

VLR-10/20/81

NRHP-9/16/82

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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date entered

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Cliffside

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Route 6 N/A not for publication

city, town Scottsville X vicinity of 7th congressional district (J. Kenneth Robinson)

state Virginia code 51 county Albemarle code 003

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Virginia Moore

street & number Rt. 1, Box 62

city, town Scottsville X vicinity of state Virginia 24590

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Albemarle County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Charlottesville state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)
title (1) Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no
Inventory

date 1957 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D. C.

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**National Register of Historic Places
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CLIFFSIDE, Route 6, Scottsville, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 6, 7, 9

Page 1

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1967, 1981 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7. DESCRIPTION

Each of Cliffside's five original mantels is highly individualized. The east parlor mantel has Doric colonnettes supporting entablature blocks interrupted by pairs of globe-shaped turned spools. Its frieze is filled with a symmetrically molded panel, and narrow rope and reeded moldings carry across the architrave. The mantel in the west room displays similar colonnettes and spool entablature blocks, but there the spools are ribbed, and the frieze panel is filled with three sunburst paterae divided by stylized palm leaves. In addition, a band of spools carries across the base of the heavily molded shelf, which like the other mantels breaks out over the entablature blocks.

Upstairs mantels also exhibit elaborate detailing. That in the east room has vertically reeded pilasters, diagonally reeded entablature blocks, and a band of half spools beneath the shelf. The west chamber mantel features pairs of reeded, engaged colonnettes terminated by narrow spools; the frieze is decorated by quadrant-corner recessed panels and the entablature blocks by recessed panels with inset-arched heads and bases.

The extremely wide mantel in the west basement room is of simpler and more conventional form, with reeded pilasters and a plain raised-panel frieze. This mantel is the only one in the house to retain its early, if not original, paint. Marbleized by ochre-color paint trailed over a matte black base, this apparently unaltered mantel suggests that those upstairs were also marbleized at one time.

The only surviving early outbuilding on the property, the "Ginger House", is a one-story frame office/schoolhouse probably erected in the mid-19th century. Located about seventy yards down a slope from the main house, at the east edge of the front lawn, the building has brick foundations, a steep-pitched gable roof, and a two-bay front. Probably built as a one-room-plan structure, it was later expanded by a rear lean-to. The building is notable for its Gothic detailing, including projecting eaves, deeply sawn bargeboards, board-and-batten siding, and a front door with two pointed-arch panels.

An early family cemetery surrounded by a late 19th-century, cast-iron fence stands just east of the office/schoolhouse. Although some stones have been removed, several inscribed monuments remain.

JO'D

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Sheridan, Philip H. Personal Memoirs. New York: Charles L. Webster and Co., 1888.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	date <u> </u> N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Cliffside is a modified Jeffersonian-style house situated on a wooded, eleven-acre tract in southern Albemarle County, overlooking the town of Scottsville. Substantially unaltered since its erection in 1835, the house, on its steeply sloping site, presents an imposing image of upper-class life in antebellum Albemarle County.

The residence consists of an original central-passage-plan main block and a ca. 1850-60, side-passage rear ell. Both sections feature two-story elevations with raised basements, interior end chimneys and low-pitched gable roofs. The south front and east gable end of the original section are faced with finely executed Flemish bond, while the north and east walls are of relatively crude five-course American bond. The main facade is distinguished by a slightly protruding pedimented central pavilion, a bold wooden cornice, double-lintel window heads, and an original single-story, tetrastyle Greek Revival portico. Simple mid-19th-century verandas with square recessed-panel posts run along the north and east facades of the house.

The front of the building is punctuated with three openings per floor, while the end walls are blank except for paired attic vents on the west end and a later triple-sash French window on the east end. All windows contain six-over-six sash, including the central second-story opening, which has narrow four-over-four sash sidelights. The monumental main entry consists of a single exceptionally wide raised-panel door flanked by deeply recessed sidelights, all framed by an entablature and reeded pilasters and capped by a broad elliptical fanlight. An elliptical arch of rubbed and molded brick with hairline mortar joints contains the fanlight's wooden frame, which features a reeded soffit and an extrados enriched by a band of turned pendants. The fanlight itself takes the form of a sunburst, with wooden circles positioned between the sun's rays. Another notable exterior decorative feature is the false fanlight in the roof pediment's tympanum, fashioned of molded wooden strips and painted white like the rest of the exterior woodwork.

A ten-foot-wide stair passage divides identical-sized rooms on all three floors. The main stair is of open-well, open-string form, rising along the left side of the passage. Painted rectangular-section balusters with finely beaded edges support an oval pine banister ramped and eased at the newels. The varnished, vase-form pine newels rest on square or octagonal bases with turned drops at the landings. The stair spandrel is faced with raised panels, and the sawn tread brackets have triple-wave-form soffits.

Main-floor doors and windows are finished with symmetrically molded casings with bull's-eye corner blocks. Bold, heavily molded chair rails and baseboards surround each room. The only 20th-century trim consists of molded and denticulated cornices on the main floor. Doors have six raised panels with applied quirked moldings; most retain their original iron locks with brass knobs. The thirty-seven-inch-wide front and rear passage doors, each decorated by a field of nine square upper panels and three vertical lower panels, contain elaborate early brass locks possibly installed in this century. The rear lock has a raised figure of the goddess Ceres, while the front lock is embellished with a spread eagle.

(See Continuation Sheet # 1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1835 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cliffside, rising from a bluff overlooking the town of Scottsville, is a notable example of Piedmont Virginia Federal architecture. Scottsville witnessed a surge of growth from the 1830s to 1850s with the completion of the Staunton and James River Turnpike in 1827 and the chartering of the James River and Kanawha Canal Company in 1832. It was during this golden era that many of the existing commercial and residential structures were erected. Profiting from the town's rise to prosperity, Gilly Lewis, a local doctor and mill owner, built Cliffside as his residence in 1835. The house is set apart from the majority of town buildings of the period by its impressive scale; fine exterior detailing; and well-preserved boldly carved interior woodwork.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Cliffside stands on land that in 1828 formed part of a large estate belonging to Peyton Harrison of Cumberland County. In the tax books, this parcel is described as containing 650 acres, adjacent to Scottsville, with \$2,000 of improvements. In 1835 Peyton Harrison sold 626 acres of this parcel, including the improvements, to Carter Harrison, while selling the remaining acreage to Gilly M. Lewis. In that same year, Lewis added improvements valued at \$3,500 to his portion; hence, the 1835 construction date for Cliffside. Lewis already owned an improved lot in the town of Scottsville that may have served as his medical office. According to an 1836 gazetteer, Scottsville had a number of brick buildings at this time, which would account for the high valuation given to improvements in the town.

The physician who built Cliffside was a wealthy man. Besides a large personal estate and his town property, Gilly M. Lewis also owned a large mill on the Hardware River, known as the Albemarle Mill. Thus, it is not surprising that he could build such a fine residence as Cliffside. Although it is not known where Lewis came from before settling in Scottsville, he does not seem to have been related to the prominent Lewis family of Charlottesville.

Gilly Lewis died in 1842. In 1852 some controversy concerning his estate led the county court to appoint a commission to settle the matter. The commissioners acted by selling Cliffside to John O. Lewis, possibly a relative of Gilly M. Lewis. The parcel bought by John O. Lewis contained the dwelling house and other dependencies. The mill remained in the Gilly Lewis estate for another ten years. Reserved in the deed to John O. Lewis were the "Mount View School" and the family graveyard. The schoolhouse, according to Virginia Moore, the present owner of Cliffside, was used to tutor neighborhood children both before and after the Civil War. John Lewis, like his predecessor at Cliffside, had extensive holdings in real estate and, according to Miss Moore, was a prominent citizen of Scottsville. The 1850 census describes him as a farmer, but he carried on commercial activities as well.

The significance of Cliffside is enhanced by a local tradition that it served as Sheridan headquarters during the Civil War as well as a center of activity during Union raids on Scottsville and the canal. The stories dealing with this episode are charming and undoubtedly grounded in truth, but they are impossible to document.

