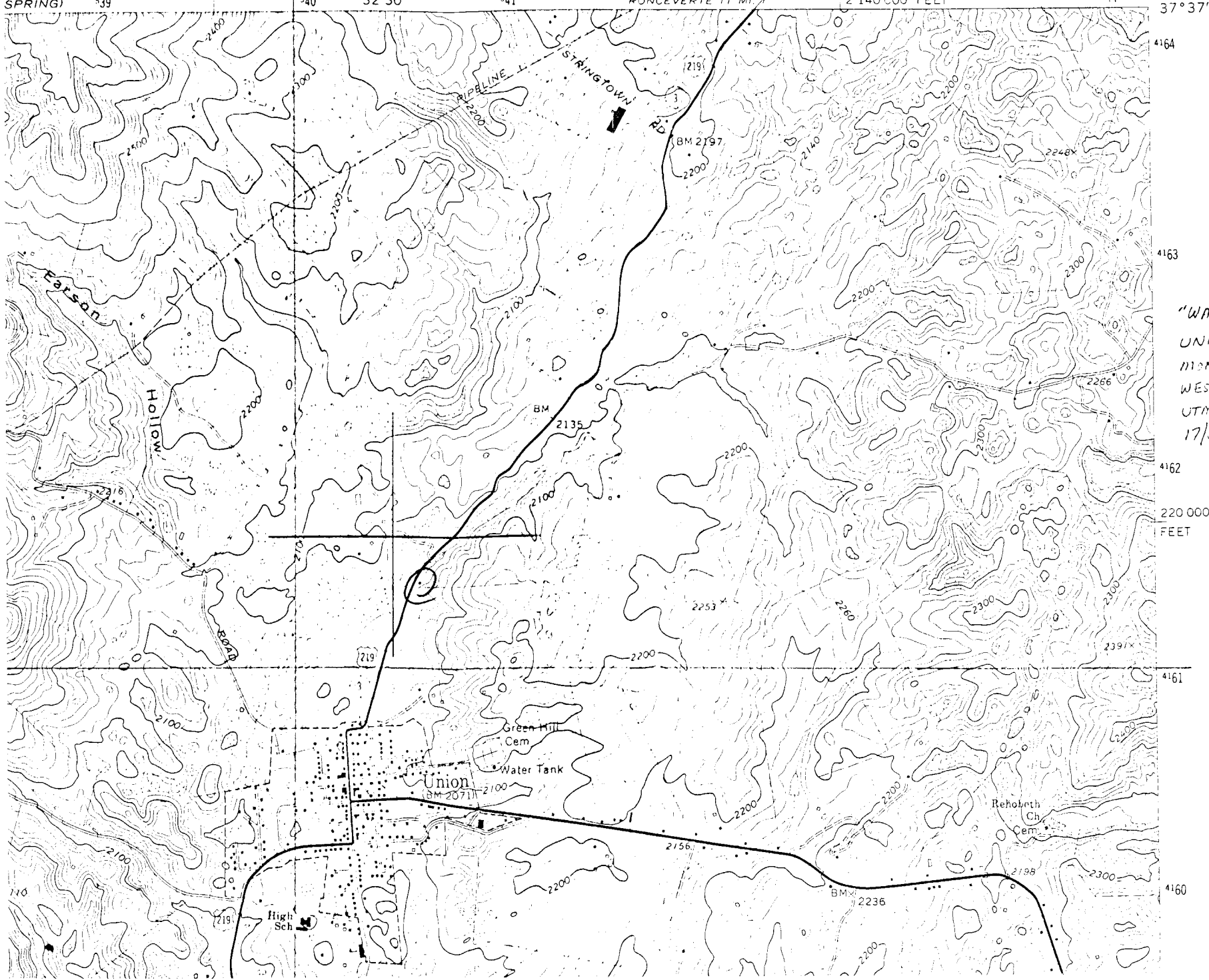
LINE NE  
SPRING)

UNION QUADRANGLE  
WEST VIRGINIA—MONROE CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

SE 1/4 ALDERSON 15' QUADRANGLE

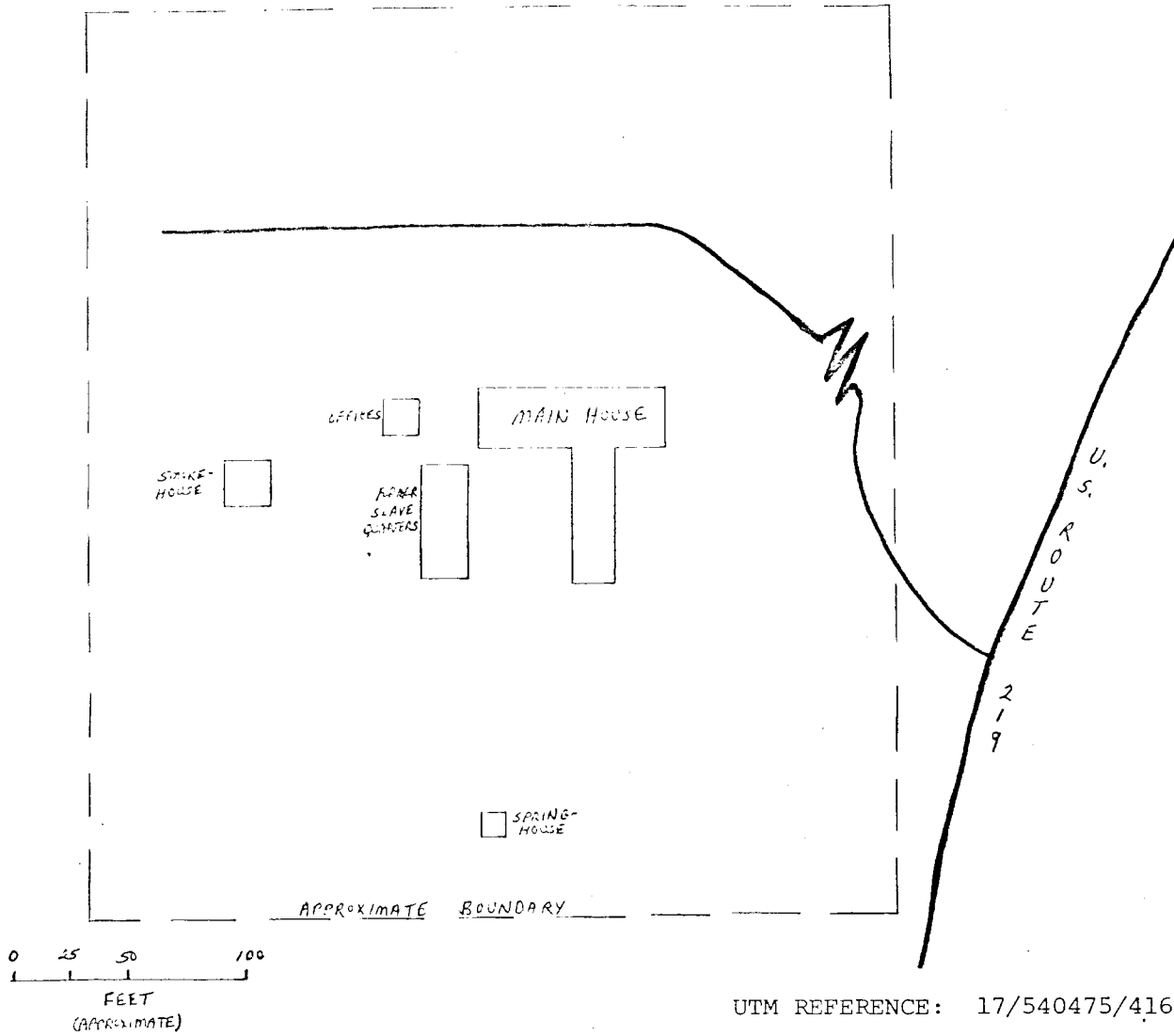
4959 III NW  
(RONCEVERTE)

539 540 541 214000 FEET 544 80°30' 37°37'30"



"WALNUT GROVE"  
UNION VICINITY,  
MONROE COUNTY,  
WEST VIRGINIA  
UTM REFERENCE:  
17/540475/4161620





UTM REFERENCE: 17/540475/4161620

"WALNUT GROVE"

Union vicinity,  
Monroe County,  
West Virginia

