

VLR-4/20/94 NRHP-7/28/94

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 Mulberry Grove
other names/site number VDHR File No. 81-44

2. Location

street & number S side SR 724, 5000' SE of jet w/SR 252 not for publication N/A
city or town Brownsburg vicinity x
state Virginia code VA county Rockbridge code 163 zip code 24415

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 statewide x 'Locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Henry C. McH...
Signature of certifying official Date 5/4/94

Director, 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 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 Keeper Date of Action

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.)

- 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)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance c. 1790-c. 1850

Significant Dates c. 1790
c. 1828
c. 1850

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder unknown

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 #

- 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
=====

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	648820	4198500	2	17	648920 4198500
3	17	649010	4198440	4	17	648930 4198350
5	17	648800	4198400			

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 Mary Sterrett Lipscomb

organization _____ date January 30, 1994

street & number Route 1, Box 524 telephone 703-348-5208

city or town Raphine state VA zip code 24472

=====
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 B. A. and Mary Sterrett Lipscomb and others
street & number Route 1, Box 524 telephone 703-348-5208
city or town Raphine state VA zip code 24472

=====
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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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

**Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia**

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Located on the south side of State Route 724 in northwestern Rockbridge County, Virginia, one mile east of the Brownsburg Historic District, Mulberry Grove is a farmhouse representing four different building periods from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. It is a two-story brick and frame Federal-style dwelling with two chimneys at the northeast end and one brick chimney near the southwest end. The original frame-over-brick-nogging section, a small, simple, one-room-down and one-room-up Virginia frontier house built about 1790, is presently in the center of the structure. A frame stair hall was added about 1828. Common-bond brick wings were added at each end about 1840, and the house was spanned by a long porch. The original structure with its three additions form a vernacular Federal-style house. The interior wood-work is both early- and late-Federal. Notable outbuildings include a log meat house and a double-pen log barn, both built from the early to mid-nineteenth century.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Mulberry Grove is a two-story brick and weatherboard vernacular Federal-style dwelling 76' long and 34' deep, with brick chimneys at the northeast end and near the southwest end. Facing to the northwest, it has been used as a farmhouse since its original construction in about 1790 and represents at least four different building periods from the late eighteenth century to about 1850, with twentieth-century changes made in 1937, 1965, and 1984. The foundation is brick. The two wings at each end of the house are common-bond brickwork, while the center section, which includes the original house and the first addition, is framed with weather-board. This center section includes a large porch with chamfered wooden posts and railings. There are two first-floor windows and two doors opening onto the porch, with three windows on the second floor. The northeast wing has two windows on the first floor and two dormer windows on the second. The southwest wing is a large kitchen with a loft, with doors opening onto both the front and the back porches, and one window on each floor at the southwest end.

The original section of the house, which lies near the center of the present structure, is clad in weatherboard over post, beam, and brick-nogging construction. Its foundation, not presently visible, is stone with log joists supporting the first floor. It had no porches but probably a stoop by which to enter the front door. It had one room downstairs and one upstairs, with a ladder-type stairway to the second floor. Both the downstairs and the upstairs rooms have been divided into two rooms, partitions having been added around 1900. The four windows on the first floor have nine-over-six double-hung sash, with six-over-six sash in the four windows on the second floor. Much of the glass is older, as revealed by its imperfect textures. The flooring is original heart pine. The roof over this section is standing-seam metal with pegged mortise-and-tenon rafters. The roof originally had wooden shingles.¹ There is a common-bond brick chimney between this original structure and the kitchen that was added later, with a fireplace on each side. The chair rail and window trim both downstairs and upstairs are early-Federal-style and original to this section of the house. The upstairs mantel is also early-Federal-style; the downstairs mantel is late-Federal-style.

¹Romer H. McClung (1893-1986), conversations with Mary S. Lipscomb, 1946. Mr. McClung stated that this house was always known as the first house in the area with a tin roof after wood shingles.

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Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia

The first addition, built in the 1820s, was a frame two-story stair hall that extended 10' to the northeast of the original house. It later provided access to a large 1840s addition. This stair hall has a brick foundation and late-Federal-style woodwork. The black oak flooring runs perpendicular to the flooring of the original house. The treads of the steps are heart pine, the risers 9 1/2" high, and the flooring of both the landing and the upstairs hallway is poplar. The banister is plain walnut with very plain balusters. The roof over this section is also standing-seam metal with pegged mortise-and-tenon rafters.

At about the same period (late 1820s), a large brick kitchen with a loft and cooking fireplace was added to the southwest end of the original house. This kitchen has no entrance to the main part of the house, but has doors that lead onto both the contemporary front and back porches. These large mortise-and-tenon-assembled porches have heavy walnut chamfered posts and railings.

In the 1840s a double-pile brick section was added to the northeast of the stair hall. This addition has common-bond brickwork featuring molded brick cornice with an interior braced, standing-seam metal roof.

There are two common-bond brick chimneys at the northeast end of the house and two major rooms downstairs, each with a fireplace. One room was originally divided by a partition, which was removed about 1890. There are two distinct floorings in this room: the larger section is chestnut and the smaller a more inferior heart pine. The small room was used originally as a pantry for the kitchen that was at the opposite end of the house.² The larger section was a bedroom with an early-Federal-style mantel that was probably moved from the original section of the house.

The other downstairs room of this 1840s section is clearly the major room of the house, with a large, very ornate late-Federal mantel measuring 103" x 70" with scrolled pilasters and acanthus leaves. The double-hung six-over-six sash windows include large 10" x 16" panes. Many of the old 10" x 8" "half panes" remain in this section. The chair rail and baseboard are executed in the late-Federal Style. The fireplace has an iron fireback which, although not signed, is similar to others in Rockbridge County cast before 1797 by Halbert and Moses McCluer of this county. This fireback was either moved from the original section of the house or taken from some other home for this addition.³

The second floor of this section originally had one large room with one window at the end and closets in the front and back eaves. In 1937 this additions was converted from one large room into two small rooms, closets, and a bathroom. The northeast window was closed and two smaller windows were added to this end between the two chimneys. Four dormers, two at the front and two at the back, were added.

²Ida Willson Fultz (1855-1949), conversations with Mary S. Lipscomb in the 1940s. Mrs. Fultz was a granddaughter of Samuel Willson and lived at Mulberry Grove until she married.

³Royster Lyle, Jr., Lexington, Virginia, interview with Mary S. Lipscomb, 20 January 1994.

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**Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia**

The basement is reached by a stairway from the outside that was enclosed in 1984. There is only one large room under the original structure, with a smaller crawl space under the stair hall, and a large dirt basement under the 1840s addition. The original kitchen has no basement. The area under the present kitchen (originally a porch) and the large room under the original section have concrete floors and are presently used for storage, the furnace, and the water heater.

Between 1890 and 1900 the public road was relocated and the orientation of the house was changed from southeast to northwest. A part of the long porch at the rear of the house was enclosed at about that time and converted into a kitchen. In the 1960s a one-story frame addition was built along the rear of the enclosed porch for a bathroom and laundry room. In 1984 this addition was enlarged to enclose the entrance to the basement area from the outside.

Notable outbuildings include a log meat house to the southwest of the house. It has V-notched logs on a rubble foundation, a common roof rafter system, and a standing-seam metal roof. It may date to the first half of the nineteenth century.

Southeast of the house is a double-pen log barn. The pens' construction consists of V-notched logs and half-lapped and pegged roof members. This barn may also date to the first half of the nineteenth century. There are twentieth-century additions almost entirely surrounding the original structure.

Mulberry Grove has been a major farmhouse in this area since its construction. The house and its two contributing dependencies and three noncontributing dependencies have been the central part of farming enterprises for two centuries. The farmhouse is in excellent condition. Clearly visible from State Route 724, it sits back about 150' from the road, is surrounded by old and young trees, and remains the central farmhouse of a 600-acre working farm.

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Section 8 Page 4

Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Mulberry Grove's architectural significance lies in the fact that it represents four distinct building periods which show various styles of American architecture between 1790 and 1850 in the farming area of northwestern Rockbridge County. In the late eighteenth century Joseph Skeen probably built this small, simple, functional frame house suitable for his family of early settlers in the Valley.¹ In 1824 Samuel Willson, a more affluent farmer, purchased the property and began to make more elaborate late-Federal-style additions to the original house. Each of these three additions embodied the architectural styles of the period as well as the interests and needs of the Willson family from 1827 into the 1840s. The architecture also reflected the culture of the surrounding farming area settled largely by Scotch-Irish slave-holding Presbyterians. Later twentieth-century changes are sympathetic to the original architectural form and details. The house, with its two contributing dependencies, continues to be an important part of the farming community in this area.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although the central section of the house, built in the late eighteenth century, is quite small, one-room-down and one-room-up, with few decorative elements, it was very carefully and sturdily constructed, thus lasting these two hundred years. The brick-nogging construction, placed between posts and beams, used for insulation and fire prevention and covered with weatherboarding, is quite significant to its architecture as well as its survival. In his will, probated 21 May 1814, Joseph Skeen called it a "mansion" and left it to his sons, John and Robert.²

Samuel Willson purchased the farm and house from John Skeen in 1824 and began to make additions in the late 1820s. He first added a two-story stair hall, frame with a brick foundation. The introduction of late-Federal-style woodwork with its new front and back doors and floorboards running perpendicular to the original house indicate the separate use of this addition. Willson also added major porches to both front and back, along the entire length of the house. They were constructed of stylish chamfered posts and railings made of mortised and tenoned heavy walnut. The new hallway opened onto these porches and afforded an important place to greet guests away from the one downstairs room, where eating and sleeping took place and children were at play. This hallway also provided a place for a stairway, so that there was no longer any need for the ladder-type stairway of the original house.

Around this same time Willson also added a two-story common-bond brick kitchen to the southwest end of the original house and extended the porches along the front and back of this addition. This very functional addition, with its large cooking fireplace and servants' quarters on the second floor, move the cooking and housekeeping closer to the family. But with no entrance to the main part of the house, it clearly reflected the culture based on slavery: the

¹Rockbridge County, Virginia, Tax Records, 1787, 1789, 1797.

²Rockbridge County Will Book No. 4, page 44, May 21, 1814, Joseph Skeen to Robert and John Skeen.

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Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia

servants still needed to go outdoors to bring things to the main house, thus keeping them separated from the family.

Most significant to the architectural importance of Mulberry Grove is the 1840s addition of a two-story double-pile common-bond brick section with a brick foundation. A molded-brick cornice forming the cyma recta, split by a stretcher row, is a dominant element of this late-Federal Style. It suggests the prosperity of the owner because of the added expense and difficulty of this type of construction. This addition contained two large rooms downstairs and one large bedroom upstairs with closets under the eaves.

The woodwork in the major living room of the fourth addition includes a very ornate mantel measuring 103" x 70" with scrolled pilasters and acanthus leaves. The fireplace in this room has an unusual fireback similar to others cast before 1797 by Halbert and Moses McCluer of Rockbridge County. It shows an angel with swept-back hair blowing a trumpet toward a cloud encircling thirteen stars representing the original thirteen colonies. Above the angel's head are the words "Peace and Unity to." The words lead to the thirteen stars, indicating peace and unity to the new nation. This fireback may have been one of the things Willson moved from his original house or it may have been taken from some older house of the area.

The other downstairs room in this addition was at one time divided by a partition which formed a small room that opened into the stair hall. This room was used as a pantry and a bedroom for the lady of the house. Servants crossed the back porch and were given supplies by the lady of the house from the pantry that she always kept locked.³

The agricultural revolution of the nineteenth century brought many changes to the property. Willson tried his hand at raising the Chinese mulberry tree, growing silkworms, and attempting to produce silk.⁴ He was not prosperous in this venture, but succeeded in all other farming enterprises. Mulberry Grove saw Union General David Hunter's troops camp along its creek bank on their way to Lexington to burn Virginia Military Institute. All three of the Willson sons supported the South in the Civil War, and Mulberry Grove never quite recovered from the economic effects of that war.⁵

In 1880 James E. A. Gibbs of Raphine, Virginia, the inventor of the sewing machine, purchased the property and gave it to his daughter, Ellabell Gibbs Moore.⁶ During Mrs. Moore's years of ownership, between 1880 and 1925, the public road was relocated and the orientation of the house was changed from southeast to northwest. The Moores made some changes, adding partitions and converting the then back porch into a kitchen about 1900. Most

³Ida Willson Fultz (1855-1949), conversations in the 1940s with Mary S. Lipscomb. Mrs. Fultz was a granddaughter of Samuel Willson and lived at Mulberry Grove until she married.

⁴Advertisement in the Lexington Gazette, Lexington, Virginia, August 11, 1837: "MULBERRIES FOR SILKWORMS. 50,000 Plants of the Chinese mulberry of *Morus multicaulis* for sale"

⁵James G. Alexander, Fairfield, Virginia, grandson of Ida Willson Fultz, interviews by Mary S. Lipscomb, January 15, 1994.

⁶Rockbridge County Deed Book UU, page 308, June 26, 1880, James E. A. Gibbs to daughter Ellabell Gibbs Moore.

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**Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia**

of these changes reflected the disappearance of servants, and no changes were made to the structure of the house.

In 1926 M. McClung Sterrett, a great-grandson of Samuel Willson, purchased the property and in 1937 added dormer windows to the northeast end of the house, both back and front. This permitted the division of the second-floor room into two bedrooms and a bathroom. Other one-story additions for a bathroom and laundry room were made in 1965 and 1984 at the rear of the house, but changed very little the nineteenth-century Federal style of the house.

The two log structures, a meat house and a barn, have probably stood since the early nineteenth century. The barn sheltered cows, horses, sheep, grain, and hay, and is the one from which grain was threshed from 1890 to 1940. It continues to play an important role in the present beef-cattle farming operation. The log meat house was used for meat curing and storage, a most important feature of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century rural life.

One of the most significant changes in rural life in the Valley of Virginia was the coming of electricity in 1939. From central heating and refrigeration to the abundance of water pumped into both the house and the barns, electricity was of basic importance. In 1944 the farming enterprise changed from general agriculture to a major dairy farm as a result of the use of electricity, and remained so until 1984.

Built by forward-looking people and housing four families of innovative farmers, Mulberry Grove has been architecturally significant for nearly two centuries. These families have contributed to the culture, industry, and history of this rural community. They were important in the early settlement of the area, the agricultural revolutions of both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Great Depression. Mulberry Grove represents a true history of rural western Virginia, reflecting the styles of the periods and the affluence, interests, and needs of the owners in this still-rural area.

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Section 9 & 10 Page 7

Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Heffelfinger, Grace P. *The I House in Rockbridge County, Virginia*. MA Thesis. Cooperstown: 1973. Unpublished.
- Isaac, Rhys. *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.
- McCleary, Ann. *An Evaluation of Architectural, Historic, and Archaeological Resources in Rockbridge County, Virginia: The Valley Region Preservation Plan*. Richmond: Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, 1985.
- McClung, James W. *Historical Significance of Rockbridge County*. Staunton: McClure Co., Inc., 1939.
- Rockbridge County, Virginia, Deed Books, Office of Clerk of the Circuit Court of Rockbridge County, Lexington, Virginia:
- October 29, 1824. John Skeen to Samuel Willson, Deed Book O, p. 201.
 - September 26, 1873. Upon the death of Samuel Willson, sold in trust to Jacob Maphis. Deed Book RR, p. 531.
 - June 24, 1880. Jacob Maphis to James E. A. Gibbs. Deed Book UU, p. 308.
 - June 26, 1880. James E. A. Gibbs to Ellabell Gibbs Moore. Deed Book UU, p. 308.
 - August 24, 1926. Ellabell Gibbs Moore to Madison McClung Sterrett and Edna Sterrett. Deed Book 145, p. 350.
 - August 18, 1972. M. M. Sterrett and Edna Sterrett to M. M. Sterrett, Jr. and Annamarye Sterrett. Deed Book 329, p. 155.
 - January 31, 1983. M. M. Sterrett, Jr. and Annamarye Sterrett to Bruce Alexander Lipscomb and Mary Sterrett Lipscomb. Deed Book 400, p. 831.
- Simpson, Pamela H. *The Molded Brick Cornice in the Valley of Virginia*. The Association for Preservation Technology, Vol. VII, No. 4, September 1980.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points:

1 17 648820 4198500 2 17 648920 4198500
3 17 649010 4198440 4 17 648930 4198350
5 17 648800 4198400

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

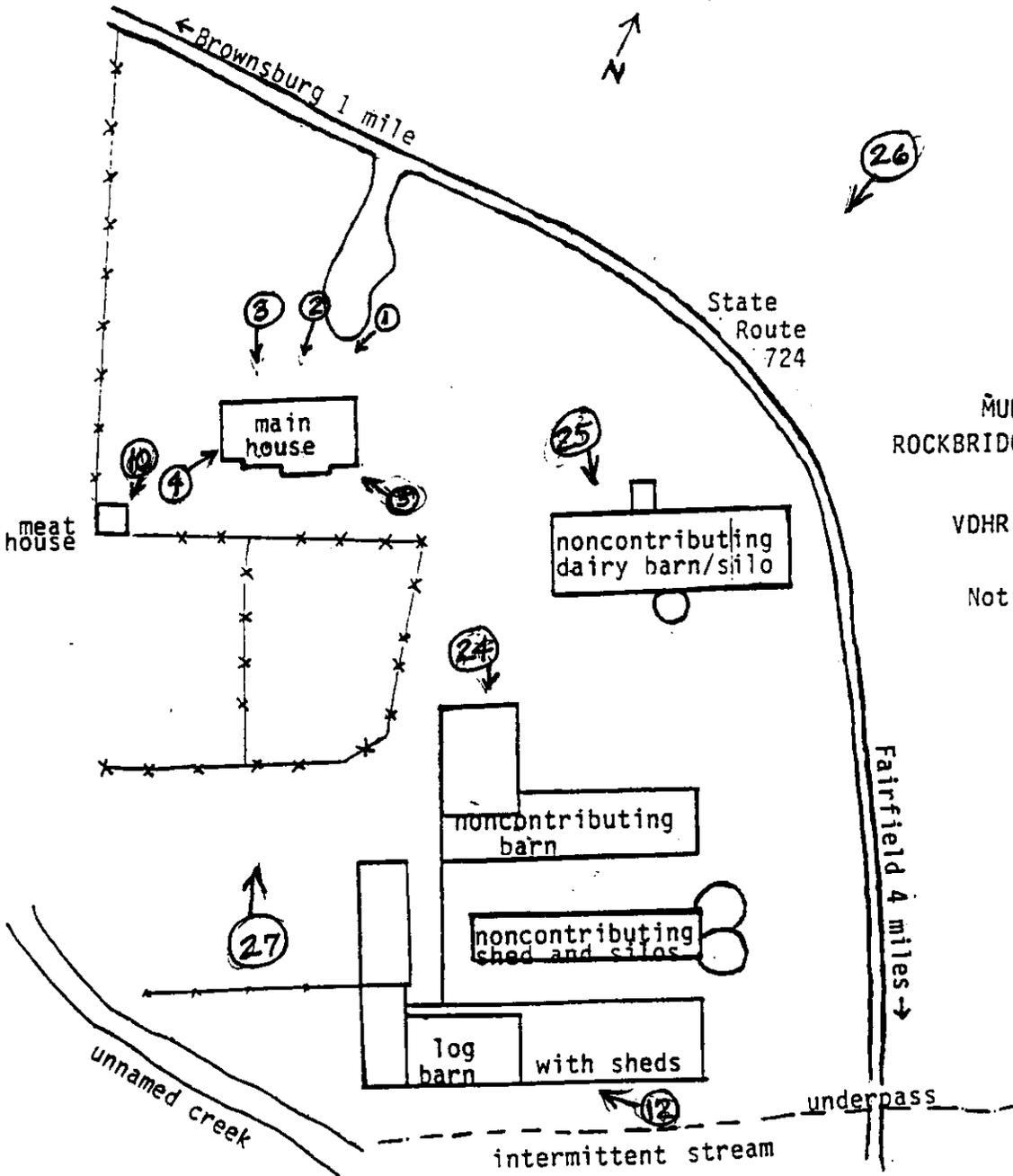
The boundary of the 2.5 acre includes the main dwelling, the log meat house, and the log barn historically associated with the property. The remaining area of the farm property has not been included as the agricultural buildings do not relate to the architectural significance of the historic core of the property.

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Section Sketch Map Page 8

**Mulberry Grove
Rockbridge County, Virginia**

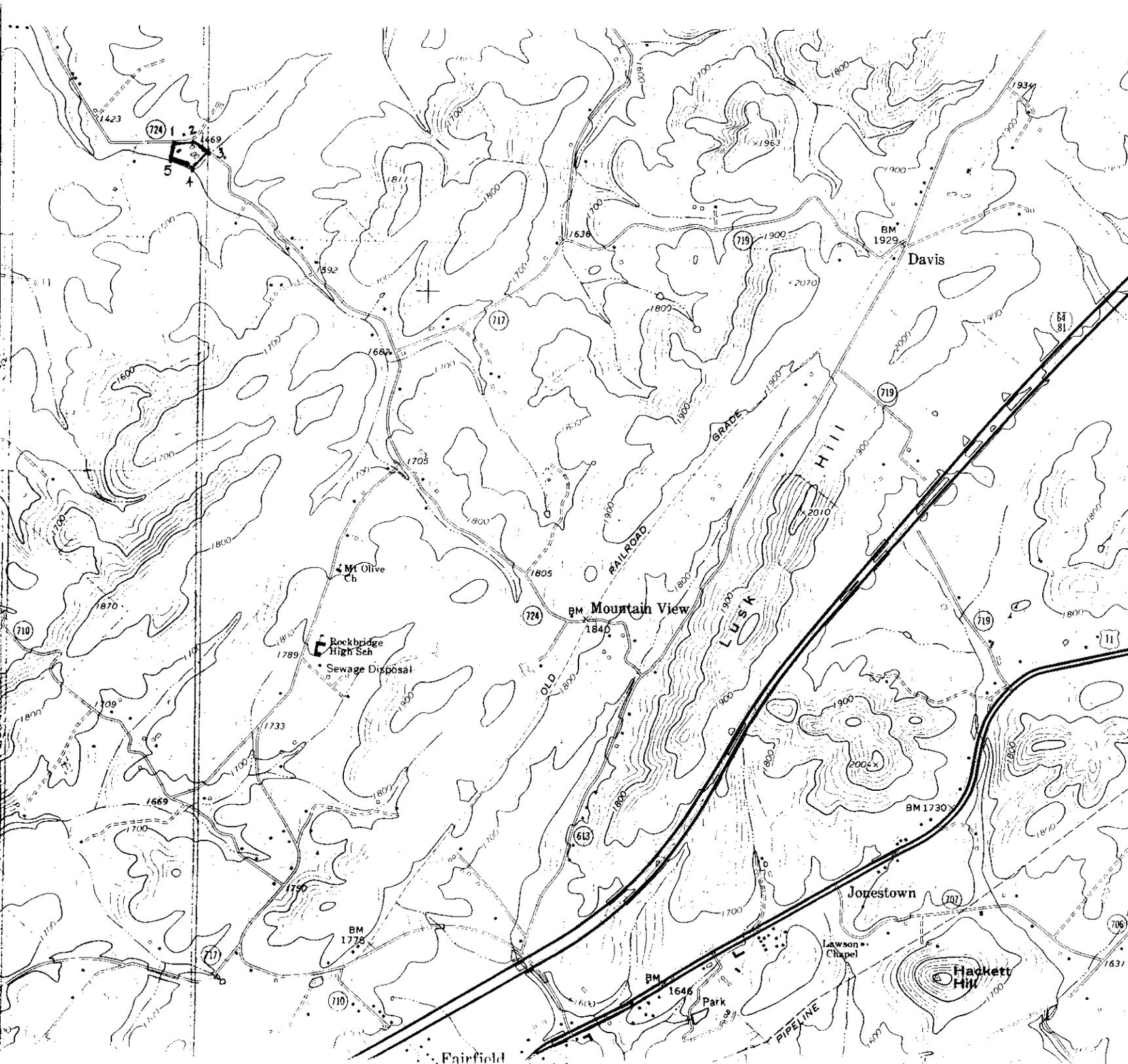


MULBERRY GROVE
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

2.5 acres

VDHR FILE NO. 81-44

Not drawn to scale.



1.5 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 54
 STAUNTON 18 MI.
 4199
 4197
 4196
 STEELES TAVERN 3.2 MI.
 STAUNTON 22 MI.
 4195
 80 000 FEET
 (NORTH)
 4194000m N.

MULBERRY GROVE
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY,

UTM REFERENCES

1	17	648820	4198500	
55'	2	17	648920	4198500
3	17	649010	4198440	
4	17	648930	4198350	
5	17	648800	4198400	