

VLR-3/19/09
NRHP-6/3/09

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 Pharsalia
other names/site number 062-0428

2. Location

street & number 2325 Pharsalia Road not for publication N/A
city or town Tyro vicinity _____
state Virginia code VA county Nelson code 062 zip code 22967

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] _____ Date 4/15/09
Signature of certifying official
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ____ 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

___ 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

Pharsalia

Nelson County, Virginia

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5. Classification
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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 9 </u>	<u> 10 </u>	buildings
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	objects
<u> 11 </u>	<u> 11 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

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6. Function or Use
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> Domestic </u>	Sub: <u> single dwelling </u>
<u> </u>	<u> secondary structure </u>
<u> Agriculture/Subsistence </u>	<u> processing, storage, </u>
<u> </u>	<u> agricultural field, animal facility, </u>
<u> </u>	<u> agricultural outbuilding </u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u> Domestic </u>	Sub: <u> single dwelling, secondary structure </u>
<u> Education </u>	<u> research facility </u>
<u> Recreation and Culture </u>	<u> outdoor recreation </u>
<u> Agriculture/Subsistence </u>	<u> horticultural facility </u>
<u> </u>	<u> agricultural field </u>

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
roof metal
walls wood
other _____

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

Pharsalia

Nelson County, Virginia

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8. Statement of Significance
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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.
- 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.)

- 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 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture
Architecture

Period of Significance 1814-1852

Significant Dates 1814, 1840, 1852

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) William Massie

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Thomas Massie, George Williams, William Massie

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 # _____

Pharsalia

Nelson County, Virginia

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 23.54

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	0673800	4185380	2	17	0673590	4185170	3	17	0673370	4185350
		<u>4185500</u>									<u>4185460</u>

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 Sandra F. Esposito
organization Antiquaries date 18 June 2009
street & number 140 Cradon Hill Ln telephone 434-946-7496
city or town Amherst state VA zip code 24521

Additional Documentation

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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)

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Property Owner

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

name Richard T. and Florence Flippin Morgan
street & number 2333 Pharsalia Rd telephone 434-277-5696
city or town Tyro state VA zip code 22967

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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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Pharsalia
Nelson County, Virginia**

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7. Summary Description

Pharsalia is a complex of antebellum plantation buildings located near the village of Massie's Mill in Nelson County, Virginia. The complex is at the base of Priest Mountain on a knoll overlooking the Tye River Valley and was part of the plantation established by William Massie in 1814. The Federal style, frame manor house was complete by 1816 and had a one-story, linear, single-pile, four-room plan with 11 bays across the front facade. Massie enlarged the house in the mid-19th century to its current T-shaped plan. Notable features of the house include an offset pediment, from a later addition, that rises above the original roofline, and 6/6 double-hung sash windows with wide center lights and smaller flanking lights in the sashes. Many dependencies surround the manor; most were erected before 1862. These buildings include a kitchen, barn, several slave quarters, and the privy. This is one of the best collections of antebellum Piedmont plantation buildings in Nelson County. The complex is well documented due to the preservation of William Massie's papers. The house and grounds retain integrity of location, design, materials, association, feeling, workmanship, and setting. The complex is maintained and used for special events and workshops; it continues to be part of a working farm

and is a significant resource relating to the agricultural and social history of Nelson County.

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Inventory of buildings

Contributing Buildings (9)

Manor House- 1814-Federal style-frame construction with weatherboard
Icehouse/School-1834-Vernacular- frame construction with weatherboard
Privy-c.1814-Vernacular- frame construction with weatherboard
Kitchen/Laundry/Slave Hospital-1834-Vernacular-brick construction
Slave Quarter #1-c.1834- Vernacular- log construction
Smokehouse-c.1814- Vernacular- frame construction with weatherboard
Weaving Room-c.1814- Vernacular- frame construction with weatherboard
Crib Barn-c.1830- Vernacular- post and beam with vertical siding
Slave Quarter #2-c. 1814-Vernacular-log construction

Contributing Sites (2)

Commercial Smokehouse-c.1830-remains of brick foundation
Mill Site-c.1830, rebuilt 1840-site known by 1852 map

Noncontributing Buildings (10) and Sites (1)

Level Green Smokehouse-c.1803, reconstructed 2005- Vernacular- frame construction with weatherboard
Slave Quarter #3-c. 1814, c. 1952, c. 1980- Vernacular- log and frame construction
Concrete Building #1-c. 1950-concrete block
Concrete Building #2-c.1950-concrete block
Garage-c.1950-concrete block
Stable-c.1950-post and beam
Chicken Coop-c.1980-frame
Small Wooden Shed #1-c. 1980-frame
Small Wooden Shed #2-c. 1980-frame
Frame Shed-c. 1950-frame
Pool-c.1950-site

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Architectural Descriptions

Manor House—1814—Exterior—Contributing Building

The manor house is frame with beaded weatherboard siding. The brick foundation is parged and scored; the foundation is taller at the front of the house because the house is built on a sloping site. There are five brick chimneys: two are interior parged chimneys, one is an interior end chimney, and the last two are exterior end chimneys. The house has a hip roof over the 1814 section and a gable roof over the additions; all are covered with standing-seam metal. The house was built in several phases. The earliest section was built between 1814 and 1816 in the Federal style. The house is approximately 100 feet long. It consisted of a linear, single-pile plan of four rooms: two on either side of a center hall. The Federal-style exterior details include the modillioned cornice of the earliest section. Other details include window trim of plain architraves and molded sills that are pegged at the corners; the pedimented entry porch with a lunette, tracery window; and wide, single-leaf entry with sidelights and transom. The principal elevation has eleven bays and faces southeast. The entry is located in the center bay beneath a three-bay porch with a gable roof. The house retains its original shutters and shutter hardware. Each room of the house has an exterior entry to facilitate movement of the servants into the house. The exterior single-leaf doors are typical six-panel wooden doors and the cellar doors are single-leaf batten doors. In addition to the individual entries, there was a bell system installed to summon servants, each bell had a different tone, and the system has been retained in parts of the house.¹

The next phase of construction occurred in 1840. The rear ell addition was added off-center to the original house. It was a one-story frame addition consisting of a rear passage, storeroom, chamber, and plantation office. This area was enlarged in 1852 according to plans drawn by William Massie. He added a rear room or nursery behind the master bedchamber and a second story with an attic above the first floor and the off-center gable seen above the 1814 roofline. Typical fenestration for these additions are 6/6 double-hung sash windows on the second story and 9/9 double-hung sash windows on the first story; all with reeded architraves. The rear entry has two 6/6 small double-hung sash windows flanking the entry and a transom above the entry.²

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The newest additions were added in the 20th century. Around 1920 a small one-story room was built onto the northeast side of the 1850 rear room. In the 1980s, the c. 1920 room was remodeled and integrated into the larger wing that included a commercial kitchen and a sunroom. The fenestration in this area varies. There is a small 6/6 double-hung sash window, a bay window and three walls of the sunroom are glazed. In the 1950s, a bathroom was built onto the exterior of the northwest elevation of the 1814 section of the house.³

The porch, c. 1814, has four stone risers and the porch floor is made of soapstone. This stone, which is used on all the exterior porches, is believed to be from the Phoenix Quarry that once existed in Nelson County.⁴ The remaining 19th century era porches are all made of the same stone. The porch has tapered square columns and the railings between the columns have square balusters. The pediment above the porch contains a lunette window with tracery. The pediment and entire cornice of the elevation have modillions; this pattern was copied in the 1852 pediment seen above the original roofline. The single-leaf entry, beneath the porch, has six panels; above the door is a three-light transom and flanking the door are narrow 2/2 double-hung sash windows vertically aligned to appear as sidelights. The placement of these windows could be intentional as they are seen clearly between the porch columns.

The southwest side elevation of the 1814 section of the house has two entries. The lower single-leaf batten door is an entrance to the cellar. The upper door is a single-leaf entry that is located beneath a shed roofed entry porch supported by tapered square columns with a railing and soapstone flooring similar to the front porch.

The northwest (rear) elevation was significantly altered by the 1840/1852 rear addition and it divided the elevation into two sections. The southwest side has the warming kitchen adjacent to the original dining room. The exterior entry into the kitchen was sealed c. 1950, but the entry and stoop remain. The southeast side of the elevation retains its functional, exterior entry. It is beneath a one-bay porch with a gable roof made of similar materials to the front porch. There is a c. 1950 bathroom constructed on this side of the elevation. The construction required removal of one original window that was reused in the wall of the new construction.

The entrance to the wine cellar is at the basement level of the northeast elevation of the 1814 section. A bulkhead, built in 1834, protects the single-leaf, batten door.⁵

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The rear addition was added slightly off-center to the central hall of the original house. It was built in two phases: the first floor in 1840 and the second story and rear room in 1852. The 1840 addition consisted of a passage, chamber, and storeroom and plantation office and it was added onto the center hall of the earlier section. The 1852 addition of the second story included the staircase, bedrooms and an attic above them and included a one-story room to the rear of the house. These additions give the house its T-shaped plan and creates the unusual appearance of the main elevation with the pediment above the original roofline and off-center.

The southwest side elevation of the 1840/1852 addition has a shed roof porch that spans most of the first story. The roof is supported by tapered columns on brick piers. The entry is a double-leaf door with three panels on each leaf and it is surrounded by a transom and sidelights. The transom has six lights and rope trim decoration around the window on the exterior and interior. The narrow 6/6 double-hung sash windows are aligned to appear as sidelights. The west end of the elevation, constructed in 1852, has an enclosed porch area screened by vertical bars. This area may have been the springhouse and well room; it has wooden cabinetry that appears to have been used as a cooler. William Massie is known to have had water piped to the house through wooden pipes; there is no evidence of a well in the yard. There is a single-leaf entry from this enclosed porch into the house; the top half of the door has nine lights.⁶

The northwest side elevation of the 1840/1852 addition has a single 9/9 double-hung sash window. In addition, the elevation includes the 20th century additions. There is a small 6/6 double-hung sash window in the c. 1920 section and in the c. 1980s addition are a bay window, a single-leaf modern door and a glazed wall.

The northeast elevation of the 1840/1852 addition has a brick chimney centered on the wall and three typical windows on the first story and the second has two windows. There is a narrow, six-light horizontal sliding sash window in the gable area of the addition located above the original roofline; there is an identical window in the same location on the opposite elevation. The 1840 plantation office is located on the western end of the 1840/1852 addition. The office has a single 6/6 double-hung sash window on its northeast side. The southeast side has a single-leaf entry protected by a door hood. It is accessed by a small stoop made of the same stone as the other exterior entries.

The 20th century additions are sympathetic to the house. The northwest elevation of the c.1980s addition is glazed. The southeast elevation has a glazed wall and two single-leaf modern entries.

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Manor House—Interior

The original plan was a linear, single pile plan with four rooms: two on either side of the central hall. The inner rooms, on either side of the hall, were the dining room and the parlor; the outer rooms were bedchambers. Between the inner rooms and outer rooms are passages with floor-to-ceiling storage cabinets. The 1840/1852 section was attached to the rear of the center hall. The second story has a passage and four rooms including a garret room and an attic. The 20th century rooms on the first floor are a commercial kitchen and a sunroom. Most of the interior flooring and trim work is original and varies according to construction period. The 1814 section has quarter sawn oak flooring; the rear addition has a wide plank flooring of a different wood. Most interior doors are single-leaf with six panels. Throughout the house are 19th century Federal-style mantels, each with different decoration. The Federal-style decoration throughout the house, both the exterior and interior, is inspired by period pattern books by William Pain, Asher Benjamin and Batty Langley.⁷

The center hall has a set of double-leaf doors leading to the dining room and another to the rear hall. The parlor door is single-leaf. The hall has wide baseboard and a chair rail with paneled wainscot, all original. There is 1950s denticulated crown molding around the ceiling.

The southwest rooms are the dining room, now the library, and the southwest bedroom. The library has the same paneled wainscot with chair rail and 1950s crown molding as the center hall. The northeast wall of the room has two large, floor-to-ceiling, voluted pilasters on either side of the doorway flanking the entry from the hall. On either side of the pilasters are bookshelves and between the pilasters, over the doorway, is a landscape painting of “Three Springs” by a local artist. The shelves and pilasters are Colonial Revival alterations dating from the 1950s. The original mantel on the southwest wall has paneled pilasters flanking the firebox. The five-part frieze has a raised centerpiece of horizontal reeding and the recessed panels of the frieze have incised swags. The cornice of the fireplace contains punch-and-dentil and the shelf is articulated. Two doors flank the fireplace; the northwest door was the exterior entry from the warming kitchen into the dining room and is no longer in use. The other door leads to the passage and southwest bedroom.⁸

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The southwest bedroom has vertical bead board wainscot beneath the chair rail. The mantel, located on the northeast wall, has a crossetted fireplace surround and a crossetted frieze. The raised centerpiece has incised swags and vertical reeding. A molded mantelshelf completes the composition. The 1950s doorway, on the northwest wall, is the entry to the bath created from the old warming kitchen. The exterior entry to the room is on the southwest wall.

The rooms on the northeast side of the center hall are the parlor and northeast bedroom. The parlor, adjacent to the hall, has trim work similar to the center hall with paneled wainscot beneath the chair rail and 1950s crown molding. Like the library, this room has a fireplace flanked by two doors; all on the northeast wall. One door is the exterior entry to the room and the other leads to the passage and northeast bedroom. Between the doors is the most decorative mantel in the house. A vine motif decorates the sides of the fireplace surround and the top of the surround has a row of incised swags. There are paired, reeded pilasters flanking the surround and the five-part frieze has vertical recessed panels on the ends and in the raised centerpiece. Between the ends and centerpiece are horizontal recessed panels. The mantelshelf is articulated and the cornice is decorated by a band of reeding and another of fluting.

The northeast bedroom has the same decoration as the southwest bedroom. Sometime in the 19th century, a chimney fire damaged the floor and mantel of the southwest wall. The current mantel replaced the original. Paneled pilasters support a five-part frieze decorated with a raised centerpiece and a dentiled cornice. There are two single-leaf doors on either side of the mantel: one is the entry from the parlor and the other is the exterior entry to the room. In the 1950s, the northeast window was removed and replaced with a door leading to a 1950s bathroom constructed onto the northeast side of the original house. The original window was installed in the northeast wall of this bathroom.

Behind the center hall is the stair hall of the 1840/1852 addition. The stair hall has wide baseboard and plain wainscot beneath a chair rail. The southwest wall has a double-leaf exterior entry. On the opposite wall are the staircase, landing and entry to the storeroom. The single-leaf entry on the northwest wall of the hall leads to the former master bedchamber. The staircase is an open, dogleg stair with plain brackets, turned balusters and a turned newel post with a ball finial. There is a riser to a landing where the staircase rises to the second floor. This landing is in front of the storeroom entry. The storeroom has floor-to-ceiling, open shelving and was used to keep valuables under lock and key. The windows have vertical wooden bars and the only entry to the room is from the passage.

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Behind the hall and in line with the center hall is the master bedchamber, built for William Massie's wife, Maria. It was built off-center, according to tradition, so she could look out the front door from a chair set in the room. Today, the room is the dining room. It has a simple wainscot and chair rail with rope motif. On the northeast wall, the single-leaf door leads to the plantation office. The mantel and two single-leaf doors are located on the northwest wall; the northeast door opens to a closet and the southwest door leads to a passage and the rear room. Between the doors, the mantel has reeded colonettes capped by reeded consoles flanking a raised centerpiece with vertical reeding. The five-part, stepped cornice has the same rope motif as in the fireplace surround, the chair rail and the transom window of the rear hall. This mantel appears to exhibit transitional detailing of both the Federal and Greek Revival styles. The colonettes and reeded consoles are Federal-style details while the elongated moldings in the mantelshelf are influenced by the Greek Revival style.⁹

The plantation office is located on the northeast side of the dining room. The room is without decoration and has an exterior entry. It is still used as an office.

There is a passage between the dining room and the rear room. It was converted to a butler's pantry in the 20th century. There is an entry to a storage area from the passage. The storage area is on the southwest side of the house and was created in the 1950s. The storage area has a poured concrete floor and is without decoration.

The rear room, built in 1852, was the nursery. It is used as a den today. The remaining 19th century chair rail and wainscot matches the rear passage trimwork. The mantel, on the southeast wall, has paneled pilasters on the sides and an undecorated raised centerpiece in the frieze. The southwest wall has a single-leaf entry with two lower panels and nine lights at the top of the door and there is a 19th century box lock on the door. The wall also contains a horizontal sliding sash window with six lights per sash. In the 1950s, bookshelves were installed on the northwest and northeast walls and the ceiling beams were exposed. The single-leaf door on the northeast wall is wider and has been altered by the replacement of the upper four wooden panels with glass. This is the entry to the 20th century additions.

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The 1852 second-story addition has five bedrooms and an attic space above the second floor. The largest room on the second floor is at the northwest end of the house and is the only one with a fireplace. The mantel has paneled pilasters supporting a wide five-part frieze with a raised, undecorated centerpiece. The end blocks of the frieze are paneled and it has a stepped cornice. This mantel is unusual to the house because the frieze of the mantel is wider than the other mantels in the house; however, it is similar in style to the den mantel and both of these show the elongated moldings that were part of the Greek Revival style. There is also a closet on one side of the mantel. At the opposite end of the second floor is the pediment room. This room is without decoration except for two horizontal sliding sash windows. According to family lore, guests were moved to the room when their welcome was wearing thin. In the summer, it is one of the hottest rooms and one of the coldest in the winter. The attic stair, located in the passage, has two risers then a door concealing the remainder of the stair. The second floor rooms have wide baseboards and door framing similar to those of the first floor. Massie drew the second story plans in his 1851 memorandum book and the interior framing used down braces like the framing of the privy.¹⁰

The 20th century additions were added to the northeast side of the nursery: one around 1920 and an expansion around 1980. Dr. Edgar Parsons added a small room and he installed running water and central heat to the house in the 1920s. A c. 1920 door with horizontal panels is the remaining evidence of that addition in the room. In the 1980s, this addition was incorporated into a large, modern commercial, kitchen and sunroom addition. The kitchen has terra cotta floor tile, modern appliances, and cabinetry. The sunroom, beyond the kitchen, has brick flooring in a basket weave pattern. On the southwest wall of the sunroom is a simple hearth with a stove insert. The remaining walls are comprised of fixed glass panes with a long pane at the top and a smaller pane at the floor and single-leaf entries in the center walls of the southeast and northwest walls of the room.

Yard, Outbuildings and Landscape

The yard surrounding the manor house includes many mature trees, shrubs and plants of different varieties. The house is on a hill at the foot of Priest Mountain and the yard is sloping in the front with a relative flat area in the rear. The southeast yard, in front of the house, is an open lawn overlooking the Tye River Valley. A stone at the far end of the yard, near the drive, was once used to assist people mounting onto carriages and horses. The driveway winds from the bottom of the hill up and around the front of the house; it leads to the service areas in the rear of the house. The side and rear yards

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contain the outbuildings. The house is sited between the lawn and the rear yard facing the lowlands of the Tye River Valley. Today, the once-open farmland is planted with fruit trees belonging to Silver Creek Orchard. The company is owned by descendants of William Massie, the first person to plant commercial orchards in Nelson County.¹¹

The entire Pharsalia farm has archaeological potential. A comparison between the buildings described by Massie's papers and those remaining indicates that there were more buildings in the area. These included a dry house (for preserving fruit), a tobacco-packing house, a stable, a corncrib, tobacco barns and perhaps many others. It has been noted that this one of the best collections of plantation buildings in Nelson County.¹²

Ice House/School –c. 1834—Contributing Building

The icehouse/school is located northeast of the main house. It is a one-story frame building over a raised brick foundation laid in five-course American bond. Massie's Memorandum book notes that Madison Black laid the bricks in 1834. The siding is beaded weatherboard like the main house. It has a standing-seam metal front gable roof with a gable end entry. The single-leaf batten door faces the southeast. Protecting the entry is a wooden, one-bay porch with a shed roof extension supported by square posts on brick piers and a wooden stair. Typical fenestration is 6/6 double-hung sash windows. The ice pit is the basement and it is lined with vertical logs. The basement was always used for ice storage. The first floor has been used as a multi-purpose area such as a school and workshop, and was known to have been used as a meetinghouse by Dr. Edgar Parsons.¹³

Privy—c. 1814—Contributing Building

The privy or necessary, as Massie knew it, is northeast of the house, and is separated from the house by a rise. It has a stone foundation and is a one-story frame building with beaded weatherboard. The side gable roof is sheathed in standing-seam metal. The two gable side entries face the house. The rear of the building faces the driveway and has two clean-out panels. There is a dead sash with four lights at each gable end. The interior framing is mortise and tenon with down braces and pit sawn, pegged studs. The interior is divided into two seating sections.¹⁴

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Kitchen/Laundry/Slave Hospital—c. 1834—Contributing Building

Directly behind the house is the two-story brick kitchen/laundry/slave hospital. The building has a standing-seam metal side gable roof. The foundation is stone and the walls above the foundation are brick, laid in five course American bond on three elevations. The main elevation, facing the house, is laid in Flemish bond, and contains three entries to the building. There is a central brick chimney. All doors and windows on the lower floor have jack arches. The typical windows are one of two types: 6/6 double-hung sash windows and six-light horizontal sliding sash windows. The batten doors are single-leaf. The kitchen has a wooden door hood with a standing-seam metal covering. The center door leads to the second story area above the laundry and the third door provides access to the laundry. The kitchen retains its large hearth and its hearth equipment and brick floor. There is a pantry beside the hearth. On the exterior wall is an enclosed stair to the second floor. Massie specified spruce to construct the kitchen ceiling and white pine for the doors, staircase and laundry room floor. The second floor of the kitchen was used as a slave hospital and was originally split into two sections but there is access between the two areas now.¹⁵ The kitchen is currently used for exhibition and the laundry and the second floor are now used for storage.¹⁶

There was a kitchen and laundry known to have been at Pharsalia since it was built. Massie's notes contain the 1834 plans for a brick kitchen and laundry. In 1836, he wrote that he needed to complete the kitchen as well as reshingle the old kitchen and laundry. The frame and brick buildings likely coexisted for a time on the farm.¹⁷

Slave Quarter #1—c. 1834—Contributing Building

Next to the kitchen is the log-framed, saddlebag plan, slave quarter. This is a typical building form used on many southern plantations. It is one of three one-and-one-half-story slave quarters on the property. The building has a stone foundation and v-notched logs that were once covered with beaded weatherboard. There is a central chimney and it has a standing-seam metal side gable roof. There are three bays. The central bay is a storage area and the bays flanking the central bay open into two separate rooms. The entries are covered by a bracketed hood that spans the length of the building; it is covered with standing-seam metal. There is a shed roof extension to the northeast side of the quarter and a shed roof extension to the rear or northwest side of the building. These are used for storage. The interior of the house is two separate rooms each with its own stone hearth and a loft above the room. The windows in this building are all set horizontally; some are horizontal sliding wooden sash windows with six lights like those of the main house. The southwest room of the quarter is used as an office.¹⁸

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This cabin was likely constructed about the same time as the brick kitchen. Both buildings have similar size, shape, and interior plan. Both have similar windows, window placement and doors; only the construction material is different. Slave Quarter #1 differs from Slave Quarters #2 and #3 in many ways such as the distance they were constructed from the main house. Quarters #2 and #3 appear as typical hall/parlor plan vernacular houses built in early Virginia. These cabins also have exterior end chimneys and the typical windows are 6/6 double-hung sash windows, whereas dead lights and horizontal sliding sash windows were used at Slave Quarter #1. Slave Quarters #2 and #3 also only have a single entry to the cabin whereas Slave Quarter #1 has separate entries for each room. It is likely that most of the cabins were used for multiple families and the newer cabins were better designed to accommodate separate dwellings with the separate entries. Massie's notes from 1834 and 1837 indicate that he built cabins to house three families.¹⁹

Slave Quarter #2—c. 1814—Contributing Building

Slave Quarter #2 is located in the upper corral, northwest of the stable. The log house is covered with vertical board siding and built on a stone foundation. There are two exterior gable end chimneys of stone and brick and the side gable roof is sheathed with standing seam-metal. The main elevation has three bays and faces southeast toward the main house; there is a one-story addition on the southeast side. The house is in poor condition. The southeast windows are boarded. There is a 6/6 double-hung sash window and a four light sash on the northwest elevation.²⁰

Slave Quarter #3—c. 1814, c. 1950, c. 1980—Noncontributing Building

Slave Quarter #3 is integrated into a modern home for the current owners of the farm. The form of the original cabin was similar to Slave Quarter #2. The interior was two separate rooms each with a stone hearth; these rooms are now used as a dining room and the other is a bedroom. The loft, above the main floor, was accessed by the still extant ladder in the dining room. The interior of the old slave cabin remains plain and without decorative elements. The current house including both the 1950s and 1980s expansions has many rooms, a basement and is two-stories high. The modern house is a combination of brick, stone and frame construction. The multiple gable roofs are all covered with standing-seam metal. Throughout the expansions, the family carefully preserved the early slave quarter. The hearths, floors, ladder, dividing wall, and exposed ceiling beams are original to the building.²¹

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Smokehouse—c. 1814—Contributing Building

The smokehouse is southwest of the main house. It is a tall one-story frame building on a stone foundation. The c. 1814 smokehouse has beaded weatherboard siding and the side gable roof is standing-seam metal. The horizontal board, single-leaf entry is on the gable side and faces the main house. A covered porch and a storage area attached to the smokehouse were removed around 2006. These additions were not likely original to the building. The interior is a single room with a dirt floor and a large, wooden salt trough. Today, the smokehouse is used for exhibition.²²

Weaving Room—c. 1814—Contributing Building

The weaving room, as it was referred to by Massie, is located in the southwest yard. It is a frame building with a stone foundation. It has vertical board siding and a standing-seam metal gable roof. The rectangular building has one bay in either gable end. The principle elevation faces northwest and has one bay. The entry is a single board door and three wooden risers lead to the entry. The southwest elevation has a large glazed dead window. The interior is a single room with wide wooden floorboards (a single board, about 12 inches wide, runs the length of the building). There is a turned stair in the southeast corner to access the attic space. The ceiling of the room was lowered and is made of an unknown modern material. In the 19th century, the building was used for spinning and weaving the wool and flax grown on the plantation. The building is currently used for storage.²³

Concrete Building #1—c. 1950 & Concrete Building # 2—c. 1950—Noncontributing Buildings

Located to the southwest of the weaving room are two concrete block storage buildings. Building # 1 has vertical board siding on the northeast elevation of the building, like the weaving house. It has a standing-seam metal gable roof. Building #2 has a shed roof also made of standing-seam metal; it was likely once used to store pool supplies.

Smokehouse Ruins—c.1830s—Contributing Site & Pool—c. 1950s—Noncontributing Site

The brick ruins of the commercial smokehouse are located in the southwest yard between the smokehouse and the weaving room. This smokehouse was built when William Massie started selling his hams commercially in the 1830s. The Massie ham became a well-known brand in Richmond and Lynchburg. The smokehouse was torn down by Dr. Parsons in the early 20th century.²⁴ The ruins of the smokehouse were incorporated into the landscaping around the 1950s in-ground pool.

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Level Green Smokehouse—c. 1803—Noncontributing Building

Beyond the pool area is the c. 1803 frame smokehouse that once stood at Level Green, the c. 1803 house of Thomas Massie. This frame building was to be torn down by the present owners of Level Green. The Morgan family obtained the building and reconstructed it at Pharsalia around 2005. The building retains its stone foundation, dirt floor, and mortise and tenon framing with down braces. It has a pyramidal roof with wooden shakes and a terra cotta chimney cap at the peak of the roof. There is a single-leaf batten entry beneath a simple shed roofed stoop supported by square posts.²⁵

Crib Barn—c. 1830—Contributing Building

The barn is located northwest of the smokehouse. It is a two-story, post and beam crib barn with one frame bay and vertical board siding of random widths and lengths. It has a later one-story shed roof addition on the southeast elevation. The foundation is dry-laid stones and the front gable roof is sheathed in standing-seam metal. Part of the gable front projects over the entry and is braced to the main wall. Two vertical board doors are aligned one above the other. The later, one-story, standing-seam metal, shed roofed addition has a concrete block foundation. The rear of the addition is open to a fenced enclosure. The building resembles a typical crib barn used for crop storage. The main interior section was not accessed.²⁶

Garage—c. 1952—Noncontributing Building

To the northeast of slave quarter #1 is a two-story concrete block garage with a one-story extension on the northeast side. It has a standing seam-metal front gable roof. The main elevation faces southeast. There is a garage door on the lower story and a single-leaf batten door on the second story. The second story is accessed by a wooden stair. This building was constructed on the same site as an earlier carriage house.²⁷

Stable—c. 1950—Noncontributing Building

A stable and corral are located northwest of the crib barn. The stable is built on a concrete slab. It has three stalls and a tack room. The framing is post and beam construction with vertical board siding with a gable roof of standing-seam metal. The southwest elevation is open and the roof is supported by rounded posts. There is a corral near the stable made of a four-rail wooden fence.²⁸

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Chicken Coop—c. 1980, Wooden Shed #1 —c. 1980, & Wooden Shed #2—c. 1980—Noncontributing Buildings

These outbuildings are associated with the third slave quarter and residence of the current owners. The frame chicken coop has a chicken wire enclosure. It has batten siding and a shed roof of standing-seam metal. The chicken coop is on the northwest side of Slave Quarter #3. Wooden Shed #1 is northwest of the chicken coop; it is constructed of wooden ply board and has an asphalt shingle gambrel roof. Wooden shed #2 is northeast of slave Quarter #3; it has a shed roof addition to the northeast. It has weatherboard siding and both the gable roof of the main section and the shed roof are made of asphalt shingles. Both sheds are used for storage.

Frame Shed—c. 1950—Noncontributing Building

At the northeast corner of the yard, between the kitchen and the third slave quarter, is a small frame shed with wooden ply board siding. It is built on a concrete slab and has a pyramid roof covered with wooden shakes. The southeast elevation has batten double-leaf doors. The building is used for storage.

Mill Site—c. 1840—Contributing Site

A gristmill was known to have existed at the bottom of the driveway and foot of the knoll on which the farm stands. The mill site is shown on an 1851 map drawn by William Massie.²⁹ The first frame mill on the site burned in 1839 due to the negligence of a slave named “Saint” Peter.³⁰ Massie rebuilt it, according to an oral history survey; the second frame mill was three-stories high and measured 50 X 60 feet. This water-powered gristmill got most of its water from another stream that was higher on the mountain. The water was diverted to the adjacent stream increasing its flow. The Pharsalia mill processed the Pharsalia grain and was likely abandoned sometime after the farm was sold in the late 19th century and there is no trace of the mill races to be seen.³¹

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8. Statement of Significance

Significance Statement

Pharsalia is locally significant and eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architecture. The property contains one of the best collections of antebellum plantation buildings in Nelson County. The vernacular outbuildings include kitchen, slave quarters and farm buildings. The manor house is also significant as an unusual example of Federal style architecture. The original plan was a one-story, four room linear arrangement of rooms. The current T-shape plan and an offset pediment above the original roofline were the result of later additions. Pharsalia is also eligible under Criterion B for its association with William Massie in the area of Agriculture. He was the creator of the plantation and his surviving papers document life on the plantation throughout his lifetime. Massie is best remembered as the landowner who created what is today the second biggest agricultural industry in Nelson County, the commercial orchard.³² He was a well-known landowner, miller, politician and businessman. The period of significance is significant from 1814, when the house was constructed, until 1852, the date of the last significant historic addition. Today, the house is part of a working farm and it remains in a rural area surrounded by orchards. The house and grounds are used to teach 19th century culture and life and are rented for conferences and special occasions.

Acknowledgement

William Massie was a meticulous record keeper concerning his farming practices and his slaves. The surviving letters, documents and memorandum record his thoughts, plans, farming chores, repair lists and records of his slaves. These documents are stored at several different institutions including the majority at the (University of Texas) in Austin, Duke University, and Swem Library (Williamsburg, Va.), Library of Virginia and the Virginia Historical Society. Many historians have used these records to understand slavery, antebellum economics, as well as 19th century politics and agriculture.

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Property History

Pharsalia is located in the Tye River Valley. The house is sited on a knoll, at the base of Priest Mountain and it overlooks the level valley farmland below it. The land was originally part of the 1740s land patent belonging to Rev. Robert Rose. After his death, the land was passed to his son, Col. John Rose. Col. Rose sold 3,111 acres to Major Thomas Massie (1747-1834) in 1796.³³

Major Thomas Massie, a Revolutionary war veteran, visited the valley area on business and decided to move his family from Frederick County to the Tye River Valley. By 1803, Maj. Massie and his family moved into his new house. Massie named the house "Level Green" for its location on level area in the Tye River Valley. Maj. Massie and his wife, Sarah, raised their three sons Thomas J., Henry, and William in the house. This house still exists. Maj. Massie focused his farming on grains, especially wheat, and did not grow tobacco. In 1806, Maj. Massie built a large mill on the Tye River for grinding grain for himself and the community. The village that grew around the mill is known as Massie's Mill.³⁴

William Massie (1796-1862) became engaged, at the age of nineteen, to Sarah Steptoe of New London, Bedford County. As a wedding present, Maj. Massie created a plantation from a 1400-acre parcel of his Level Green farm; this was located two miles east of Maj. Massie's home, Level Green. In 1813, Maj. Massie contracted master carpenter and family friend, George Williams, to construct a house and necessary buildings for the couple. The house constructed on the property was a one-story, four-room, linear, frame house. By 1816, construction was complete and William purchased the farm from Maj. Massie.³⁵

William christened his new plantation and house, Pharsalia. It was named for the epic poem by Lucan that described a battle of the Roman Civil War between Julius Caesar and Pompey fought in the Greek city of Pharsalus. William organized the property and divided it into different lots and areas. He concentrated his efforts on improving soil fertility and crop production. He paid careful attention to the many different daily tasks that were necessary to make his plantation self-sufficient and successful. He constructed new buildings for different tasks and plans and notes on the buildings are found in his surviving papers. These include plans for additions to the main house, kitchen, slave quarters and stable.³⁶

After William's death, Maria, William's widow, managed the farm until her death in 1889. During the Civil War, Federal troops took the farm's horses on their 1864 march to the Tye River Depot. At Maria's death, the plantation was divided between surviving heirs and in 1897, the house and 144 remaining acres were sold to James C. Bentz of Pennsylvania.³⁷

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James Bentz, his cousin, Dr. E. P. Parsons, and Parsons' family moved into Pharsalia. Dr. Parsons was a dentist who, by tradition, practiced dentistry in the morning and farmed in the afternoon. He maintained and improved the existing Massie orchard. In 1907, Parsons became the legal owner of the property. Around 1920, Parsons built a small addition onto the main house and installed plumbing and central heating. Parsons razed Massie's c. 1830s commercial smokehouse but left the foundation. Parsons died in 1941 and left the house and grounds to his wife and heirs.³⁸

The farm remained in the Parsons family until 1952 when Perkins Morton Flippin, a great-granddaughter of William Massie, purchased the house and remaining 22 acres and brought the property back into the family. The Flippin family began restoring the house and grounds; they made other improvements as well. The family expanded Slave Quarter #3 and installed an in-ground pool near the foundation of the commercial smokehouse. In the 1980s, they built a commercial kitchen and sunroom onto the 1920s main house addition and Slave Quarter #3 was expanded to its present size. Foxie and Richard Morgan are the current owners of the property; Foxie is the daughter of Perkins Flippin. Foxie and Richard reside in Slave Quarter #3 and maintain the manor house and grounds as a working farm and education facility. They rent the area for conferences and special events.³⁹

Architectural Significance

Pharsalia, like most southern plantations, had multiple dependency buildings arranged in a manner according to their function and relation to the main house. The form and construction of the buildings are typical of the period and are based on familiar patterns used throughout Virginia and the south. Pharsalia was described as the "quintessential southern plantation" in a 1992 architectural survey. The Federal style house and its collection of antebellum dependencies are well documented through Massie's records.⁴⁰

A typical plantation was organized with the manor as the centerpiece. Near the house was a yard, or outdoor work area, surrounded by the buildings that housed functions that related to the manor such as the kitchen, smokehouse, and laundry. Beyond the yard were the buildings associated with farming activities like the barns and stables. These were not as neatly arranged and were often obscured from direct view of the main house.⁴¹

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The yard dependencies at Pharsalia include the privy, icehouse/workshop, kitchen/laundry/slave hospital, household servants' quarter, smokehouse and weaving house. The weaving house contained the equipment for the manufacture of cloth from the flax and wool produced on the farm. It is a simple one-room building, like a barn, with few windows. The smokehouse was also a simple one-room building with a dirt floor, salt trough and a central area used to maintain a smoldering fire to smoke the meat hanging from beams within the building. Pharsalia also had a commercial smokehouse that, based on its surviving foundation, was a larger version of the existing smokehouse.⁴²

Between the smokehouse and kitchen is the double-pen log slave quarter. Its form and construction were typical of those on many plantations. This particular quarter was better constructed than the quarters built for the field hands because of its location near the manor house. This building housed the household servants.⁴³ The kitchen building has a two-room plan. At Pharsalia, the second room was the laundry and the loft area above both rooms became the slave hospital.⁴⁴ In the 1830s, two kitchens co-existed. Massie's 1836 daybook noted repairs needed to the kitchen; it was likely frame and constructed in 1814. In the same note, he records construction progress on the new brick kitchen building.⁴⁵

An icehouse was another building common to a plantation and was generally one-story, built partially underground to maintain a temperature to preserve ice. The icehouse at Pharsalia was unusual. It was built into a hillside with a brick foundation lined with logs; however, an entire room was erected above the icehouse and it may have been intended for storage or other food purpose. Tradition recalls the use of the building as a schoolhouse, workshop, and Dr. Parsons used it as a meetinghouse.⁴⁶

The dependencies beyond the yard were those associated with farming and were built at a distance and out of direct view from the main house. These buildings included stables, barns, carriage house, shops and quarters for the field servants. The surviving Pharsalia farm buildings include two slave quarters and a barn. The slave quarters are two-room buildings with end chimneys. The barn is a crib barn with a large overhang above the gable end. It was likely used for crop storage.⁴⁷

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Pharsalia is a 19th century plantation with many of its outbuildings built no later than the 1840s, according to the Massie papers. William Massie recorded the plans, use, construction, and repairs of many dependencies; an exhaustive study of his notes would provide a complete picture of the plantation and its activities. There are two other Nelson County plantations listed on the National Register of Historic Places that have many outbuildings: Edgewood (062-0004 VLR 03-06-06 NHRP 05-02-06) and Elk Hill (062-0005 VLR 12-06-06 NHRP 03-27-07). Both are earlier plantations; Edgewood no longer has its manor house and Elk Hill is an earlier property that developed over a longer span of time. It is the supporting documentation and surviving buildings that together distinguish this property from others in Nelson County.⁴⁸ The manor house is also an architecturally significant form of Federal style architecture; it is likely the best surviving frame example of Federal style architecture in Nelson County. The original plan was one-story, single pile with a linear plan of two rooms on either side of a central hall. An uncommon trait of the style is the large number of windows across the façade with an atypical placement of the muntins within those windows. The muntins placement allows for wider central lights flanked by narrow lights. Today, the house appears with an offset pediment above the original roofline; this was the result of two rear additions onto the house giving it an overall T-shaped plan. These late Federal style additions were made in 1840 and 1852.

George Williams (1775-1854) was a master carpenter and close friend of the Massie family. Maj. Thomas Massie convinced him to relocate to Nelson County in the early 19th century and commissioned him to build Level Green. In 1813, he was commissioned by Maj. Massie to build the house and necessary outbuildings for the plantation that would become Pharsalia.⁴⁹ Williams' workmanship shows influence from period pattern books such as William Pain's The Practical House Carpenter and Pain's British Palladio; Asher Benjamin's The American Builder's Companion; and Batty Langley's The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs. The interior mantel designs seem to be inspired by models in the books, however, none of these are exact copies of the patterns. The mantels contain swags inspired by Benjamin and Langley; the floral motifs, crosstetted mantels and attenuated shelving designs are found in Langley and the ribbon and rope motifs are seen in Pain's books.⁵⁰ Articles discussing the form of Pharsalia have argued that the house was to eventually become two stories and resemble Level Green. Enlargement of the house would occur as William Massie's family and wealth increased. It is possible that the single-story form with the linear arrangement of four rooms was adapted from Pain's British Palladio, Plate XXIV.⁵¹

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Pharsalia and Level Green share several characteristics such as similar pedimented entry porches, hip roofs, and interior decoration such as the reeded mantel with consoles. The differences are the number of stories and the lunette tracery window in the tympanum and the fenestration of Pharsalia.⁵²

The form and shape of Pharsalia is also similar to Geddes (005-0007) in Amherst County. It has a single-pile linear plan with four rooms and a hip roof. The house reached its current form by a series of additions over time but was complete when Pharsalia was built. Both houses have pedimented entry porches with a window in the tympanum; Geddes has a diamond-shaped window and Pharsalia's is fan-shaped. Geddes is one and one-half stories and Pharsalia is one story. Geddes, like Level Green, does not have the large number of windows along the façade and the atypical arrangement of muntins in the windows.⁵³

The manor house and dependencies at Pharsalia represent a well-preserved example of the typical antebellum plantation. It is one of the best collections in Nelson County and retains a high degree of integrity. These are further enhanced by Massie's papers that provide information concerning the construction and use of the many buildings. The buildings of Pharsalia are maintained and exhibited for teaching 19th century life and culture at the farm.⁵⁴

Significant Person

William Massie, the youngest son of Maj. Thomas Massie, was raised at Level Green and educated at Staunton. He was married four times. His first wife, Sarah Steptoe died in 1828. She left him with one son, Thomas James. Massie then married Martha Wiatt in 1829; she died in 1832 leaving him with a daughter, Ellen. In 1833, Massie married Martha's friend, Sarah Clark; she died the same year. William married his fourth wife, Maria Effinger, in 1834. They had ten children four of whom survived: Martha, Hope, Florence, and Bland. Maria outlived William and died in 1889. Today, there are many Massie descendants in the area of Massie's Mill including Pharsalia's current owner, Foxie Morgan. She is the great-great-granddaughter of William Massie through his youngest son, Bland.⁵⁵

William dedicated himself to the expansion and improvement of his property. He started with 1400 acres and he amassed over 8000 acres by 1862. Pharsalia was the focus and heart of his land holdings; these were divided into additional plantations known as Snug Dale, Tyro, and Montebello. Each was administered separately and had its own workforce. Massie kept meticulous records of each plantation's activities, crops, plans and slaves. He managed to improve his soils and production over time to make his lands profitable but after his death, it was never again as successful.⁵⁶

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Improving the depleted soils was a focus of many 19th-century farmers. There were many ideas and methods proposed such as fertilizers, crop rotation, and the introduction of alternative crops to replace tobacco. Many farmers were strapped for money due to the depression after the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 that resulted in lower prices for agricultural products. From 1820 to 1837, a slow recovery began but was halted by another depression. During the 1830s and continuing through the 1840s there were many advancements in fertilizers, seeds, crops, farming methods and machinery. These were shared by means of periodicals and newspapers; Massie had subscriptions to the American Farmer, Southern Planter, Philadelphia Evening Post, Richmond Whig, and Lynchburg Virginian. The proposed advancements were expensive, risky and only those with wealth and large tracts of land could afford to use the new methods. William was able and willing to take such risks. He tried new fertilizers such as guano, plaster, and animal manures. He experimented with new crops and longer crop rotation systems and periods; his notes record a planting and field rotation plan for the Pharsalia fields from 1847 to 1852. His experiments with new crops were also documented, such as the 1830s hemp experiment, that failed, and the successful experiment with multicolored rye in the 1840s. He published the 1845-46 success of the rye experiment in the Southern Planter; the results were then cited in another periodical, The Cultivator, as proof of the reliability of the seed and the increased amount of grain produced.⁵⁷

Before 1840, Massie tried other methods to increase farm profitability by selling smoked hams and distilling brandy for other than private use. He improved his herd of hogs and experimented with commercial production of hams to sell to retailers. The Massie ham became a popular brand in Richmond. It was during this time that Massie constructed the commercial smokehouse.⁵⁸ Fruit brandies were popular 19th century beverages and commercial production required improvement to his small existing orchard. Most plantations had private orchards and distilled brandies for personal use. In the 1820s, Massie began to expand his personal orchard by planting new trees ordered from New York such as cherry, peach and the new apple variety, the Newtown Pippin. He further improved the orchard by grafting older trees to new trees and planted more trees. The Newtown Pippin, later known as the Albemarle Pippin, became a popular dessert apple and was prized internationally in the 19th century.⁵⁹ The Pippin was a new apple in the late 18th to early 19th centuries, even Thomas Jefferson ordered the trees for Monticello.⁶⁰ The value of his orchard production in 1860 amounted to \$400; no earlier production amounts were recorded by the 1850 agricultural census records for him, nor were there any records for other amounts recorded for orchards in the Massie's Mill area in 1860.⁶¹ Massie's orchard is recognized as the first commercial orchard in Nelson County.⁶² Maria maintained the commercial orchard until 1889. She was able to bring good prices for her crops in late 1860s. In the late 1870s and 1880s more farmers entered the market

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and caused the price of apples overall to decline by more than a third.⁶³ The Parson family improved and maintained the Massie orchard until 1952. Dr. Parsons groomed it into a prize-winning orchard in the early 20th century. Today, orchards are the second most important agricultural crop of Nelson County and Pharsalia sits among the trees of Silver Creek Orchards, whose owners are Massie descendants.⁶⁴

Crop intensification in the 1830s to 1840s was made possible by better farm machinery. Newer ploughs and equipment were available; Massie owned several and he was a patron of other improvements such as the reaper. The reaper was an invention by Cyrus McCormick of Rockbridge County. The McCormick family was closely associated with William Massie. Massie provided financial support to Cyrus between 1834 and 1848 allowing him the capital to perfect his invention. The first McCormick reaper was sold in 1840.⁶⁵

William Massie also owned three mills. They were built at Pharsalia (c. 1830, rebuilt 1840), Montebello (c. 1835), and Tyro (1847). The Tyro mill (062-0028 VLR 06-08-06 NHRP 08-30-06) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the only one that remains. According to the 1850 and 1860 Industrial Census records, these mills were productive and profitable. In 1850, the combined flour and corn meal production of the mills amounted to \$15,000 and out-produced other county mills. In 1860, rye meal, corn meal and flour production totaled \$15,450, only ranking below the production of the Faber mill at \$24,394.⁶⁶

The farming, milling and maintenance of large plantations required a large workforce. Massie was a typical slaveholder of the period acquiring additional slaves as his plantations grew; he owned 26 slaves in 1816 and he owned 170 in 1862. Slaves were expensive assets to purchase and maintain. Many of the land improvement advocates believed the slave force should be reduced, sold, and the money reinvested in the farm, but Massie believed he needed to continue the expansion of his workforce. The slaves were divided into separate work teams for each of Massie's plantations and those that became ill were sent to Pharsalia for medical attention. Massie also rented his slaves to other farms but required them to return at harvest. He allowed trusted slaves to hire themselves out so they could earn money and purchase goods from Massie. Relations between Massie, his slaves and the overseers are documented in his papers and these relations have been studied and analyzed by many historians including Eugene Genovese in Roll, Jordan , Roll and recently by Jonathan D. Martin in Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South. According to most of these authors, Massie was a typical slave owner with a paternalistic attitude towards his slaves. He did not believe in providing luxuries but minimal comforts of life. He relied on his overseers to control and direct his workers without being overly harsh.⁶⁷

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Roads during the early to mid-19th century were rough and unreliable and farmers needed better ways to get their goods to the river and to Richmond, especially from farms located over the Blue Ridge Mountains. Nelson County hired William Massie to survey and oversee the construction and repair of many local roads in the 1820s and 1830s.⁶⁸ His biggest undertaking was working with the Blue Ridge and Tye River Turnpike Company. It was incorporated in 1819 to improve an old Indian trail of 22 ½ miles between Steele's Tavern in Augusta County, over the Blue Ridge Mountains to Massie's Mill in Nelson County. This tollroad was planked to provide a better road from the Shenandoah Valley through the Tye River Valley to New Market, now Norwood, on the James River. The turnpike traveled through much of the Massie family lands. The enterprise was not profitable and the company was dissolved around 1850. That road, today, is known as State Route 56-Crabtree Falls Highway.⁶⁹

In addition to his contributions to his community as a major landholder and miller, Massie was active in political and commercial affairs. He served as Justice of the Peace and Sheriff. In 1839, he was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates but he served only one term because he believed it took too much time and money away from his farming. Massie was a partner in Baird's Grocery, located in Massie's Mill village. Massie bought out the partnership in 1837, the same year he hosted the Zoological Institute at Pharsalia; the Zoological Institute was the forerunner to the modern day circus.⁷⁰

William Massie was a well-known citizen of 19th century Nelson County. He was respected because of his family and large property holdings. He was active in politics and business. He launched the commercial orchard industry in Nelson County and it continues as an important county economic asset.⁷¹ His records of daily farming life are also important to understanding life of the 19th century.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Amherst County Deed Book H, p. 29.

Massie Family Papers: 1767-1993, various files, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond Virginia.

Massie, William Papers: 1747-1919, various files, Center for American History, (University of Texas), Austin, Texas.

Nelson County Deed Book 2, p. 360.

Nelson County Deed Book 26, p. 172.

Nelson County Deed Book 33, p. 530.

Nelson County Deed Book 241, p. 532.

Nelson County Deed Book 244, p. 706.

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Nelson, Lynn A., Pharsalia: An Environmental Biography of a Southern Plantation, 1780-1880, University of Georgia Press, Athens, Georgia, 2007.

Pharsalia file from the Nelson County Historical Society.

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Stampp, Ed. Kenneth, ed., Records of Ante-bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War, available on microfilm from Library of Virginia.

Thacker, Massie D., Pharsalia, a WPA survey report available online from Library of Virginia.

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Thacker, Massie D., Pharsalia Mill, a WPA survey report available online from Library of Virginia.

Thacker, Massie D., Tye River and Blue Ridge Turnpike, a WPA survey report available online from Library of Virginia.

U.S. Federal Agricultural Census 1850 and 1860, available on microfilm from Library of Virginia.

U.S. Federal Industrial Census 1850 and 1860, available on microfilm from Library of Virginia.

U.S. Federal Census Records 1850-1930, available online from www.ancestry.com.

Williams, George file from the Nelson County Historical Society.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated is identified as #46A and #46C on tax parcel map 41 A for Nelson County, Virginia.

Boundary Justification

This is the same property deeded to Perkins Morton Flippin recorded in Nelson County Deed Book 244, page 706 and is the same property referred to in her will Nelson County Will Book CWF04-0683. The 20+ acres are the remainder of the original 1400 acre-plantation created in 1814 and the property includes all of the significant buildings and sites associated with the historic house.

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Photo List for
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DHR#062-0428
Nelson County, VA

All 12 photos taken by Sandra Esposito in May 2008

1. Facing Southwest—Principal Façade
2. Facing Northeast—Northwest Elevation
3. Facing Northeast—20th Century Additions
4. Facing Northwest—Parlor
5. Facing Southeast—Rear Hall looking to front entry
6. Facing Northwest—Dining Room
7. Facing Northwest—Icehouse
8. Facing Southeast—Rear Elevation of Privy
9. Facing North—Rear Yard with Slave Quarter and Kitchen
10. Facing Southwest—Kitchen Interior
11. Facing North—Slave Quarter, Smokehouse & Garage
12. Facing South—Weaving House
13. Facing Southwest—Level Green Smokehouse
14. Facing Southwest—Garage, Barn & Stable
15. Facing Southwest—Slave Quarter #2
16. Facing Northwest—Slave Quarter #3 and gardens

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Endnotes

¹ The description throughout are a combination of personal observation and two earlier surveys on file with the Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources: 1992 Cost Share Survey by Ashley Neville and 1993 Field Survey by K. Edward Lay and Lucy Crockin. The tenant house, noted in the 1992 survey is no longer part of the Pharsalia farm and is not included in this nomination.

² Nelson County Land Tax Records, 1820-1841 available on microfilm from Library of Virginia; William Massie Papers, 1747-1919 available from the Center for American History, (University of Texas at Austin; and Ed. Kenneth Stampf, ed., Records of Ante-bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War available on microfilm from Library of Virginia. These records were used to determine the dates of the additions.

³ Dating the addition came from the remaining interior door dating c.1920; an interview with the current owner; and Perkins Morton Flippin, undated, in the Pharsalia file of the Nelson County Historical Society.

⁴ The 1993 survey suggests that the soapstone for the porch is from the Phoebe Quarry in Nelson County however, it is more likely from the Phoenix Quarry that is located within 10 to 15 miles of Pharsalia. The Quarry operated from c. 1800 until c. 1927. Paul Saunders, Heartbeats of Nelson, (Piney River, VA.: Saunders Publishing L.L.C, 2008) 2nd ed., pp. 66-67, 78-81.

⁵ Massie's memorandum book notes money owed to Madison Black for the masonry work on the cellar door of his house. Madison Black, according to Massie's notes, worked on many masonry projects at Pharsalia and his other plantations in 1834.

⁶ Information on the water piped to the house comes from the Pharsalia file of the Nelson County Historical Society; Leroy & Mary Dietrich, "Nelson County History: Pharsalia," from unknown source dated 23 October 1975 and is part of the Pharsalia file of Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources; and "Pharsalia," Nelson County Heritage: 1807-2000, (WV: Walsworth Publishing Co., 2001), p. 56.

⁷ The basic five-part mantel is used in many homes in the surrounding area. The 1992 survey notes that the mantel pattern was used in the Nelson County houses of Level Green and Riverside. From personal observation, this type mantel is used in the Amherst County houses of Winton, Brick House and Edgehill, Forest Hill and Edgewood. The pattern book influences are William Pain, Pain's British Palladio, (London: I. & J. Taylor, 1788); William Pain, The Practical House Carpenter, (London: William Pain, 1792); Asher Benjamin, The American Builder's Companion, (Boston: Etheridge & Bliss, 1806); and Batty Langley, The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs, (London: S. Harding, 1756). These are available online from digicoll.library.wisc.edu/DLDecArts/Search.html

⁸ The painting of "Three Springs" was the home built by Pat Massie, nephew of William, in Nelson County around 1850; Massie D. Thacker, Three Springs, a WPA survey available online from Library of Virginia.

⁹ The 1992 Cost Share survey noted the mantel in the dining room to be similar to one at Level Green; Catherine Seaman, A History of Upper Tye River Valley & Mountains, (Sweet Briar, Va.: Sweet Briar College, 1992), photo 4-6; and Kristin Kirchen of VaDHR noted the transitional detailing seen in the mantel.

¹⁰ 1851 Memorandum Book, William Massie Papers. (University of Texas), these are the plans for the second story addition; and information from owner.

¹¹ Information concerning the historic farmland and the farming practices are drawn from Lynn A. Nelson, Pharsalia: An Environmental Biography of a Southern Plantation, 1780-1880, (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2007); and information on the yard stone is drawn from the Pharsalia archive records available at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

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¹² William Massie Papers, (University of Texas); and 1992 Cost Share Survey.

¹³ 1834 Memorandum Book, William Massie, (University of Texas); and Perkins Morton Flippin, undated, in the Pharsalia file of the Nelson County Historical Society.

¹⁴ 1836 Memorandum Book, William Massie Papers, University of Texas. In 1836, Massie noted on his December to do list to “newly sill my necessary.

¹⁵ Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), p. 312; Seaman, A History of Upper Tye River Valley & Mountains, p. 80; and information from owner.

¹⁶ 1834 Memorandum Book, William Massie Papers, University of Texas.

¹⁷ 1834 and 1836 Memorandum Books, William Massie Papers, University of Texas; and Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), p. 312.

¹⁸ John Michael Vlach, Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), p. 18-32.

¹⁹ 1834 and 1837 Memorandum Books, William Massie Papers, University of Texas; the plans of the additional slave quarters are also typical of plantation construction: Vlach, Back of the Big House, pp. 18-32.

²⁰ 1837 Memorandum Books, William Massie Papers, University of Texas. In his 1837 notes, William Massie noted that he needed to build a plank fence to keep the servants’ chickens out of the grain. It is possible he was referring to this cabin.

²¹ Interview with owner.

²² 1837 Memorandum Book, William Massie Papers, University of Texas. Massie noted in his 1837 daybook that the smokehouse needed to be reshingled.

²³ 1837 Memorandum Books, William Massie Papers, University of Texas; and U.S. Federal Agricultural Census 1850 and 1860 available on microfilm from the Library of Virginia. William Massie noted the building needed new weatherboard and to be reshingled in 1837.

²⁴ Nelson, Pharsalia, pp. 143-145; Perkins Morton Flippin, Pharsalia file of the Nelson County Historical Society; and interview with owner.

²⁵ Level Green and Pharsalia were both constructed by George Williams. Pharsalia and Level Green files, Nelson County Historical Society; and interview with owner.

²⁶ Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek, The Old Barn Book, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), pp.62-70 and information from owner.

²⁷ Interview with owner.

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²⁸ 1836 and 1837 Memorandum Books, William Massie Papers, University of Texas. William Massie had a stable on the Pharsalia grounds though the location is unknown. Massie references the stable as a corner for fencing near the orchard in both 1836 and 1837.

²⁹ Crop Rotation Plan, William Massie Papers, University of Texas.

³⁰ Nelson, Pharsalia, p. 179.

³¹ Massie D. Thacker, Pharsalia Mill Site, a WPA survey available online from Library of Virginia; and William Massie Papers, University of Texas.

³² Nelson County website at www.nelsoncounty.com; Leroy & Mary Dietrich, "Nelson County History: Pharsalia," from unknown source dated 23 October 1975 and is part of the Pharsalia file of Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources; and "Pharsalia," Nelson County Heritage: 1807-2000, p. 161; Massie is the only person recorded in the 1860 Nelson County Agricultural Census record with a profit from the orchard, Federal Agricultural Census 1860, available on microfilm from Library of Virginia.

³³ Amherst County Deed Book H, p. 29; Nelson, Pharsalia, pp. 39-51; Pharsalia file, Nelson County Historical Society.

³⁴ Major Thomas Massie is identified as Major to avoid confusion with his son, Thomas. Level Green, the home of Maj. Thomas Massie, father of William, still exists. This historic house, like Pharsalia, was sold out of the Massie family in the late 19th century. At Level Green, near Pharsalia, is the Massie Family cemetery where William and three of his four wives are buried. Pharsalia file in the Nelson County Historical Society; Nelson, Pharsalia, pp 39-51; and Seaman, History of Upper Type River Valley and Mountains, pp 33-48.

³⁵ Pharsalia file, Nelson County Historical Society; 1813 Letter and 1815 Letter from William Massie, Massie Family Papers 1767-1993, Virginia Historical Society; and Nelson County Deed Book 2, 360. William was anxious to move and in a letter to Sarah, dated September 1815, he described the construction progress and estimated about five more weeks before completion.

³⁶ Information from owner; and Nelson, Pharsalia, pp.83-87.

³⁷ Nelson, Pharsalia, pp. 190-222; Nelson County Deed Book 26, p. 172; information from owner; and Perkins Morton Flippin, Nelson County Historical Society.

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³⁸ Information from owner; US Federal Census 1890-1930 available online from www.ancestry.com; Nelson County Deed Book 33, p 530; and Perkins Morton Flippin, Nelson County Historical Society.

³⁹ Perkins Morton Flippin was the daughter of John and Florence Morton of Lynchburg. John Morton and his wife started the mass production of Chap Stick under Morton Manufacturing. John Morton had a hobby as an orchardist, later in life, in Nelson County; Florence Massie Morton was the daughter of Bland Massie and the granddaughter of William Massie. Current owner, Florence "Foxye" Flippin Morgan is the great, great-granddaughter of William Massie. Nelson County Will Book P, p 564; Nelson County Deed Book 83, p 608; Nelson County Deed Book 241, p 532; Nelson County Deed Book 244, p 706; Nelson County Will CWF04-0683(computerized file); and Nelson County Deed 050005089, p 37 (computerized file).

⁴⁰ Information on plantations and farm building drawn from Vlach, Back of the Big House and Noble and Cleek, The Old Barn Book; and 1992 Cost Share Survey.

⁴¹ Vlach, Back of the Big House.

⁴² Information from owner; and Vlach, Back of the Big House.

⁴³ Ibid. Few slave quarters are existing in Nelson County; most of the recorded properties note ruins or the foundations have been reused, like Edgewood (0062-0004 VLR 03-08-06 NRHP 05-02-06)

⁴⁴ Ulrich B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), p. 312; Seaman, A History of Upper Tye River Valley & Mountains, p. 80; and information from owner.

⁴⁵ Vlach, Back of the Big House; and 1836 Memorandum Book, William Massie Papers (University of Texas).

⁴⁶ 1835 Memorandum Book, William Massie Papers, (University of Texas); Pharsalia file, Nelson County Historical Society; Perkins Morton Flippin file, Nelson County Historical Society and information from owner.

⁴⁷ Vlach, Back of the Big House; and Noble and Cleek, The Old Barn Book.

⁴⁸ Information on Edgewood and Elk Hill is found online from www.dhr.virginia.gov.

⁴⁹ George Williams and Pharsalia files, Nelson County Historical Society. Ironically, the home built by George Williams was not frame but brick. His house, Willow Brook, still exists and is a family home

⁵⁰ William Pain, Pain's British Palladio, (London: I. & J. Taylor, 1788); William Pain, The Practical House Carpenter, (London: William Pain, 1792); Asher Benjamin, The American Builder's Companion, (Boston: Etheridge & Bliss, 1806); and Batty Langley, The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs, (London: S. Harding, 1756). These are available online from digicoll.library.wisc.edu/DLDecArts/Search.html.

⁵¹ Pain, Pain's British Palladio, Plate XXIV.

⁵²; Seaman, History of Upper Tye River Valley and Mountains, pp 33-48; Massie D. Thacker, Level Green, a WPA study available online from Library of Virginia; and Level Green file available from the Nelson County Historical Society.

⁵³ Geddes, National Register Nomination (005-0007) available online from www.dhr.virginia.gov.

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⁵⁴ In 1815, he described the progress of the construction to the house to his fiancée Sarah Steptoe. In 1818, there is a letter from noted 19th century builder-architect Dabney Cosby; this letter discusses his promise to repair a chimney at the house. In 1820, there is a receipt to A. M. Stoddard for painting the house. Throughout the 1830s, his notes record such events as the construction of tobacco barns, fences, slave houses and repairs to weaving house, smokehouse and necessary. In 1834, there is a plan of a new kitchen that appears to be brick and in 1836, Massie notes he needs to reshingle the old kitchen and laundry. In 1851, his notebooks record the plans for the second story of the 1840 rear addition with the addition of a garret room over the old house and a nursery to the rear of the earlier addition. Massie Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; and William Massie Papers, University of Texas.

⁵⁵ Information from owner; Seaman, History of Upper Type River Valley and Mountains; Perkins Morton Flippin file, Nelson County Historical Society; Nelson, Pharsalia; and Catherine Seaman, Tuckahoes and Cohees: The Settlers of Amherst and Nelson Counties, 1607-1807, (Sweet Briar, Virginia: Sweet Briar College Printing Press, 1992), pp. 86-88

⁵⁶ Nelson, Pharsalia; William Massie Papers, (University of Texas); Seaman, Tuckahoes and Cohees: The Settlers of Amherst and Nelson Counties, 1607-1807; and Pharsalia file, Nelson County Historical Society.

⁵⁷ Nelson, Pharsalia; Map, William Massie Papers, (University of Texas); and New York State Agricultural Society, The Cultivator, vol. 5(Albany, N. Y: Luther Tucker, 1848), pp 129-130.

⁵⁸ Nelson, Pharsalia; and information from owner.

⁵⁹ Nelson, Pharsalia, pp. 143-144 & 211-212.

⁶⁰ Liberty Hyde Bailey, The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture, (NY: Macmillan & Co., 1917) 2nd ed., p.322, available online from books. google.com.

⁶¹ Federal Agricultural Census for 1850 and 1860, available on microfilm from Library of Virginia.

⁶² Leroy & Mary Dietrich, "Nelson County History: Pharsalia," from unknown source dated 23 October 1975 and is part of the Pharsalia file of Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources; "Pharsalia," Nelson County Heritage: 1807-2000, p. 161; and Paul Saunders, Heartbeats of Nelson, pp. 228, 230, & 244.

⁶³ Nelson, Pharsalia, pp 211-212.

⁶⁴ Nelson, Pharsalia, pp 211-212; Paul Saunders, Heartbeats of Nelson, 228, 230, & 244; Nelson County website at www.nelsoncounty.com; and information from owner.

⁶⁵ Nelson, Pharsalia. Herbert N. Casson, Cyrus Hall McCormick: His Life and His Work, (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1909), p. 60; David Lindsay, Madness in the Making, (NY: Kodansha America, Inc., 1997), pp. 116-118, 122.

⁶⁶ Nelson, Pharsalia; Tyro Mill, National Register Nomination (062-0028) available online from Va. Dept. of Historic Resources; William Massie Papers (University of Texas); and US Federal Agricultural Census 1850 and 1860, available on microfilm from Library of Virginia.

⁶⁷ Nelson, Pharsalia; Jonathan D. Martin, Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 113-114; Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made, (NY: Pantheon Books, 1974); Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South, pp. 204-249, 310- 313.

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⁶⁸ William Massie Papers, (University of Texas). There are records for 1832 and 1835 and likely, there are more in additional daybooks that record road services on planning commissions and overseeing repairs to existing roads.

⁶⁹ Massie D. Thacker, Tye River and Blue Ridge Turnpike, a WPA study available online from Library of Virginia.

⁷⁰ Pharsalia file, Nelson County Historical Society; and Nelson, Pharsalia; 1837 Note for Dissolution of Partnership, Massie Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; and Lindsay, Madness in the Making, pp. 116 & 122.

⁷¹ Leroy & Mary Dietrich, "Nelson County History: Pharsalia," from unknown source dated 23 October 1975 and is part of the Pharsalia file of Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources; "Pharsalia," Nelson County Heritage: 1807-2000, p. 161; and Paul Saunders, Heartbeats of Nelson, pp. 228, 230, & 244.