

VLR-9/13/00
NRHP-11/22/00

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 Strickler-Louderback House
other names/site number VDHR file no. 069-0105

2. Location

street & number 1001 Old Farm Road N/A not for publication
city or town Shenandoah X vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Page code 139 zip code 22849

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 ___ ~~do~~ not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

M. Catherine Russo 10/4/2000
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure
AGRICULTURE	animal facility
FUNERARY	cemetery
LANDSCAPE	

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure
AGRICULTURE	animal facility
FUNERARY	cemetery
LANDSCAPE	

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Federal
- Greek Revival
- Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Brick
- walls Brick
- roof Metal
- other Stone
- Concrete

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1852-1950

Significant Dates

1852

1914

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

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 2.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing	
1	17	710870	4267680	3	17
2	17			4	17

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 J. Daniel Pezzoni
organization Landmark Preservation Associates date June 28, 2000
street & number 6 Houston St. telephone (540) 464-5315
city or town Lexington state VA zip code 24450

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 Harry Franklin Louderback
street & number 1001 Old Farm Road telephone (540) 652-6389
city or town Shenandoah state VA zip code 22849

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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**Strickler-Louderback House
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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Strickler-Louderback House is a two-story brick dwelling built in 1852 for David and Polly Strickler and their family, and rehabilitated in 1989-93 by the present owners, Harry F. and Sharon K. Louderback. The house has been in the Louderback family since 1914. The east-facing house has a symmetrical five-bay single-room-deep form with a full basement level and an integral two-story ell, characteristics that contribute to a sense of imposing size. Exterior features include a metal-sheathed gable roof, gable-end chimneys, a one-story Greek Revival front porch with a basement level, and later porches on both sides of the ell. The center-passage-plan interior features plaster walls and ceilings; heart pine floors; beaded baseboards; two-panel doors and some six-panel doors, all hung on butt hinges; pottery and porcelain door knobs; Federal mantels with Greek Revival influence; a number of pendant electric light fixtures from the second quarter of the twentieth century; and a range of decorative treatments. Near the house are a compound L-shaped outbuilding that includes a meathouse, chickenhouse compartments, and a workshop; and a fenced cemetery containing marble tombstones that date primarily to the late nineteenth century. Once associated with the house but now located on adjacent properties and not included in the nominated parcel are an 1895 frame bank barn and other farm-related buildings. The house stands on a high terrace overlooking the South Fork of the Shenandoah River across from the former railroad community of Ingham, which is located at the base of a western spur of the Blue Ridge known as Dovel Mountain. The surroundings are agricultural, with hay fields, cow pastures, and groves of trees. The modern River Hills subdivision abuts the approximately 2.5-acre nominated parcel on the south side.

Inventory

1. House. 1852. Contributing building.
2. L-shaped outbuilding. Ca. 1920. Contributing building.
3. Grape arbor. First half 20th c. Contributing structure.
4. Chicken house. First half 20th c. Contributing building.
5. Cemetery. 19th and 20th c. Contributing site.
6. Meathouse. First half 20th c. Noncontributing building.
7. Privy. 1950s. Noncontributing building.

Exterior

The house brickwork is laid in a variable American bond ranging from seven to twelve stretcher courses between each header course. The bricks were painted red in the twentieth century. The

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Description (continued)

main body of the house and the ell have corbeled cornices and cornice returns consisting of five courses of brick. The brickwork is continuous between the main body of the house and the ell, evidence that the ell is integral to the house. The gable-end chimneys project on both the exterior and interior walls of the gable ends and have stepped shoulders. Visible at the foot of the north chimney is an unusual detail: the chimney corbels out from house wall, rather than continuing down below grade. The house has nine-over-six windows on the first story, six-over-six on the second, small four-light windows in the gables, and a front entry with a six-panel door and a three-light transom.

A one-story porch extends across the front of the house, supported on basement-level brick piers. The first-story tier has tapered square wood columns and pilasters with molded caps; a balustrade with an octagonal-section hand rail and rectangular-section banisters; beaded slatted ceiling boards; and a hip roof. Visible in the basement tier are the mortise-and-tenon structure of the floor above, and herringbone-pattern brick pavers.

A one-story porch extends along the south side of the ell and adjacent main house wall. A ca. 1900 photograph of the house shows this porch with chamfered square wood posts, a delicate sawn balustrade, and small sawn frieze brackets. The brackets remain, but the posts and balustrade were removed in the 1950s and metal supports installed. Other features of the porch include a beaded slatted ceiling, concrete steps with river-cobble cheeks (added shortly after 1914), a concrete floor, and a cinder block foundation (the last two date from the 1950s).

A small one-story porch extends from the end of the ell on the north side. This porch is thought to date to shortly after a change in ownership in 1914, and its Craftsman-influenced river-cobble construction supports the tradition, although chamfered rectangular posts with unusual scalloped tops may have been recycled from a nineteenth-century porch in the same location. Other features include an antique Gem galvanized steel chain pump with stencilled inscription and decoration, recently installed to replace an earlier pump now missing; an arched scupper with a sloping lip to help waste water drain off the concrete porch floor; and steps with cheeks constructed of the same stonework and concrete copings of the porch, two of the copings replaced with concrete flower boxes. Under the porch is a cistern fed by downspouts from the ell roof. Nearby is another below-grade cistern with a Gem pump that is also a recent replacement.

Interior

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The front entry opens into a center passage containing a two-run stair with turned newel posts, rectangular-section banisters, ramped handrails with rounded sections, and scrolled tread brackets. A stair leads down to the basement under the main stair behind a vertical flush-board spandrel. The first-floor room on the south side of the passage has a paneled wainscot with a molded chairrail, a picture rail, splayed window embrasures (typical throughout the house), and a three-part Federal mantel with symmetrical moldings in the pilasters. The door and window surrounds have symmetrical fluted moldings with central indentations that are referenced in the central indented buttons of the turned corner blocks. During the 1989-93 rehabilitation a book shelf was built in one corner of the room, and the hearth (originally with bricks set in sand) was redone with various objects (small river cobbles, cut nails and spikes, buttons, coins) set in concrete. The trim is painted a shade of green that is based on the historic trim color revealed during rehabilitation (trim colors in most of the other interior spaces are also based on the historic colors).

The location and finishes of the south room suggest it served historically as a parlor. The amount of wear on the door leading into the room and on the floor around the fireplace suggest frequent use and more informality than in the parlor on the north side of the center passage. This north room has somewhat finer finishes than the south room, with paneled window embrasures and a more decorative mantel, but the room lacks a wainscot. The three-part Federal mantel features lozenge-shaped recesses in the frieze tablets and moldings with a peaked section on the faces of the pilasters. The room has molded chairrails, a modern stone hearth, and door and window surrounds with symmetrical moldings featuring central half-round ribs that are referenced in the projecting central buttons of the turned corner blocks--the reverse of the treatment in the south parlor. Louderback family tradition recalls that a painted medallion or other figure once graced the ceiling of this room. The room served as a birthing room on at least one occasion, that of the birth of Earl Lynn Louderback in 1915.

The first floor of the ell is divided into a larger room adjoining the main body of the house and a smaller end room. The larger room has Greek Revival peaked-section door surrounds (similar to the pilasters of the north parlor mantel) with blank corner blocks, chairrails, picture rails, and an interior brick stove flue added about 1900 or earlier. The smaller room once served as school room but was made into a kitchen in the twentieth century and remodeled again for use as a cold-weather kitchen during the 1989-93 rehabilitation. The room contains an enclosed stair to the second floor and, under it, a closet which replaced a stair to the basement. The chimney breast is provided with a bracketed Victorian mantel shelf (indicative of a late nineteenth century change from a fireplace to a stove) and is flanked by presses with molded surrounds and shelves with

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double-beaded edges. During rehabilitation traces of simple stenciling were discovered at the top of the chimney breast under twentieth-century paint layers.

The second floor rooms served as bedrooms historically and presently. Until a doorway was added in the twentieth century no connection existed between the second floors of the ell and the main body of the house. The south room in the main body of the house has an architrave mantel with simple architrave and shelf bed moldings, and a two-panel door with spirited graining in brown and yellow-tan. The lock box dates to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and the graining covers the space left by an earlier lockbox, suggesting that the graining dates to the same general period as the present lock box. This room is believed to have served as the bedroom of David and Polly Strickler. The north second-floor room has a two-part Federal mantel with fluted pilasters and peaked-section frieze tablets over the pilasters. The second floor of the ell contains two rooms, but of different sizes than the rooms downstairs. Features include a stair railing with a turned newel post and rectangular-section balusters, and a bathroom in the end room with a modern beaded matchboard wainscot.

In the second-floor center passage is a two-run stair that rises to the attic directly over the stair below and like it has turned newels and scrolled tread brackets. The risers and baseboard on the landing and upper run preserve wavy painting in brown on green. The top of the stair-passage window, which projects a few inches above the landing floor, preserves green paint of the same shade as that on the risers and baseboard. The uncomfortable lack of headroom over the upper run may relate to a tradition that the Stricklers planned to have a third story for the house but ran out of money and had an attic built instead. The attic, useful only for storage, displays straight-sawn roof boards, common rafters, and ridge boards, cut nails, and split lath. The short beaded batten attic door is painted green on the stair side.

Although not as finely finished as the upper floors, the basement played an important role in the operations of the household, and it preserves many features related to its historic functions of food storage, preparation, and possibly consumption. The basement plan reflects the plans of the floors above, with a south room that functioned as a kitchen, a smaller center room containing the stair and a pantry, a north room of more obscure function but possibly a warm-weather dining room, and a single large room under the ell for fruit and vegetable storage. Except for the ell room the basement has brick pavements, and the bonds vary from room to room: stretcher bond in the north room, irregular in the pantry, and a pattern of concentric rectangles in the south room.

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The south room features a large fireplace with a wrought-iron crane and hooks and crude cast-iron fireback and hearth plate. Surrounding the fireplace is an architrave mantel, and next to it is a press with upper and lower sets of paneled doors and shelves with double-beaded edges similar to those in the ell first-floor end room. This room and the north room have beaded chairrails. The pantry has shelves of circular-sawn cut-nailed construction, and evidence of whitewash on the shelves and other woodwork. The two-panel doors opening into the pantry and the north and south rooms from a vestibule at the base of the stairs display a range of wrought-iron latches, dead bolts, and other hardware. The north room, which is now used as a warm-weather kitchen and informal dining area, has an architrave mantel similar to that in the second-floor south room.

A two-panel door leads from the north basement room into the more crudely finished ell basement. On the ell side of the door is a cast iron lock box bearing the worn circular brass emblem of the manufacturer, an eagle with a shield on its breast and an inscription ending "Erwin & Co." It may be that this lock box was recycled to the basement when the lock boxes on the upper-floor doors were changed. On the gable-end wall are two brick piers that support the chimney breast in the room above. The piers are joined at the top by a corbeled arch with parging at the top of the arch, probably applied in the nineteenth century. On this parging was molded the form of a human face, of which two squint eyes survive, the nose having flaked off since the mid-twentieth century and the mouth before then. Other features of the room include potato bins along the south wall, constructed of straight- and circular-sawn lumber fastened with cut and wire nails; vertical wooden barred vents; parged walls; and a batten door to the exterior on the north side.

Outbuildings and Landscape Features

Located approximately thirty feet north of the west end of the ell is a one-story L-shaped outbuilding composed of smaller units that served a variety of household and agricultural functions. According to Louderback family tradition, the building was begun shortly after the family acquired the farm in 1914, and its poured concrete foundations, circular-sawn light framing members, and wire-nail technology support an early twentieth-century date of construction. The building's compound form suggests it grew in stages. The building features weatherboard and vertical-board siding, painted red with white trim, and metal roofing. The south end unit is the meathouse. It is the only section of the building with a gable roof (the other sections are shed-roofed), which overhangs on the south-facing front to shelter a work area and entry with batten door. Inside are a concrete floor, wire nails hammered into the exposed ceiling

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joists for use as meat hooks, and the inscription "ham 32 1/2" penciled on the door. Sheets of tin are attached to the wall ends of the joists to deter vermin from reaching the meat, on the same principle as the metal collars that deter squirrels from raiding bird feeders.

Adjoining the meathouse is a long chickenhouse with window openings covered with mesh or sheets of corrugated fiberglass, a dirt floor, and an old interior door recycled from some unidentified building. The door is constructed of beaded battens joined by tapered and molded cross pieces dovetailed into the battens, and has wrought iron strap hinges attached by hand-headed nails and other features suggesting it dates to the late eighteenth century or the early nineteenth century. The other arm of the L is formed by two sections with original and modern windows and corrugated metal sheathing across the back. Historically these sections were used on different occasions to shelter chickens, hogs, and sheep. In more recent years and presently the east end section serves as a workshop.

A privy formerly extended the L-shaped outbuilding to the east. It was removed after a new privy was built in the northeast corner of the house yard in the 1950s. The yard privy has framed construction, plywood siding painted red, and an asphalt-shingled front-gable roof. The yard privy adjoins a concrete-capped river-cobble pier similar in construction and probably date to the north ell porch. Another stone pier stands at the southeast corner of the yard (near a former bake oven, the site of which is indicated by a scattering of bricks) and a pair forming a gateway stand at the southwest corner. The gateway has a metal gate and a sloped concrete threshold with a decorative checkerboard pattern of scorings to create a more textured surface for traction. The threshold forms the end of a concrete walkway that angles to the south ell porch. Wire fencing, supported by metal posts attached to a continuous concrete footing, spanned between the stone piers for most of the twentieth century. The wire fencing on the north and west sides of the yard remains; that on the south and east sides was replaced with white-painted board fencing in 1999. Between the west fence and the end of the ell stands a grape arbor with a support structure of metal piping, erected before 1950 to replace an earlier arbor that stood in the northeast corner of the yard near the yard privy. Beyond the west fence is a large vegetable garden in the same location as a historic-period garden, and beyond it, forming the west boundary of the nominated parcel, is a creosoted board fence.

To the north of the privy stand a chickenhouse and a meathouse that was moved to the property. The chickenhouse is a one-story weatherboarded frame building with a red and white paint scheme, a metal-sheathed shed roof, two batten doors, windows with fixed six-light lower sash and awning-type six-light upper sash, and a modern cinder block foundation. The building

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originally stood a short distance to the north. The meathouse formerly stood behind a house in Shenandoah that was recently torn down to make way for an expansion of Pioneer Bank. The building has an overhanging metal-sheathed gable roof, a temporary cinder block foundation, and siding made from metal caboose siding panels (the former owner was a railroad worker) painted gray. Inside, between exposed circular-sawn studs, are the painted inscriptions "Paint 6.25.48" and "6-28-47." A satellite dish stands in the general vicinity of these buildings.

The cemetery lies to the south of the house, across the end of Old Farm Road, on a slightly higher section of the terrace on which the house stands. Rectangular in layout, the cemetery is enclosed in a twentieth-century iron picket fence with a gate bearing the name J. T. Kibler; this fence replaces a wire and wood post fence that appears in a ca. 1900 photograph of the property. The majority of the monuments are in form of tabular marble headstones with flat or segmental tops. The more decorative of these are for individuals who died in the 1880s, and they have stylistic similarities suggesting they were carved at the same marble works at roughly the same time. Decorative bas-relief motifs include a superimposed crown and cross (for David Strickler, d. 1882), a lamb (for Kemper Lee Strickler, d. 1884, age 3), and a hand with index finger pointing heavenward in a trefoil-form recess (for Mary E. Kibler, d. 1884, age 6). Less common are rough-hewn tabular limestone tombstones that probably antedate the marble markers, and the ca. 1900 photograph shows what may be small fieldstone markers that may survive under grade or undergrowth. Standing in the cemetery are tall cedars, likely over a hundred years old since they appear as mature but smaller trees in the ca. 1900 photograph, and the ground is blanketed with periwinkle.

Integrity Statement

The Strickler-Louderback House possesses a high degree of architectural integrity. Most exterior and interior features from the period of significance are present. The only significant loss of exterior historic fabric and replacement by modern fabric is the south-side ell porch, which had its Victorian posts and balustrade replaced with metal supports in the 1950s. Inside, the house retains its mantels, staircase, and other trim, as well as features such as brick-paved floors, fireplaces, a pantry, and a press associated with the use of the basement for food storage and preparation, features that rarely survive in such a high state of preservation in other houses of the era. The house retains traces of vernacular decorative painted finishes; these were preserved in the sensitive 1989-93 rehabilitation. Other traces, too damaged to repair, were photographed and covered over. The property retains a number of domestic outbuildings dating to the latter part of the period of significance, as well as a cemetery and historic walkways, fences, and

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gates. Several modern farm buildings have been built adjacent to the nominated parcel, and the Letelier Summer House is visible from the property, but otherwise the property's agricultural setting remains intact.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Strickler-Louderback House was built in 1852 for David and Polly Strickler and their large family on a bluff overlooking the Shenandoah River in southern Page County, Virginia. The two-story brick house features many notable architectural characteristics, including hybrid Federal-Greek Revival mantels, traces of vernacular decorative finishes, and a basement-level food storage and preparation area with brick-paved floors. The house was later occupied by the Kibler and Foltz families and in 1914 it was acquired by the Louderbacks, who added Craftsman-style stonework to the house and yard. Nearby stand a combination meathouse and chicken house building, and a family cemetery with Victorian marble tombstones. The present owners, Harry and Sharon Louderback, completed a sensitive rehabilitation of the house in 1993.

Applicable Criteria

The Strickler-Louderback House is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a well preserved Federal-Greek Revival farmhouse that illustrates the persistence of the Federal style in mountainous Page County, and that also retains traces of vernacular decorative finishes and features a basement-level food storage and preparation area that illustrates nineteenth-century domestic arrangements. Later features such as 1910s Craftsman stonework are also of note. The period of significance extends from the date of construction in 1852 until 1950, embracing the later evolution of the house and the construction of the present complement of outbuildings and landscape features, some of which date to shortly after the property was acquired by the Louderback family in 1914. The Strickler-Louderback House is eligible at the local level of significance. Information in support of designation appears throughout the historic context.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Foremost among these were the nomination's sponsors, Harry Franklin and Sharon Kite Louderback, who completed a sensitive rehabilitation of their family homeplace in 1993. Others who provided assistance included Leslie A. Giles, Elizabeth Gushee of the Library of Virginia, and Scott Brooks-Miller, Suzanne Durham, David Edwards, June Ellis, and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. This project is an outgrowth of the 1997-1998 Page County Historic Resources Survey, sponsored by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Page County, and the Page County Heritage Association, and conducted by Landmark Preservation Associates.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

Historic Context

The property on which the Strickler-Louderback House stands belonged to Martin Strickler (ca. 1781-1851) for much of the first half of the nineteenth century. Rockingham County deed records, which are incomplete due to burning during the Civil War, suggest a number of transactions between Martin and other Strickler family members dating back to 1806. Land tax records preserved in Richmond are more informative. The first reference to Martin Strickler appears in 1809 when he owned 285 acres, which later records indicate included the site of the present house. A partially reconstructed Rockingham County deed suggests this parcel was acquired by Martin from a J. Strickler and wife and recorded in September 1808. The J. Strickler was likely John Strickler, Martin's father. Martin either acquired a dwelling with the transfer or had one built by 1820 when the records show buildings valued at \$200.¹

Martin and his wife Anna Comer (ca. 1784-1857?) lived in a log or frame house--most likely the one standing in 1820--that stood a short distance north of the present house. In addition to farming Martin owned a sawmill, and there is a tradition that he taught school during his younger days. Nearby in 1850 lived Martin and Anna's son David Strickler (1801-82), his wife Polly A. (ca. 1810-90; may also have gone by the name Mary), and their growing family. When Martin Strickler died in 1851, Anna received a life right to a third of his 350-acre "River" farm, and David received two-thirds. On Anna's death, believed to have occurred in 1857, David inherited the remaining third. David Strickler wasted no time in building a house on his newly acquired property. Page County's 1852 tax records, which list the river farm under Martin Strickler's estate, indicate a rise in the value of buildings from \$300 to \$1,300 and the notation "\$1000 Added for a New Brick House." Tax records for the following year show the farm and the house under David's name.²

¹ Rockingham County grantee and grantor indexes, tax records, and Deed Book 000, p. 519; Strickler, *Forerunners*, 296. The Strickler-Louderback House is located in the part of Page County that was formed out of Rockingham County in 1831.

² U.S. census, 1850 free population schedules; Page County Will Book D, p. 208, and Will Book E, p. 54; Owens and Cyphert, *Page County, Virginia, Cemeteries*, 121; Page County tax records; and Sharon K. Louderback personal communication.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

The federal censuses of 1850 and 1860 provide a statistical portrait of the Martin and David Strickler households, estates, and farm operations. In 1850 Martin, who lived alone with Anna, possessed real estate worth \$10,000. The next dwelling in the enumeration was that of David and Mary (Polly) Strickler and nine of their children. David owned real estate valued at \$2,500. The 1860 census, taken after Martin and Anna's deaths, reflects the transfer of the farm to David, who then owned \$10,500 in real estate. He also owned \$5,967 in personal estate, a small part of which appears to have represented the value of a sixteen-year-old male slave whom Strickler may have owned in 1850 as well. Most of the labor on Strickler's farm was likely performed by his sons, kinsmen, and hired hands.³

Although David Strickler did not become full owner of the farm until his mother's death, the federal census agricultural schedules suggest he had assumed responsibility for the farm's operation by 1850. David reported the value of his farm as \$10,000--identical to the value Martin gave for his real estate the same year--and David reported owning 225 acres of improved land and 122 unimproved acres in 1850, whereas Martin reported owning no land. A variety and abundance of crops and livestock were raised on David's farm, including horses, milk cows and other cattle, sheep, swine, wheat, rye, corn, oats, and orchard products, whereas Martin reported owning a single horse and cow and did not report any crop production. The 1850 census presents a picture of two households, with David Strickler running the farm that technically belonged to his father, and the elderly Martin and Anna living nearby, presumably in the older homeplace which may be recorded in the 1860 census as an adjacent unoccupied dwelling.⁴

³ The original lack of connection between the second floors of the main house and the ell may indicate use of the ell second floor as living quarters for farm hands.

⁴ David Strickler's farm was typical of antebellum Page County farms in the diversification of its products. Of note is the value of orchard products produced on the farm in 1860, which had increased to \$275 in value, the highest value of any farm in the Alma P. O. census district and indicative of a large orchard, presumably of apple trees. The 1860 census lists the following children in the David and Polly Strickler family: Martin (age 23; listed as a farmer), Mary C. (21), Emaline (18), Hiram (16), Nancy (15), Frances (14), Harrison (12), David J. (10) and Abraham (6). An older daughter, who is listed as "Mlia" (Amelia?) in the 1850 census, had apparently moved out of the household by 1860.

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By 1870, David and Polly too were advanced in years, and they relied on the labor of three sons who still resided with them to operate the farm and on two teenaged female domestics--one white and one black--to assist with housework. In 1875 David drafted an "article of agreement written between himself and his heirs giving them possession of his Mansion farm lying on the west side of the Shenandoah River for a stated annuity, each heir to pay him ten dollars yearly as long as he and his wife lives." Court records and other sources suggest that the farm was consolidated under Harrison Strickler, a son and heir, and Hiram Kibler, a relative. The 1885 Lake atlas appears to show Kibler living in the brick house and Harrison Strickler living in another dwelling a short distance to the south. In 1899 Harrison and Sarah J. Strickler sold a portion of the farm, including at this point the brick house, to John W. Foltz, and in 1914 Foltz sold the property to his son-in-law, Frank V. Louderback, who moved in with his wife, Gracie B. During Harrison Strickler's ownership a bank barn, which now stands on an adjoining parcel to the south, was constructed in 1895, and during the Foltz ownership John Foltz's son Homer lived in the house.⁵

Soon after the Louderbacks acquired the property they began to make changes, adding Craftsman-style stonework and concrete-work to the house and yard and building the L-shaped meathouse and chickenhouse building. Gracie converted the schoolroom at the end of the ell first-story into a kitchen, its present use. The Louderbacks continued to practice general farming, including an emphasis on orchard production as in the nineteenth century, and they shipped apples and raspberries to markets in Baltimore and other cities from the Norfolk & Western depot across the river in Ingham. The Louderbacks used Strickler Ford, located upstream from the present property, to cross the river to Ingham by vehicle, and Gracie used a homemade flat boat to fetch the mail from a mail box on the present Route 650 across the river. In addition to his farming activities, Frank worked as an insurance salesman and he served on the board of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in the nearby town of Stanley.⁶

Frank and Gracie had a son, Earl Lynn, who purchased the property from his parents in 1949. After Lynn's death the property passed to his widow, Essie, and upon her death in 1986 it passed

⁵ U.S. census 1870 Page County population schedules; Page County Deed Book U, p. 202, Deed Book 42, p. 19, and Deed Book 68, p. 451; Lake; *Page News and Courier*, August 31, 1995; and Harry F. and Sharon K. Louderback personal communication.

⁶ Harry F. and Sharon K. Louderback personal communication.

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to Lynn's nephew, Harry F. Louderback. In the 1960s an adjoining property owner developed the River Hills subdivision across Old Farm Road to the south of the house, separating from the house an 1895 bank barn and twentieth-century chicken house and garage. In 1969 Chilean nationals Orlando and Isabel Letelier purchased River Hills lots B-1 and C-1, directly across Old Farm Road from the Louderback property. The Leteliers built a two-story cinder-block and frame Ranch-style vacation house on lot B-1. Orlando Letelier held several posts in the Allende administration during the period 1970-73, including Chilean ambassador to the United States. He was assassinated by a car bomb in Washington in 1976. Isabel Letelier was an artist, educator, and founder of the Chilean Human Rights Office.⁷

The present owners, Earl Lynn's nephew Harry F. Louderback and his wife Sharon Kite Louderback, acquired the 47-acre core of the farm in 1986, and three years later they commenced a rehabilitation which was completed in 1993. Howard C. Shifflett served as the rehabilitation contractor. In 1999 the property received Virginia Century Farm designation. The family believes it shares the house with another occupant, a ghost with a fondness for knocking on doors, tugging on clothing, and walking upstairs to the attic in the middle of the night. The ghost is believed to be that of David Strickler.⁸

Architectural Analysis

The Strickler-Louderback House illustrates the persistence of the Federal Style in the domestic architecture of Page County. In most of rural antebellum Virginia, the Federal Style began to be replaced by the Greek Revival Style in the 1830s and was nearly entirely supplanted in the 1840s. In the 1852 Strickler-Louderback House and certain other late-antebellum Page County houses the Federal influence lived on, typically hybridized with Greek Revival influence. The mantels of the Strickler-Louderback House and another house, the Maggart-Gander farmhouse near Hamburg, illustrate this hybridization; the mantels have three-part Federal forms, or other Federal attributes such as pronounced frieze tablets, but the faces of the pilasters are embellished

⁷ Page County Deed Book 134, p. 452, and Deed Book 238, p. 313; Dinges and Landau, *Assassination on Embassy Row*; and Harry F. and Sharon K. Louderback personal communication.

⁸ Harry F. and Sharon K. Louderback personal communication; Page County Deed Book 394, p. 317.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

with symmetrical Greek Revival moldings. Page County's architectural conservatism may stem from its relative remoteness--the mountain-girded county was not served by railroad until the 1880s. Another factor may have been cultural isolation associated with the general lack of participation of the county and its large German population in the Anglo slave-based economy that predominated elsewhere in Virginia.⁹

Like many nineteenth-century Page County houses, the Strickler-Louderback House preserves evidence of decorative painted finishes. The county is remarkable for the richness of its decorative painting tradition--a trait it shares with other Shenandoah Valley counties--and within the local tradition the Strickler-Louderback House is notable for the range of decorative techniques employed in its interiors. Surviving finishes such as the graining, attic-stair marbling, and the idiosyncratic parged face in the ell basement are described above. The attic-stair marbling--more an abstraction loosely based on marbling--has its closest known parallel in dark green baseboard painting that survives in the William and Christina Dovel House, located three-quarters mile north of the Strickler-Louderback House. No longer extant but photographed during the rehabilitation was the painted ceiling medallion in the second-floor south bedroom. This featured a pentagon and five-pointed star within a circular band, painted in dark shades of red, green, and yellow on the blue ceiling of the room. Another, undocumented painted medallion is said to have existed on the ceiling of the first-floor north room during the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁰

Other notable features of the house include its basement food storage and preparation area, which displays a degree of finish and preservation rarely encountered in Virginia domestic architecture of the nineteenth century. The Louderback family perpetuates nineteenth-century custom by using the north basement room as a warm-weather kitchen and informal dining area. The 1910s stone- and concrete-work on the property relate to an imaginative tradition of masonry work practiced in the county during the first half of the twentieth century. Likewise, the ca. 1920 meathouse and chicken house building illustrates a local preference for such combination outbuildings.¹¹

⁹ Giles and Pezzoni, "Page County Historic Resources Survey Report," 11, 32-34.

¹⁰ Ibid., 36-38; Pezzoni and Reynolds, "Shenandoah County Historic Landmarks Survey," 46-47.

¹¹ Giles and Pezzoni, "Page County Historic Resources Survey Report," 58.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel encompasses a roughly rectangular area of approximately 2.5 acres defined as follows. Beginning on the north side of Old Farm Road--the south boundary of Page County tax parcel 88 ((A)) 12, on which the Strickler-Louderback House stands--at the point where the fence on the west side of the garden meets the road approximately one hundred feet west of the west gable end of the house ell; thence eastward with the south boundary of tax parcel 88 ((A)) 12 to the west bank of the Shenandoah River but jogging south to include two small parcels, tax parcel 88A ((1)) 2A (the end of Old Farm Road) and tax parcel 88A ((1)) 1 (the Strickler and Kibler family cemetery described in the nomination); thence north along the west bank of the river to a point at the intersection of a due east-west line that passes exactly fifty feet north of the northwest corner of the L-shaped outbuilding; thence west along the due east-west line until it intersects the north-south fence on the west side of the garden; thence south with the fence to the beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated parcel are defined so as to include historic resources such as the main house, the L-shaped outbuilding, the cemetery, and so forth, and so as to exclude modern farm buildings and structures located to the north and northwest of the house.

