

VLR-3/19/97 NRHP-5/23/97

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

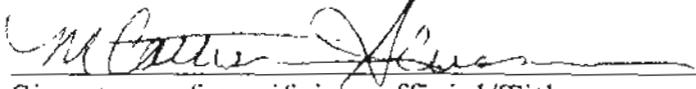
historic name Finney-Lee House
other names/site number VDHR File No. 33-179

2. Location

street & number W. side Rt. 717 0.75 mi. N. of jct. w/ Rt. 890 N/A not for publication
city or town Snow Creek X vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Franklin code 067 zip code 24112

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 4/17/97
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other (explain):

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>		sites
<u>1</u>		structures
		objects
<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
FUNERARY	cemetery
AGRICULTURE	processing
TRANSPORTATION	road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
FUNERARY	cemetery
AGRICULTURE	animal facility
TRANSPORTATION	road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Federal
- Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	BRICK
walls	BRICK
roof	ASPHALT
other	WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1839-1945

Significant Dates

1839

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mountjoy & Ligon (monument carvers)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
#
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
#

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approximately 114 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	606570	4077020	3	17	607560 4077270
2	17	606990	4077530	4	17	607640 4076620

X See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Leslie A. Giles and J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>	date	<u>December 18, 1996</u>
organization	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni, Preservation Consultant</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 366-0787</u>
street & number	<u>PO Box 7825</u>	zip code	<u>24019-0825</u>
city or town	<u>Roanoke</u> state <u>VA</u>		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Gary Michael and Carol Bowles Gibson
street & number 3100 Snow Creek Road telephone (540) 632-8531
city or town Martinsville state VA zip code 24112

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1

Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Finney-Lee House, completed in 1839, is a south-facing two-story dwelling of Flemish-bond brick construction with an asphalt-shingled side-gable roof, exterior end chimneys, one-story front and side porches, and a 1970s one-story rear addition. The symmetrical three-bay front elevation reflects a center-passage plan within. The interior retains a full complement of Federal-Greek Revival and Greek Revival mantels, as well as paneled wainscots and two-leaf doors, a second-story "travelers room" originally segregated from the rest of the interior, ceiling-mounted quilt frame hooks, and other notable features. Adjoining the house are a ca. 1930 frame pack house (for processing and storing tobacco), a 1950-51 cinder-block dairy barn, and landscape features including early plantings and a white quartzite-paved front walk. Further afield are a fenced cemetery containing the marble tomb slab of Peter Finney (d. 1839) and an obelisk and other monuments associated with the Lee family, as well as three log tobacco barns (one converted into a cow barn) and miscellaneous modern outbuildings. The rolling pastureland surrounding the Finney-Lee House is interspersed with woodlots and streams including Snow Creek, a tributary of the Pigg River and ultimately the Staunton (Roanoke) River.

Inventory

1. House. 1838-39. Contributing building.
2. Front walk. 19th c. Contributing structure.
3. Dairy barn. 1950-51. Noncontributing building.
4. Pack house. Ca. 1930. Contributing building.
5. Chicken house. Ca. 1975. Noncontributing building.
6. Road trace. 19th c. Contributing site.
7. Cemetery. Ca. 1839. Contributing site.
8. Cattle barn. Ca. 1900. Noncontributing building.
9. Tobacco barn No. 1. Ca. 1900. Contributing building.
10. Barn. Ca. 1975. Noncontributing building.
11. Tobacco barn No. 2. Ca. 1900. Contributing building.

Exterior Description

The Finney-Lee House is constructed of Flemish-bond brickwork with evidence of pencilling and also patching and repointing at locations (such as over windows) where mortar or brick have failed in the past. Sheltering the front entry is four-bay front-gabled porch supported by Doric columns. The novelty weatherboard sheathing (painted white) of the porch gable, the beaded

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Description (continued)

matchboard (painted light green) of its ceiling, and possibly also the stave construction of the columns suggest the porch may date to the latter part of the nineteenth century, rather than the antebellum period. Other porch details are modern in date, including brick foundation piers with an infill of wood lattice and metal railings and steps. The entry under the porch is set into a paneled embrasure and has a transom with diamond-pattern divided lights evoking quarrel panes, double-leaf doors with four panels to a leaf, and flanking modern coach lamps. The door panels increase in width from top to bottom.

The windows typically have beaded surrounds with pegged jambs. The basement windows, which were originally fitted with horizontal wood bars, have four-over-eight sash; the first story windows have twelve-over-twelve sash; the second-story windows have eight-over-twelve sash; and the small windows in the gables have six-light casements. The soffits of the eaves on the front and rear elevations have regularly-spaced blank wood panels that evoke the mutules of a Doric cornice. The gable-end chimneys have stepped shoulders and iron hooks running up their faces that formerly secured lightning rods; a series of four porcelain and metal lightning arrestors on the roof ridge may date to the same period as the rod hooks.

On the east gable end, facing a former detached kitchen, is a shed-roofed porch with square wood columns with stock molded caps, wood steps, and modern brick foundation piers. Next to the porch is a basement entry reached by concrete steps under a shed roof. A back porch similar in form to the front porch formerly sheltered the rear entry; this porch was gone by 1945 and its location is now occupied by a one-story brick-veneer kitchen wing dating to the 1970s. This wing has an asphalt-shingled gable roof, six-over-six sash windows, and first-story and basement-level entries on the west elevation reached by a wood deck and stair with metal railings.

Interior Description

The front and rear entries open into a center passage containing a two-run stair with square newels and balusters, scrolled tread brackets, and a horizontally paneled spandrel. Rising with the stair is a paneled wainscot that reaches shoulder height on the landing. The newels have turned finials and, on the upper run, turned lower termini (almost pendants) that project from the ceiling of the passage. Also on the ceiling is a round plaster medallion from which a ruby-glass oil lamp on an adjustable chain formerly hung. The passage has pine board floors, plastered walls and ceilings, paneled wainscots, and six-panel doors with symmetrically molded surrounds and turned corner blocks--finishes and details that characterize most of the other rooms of the

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Description (continued)

house.

The room on the west side of the passage, once used as the main parlor, is dominated by an elaborately carved Federal-Greek Revival mantel (described more fully in the architectural analysis in section eight) and has paneled wainscots, windows in paneled and splayed reveals, and modern wallpaper and mechanical chases in the corners. In the 1940s this room retained old wallpaper with a pattern of green leaves and pink flowers on an off-white ground. The room on the east side of the passage served as a dining room, as indicated by its separate entry facing the former detached kitchen. This room too has a Federal-Greek Revival mantel, with triglyph-like or fluted panels over the pilasters. The room has an unusual seven-panel door to the outside entry, and a boxed winder stair in one corner with a six-panel door dissimilar to the others in the house. This stair originally provided the only access to a second-floor room that is said to have been used to quarter guests.

The second-floor "travelers room" (as it was known locally) now has a small doorway to the upstairs passage with a four-panel door and a Late Victorian surround with turned corner blocks. Other features of the room include a Federal mantel with diagonal reeding, a stairwell railing supported by square newels and balusters, and four hooks set into the ceiling that were formerly used to suspend a quilt frame. The other upstairs room contains a Greek Revival mantel with pilasters like those of the room below and a heavy Greek key molding in the frieze, and door and window surrounds with fluted moldings and mitered corner blocks. The passage contains the upper part of the main stair and the base of a boxed winder stair to the attic. Under this latter stair is a small storage compartment accessed by a one-panel door with a grained inner surface and surround. On one wall of the passage is a peg board with decoratively turned knob-like clothes hooks rather than the more common plain pegs. (This peg board may have been located in the first-floor passage originally.)

The attic is divided into two rooms and a center passage (mirroring the lower floors) and has six-panel doors (one with a Carpenter & Co. rim lock), a double newel post at the top of the stair, and beaded chairrails and baseboards. The basement, which also has center-passage plan, has an east room that once served as a dining room. This room was redone in the 1970s with wood paneling, brick-pattern vinyl flooring, a textured ceiling, and a wood-burning furnace on a brick platform. The concrete floor in this room was poured after a fire damaged an earlier wood floor before 1945. The other basement room, which served as a "keeping room" or supply room through the 1940s, retains more of its early flavor, with plastered brick walls, a plaster over circular-sawn lath ceiling (other lath observed in the house is split), a six-panel door with

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Description (continued)

evidence of an original dark green paint color and a pegged and beaded surround, and a scored concrete floor. Historically, the basement passage was divided into two compartments: one used as a "retiring room" and the other, located partly under the stair, as a pantry and root cellar. The partitioned-off pantry now contains a modern bathroom. The basement under the 1970s ell contains mechanical equipment; the main floor of the ell has a dining area with textured sheetrock walls and ceilings, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a closet.

Outbuildings and Landscape Features

The Finney-Lee House has lost its historic complement of domestic outbuildings. According to informants, before the 1940s a detached kitchen stood approximately thirty feet to the east of the porch on the east gable end of the house. This was a long log building with a cooking fireplace that also served as the residence of the household cook and, in antebellum times, possibly other slaves of the Finney and Lee families. In between the house and kitchen, offset to the north, stood a log meathouse measuring approximately ten by twelve feet in dimension, with clay and wood block chinking and a large iron pot for rendering lard. Beyond the kitchen and outside the nominated parcel stood the ice house, a pit-like structure with a frame roof and a bedding of straw and sawdust used to keep ice. Like the other domestic outbuildings, the ice house is gone, although a declivity marks its former location.

More evidence of early landscape features survive, most notably a front walk of unmortared white quartzite rubble that leads from the front porch down to the trace of a drive way that looped around the west side of the house. Mature ornamental trees include white oak, black walnut, elm, silver maple, and paulownia, and shrubs and flowers include American boxwood, hydrangea, lilac, rose, day lily, and iris. To the west of the house, beyond a concrete-capped well head, spreads a rectangular area formerly cultivated as a vegetable garden, and further to the northwest is a small orchard. A dinner bell on a post stands to the north of the house.

A group of farm buildings stand to the west of the house. The oldest of these is a two-story frame pack house with weatherboard siding painted white, a metal-sheathed front-gable roof, and a poured concrete foundation. A beaded tongue-and-groove door leads into the lower level, which contains shelves and a work table indicative of a later use as a workshop, and a ladder providing access to the upper floor. In the mid-1950s, John R. Mason, a hired hand of the Adams family, moved out of the main house and into this building, where he lived several years. Attached to the packhouse is a 1970s garage supported by wood poles and sided with recycled and painted-over pieces from two billboards, one advertising a McDonalds in Emporia, the other

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Description (continued)

a General Motors dealership in Penhook.

To the south side of the pack house stands a one- and two-story cinder-block dairy barn constructed in 1950 or 1951, with a poured concrete foundation, two-over-two metal sash windows, and a metal-sheathed side-gable roof. The two-story section contains a milking parlor with a hay and feed mow above. Concrete walkways, sockets for former stanchions, and remnants of a wood on log sleeper floor are evident. Adjoining the milking parlor is a feed room with a concrete floor and grain bins. The one-story section of the barn houses a cold-storage room with a concrete floor, sheetrock ceiling, and metal shelving. Extending off the west gable end of the barn is a concrete sluiceway that formerly contained an antibacterial solution through which the cows walked on their way into the barn. A pole-supported machinery shed stands against the south wall of the barn. To the south of the barn stands a small frame chicken house with masonite siding and a metal-sheathed side-gable roof. The building contains roosts and laying boxes.

To the south of the house and farm complex, about half way to Snow Creek and across a pronounced road trace, is located a fenced family cemetery measuring approximately fifty by forty feet in size and containing plantings of arbor vitae and periwinkle. The oldest dated grave in the plot is that of Peter Finney (d. 1839), marked by a fieldstone tomb supporting a marble slab manufactured by Mountjoy & Ligon of Richmond. The inscription includes the phrase: "He was a kind Husband affectionate Father a good master and kind neighbour." Next to her father's tomb is that of Elizabeth Ann Frances Finney (d. 1849), which is capped by a marble slab that also appears to have been made by Mountjoy & Ligon. Other monuments include a marble obelisk marking the graves of Charles C. Lee (d. 1879) and his wife, Louisa M. W. (d. 1883). Several graves are indicated by fieldstone markers, and others by shallow depressions. There is no marked grave for Ann Finney, the wife of Peter, in the cemetery.

The road trace mentioned above leads to a log cow barn located in the southwest corner of the property. This barn, which is in poor condition, appears to have served originally as a tobacco barn, as indicated by its form and by notches left behind by former tier poles. Two other tobacco barns, both in good condition, stand at the north end of the property uphill from the house. One of these, a crude saddle-notched building with a metal-sheathed front-gable roof, retains original fieldstone fireboxes at its two front corners that extend part way into the interior (one with flagstone cap stones, the other with concrete) and that formerly connected to sheet-iron flues (remnants of which survive) that looped across the floor of the barn and exhausted at two ports flanking the entry. The entry has circular-sawn jambs constructed with cut nails, evidence of a

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Description (continued)

date of construction about 1900 or during the last third of the nineteenth century. The barn has six tiers of tier poles forming four rooms and pole-supported side sheds--one still sheltering a pile of firewood. The other tobacco barn was converted to oil burning in the mid-twentieth century. Between the two barns stands a modern pole hay barn. According to Frances Adams Wheeler, who moved to the farm in the 1940s, field clearing in the area between this barn complex and the house uncovered a flat stone inscribed "I. [or J.?] Cook." The stone was interpreted to be a grave marker and was left in place out of respect for the deceased. It has not been relocated.

Integrity Statement

The Finney-Lee House has good architectural integrity. The house retains its principal exterior and interior character-defining features, as well as small but important features such as quilt frame hooks and peg boards. Modernizations have been largely relegated to the basement and ell. The 1970s ell is relatively small and unobtrusive. Less well preserved are the grounds surrounding the house, which have lost many early domestic outbuildings. The property retains a fairly good sample of historic farm buildings.

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Finney-Lee House, located in the Snow Creek valley of southern Franklin County, Virginia, is an outstanding example of a transitional Federal-Greek Revival plantation house. Completed for Peter and Ann Finney in 1839, the two-story brick house retains beautifully crafted mantels and stair detailing, a "travelers room," quilt frame hooks, and other features of note. The surrounding acreage encompasses a tobacco pack house and barns and a family cemetery containing the monuments of Peter Finney and his successors, the Lee family.

Justification of Criteria

The Finney-Lee House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of architecture, primarily for the quality and interest of its transitional Federal-Greek Revival detail, and secondarily for the quality and distinctive characteristics of outbuildings and landscape features. The resource is eligible at the local level of significance. The period of significance spans from 1839, the year the house was completed, through 1945, the year of a change in ownership that marks the end date of historic construction on the property.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Gary and Carol Gibson, owners of the Finney-Lee House, sponsored the project and shared their research on the property. Frances Adams Wheeler, the daughter of former owners Clyde and Myrtle Adams, shared her memories of the property as it was in the 1940s and 1950s, as did long-time area resident Lewis Bousman. Staff members of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources who assisted with the project included historian Dr. John R. Kern, architectural historian Anne Beckett, and National Register coordinator Elizabeth H. Lipford.

Historical Background

European settlers first moved into Franklin County's Snow Creek drainage during the second half of the eighteenth century. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Peter Finney (1783-1839), the son of one of the county's pioneer settlers (also named Peter Finney), began to purchase land in the Snow Creek area. By 1822, Finney and his wife Ann Walker (also Anna; d. ca. 1856) had built a dwelling--probably a small log house--on one of their parcels, and by 1826 the Finneys had amassed nearly 900 acres. In that year Peter purchased the 1,948-acre Snow Creek home tract of Robert and Tabitha Innes. Robert Innes was at the time a leading

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

citizen of the county; he had been among the first trustees of the town of Rocky Mount when the county seat was established in 1804, and as "a man of Great military turn of mind" he had been appointed to head the county militia in 1808. The Innes property included improvements valued at \$1,000, and it seems likely the Finneys moved from their humble \$150 homestead to the Innes residence.¹

Peter and Ann Finney's holdings averaged around 3,000 acres during the 1830s, much of it fertile bottom land along Snow Creek and its branches. The adults and older children among the Finney's thirty or so slaves worked in the plantation's fields and woodlots, raising crops of corn, wheat, oats, and tobacco and tending to cattle, sheep, swine, and horses. An inventory of the farm taken in November 1839 counted nearly 10,000 pounds of tobacco of varying grades and 5,000 pounds of pork on hand, among many other agricultural products. This prodigious output enabled the Finneys to better their living standards once again. In 1838-39, the value of improvements on the 1,948-acre tract jumped from \$1,000 to \$5,000, representing the construction of the Finney-Lee House and likely other buildings.²

Tragically, Peter Finney died while his new home was being completed. In his will he conveyed all his real and personal property to his wife, with the provision that as his children reached the age of twenty-one, she "give to them what she can conveniently spare and she thinks proper so as to not exceed their equal proportion of my estate." The Finney's daughter Louisa appears to have received her share first: in October 1840 her mother deeded to her a 500-acre parcel with \$100 in improvements. Ann Finney retained the bulk of the remaining acreage and the main house through the early 1850s. In 1850, according to the federal census of that year, her farm was estimated to contain 500 acres of improved land and 1,500 acres of unimproved land (mostly woodland) at a total value of \$10,000. The crops and livestock raised in 1850 were essentially the same as in the 1830s, with the additional information that the farm was home to two oxen and produced Irish and sweet potatoes, peas, and flax. In 1854 or early 1855, Ann conveyed 445

¹ Salmon and Salmon, *Franklin County*, 27, 88, 89, 91-93; Franklin County deed and land book records. The Innes to Finney deed is found in Deed Book 11, p. 490.

² Franklin County land book and will records. The agricultural statistics are taken from the inventory of Peter Finney's estate recorded in Will Book Ct. 2, pp. 92-97. The transitional Federal-Greek Revival character of the house lends additional support to a date of construction around 1840, as discussed in Section 7.

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

acres including the main house to her son William A. Finney. Then, in January 1855, William and his wife Sarah sold the tract for \$6,200 to Charles C. Lee, the husband of Louisa Finney.³

Through this series of bequests and sales, Louisa Mary Walker Finney Lee (1816-83) and Charles Clark Lee (1811-79) came into ownership of the Finney-Lee House, and through additional purchases the Lees assembled a holding of over 1,000 acres in the Snow Creek and nearby Turkeycock Mountain areas. Charles, a native of Bedford County, married Louisa in October 1835, and the couple established a household on the 500-acre portion of the Finney plantation that Louisa received from her mother in 1840. In the 1850 census, Lee was listed as farming 500 acres in Franklin County with a focus on tobacco production (the 3,000-pound product of his 100 improved acres was equal to the tobacco crop from his mother-in-law's 500 improved acres). According to Lee family tradition, Peter Finney built the Finney-Lee House as a wedding gift for Louisa and Charles, but there is no mention of this arrangement in Peter's will or other court documents. The house is said to have been built by the plantation's slaves using bricks manufactured in a kiln located to the south of the house.⁴

Even after they acquired the house in 1855, Louisa and Charles did not at first live there. The 1860 census lists Charles as a farmer and tobacconist residing in a household with his wife, the couple's son William, and several laborers in the Lafayette section of Montgomery County. The Montgomery County association accords well with a family tradition that Lee had acquired land in the community of Big Spring (now Elliston, located near Lafayette) prior to moving to Franklin County. The Lafayette-Big Spring area was antebellum Montgomery County's principal tobacco-growing section, a status it enjoyed on account of its proximity to Roanoke and James river routes to the state's major tobacco markets, and the year 1860 witnessed the county's

³ Franklin County deed, land book, and will records; U.S. census, Franklin County agricultural schedules for 1850. Peter Finney's will appears in Will Book Ct. 2, p. 13. Ann Finney's will is not recorded. The 500-acre transfer to Louisa Finney appears in Deed Book 16, p. 376, and the transfer from William Finney to Charles Lee appears in Deed Book 23, p. 486. The 1840 land book shows an unaccountable decrease in the value of improvements on Ann Finney's 1,948-acre tract from \$5,000 to \$2,600. The value of buildings on the 445-acre tract conveyed by Ann to William and from William to Charles totaled \$1,600.

⁴ Gibson, "C. C. Lee Home;" Frances Wheeler interview; and U.S. census, Franklin County agricultural schedules for 1850.

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Finney-Lee House
Franklin Co., Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

largest recorded tobacco crop. As one accustomed to the tobacco trade through his knowledge of Piedmont Virginia plantations, Charles Lee may have seen an opportunity to capitalize on his expertise by establishing himself as a middle man in a newly-prosperous tobacco-growing region. After the Civil War, and after tobacco production had declined in Montgomery County, the Lees moved back to their Snow Creek farm. According to the 1870 census, the Lee's farm then numbered 250 acres improved land and 800 acres unimproved land valued at \$5,500, with a continuing focus on tobacco production (5,000 pounds product) and a new emphasis on cattle raising.⁵

Charles and Louisa's son William Peter Finney Lee (1840-1911) attended Trinity College (now Duke University) and entered the Confederate army at the start of the Civil War. Commissioned captain of Company B, Fourth Virginia Infantry, he served for a time under Stonewall Jackson and took part in several important engagements, including Pickett's Charge at the Battle of Gettysburg, where he was wounded and captured. Released from the Johnson's Island prison in April 1865, he returned to Franklin County and married Nannie Susan Barrow (1842-1913) in 1866. The couple lived in Big Spring for several years before moving back to Snow Creek, where they helped with the running of the family farm while raising a family of six children and caring for William's elderly parents. William and Susan eventually came into possession of the Finney-Lee House and surrounding farmland, and they practiced diversified farming there until moving to Martinsville in 1906. Like his father before him, William Lee was an active member of the Masons.⁶

From the Lee family the property eventually passed to Milton Lavender, who in 1945 sold the house with 114 acres to Thomas Clyde Adams (1901-60), a machinist at Sale Knitting in Martinsville. Clyde and his wife Myrtle (1905-96) at first kept only a few milk cows for family use on the farm, but in 1950 or 1951 they hired their relative, local contractor J. W. Williams, to construct the cinder-block barn that stands to the west of the house, and they converted the farm into a commercial dairying operation. Milk from the farm was delivered by truck three or four times a week to a creamery in Rocky Mount for processing. In 1971 the property was

⁵ Franklin County deed and land book records; U. S. census, 1860 Montgomery County free population schedules and 1870 Franklin County population and agriculture schedules; and Worsham and Pezzoni, "Montgomery County," 164.

⁶ Gibson, "C. C. Lee House."

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Statement of Significance (continued)

purchased by Daniel and Carlene Joyce, who added the rear kitchen wing but otherwise left the house as is. The 114-acre farm was purchased by Carol and Gary Gibson in 1995.⁷

Architectural Analysis

The Finney-Lee House provides an excellent example of the transition from the Federal style to the Greek Revival style, the dominant classically-inspired styles of Virginia domestic architecture during the antebellum period. Most Virginia houses of the first three decades of the nineteenth century adopted the delicate and visually complex Federal style for interior treatments such as mantels and door and window surrounds. Beginning in the 1830s, homebuilders began to shift to the more robust and academically correct version of classicism known as the Greek Revival style. Other documented houses from the antebellum period in Franklin County generally (perhaps exclusively) exhibit either one style or the other, suggesting that once taste changed, old ways were abandoned. The Finney-Lee House therefore represents a rare hybridization of the two styles. The Finney family, and/or their unknown builder, were aware of the newly popular Greek Revival style and apparently eager to use it in the house, but by the same token they chose to retain certain elements from the Federal style.

Federal styling is most evident in the form of the mantels in the house, which typically have two-part or three-part designs with broken friezes. For example, the mantel in the first-floor west room has a three-part scheme with a central frieze tablet and smaller end tablets above the pilasters. The mantel also incorporates standard Federal details such as the covered urns at the ends of the frieze and a decorative frieze band with alternating gougework strokes and sunburst motifs. But this same mantel departs from the Federal style in the form of its pilasters, which feature clean Doric column shafts akin to the more accurate classical forms of the Greek Revival style. The elliptical moldings in the bed molding too are more Greek Revival in spirit, and the molded surround of the fireplace opening has a symmetrical profile--not the stepped asymmetrical profile of a standard Federal molding.

Other mantels also mix elements from the two styles, although less dramatically than the example above. One exception to the mixing is the mantel in the second-floor west room, a room that was probably intended for use as the Finney's bedchamber. This mantel's heavy Greek key molding is unequivocally Greek Revival in character, and appears to have been inspired directly by one

⁷ Lewis Bousman interview.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

of the pattern books of Asher Benjamin. Also Greek in inspiration are the door and window surrounds in most rooms, which are symmetrical in profile.

The Finney-Lee House belongs to what is probably a small group of similarly hybrid Federal-Greek Revival houses in western Virginia. The author is aware of two other examples--the 1840 Clark Royster House in Mecklenburg County, and Kentland, a Montgomery County house completed in the mid-1830s--both imposing brick houses. The Royster Clark House features a parlor mantel with pilasters in the form of Tuscan colonnettes, as well as a front entry transom with diamond-pattern lights like that at the Finney-Lee House. Kentland also has mantel colonnettes, but in other respects the house is more Federal in character. The apparent rarity of these hybrid houses may have something to do with the fact that the transition from Federal to Greek Revival occurred in Virginia during a period of nationwide economic distress following the Panic of 1837. Few large houses of any style were built between the regional construction booms of the 1820s and 1850s. The Finney-Lee House therefore illustrates an important period of change in Virginia's architectural development.⁸

The house and its associated outbuildings and landscape features are notable in other ways. The tradition that the second-floor east room was used for lodging guests is supported by the architectural evidence, which indicates that the room was originally accessible only from the dining room below. Frances Adams Wheeler recalls her neighbor, a Mrs. Mitchell, referring to the room as a "travelers room." A similar arrangement has been observed in the 1822-23 Bowling and Mildred Eldridge House in Halifax County, which has an upstairs room in the front section of the house accessible only from the first floor room (probably a dining room) of the rear ell. The room is also notable for its four ceiling hooks, which served as points of attachment for a suspended quilt frame. This practical solution, observed in other houses as well, allowed quilters to work intermittently: when work on a quilt stopped, the frame could be drawn up to ceiling level and the room returned to other uses; when the work resumed, the frame could be lowered back down to seating level. The fact that quilting took place in this room and not another may be related to its earlier use as a guest room segregated from the private zones of the house.⁹

⁸ O'Brien, "Clark Royster House;" Kern and Pezzoni, "Kentland Farm."

⁹ Pezzoni, "Bowling Eldridge House."

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The Finney's show-cased their prosperity in the artistry of their grave monuments. Peter Finney's tomb, and also apparently that of his daughter, were manufactured by commercial monument carvers located outside the region, giving them the cache of costly imported consumer goods. Originally, the clean lines and sparkling white of the marble tomb slabs would have contrasted dramatically with the dull, misshapen fieldstone markers that cluster around them--another demonstration of the family's standing in society. At the other end of the cultural spectrum stand the farm's log tobacco barns. The least-altered of these (barn no. 2) preserves a relatively complete wood-fired firebox/flue system--once a common feature of Piedmont Virginia flue-cure barns but later superceded by oil-burning systems and consequently removed from barn floors.

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UTM References (continued)

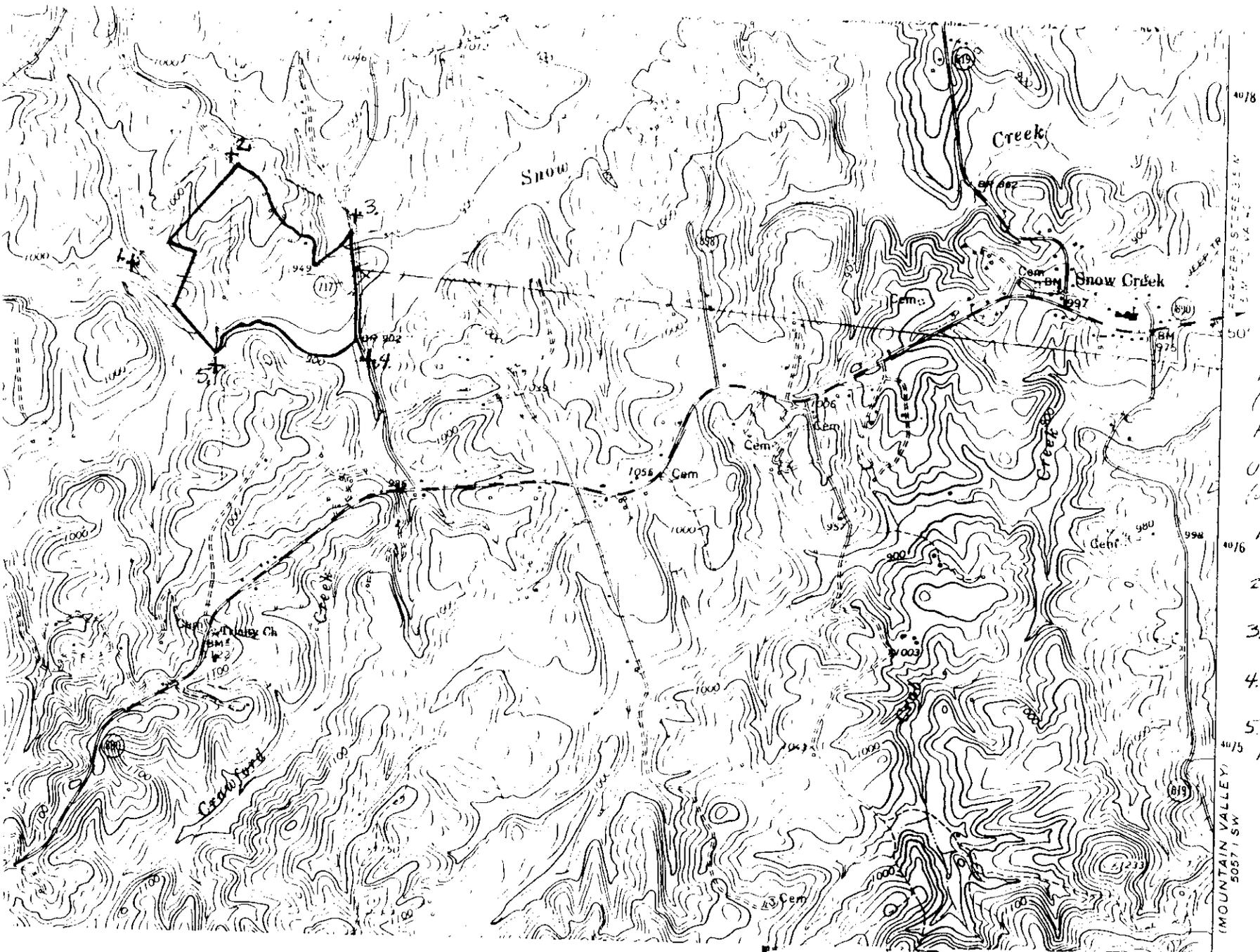
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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Finney-Lee House nominated parcel are portrayed on the accompanying 1:200 scale map.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Finney-Lee House nominated parcel include the house, outbuildings, and cemetery that support the architectural significance of the property.



Finney Lee Hook
 (VDNR No. 33-179)
 Franklin Co., VA

UTM references
 (all zone 17):

1. E 606570
 N 4077020
2. E 606990
 N 4077530
3. E 607560
 N 4077270
4. E 607640
 N 4076620
5. E 606960
 N 4076570