

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

VLR: 11/16/71 NRHP: 2/23/72
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: VIRGINIA	
COUNTY: STAUNTON (in cit.)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
SEARS HOUSE

AND/OR HISTORIC:
SEARS HOUSE

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
NE end of Sears Hill Rd. in Woodrow Wilson City Park

CITY OR TOWN:
Staunton (James Kenneth Robinson, Congressman, Seventh District)

STATE Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: (in cit.)	CODE 790
-------------------	------------	----------------------	-------------

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<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 type="checkbox"/> Comments Other (Specify) <u>Vacant</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Staunton Dr. & Mrs. W. Larry Harrell

STREET AND NUMBER:
Sears House 400 Marquis St.

CITY OR TOWN: Staunton	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51
---------------------------	--------------------	------------

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Augusta County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Staunton	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51
---------------------------	--------------------	------------

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building,

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51
---------------------------	--------------------	------------

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: VIRGINIA
COUNTY: STAUNTON (in cit.)
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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 type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sears House stands at the top of the steep Sears Hill, overlooking the downtown section of Staunton. The hill, which forms the Woodrow Wilson City Park, has been left largely in its natural state and is dotted with especially fine shade trees, all forming a particularly appropriate setting for the picturesque house.

The house itself is a classic example of the small "bracketed cottage" so widely popularized in America by Andrew Jackson Downing in his influential book The Architecture of Country Houses of 1850. The small, one-and-a-half-story frame dwelling is sheathed with board and batten and is covered with a gable roof with cross-gable. The roof is metal and has a chimney placed slightly to the east of the cross-gable. Beneath the eaves around the main part of the house are long, shallow-scrolled brackets. The use of round headed arches in the pair of narrow windows in the cross-gable and in the three-bay arcaded front porch make the house conform more to the "Tuscan mode" of cottage rather than the Gothic. The porch shelters an off-center front door and one window - the only openings on the first floor level of the front. At the southwest corner of the house is a three-story octagonal-ended tower covered by a shallow hipped roof with dentiled cornice. It is uncertain whether or not this tower is an original feature or a very early addition; however, it conforms closely in style with the architecture of the main part of the house. The tower features tall, rounded headed openings on the first two levels and rectangular, louvered ventilators on the top level. The house's service area is contained in a one-story section extending around the southeast corner of the house. The south side of this section is sheltered by a porch supported on three thin posts.

The interior of the Sears House is laid out in an irregular plan and has starkly plain woodwork, in conformity of Downing's doctrine of informality and simplicity. One enters through the front door into a small stair hall with its plain stair ascending eastwardly against the front wall. Opposite the front door is a door leading into the dining room. On the right side of the stair hall is a door leading into the parlor which occupies the west side of the first floor. The first floor room of the tower is reputedly where Barnas Sears had his library.

At present the house is unoccupied and is in only fair condition. It has been sealed to some degree against intruders, but vandalism has occurred, chiefly in the form of broken windows. The structure is currently being studied with the hope of renovating it to serve as a community or neighborhood center.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Sears House is significant for its association with Dr. Barnas Sears (1802-1880), a prominent educator, who owned and occupied the house from 1867 until his death. Sears, a native of Massachusetts, was a graduate of Brown University and later studied at Halle, Leipzig, and Berlin. In 1848 he was made secretary and executive agent of the Massachusetts Board of Education; and from 1855 to 1867 he served as president of Brown University. In 1867 Sears was chosen by George Peabody of Massachusetts to be the general agent and administrator of a \$3,500,000 fund set up by Peabody to further "intellectual, moral, or industrial education among the young. . . of the Southern and Southwestern States of our Union." Following his acceptance of the position, Sears moved to Staunton because he felt that city would be the most convenient location for him to carry out his duties. For his residence, Sears purchased a board-and-batten cottage erected on a hill overlooking the city the previous year by a "Dr. Madison." It was from this simple, picturesque dwelling that Sears administered the famous Peabody fund which played such an enormous role in the establishing of free schooling in the post-war South.

In addition to its associations with Dr. Barnas Sears, the Sears House is significant architecturally as a notable example of the "bracketed cottage", an architectural form popularized through the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing. Many of these "bracketed cottages" were built around the nation in the 1860's, but because of the War and Reconstruction few were erected in Virginia. Of these few, the Sears House survives as perhaps the Commonwealth's purest example of this distinctly American form.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Barnas Sears," Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 16, p. 537.
 Downing, A. J., The Architecture of Country Houses, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1969.
 Gordon, Armistead C., Esq., "Staunton, Virginia, Its Past, Present and Future," New York: South Publishing Co.
 Hellman, George T., "The First Great Cheerful Giver," American Heritage, June 1966.
Proceedings of the Peabody Educational Fund in six volumes, University of Virginia.

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 °	08 '	45 "	79 °	04 '	20 "
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Less than 10 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff; James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: Aug. 11, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
 Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 51

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 _____

James W. Moody, Jr., Director

Title Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

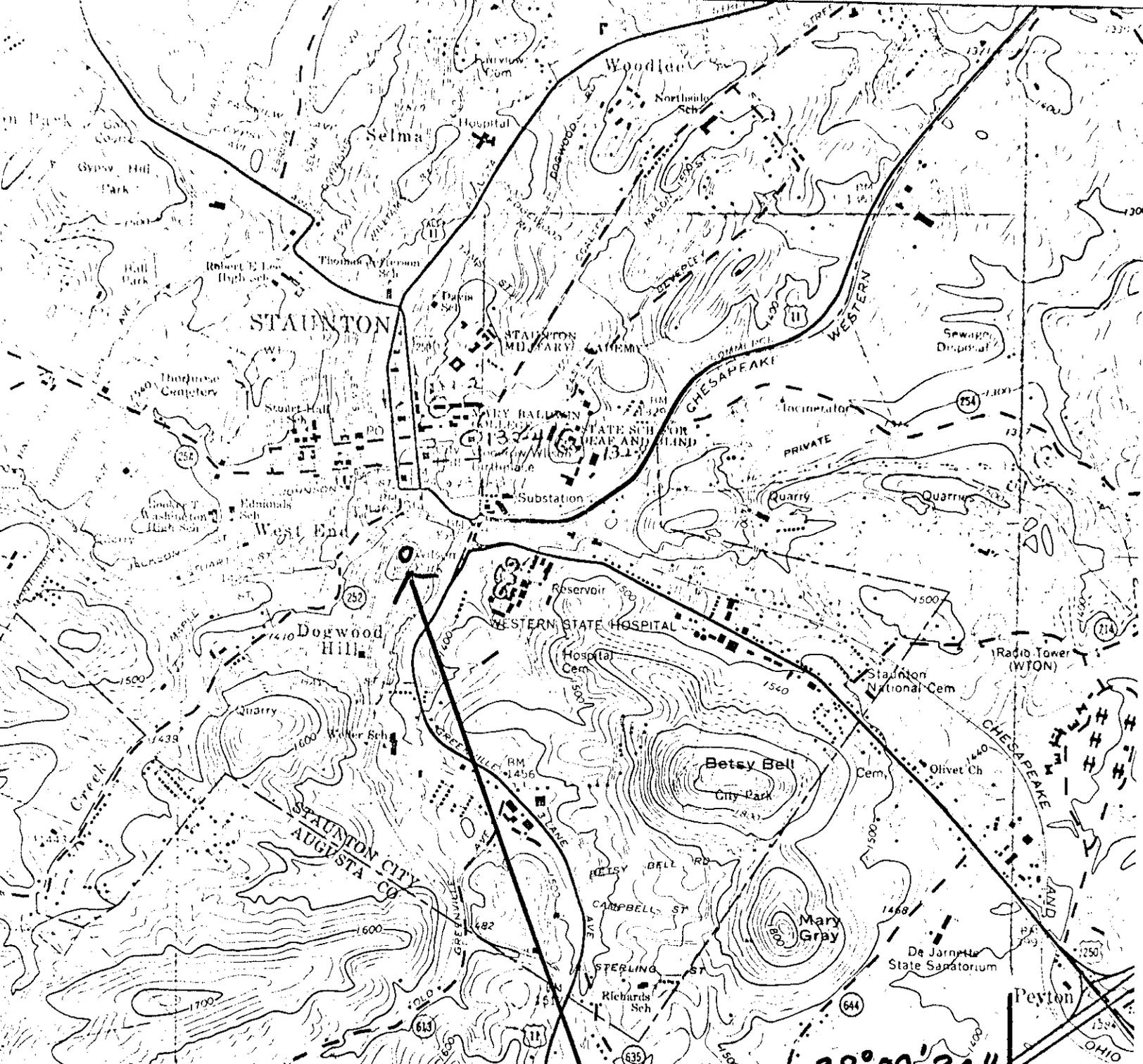
Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

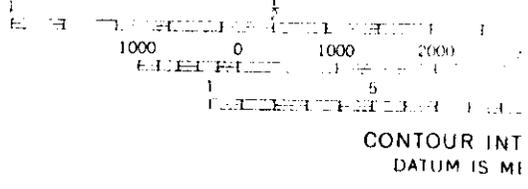
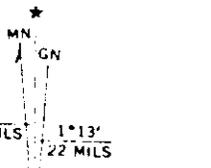


1:830 000 FEET

GREENVILLE 10 MI. (STUART'S DRAFT)
 LEXINGTON 31 MI. 5160 II SE

SCALE 1:24 000

38° 07' 30"
 79° 21' 0"



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
 Staunton, Va. 1964

SEARS HOUSE
 latitude
 38° 08' 45"

longitude
 79° 04' 20"

AND 1964 MAGNETIC NORTH
 N AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIC
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL F
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP:

