

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.

VLR 9/14/15  
NPHP 2/14/16

#### 1. Name of Property

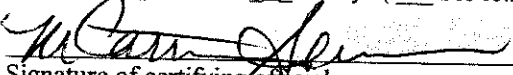
historic name Springdale  
other names/site number Half Moon; The Alexander Trimble House; Holly Hill; The Dixon House/Farm  
DHR File 081-0180

#### 2. Location

street & number 70 Gilmore Lane not for publication N/A  
city or town Lexington vicinity N/A  
state Virginia code VA county Rockbridge code 163 Zip 24450

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

  
Signature of certifying official

12/29/05  
Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_











United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Springdale  
Rockbridge County, Virginia

Section   8   Page   3  

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**Justification of Criteria**

Springfield is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the regional level, under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, because of its association with John Jordan, a very noteworthy builder of the period and region; and because of its rare architectural form, quality of detail, and high degree of historic integrity. Its period of significance begins with construction, c. 1812, and ends in 1955 with the 50-year mandatory cut-off.

**Narrative History**

Alexander Trimble (1762-1816), who purchased 600 acres of the Borden grant in 1790, appears to have been the first owner of the Springdale property. He and his second wife, Martha Grigsby Trimble (1770-1868) were married December 12, 1793. The Trimble family may have resided in the log cabin known to have been on the land before the brick house was built, c.1812. A Mutual Insurance Society document, dated December 3, 1812, includes a sketch with a likeness of the house, showing its three-part form, and a description: "two-story Brick dwelling house covered with wood [wood shingles] 92 x 22'. Two wings, one-story brick, covered with wood, 16' x 16'. Brick kitchen covered with wood." The house and kitchen were valued at \$1800 and \$100, respectively.<sup>1</sup> Trimble's farm eventually became known as "Trimble Hills," but was referred to on the assurance form as "Holly Hill." In his last will and testament, dated November 12, 1813, Trimble bequeathed the house and a large part of his estate to his nephew Joseph Steele and wife Martha Paxton Steele, although Trimble did not die until November 22, 1816. Joseph Steele (1795-1872) was a prominent lawyer in Lexington and a trustee of Washington College, now Washington & Lee University.<sup>2</sup>

Based a persistent oral and written tradition attributing Springdale to Jordan, the house's unusual plan, its methods and materials of construction, as well as its location and date of construction, the architect-builder of Springdale appears to have been none other than Colonel John Jordan (1777-1854). Jordan is a well-known historical figure in the region, and the subject of numerous poorly substantiated and often conflicting legends. He was born in Goochland County, Virginia, and lived in Halifax County before establishing himself in the town of Lexington in 1796 (some sources say 1802 or 1803). A vastly resourceful man, he excelled in the businesses and industries of architecture and building construction, iron smelting, gristmills, blacksmithing, and cotton and woolen textile manufacturing. Some written histories credit him with involvement in the construction of nearly every important building built in or around Lexington during his long, successful career.<sup>3</sup> Present-day historians credit Jordan for introducing classical refinement to the early architecture of the Lexington-Rockbridge County area. Although not verified, the earliest house (perhaps erroneously) attributed to him in Lexington is Mulberry Hill (117-0010, NRHP 9/9/82), begun in 1797.

Section   8   Page   4

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Springdale  
Rockbridge County, Virginia

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It is well documented that Jordan worked as a brickmason at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello around 1805-6 and owned a slave woman married to Jefferson's brickmason slave "Brown," whom Jefferson ultimately sold to Jordan-- as evidenced by a letter from Jefferson to Jordan dated December 21, 1805.<sup>4</sup> Jordan has been credited with designing and building the splendid Ann Smith Academy in 1808, "a brick structure of rather pretentious proportions", once considered the handsomest building in town; and a house called Little Stono (DHR #081-0079), outside of Lexington, around 1816.<sup>5</sup> Jordan and Samuel Darst (1788-1864), the son of prominent Lexington potter, brickmaker and contractor Benjamin Darst, operated the firm of Jordan and Darst from 1815 to 1824, with Jordan negotiating the contracts and Darst managing its operations. The firm was involved in the construction of some of Lexington's most impressive buildings, including Washington Hall at Washington and Lee University (DHR #117-0022, NHL 11/11/71); Stono, Jordan's home near VMI at Jordan's Point (DHR #117-0016, NRHP 4/1/75); Darst's own mansion, Barclay House (now called Beaumont) on Lee Avenue; the Pines, the residence of the elder Darst; and the Ruffner House on Lexington's Preston St., completed in 1824. Around 1820 Jordan and Darst are said to have done some additional work for Jefferson at the University of Virginia. Although their involvement in building UVA has not been documented, their names appear in a March 9, 1819 letter from Archibald Stuart to Thomas Jefferson in which proposals from a number brickwork contractors were mentioned. Jordan also improved Lexington's transportation system by building roads connecting the town with the more established routes across the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains; an important covered bridge burned by Confederate forces in 1864; the bateau canal on the James River at Balcony Falls beginning in 1824; and the North River Canal System in the 1830s.<sup>6</sup> Jordan and his wife were founding members of the Lexington Baptist Church, constituted May 9, 1841.<sup>7</sup>

### Springdale after 1889

In 1889, most of the property was purchased by John W. Barclay of Lexington. In 1902, Edgar McClung Dixon and wife Mary McCormick Dixon bought part of the farm from Barclay, and the remaining portion in 1904. After Dixon's death in the 1950s, the farm and house passed to daughter Odessa Dixon Holman and husband Samuel R. Holman.<sup>8</sup>

Some window frames and sashes were replaced in 1914 when Edgar Dixon renovated the house. The renovation included construction of the present full-length porch to replace a "much smaller porch." The original stone piers supporting the porch were re-used. There was a brick office building in the yard, on the north side of the main house, and which is said to have been used by a lawyer. Tradition also holds that magistrate court was held there before the Rockbridge Courthouse was built. This building was torn down in 1914 by Dixon, and the brick was used to raise the two original one-story wings of the house to create second story bedrooms. The old office building had become dangerous, and was held together with very long iron rods. The farm received electricity in 1940, and the first

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Springdale  
Rockbridge County, Virginia**

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bathroom plumbing was installed in the house in 1949. An old detached kitchen on the south side of the house was torn down about 1908 and the brick used for a springhouse, to which the water was piped from the foot of the hill by means of a ram. The kitchen originally had a brick floor, and stood just below the springhouse, which is now gone too.<sup>9</sup>

In the late 1900s the house was used for student housing for a time and later stood empty, or was used for farm storage. When Mr. and Mrs. James C. Kidd bought the property in 1997, the house was in need of rehabilitation, but was still structurally sound.<sup>10</sup>

**Architectural Context**

Over the years, Springdale has been referred by a variety of other names, such as Holly Hill. By no coincidence, it is closely related temporally and architecturally to a number of other houses in Rockbridge County with the word "hill" in their name. These include Fancy Hill, Hickory Hill, Cherry Hill, Fruit Hill, Liberty Hill, Clover Hill, Cress Hill and Rose Hill. All of these residences are commodious brick homes with a high level of architectural refinement. Furthermore, all of the patrons for whom the houses were built were members of the Grigsby family or its many branches. (Springdale was built for Martha Grigsby and her husband Alexander Trimble). Although the Grigsbys and others related by marriage built many more fine dwellings in the area than are listed above, a group of them have come to be known as "the Seven Hills," and have been discussed at length in written histories and genealogical literature. All of the notable Grigsby houses were erected during the early National period, are designed in the Federal or Neo-classical styles, and are of Flemish bond brick construction.<sup>11</sup> The houses are typically center passage plans rather than the temple-wing form, which remained rare in the area. With the exception of Springdale, neither Colonel Jordan nor the Darsts have been demonstrably connected with the Grigsby family residences.





**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Springdale  
Rockbridge County, Virginia**

All photographs are of: **Springdale**, Rockbridge County, Virginia

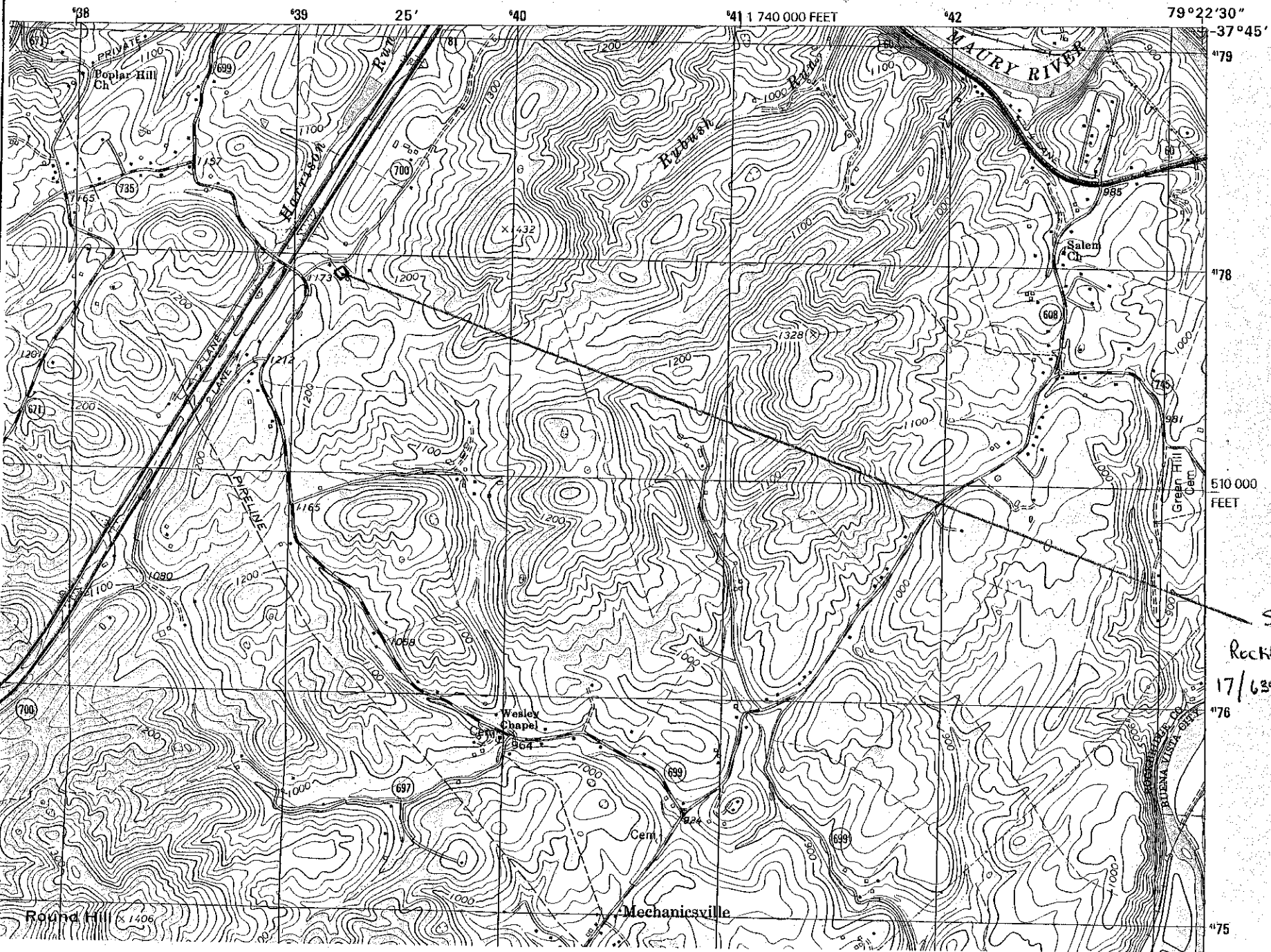
Date: March 2005

Photographer: Michael J. Pulice

Negative No. 22043, 22105

Location of negatives: VDHR, Richmond

1. VIEW OF: South (front) elevation. Neg. No. 22043
2. VIEW OF: South (front) elevation (alternate angle). Neg. No. 22043
3. VIEW OF: South (front) elevation (alternate angle). Neg. No. 22043
4. VIEW OF: West elevation. Neg. No. 22043
5. VIEW OF: East elevation. Neg. No. 22043
6. VIEW OF: North(rear) elevation. Neg. No. 22043
7. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, parlor mantel. Neg. No. 22043
8. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, dining room mantel. Neg. No. 22043
9. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, library mantel. Neg. No. 22043
10. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, bedroom mantel. Neg. No. 22043
11. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, front door. Neg. No. 22043
12. VIEW OF: First floor, interior door. Neg. No. 22043
13. VIEW OF: First floor, interior, stairway landing. Neg. No. 22043
14. VIEW OF: Attic, interior, rafter pair. Neg. No. 22043
15. VIEW OF: Attic, interior, rafter w/ Roman numeral. Neg. No. 22043
16. VIEW OF: Exterior, west elevation (alternate view). Neg. No. 22105
17. VIEW OF: View from front yard facing west (neighboring property). Neg. No. 22105



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FEET

81-180  
Sprugdale  
Rockbridge Co. VA  
17/639234/4178141

Round Hill 1406

Mechanicsville

Wesley Chapel

Salem Ch

Poplar Hill Ch