NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

VLR - 6/13/01 NRHP - 1/24/02

OMB No. 1024-0018

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 Blandome
other names/site number VDHR file no. 117-8027-0127

2. Location

street & number 101 Tucker Street N/A not for publication
city or town Lexington N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Lexington (Indep. City) code 678 zip code 24450

3

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 nationally ___ statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Catherine Bruser 10/16/2001
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)

- X private
- ___ public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
4	0	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

4

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	*Subcategory*
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure
COMMERCE	professional (law office)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	*Subcategory*
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal
Greek Revival
Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Stone
walls	Brick
roof	Metal
other	Wood

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.
- X 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

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

Period of Significance

Ca. 1830-1941

Significant Dates

1872

1917

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

(see continuation sheet)

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 1.9 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	637480	4182810	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	January 12, 2001
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	Clarence M. Wood Jr., Trustee				
street & number	4945 Parkside Ave.	telephone	(540) 463-4271 Contact: Alexander B. Wood		
city or town	Philadelphia	state	PA	zip code	19131

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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Blandome stands at 101 Tucker Street overlooking the historic center of Lexington, Virginia and the Washington & Lee University and Virginia Military Institute campuses beyond. The northwest-facing house at the upper end of Henry Street (which tees into Tucker in front) is a two-story Federal-Greek Revival residence built about 1830 and remodeled in the Italianate style about 1872. The five-bay house is constructed of brick laid in Flemish bond with a metal-sheathed hip roof capped by a belvedere, and it has a two room deep center-passage-plan interior that features decoratively varied Federal-Greek Revival mantels. Near the house is a one-story frame office with an unusual seven-sided form built in 1890. Blandome stands in a residential area consisting of closely spaced frame houses dating from the 1870s through the early twentieth century.

Inventory

1. Blandome. Ca. 1830; ca. 1872. Contributing building.
2. Law office. 1890. Contributing building.
3. Garage. Ca. 1950. Contributing building.
4. Ice chest. Ca. 1920. Contributing object.

Exterior

Blandome's overall appearance is Italianate in character, a result of the substantial remodeling that took place in the early 1870s, although closer inspection reveals original Federal-style features that point to the home's construction about 1830. The principal original exterior feature is the front (northwest) entry, which is surmounted by a half-round fanlight with radiating muntins, and which has a richly ornamented surround with an outer border of roll moldings, intricately molded jambs, and a punch and gouge-like molding running under the fanlight. The door itself has an early six-panel form with a window inserted in place of the middle two panels. Other early features include the home's Flemish-bond brickwork, which has been painted for much of the twentieth century; four interior side-wall chimneys; nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows; parged lintels over the first-story front windows scored to simulate splayed stone jack arches; simple splayed brick jack arches over other windows; a round-arched stair landing window on the rear elevation; and a stone basement level with segmental brick arches over the basement windows (a common antebellum Lexington treatment).

Description (continued)

The Italianate remodeling is expressed by four features: the belvedere, a bracketed cornice, a front porch, and a northeast elevation side porch. The belvedere is rectangular in plan with a low hip roof. It has a cornice with dentil-like blocks and large sawn brackets, and windows with segmental-arched panes. Similar brackets, superimposed on a wide parged frieze, support the deep eaves of the main house roof. The three-bay front porch stands on chamfered posts, grouped in threes at the corners, with wood pedestals, molded caps and delicate sawn brackets. Between them span lacy sawn balustrades that are repeated in a roof balustrade. Other front porch features include a ceiling with beaded slats and a foundation of tall brick piers infilled with wooden lattice. A flight of wooden steps with a handrail based on the historic balustrades is a sympathetic modern addition, as are many of the sawn baluster repeats themselves, recreated by craftsman Corey M. Cox in 2000. The two-bay side porch is similar in design and degree of reconstruction to the front porch. In the early twentieth century this porch was partly enclosed to serve as a laundry and storage room. During much of the twentieth century a two-tier porch extended across the rear elevation, with a partially enclosed second story that served as a sleeping porch.

Interior: First Floor

Blandome's plan and most of its interior decorative features have changed little since the antebellum period. The front and rear entries open into a center passage that widens at the back to accommodate a two-run stair. The stair has rectangular-section banisters and slender turned newel posts with urn-like caps that support a handrail that terminates in a spiral with a central boss at the foot of the stair. At the ends of the treads are scrolled brackets with incised curls and dots instead of the more typical interior cavities. Other stair details include ramping and easing of the handrail at the landing; an unusual arching of the handrail at the second-floor level; acorn pendants; and a triangular spandrel panel defined by an unusual form of cable molding with the tight helical appearance of a telephone cord. (For reasons of brevity and clarity, this detail will be referred to by the unorthodox term "telephone-cord molding" throughout the nomination.) The doorways opening into the passage have symmetrical moldings with corner blocks with pronounced, almost spherical center buttons. The front entry fanlight has a wooden keystone-like element. At ceiling level over the passage midpoint spans a screen formed by vasiform baluster-like elements, a heavy rendition of the spindle friezes that were common at the turn of the twentieth century. In the floor is an ornate circular cast-iron furnace register (another of similar form is in the living room). Other features of the passage are typical throughout the house: wood floor boards nailed down with cut nails, plaster wall and ceiling finishes, and molded baseboards, chairrails and cornices.

Description (continued)

On the right as one passes through the front entry is a large opening framed by tapered Doric columns on low pedestals. This colonnade, created out of an equally wide antebellum opening, leads into a front parlor, a room used as a living room by the Walker and Wood families (residents of the house from 1917 to the present). The living room mantel has a three-part Federal form with an elliptical sunburst in the center frieze tablet, sunken elliptical panels in the end tablets, pilasters with slender convex reeded elements loosely based on colonnettes, and an undercut cavetto molding under the shelf. Telephone-cord moldings run under the shelf bed molding and frame the fireplace opening. The fireplace itself has a surround and hearth of glazed green tile, with decorative tiles bordering the hearth, and a cast-iron insert depicting a woman standing with an anchor and framed by pilasters. To the left of the chimney breast are built-in shelves (remodeled from an original press) with a baluster detail at the top that mimics in miniature the colonnade between the living room and passage.

A wide round-arched opening opens from the living room into a back parlor known in the twentieth century as the library. The opening has paneled jambs, a wooden keystone similar to that over the front entry, and evidence of former hinged double doors. The library mantel has a three-part Federal form with elliptical sunbursts with prominent center buttons in the center and end tablets, telephone-cord moldings, and two pairs of the colonnettes with button-like studs around their tops. The fireplace surround and hearth are finished with matte terra-cotta tiles, and the cast-iron insert is ornamented with wreaths, torches and swags. The symmetrically molded door and window surrounds incorporate telephone-cord moldings and have corner blocks with sunken circular centers. Six-panel doors such as the one in the doorway between this room and the passage are typical throughout the house.

The front left-hand room, used as a dining room in the twentieth century, has a three-part Federal mantel that was moved to Blandome from Lexington's Wilson-Walker House about 1920. The mantel is more stoutly proportioned than others in the house. It has projecting "jello-mold" sunbursts in its frieze tablets, elliptical in the center and circular on the ends, with reeding on the sides of the end tablets. The squat high-relief pilasters have flattened sections, tapered and fluted shafts, and bulbous bases, and under the shelf is an undercut cavetto molding. The narrow presses that flank the chimney breast have paneled doors. Similar presses survive in the kitchen in back of this room and in several second-floor bedrooms (although in each case only on one side of the chimney breast). Likewise, the dining room, the kitchen and the second floor have relatively simple symmetrically molded door and window surrounds.

Description (continued)

The kitchen has a three-part Federal mantel that was moved to the room from the adjoining dining room about 1920. The mantel has a floating center frieze tablet containing a molded and sunken elliptical panel, similar but circular panels in the end tablets, narrow arched recessed panels in the pilasters, and telephone-cord mantels. The kitchen was modernized in the third quarter of the twentieth century with wood base and wall cabinets, vinyl flooring, and a drop ceiling with fluorescent light panels. A segmental-arched doorway opens to the side porch.

Interior: Second Floor

Like Blandome's first floor, the second floor has a two-room-deep center-passage plan, four fireplaces, wood floors, chairrails, and plaster wall and ceiling finishes. The four second-floor rooms traditionally served as bedrooms; the east room was reduced in size by the insertion of a bathroom in the early twentieth century. The second floor's Federal mantels are less decorative than those in the downstairs, and stylistically they tend to be less advanced, with more influence from the Georgian style. The most stylish second-floor mantel is the one in the west bedroom, which has a three-part form with elliptical sunbursts in the center and end frieze tablets, a complex bed molding under the shelf, and paired colonnettes in place of pilasters. The mantel in the north room has a lozenge-shaped panel defined by moldings in the center of its frieze. The mantel in the south room was moved to Blandome from Lexington's Wilson-Walker House about 1920; it has a two-part form with reeding on the surfaces of the pilasters and the tablets at the ends of the frieze. The bathroom has a decorative door with textured glass upper panels in chamfered surrounds, and pink, gray and black tilework from the mid-twentieth century. To the side of each chimney breast are narrow presses like those in the downstairs, and there are three small closets added in the last half of the twentieth century.

Interior: Attic and Basement

The early 1870s remodeling created a partitioned-off space in the center of the attic below the belvedere. The partitions are sheathed with horizontal flush boards, and at the top of the stair to the second floor are a batten door and a large window tacked in place. Partitions, door and windows are painted light olive drab. The belvedere roof is constructed of circular-sawn lumber with nailed or pegged mortise-and-tenon joints. Written on the window frames are something over a hundred inscriptions, mostly names and dates. The oldest dates are from the early 1870s; one inscription is dated June 4, 1873, and another may be dated April 6, 1872. In the 1930s and 1940s the Wood family children used the belvedere as a rainy-day play room.

Description (continued)

The basement is divided into two large spaces by a brick wall located under the north center-passage wall of the first floor. The basement has two fireplaces; the one in the west corner has a segmental-arched firebox which is a reduction of an originally larger segmental-arched firebox that may have been used for cooking. Windows with splayed embrasures, cased with wood boards, survive in the west corner where the basement rises the highest above grade. A horizontal wood barred vent, now blocked up on the exterior, survives on the northeast walls between the chimney foundations. The stair to the first floor has an enclosure of vertical beaded boards. Other features include a dirt floor, machine up-and-down sawn ceiling members, and plaster ceilings with a mix of split and circular-sawn laths.

Outbuildings and Landscape Features

The principal outbuilding is the 1890 law office, located off the south corner of the main house. The one-story frame building has a septagonal plan--its back corner comes to a point rather than an eighth side. The office has a metal-sheathed pyramidal roof, weatherboard siding, a brick foundation, an original four-over-four window, a small modern window, and a brick chimney located in the back point. The front entry is sheltered by a small ca. 1920 porch with a metal-shingle roof supported on turned posts. A ca. 1970 weatherboarded frame bathroom addition with an asphalt-shingle roof and concrete foundation extends from the southeast side. The interior features a wood floor, a vertical beaded tongue-and-groove wainscot with drywall walls and ceiling above, and a two-part Federal mantel with reeded pilasters and frieze end tablets. The mantel is similar to that in the second-story south room of the main house, which was moved to Blandome from Lexington's Wilson-Walker House about 1920.

Next to the office stands a one-story frame garage constructed about 1950 with lumber from an early-twentieth-century barn that once stood on the property. The garage has slatted vertical board siding, a metal-sheathed hip roof, a cinder-block foundation, exposed rafter ends, and a modern vinyl garage door. Off the southwest side of the house is a rectangular concrete chest or trough about the size of a bathtub that was used for refrigerating fish in ice at the Walker Meat Market in downtown Lexington during the 1920s and was moved to Blandome in the 1940s. The ice chest has a molded lip and is now used for growing water lilies.

The principal historic landscape feature is a late nineteenth-century stone retaining wall along Tucker Street. Stone steps in this wall, once fitted with an iron gate, rise to a brick-paved front walk that is now mostly covered over with turf. Picket fences demarcate the property line at places. A paved driveway leads from Fuller Street to a circle near the house. In the circle are

Description (continued)

a millstone supporting an urn, and a bird bath and plantings. A modern patio paved with greenish flagstones extends from the house towards the circle.

Integrity Statement

Blandome possesses good integrity from the period of significance. Character-defining features such as porches, the belvedere, the front entry and fanlight, stairs, mantels, trim, and the early twentieth-century bathroom and colonnade survive intact. Modern alterations are minor such as the cabinets and drop ceiling in the kitchen and the small closets in the upstairs. The only substantial loss is the two-story back porch. The property retains its principal historic outbuilding, the well-preserved septagonal law office, as well as two other historic-period resources, although nineteenth-century features such as a suspected detached kitchen and early twentieth-century features such as a barn and chicken houses are now gone. The surrounding neighborhood has changed little since the early twentieth century. Also little changed since the early twentieth century is Blandome's expansive viewshed, which encompasses downtown Lexington, the Washington & Lee and VMI campuses, and the fields, woodlots and mountains of Rockbridge County beyond.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Federal-Italianate house known as Blandome, located on a hillside overlooking Lexington, Virginia's historic downtown, is associated with several individuals who achieved local significance in the areas of education and the development of Lexington's African American community. John Thomas Lewis Preston, who is regarded as the catalyst in the creation of the Virginia Military Institute, was an early occupant of the home in the 1830s. Blandome's overall form and its Federal-Greek Revival interiors date to this period. In 1872 the property was acquired by Laura Holmes Randolph, wife of the renowned jurist John Randolph Tucker, and a belvedere and other Italianate details were added to the house about the same time. J. R. Tucker helped build the Washington & Lee University Law School into a reputable and prosperous institution. Tucker lived at Blandome on a full-time basis from 1872 to 1875 and again from 1889 until his death in 1897, and in 1890 he built a septagonal law office next to the house. In 1917 Blandome was acquired by Lexington African American business leader Harry Lee Walker, whose wife Eliza Bannister Walker championed numerous social and educational causes including the improvement of Lexington's black schools and the establishment of an orphanage and old folks home. Blandome, which now belongs to H. L. and Eliza Walker's descendants, endures as a Lexington landmark.

Applicable Criteria

Blandome meets Criterion B and is eligible in the education area of significance for its association with three individuals--J.T.L. Preston, J. R. Tucker and E. B. Walker--who made important contributions to the development of Lexington's public schools and institutions of higher learning. The property also meets Criterion B in the area of black ethnic heritage for its association with H. L. and E. B. Walker, who made important contributions to the development of Lexington's African American community in the areas of business, education and social work. Blandome also meets Criterion C in the architecture area of significance for the refinement of its Federal-Greek Revival and Italianate styling, and for its interesting septagonal law office. The period of significance extends from the apparent date of construction of the house about 1830 to 1941, embracing the associations with H. L. and E. B. Walker (H. L. Walker died in 1941 and E. B. Walker predeceased him). Blandome is eligible at the local level of significance. In 1971 the property was listed as a contributing resource in the Lexington National Register Historic District. Information in support of individual designation appears throughout the historic context.

Statement of Significance (continued)

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Foremost among these were the stewards of the property and the nomination's sponsors, Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood, who prepared the preliminary application for listing and who provided much of the historical information used in the nomination. Others who provided assistance (all of Lexington unless otherwise noted) include historian David W. Coffey; historian Mary Coulling; Keith Gibson, Director, Virginia Military Institute Museum; Diane Jacob, Archivist, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute; William Klein, Minister, Lexington Presbyterian Church; historian Royster Lyle Jr.; Lisa McCown, Librarian, Leyburn Library, Washington & Lee University; Megan Haley Newman, Curator, The Stonewall Jackson House; John Tyson Noble Jr., Fuller family descendant, Marietta, Ga.; architect Henry L. Ravenhorst; architectural historian Pamela Hemenway Simpson; and C. Vaughan Stanley, Special Collections/Reference Librarian, Leyburn Library, Washington & Lee University. Staff members of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond and Roanoke who assisted include June Ellis, Quatro Hubbard, John Kern and Marc Wagner.

Historic Context

Architectural evidence suggests Blandome was built about 1830 for one of Lexington's more affluent families. Which family is a question. The earliest court documents to refer unambiguously to the property date to 1872 and transferred the house and approximately one acre of curtilage from Jacob Fuller to Laura H. Tucker for $6,500. When and from whom Fuller received the house is not entirely clear given the contradictory and incomplete state of deed and tax records involving the property.[1]

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[1] Rockbridge County Deed Book MM, pp. 199 and 391. The difficulty in tracing Blandome's early history stems from several factors. The property appears to have been involved in legal disputes on one or more occasions, it may have been transferred frequently from owner to owner before 1872, and it appears to have been tied up in an estate settlement proceeding. Complicating the picture is the lack of specificity in Rockbridge County tax records (Lexington was then part of the county) prior to 1872. Town properties were not described by lot number, proximity, or other distinguishing characteristics.

Statement of Significance (continued)

Enough information survives, however, to make a relatively firm statement about the ownership or at least the association of Blandome in the mid-1830s, probably not long after the house was built. In *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.* (1939), historian William Couper relates that John Thomas Lewis Preston (1811-1890) and his wife Sally Lyle Caruthers Preston (1811-1856) lived at Blandome at the time of the birth of their son Thomas Lewis Preston on June 2, 1835. Couper's information came from Thomas Lewis Preston's son, John Preston. A 1948 *Rockbridge County News* article on J.T.L. Preston by Leslie Lyle Campbell states that Preston "lived first" at Blandome, and moved from there to the house he is more generally associated with at 110 Preston Street in Lexington.[2]

It may be that the Prestons rented Blandome during the 1830s and early 1840s, a common enough occurrence among Lexington's elite during the nineteenth century, but other sources suggest a stronger association. Deeds for properties in the vicinity of Blandome frequently mention adjoining parcels owned by J.T.L. Preston or in the estate of his deceased father, Thomas Lewis Preston (some of which went to J.T.L. Preston in 1835). Also, tax records from 1870 reference a property with $3,500 value of building(s) transferred from J.T.L. Preston to Jacob Fuller, and tax records the following year reference a $5,500 improvement transferred from J.T.L. Preston "by" J. M. Wilson to Fuller. Unfortunately, the deeds for these transfers were not recorded, and so the properties in question are not known conclusively. Assuming Preston owned Blandome, it is possible he held on to the valuable property after moving his family across town to 110 Preston Street in 1844, rented the house out to others, and in the early 1870s decided to sell the house--or to formalize an earlier sale--to Fuller.[3]

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[2] Couper, *One Hundred Years at V.M.I.*, 23; *Rockbridge County News*, March 18, 1948.

[3] Rockbridge County tax records and Deed Book T, p. 67, and Deed Book KK, p. 435. Another, more speculative interpretation of Blandome's early history relies on J.T.L. Preston's purchase of the former residence of William A. Caruthers in August 1835 (Deed Book T, p. 40). Caruthers was a celebrated novelist and the brother of Sally Lyle Caruthers Preston. He built a sophisticated home in the vicinity of Blandome in the early 1820s. A house owned by Caruthers--he owned considerable property in Lexington--burned in part or in whole the following decade (Rockbridge County Deed Book T, p. 40; Davis, *Chronicler of the Cavaliers*, 51-54, 79-80, 198-199; Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia). The discovery in Blandome's attic of 1790s business papers belonging to William A. and Sally's father William Caruthers may be relevant. Intensive research into William A. Caruthers' papers at a number of repositories might test the possibility

Statement of Significance (continued)

Whatever the true nature of J.T.L. Preston's association with Blandome, his presence there in the mid-1830s is well substantiated. Preston, a gifted lawyer known to some as "Lexington's Demosthenes," and a planter with properties as far afield as Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, was at the time of his residence at Blandome becoming involved in a cause that would have important implications for Lexington and Virginia: the creation of the Virginia Military Institute. VMI grew out of the Lexington Arsenal, established by the state in 1816. "During the mid-1830s," historians Royster Lyle Jr. and Pamela Hemenway Simpson have written, "the idea was conceived to allow the young men who were guarding the arsenal to continue their training in a strict, military environment while pursuing a course of scientific studies and taking certain classes at nearby Washington College. The exact steps that led to the beginnings of VMI are still unclear, but it is generally accepted that the concept originated in the fertile brain of John T. L. Preston." According to VMI Museum Director Keith Gibson, Preston was the principal promoter of the concept locally and in Richmond, the "spokesperson" or "front man." VMI opened its doors in 1839, and Preston served as one of its first instructors and maintained an association with the prestigious military school until his death. From its founding to the present day the Virginia Military Institute has played an important role in the educational life of Lexington and the Commonwealth.[4]

Blandome's association with Jacob Fuller (1816-1890) is strongest for the period of the Civil War and later, although it appears he and his wife Rachel Sloan Fuller (1817-1894) lived in the house and may even have owned it in the 1850s. Fuller is listed as a teacher in the 1850 and 1860 federal censuses; newspaper advertisements from the period list his school variously as the "Lexington Classical School", "Mr. Fuller's School" and "the Grammar School conducted by J. Fuller, Esq." An editorial in the September 12, 1850 issue of the *Lexington Gazette* described Fuller's school as college preparatory, and ranked it with three others in the community: Washington College, VMI and the Ann Smith Academy, a female finishing school. With its peripheral, semi-rural setting and capacious rooms, Blandome would have been an ideal location for a school. The Ann Smith Academy occupied a similar site away from the congestion of the downtown, and many of the more prestigious antebellum schools of the region were likewise

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that Blandome is in fact William A. Caruthers' house.

[4] Allan, *March Past*, 23; Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 211-212; Keith Gibson personal communication; Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 167; and Preston Collection.

Statement of Significance (continued)

located on the peripheries of towns. Unfortunately, none of the known advertisements for Fuller's school gives its location, so the possibility that it was operated at Blandome remains speculative.[5]

Fuller also involved himself in real estate--selling a farm to later Confederate General Thomas J. Jackson in 1859, among numerous other transactions--and in tanning hides for leather. In 1860 Fuller, T. J. Jackson, J.T.L. Preston and one other purchased the Lexington Tannery, located at the foot of the hill below Blandome. Of the four partners Fuller appears to have been most involved in the finances and daily operation of the tannery. Fuller's tannery connection may explain a bundle of tanned hides discovered hidden under attic floor boards at Blandome in the twentieth century. The hides--one marked with the name of a Capt. Dinwiddie--may have been hidden to protect them from seizure during Union General Hunter's June 1864 raid in Lexington. Blandome figures in Hunter's raid in another way. According to the war reminiscences of Cornelia McDonald, "Gen. Crook had his headquarters on a hill near me, in a large handsome house belonging to Mr. Fuller and as it was brilliantly lighted at night and the band playing it was quite a place of resort for the coloured population." A map compiled in 1932 depicting highlights of the raid identifies Blandome as Fuller's residence and Crook's headquarters.[6]

In September 1872, for $6,500, Jacob and Rachel Fuller sold Blandome to Laura Holmes Tucker according to an agreement made in April of the same year. In 1873 Fuller built and sold off a number of houses on "Locust Street" (as the extension of Henry Street to Blandome was then known) and he built a modest two-story house for Rachel and himself on the same street just below Blandome. He retained for a number of years an orchard lot on the northeast side of Blandome. When he died in 1890, Fuller held the post of Washington & Lee University

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[5] *Lexington Gazette*, June 27, August 29 and September 12, 1850, and August 27, 1857. One source that indicates Fuller's ownership of Blandome or a parcel in close proximity to the house is an October 7, 1857 plat in the Preston Collection.

[6] Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 192-193, 201; Rockbridge County Deed Book KK, p. 434; Account Book of J.T.L. Preston, Preston Collection; Driver, *Lexington and Rockbridge County in the Civil War*, 73; and Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 34. According to tradition, Thomas J. Jackson's second wife Mary Anna Jackson stayed at Blandome as a guest of the Fullers on several occasions during the Civil War; she had moved away from Lexington at the time (John Tyson Noble Jr. and Megan Haley Newman personal communication).

Statement of Significance (continued)

librarian, and he was serving his thirty-seventh year as the Clerk of Session for the Lexington Presbyterian Church.[7]

Laura H. Tucker (1827-1916) and her husband John Randolph Tucker (1823-1897) gave to the house its present name. J. R. Tucker, the son of lawyer and educator Henry St. George Tucker of Winchester, graduated form the University of Virginia with a degree in law in 1844 and practiced in Richmond. From 1857 to 1865 he served as Attorney General of Virginia, and after the Civil War he resumed private practice in Loudoun County and taught law at the University of Virginia. Notable accomplishments during this period included his participation in the defence of former Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and a lucrative appointment as counsel for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1869. In 1870 Robert E. Lee, then president of Washington College, invited Tucker to teach law at the school.[8]

At Washington and Lee University (Lee was added to the school's name in 1871), Tucker helped establish the institution's newly created Law School, and in 1873 he was named its director. W&L historian Ollinger Crenshaw has written, "The coming of John Randolph Tucker to the Law School faculty proved to be an event in the history of the institution and of the community." The Tucker period at Washington & Lee has two phases, the first ending in 1875 when Tucker was elected U.S. congressman from Virginia's Sixth District. In Congress Tucker served eight years in the Committee of Ways and Means and two years as chairman of the Judiciary Committee. He was regarded "the leader of the delegations from the South," and in 1876 he represented the Democratic Party in the resolution of the disputed Hayes-Tilden presidential election. While in Congress he gained a reputation as an authority on the Constitution and on international law. Tucker necessarily resigned his full-time position at W&L in 1875, but he maintained a working relationship with the school by delivering an annual lecture series on

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[7] Rockbridge County Deed Book MM, p. 391; Perkins, "Documented History of 'Blandome'"; and Hunter, *Lexington Presbyterian Church*, 98

[8] Rockbridge County Deed Book VV, p. 420; Perkins, "Documented History of 'Blandome,'"; Boley, *Lexington in Old Virginia*, 189; *Southern Collegian* vol. 29 no. 4 (February 1897), 160-161; and *Times*, February 14, 1897. Two traditions explain the origin of the name "Blandome". According to one, the Tuckers named the house in honor of family relations, the Blands. According to the other, J. R. Tucker invented the name, intending it to have connotations of restfulness and peacefulness (Alexander B. Wood personal communication).

Statement of Significance (continued)

Constitutional law. Crenshaw writes, "Throughout his years in Lexington, as congressman or professor, his home 'Blandome' was the scene of gay social life . . . the Tucker home brought town and gown together in an atmosphere of friendliness."[9]

Upon leaving the political arena in 1887, J. R. Tucker practiced law in Washington, arguing twice before the Supreme Court. In 1889 Washington & Lee invited Tucker to return to the Law School with the new title Professor of Equity, Commercial, Constitutional and International Law. Crenshaw claims the trustees hoped to garner prestige, students and funding from a renewed association with the "statesman-professor." Tucker did not disappoint. Enrollment at the Law School increased considerably during the 1890s, and Crenshaw reports that "Tucker's appointment was no doubt a factor." He adds: "The School may be said to have entered a new era of prosperity--a 'Golden Age'--during the closing decade of the century." Tucker's presidency of the American Bar Association during the early 1890s added to his prestige. While away from the classroom, Tucker spent many working hours in the septagonal law office he built next to Blandome in May 1890.[10]

John Randolph Tucker died on February 13, 1897. The Richmond *Times* devoted its entire front page to Tucker the following day, and *The Southern Collegian*, published at Washington & Lee, devoted its February 1897 issue to the Law School dean. In 1899 construction began on the Law School's new lodgings, the John Randolph Tucker Memorial Building, funded with contributions from Tucker's friends. At the time of his death Tucker was at work on a study of the Constitution that he had begun in 1895 and that his son Henry St. George Tucker--also a legal and political personage of considerable stature--edited and published as *The Constitution of the United States: A critical discussion of its genesis, development, and interpretation* (1899). "Harry" Tucker succeeded his father at the Law School and he later went on to a career in Virginia politics that included an unsuccessful run for the governorship. In 1904 Laura Holmes and Henry St. George Tucker sold Blandome to W. N. Key, and the property went through several owners and occupants over the following thirteen years including a fraternity, Sigma Nu.

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[9] Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, 332-334, 343; Perkins, "Documented History of 'Blandome,'"; Boley, *Lexington in Old Virginia*, 189-190; *Southern Collegian* vol. 29 no. 4 (February 1897), 161-164; and *Times*, February 14, 1897.

[10] Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, 338-340; Perkins, "Documented History of 'Blandome,'"; Tucker, *American Bar Association*; and *Times*, February 14, 1897.

Statement of Significance (continued)

Sigma Nu's emblem, a white rose, was chosen for a white rose bush that grew next to Blandome. In 1917 Blandome was sold at auction to Lexington African American businessman H. L. Walker.[11]

Harry Lee Walker (1875-1941) was born to washerwoman Hettie Walker in a cabin located at the foot of Henry Street in Lexington. At age eleven he went to work as a cattle drover and eventually learned the butcher's trade. In 1901 he purchased a farm on the present US Route 60 east of Lexington where he established a slaughter house, and in 1911 he purchased the 1820 residence at 30 N. Main St. now known as the Wilson-Walker House, which he converted into the Lexington Sanitary Meat Market with apartments in the upstairs. Walker soon gained a reputation for the quality of his hickory smoke-cured Virginia hams, which he prepared in a large smokehouse formerly located behind Blandome. He shipped his product nationally and internationally, and he was a principal supplier of meats to Washington and Lee College, the Virginia Military Institute and Lexington's many fraternity houses. A 1919 contract between Walker and VMI survives in the Walker-Wood family papers that describes the beef, mutton, pork, sausage, liver and veal to be supplied.[12]

Walker married Rockbridge County native Eliza Bannister (1874-1939) and the couple had two children, Harry Thomas (1897-1914) and Nannie Elizabeth (1900-93). Harry Thomas worked with his father in the meat business until his untimely death. Later H. L. Walker took on his son-in-law, Middlesex County native Clarence M. Wood Sr. (1889-1957). In 1923 Walker formalized the relationship by creating Walker-Wood Brothers, which included Clarence's brother, Joseph McMillan Wood. The firm also supplied seafood and groceries to the Lexington public; a concrete ice chest formerly used for icing fish in the 30 N. Main market now serves Blandome as an outdoor water lily tank. In the 1930s Walker's farm east of town became prime

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[11] Perkins, "Documented History of 'Blandome,'"; Boley, *Lexington in Old Virginia*, 189-190; *Southern Collegian* vol. 29 no. 4 (February 1897), 161-164; *Times*, February 14, 1897; Morton, *History of Rockbridge County*; Tucker, *Constitution of the United States*, v; Rockbridge County Deed Book 112, p. 449; *News Gazette*, December 13, 1967; *The Delta* (Fall 1967), pp. 20-22; and Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication.

[12] Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication; Perkins, "Documented History of 'Blandome'; Carrothers, "From Cattle Boy to Business Man;" Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 57; and Walker-Wood family papers.

Statement of Significance (continued)

real estate with the construction of Highway 60 through it, and the family began commercial development activity which continues to the present day. H. L. Walker's business income was reported to be $1,000 a month in the mid-1910s, and at that relatively early date his real estate investments were estimated to total $20,000 in value.[13]

Walker involved himself in several non-business activities. He was a deacon in Lexington's First Baptist Church, a member of several fraternal organizations, and an executive committee member of the Home and School League, created about 1920 to reform public education for the town's black school children. A tenant of a property owned by Walker during the period was Prof. Robert T. Kerlin of the Virginia Military Institute, a champion of African American causes and the editor of a compilation of articles from black newspapers entitled *Voice of the Negro*, published in 1920. H. L. Walker's prominence in the Lexington African American community was acknowledged several years before he purchased Blandome by a reporter (probably for the *Washington Eagle*) who wrote: "Beginning life as a very poor boy, today [Walker] is the proprietor of one of Lexington's leading sanitary markets, is popular with both races alike and is the owner of much valuable real estate." As his daughter later quipped, H. L. Walker was "born on the bottom of Henry Street and died at the top" in the stately home that now belongs to his grandchildren.[14]

Harry Lee Walker's business success and social standing created an opportunity for his wife Eliza Bannister Walker to devote herself to the betterment of Lexington's black citizenry. As a young woman Eliza Walker pursued a career in nursing at Freedman's Hospital in Washington, D.C., and she maintained a working relationship with social reformers in Washington's black community throughout her life. In 1917 Walker received a charter for the Lexington Old Folks Home and Orphanage, which she opened in the Walker farmhouse east of town. A photograph from the period shows Walker sitting on the farmhouse porch with her physically disabled wards. The *Washington Eagle* reported that Walker "is a humanitarian and feels that her mission is to care for the friendless and poor of the race. All Washington seems to be in sympathy with her

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[13] Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication; Walker-Wood family papers; and Carrothers, "From Cattle Boy to Business Man."

[14] *Lexington Star*, November 22-23 (1920?); Perkins, "Documented History of 'Blandome'; Carrothers, "From Cattle Boy to Business Man;" Kerlin, *Voice of the Negro*; *Norfolk Journal & Guide*, May 27, 1922; and Walker-Wood family papers.

Statement of Significance (continued)

and her labors among the people of the District of Columbia [are] going to be a grand success."[15]

In 1920 Eliza Walker launched a fund-raising campaign with the objective of building a new facility. An illustration in the January 31, 1920 issue of the *Eagle* (Exhibit A) portrays Walker building the orphanage walls with blocks inscribed with the names of contributors. A caption reads: "This home will be built of cement blocks and a memorial block will be placed in its wall for each contributor. Let us make a block for your church, lodge, self, etc." Walker distributed a flier that pictured an uninscribed memorial block and included a poem she had written, "The Orphan's Plea." The new home was never built, however. Instead, in the 1930s Eliza Walker had a half-dozen rental cottages moved to the property from a location on Rockbridge County's Buffalo Creek, and she built the Garden Grill, a restaurant and dance hall with an accompanying picnic area and playground. Eliza Walker was also active in the development of the Evergreen Cemetery for blacks, which adjoins the property.[16]

Eliza Walker's other cause was education. Although Lexington's white community prided itself for the quality of its educational institutions, opportunities for blacks were limited. Black schools had been created with the establishment of Virginia's modern public school system in the 1870s, but funding for facilities and curriculum consistently lagged behind that for whites. Lexington's African American citizens unsuccessfully pushed for the creation of a black high school at the turn of the twentieth century. Eliza Walker had become involved by the end of the 1910s, and with her family she agitated for the improvement of the Randolph Street black public school in the pages of the *Lexington Star* and through the work of the Rockbridge Walker Federation of Colored Women's Club. Eliza Walker's descendants recall she was not afraid of confrontation, engaging in heated arguments with white school officials and on one occasion driving a school bus around Lexington with a banner that stated, in effect, "No such thing as separate but equal." Walker and others in the community made slow progress. In the late 1920s the Lylburn Downing High School was built, but its high school curriculum was deficient until after World War II. Many high school-aged black children--including several of Eliza Walker's grandchildren--were

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[15] *Washington Eagle* (ca. 1920 clipping); Walker-Wood family papers.

[16] *Washington Eagle*, January 31, 1920; Walker-Wood family papers; and Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication. The farmhouse, rental cottages, and Garden Grill are no longer extant.

Statement of Significance (continued)

forced to complete their education outside the community as late as the 1940s.[17]

Eliza Walker's other activities were legion. She was described as the "leading spirit" in the local chapter of the Federation of Colored Women's Clubs that bore her name, and she was instrumental in hosting the annual session of the statewide organization in Lexington in 1921. During the 1920s or 1930s Walker served as chairman of a "Committee on Unemployed" that sought to boost domestic employment of local blacks by white families and fraternities. In May 1930 Illinois Congressman Oscar De Priest spoke in Lexington at Eliza Walker's invitation, and the celebrated black lawmaker stayed at Blandome during the visit. Others enjoyed the Walkers' hospitality; Eliza Walker advertised Blandome as a summer vacation destination, touting the home's amenities and the region's healthfulness. ("Scientists have proven that Lexington is the healthiest spot in the world," reads one of her promotional cards.) During World War II the Walkers opened their home as an informal USO for black soldiers on maneuver through Lexington.[18]

Nannie Elizabeth Walker, her husband Clarence M. Wood Sr. and their family lived at Blandome with H. L. and Eliza during the mid-twentieth century. Clarence Wood, a graduate of Virginia Union University in Richmond, aided his parents-in-law with their business and social activities. He was the editor of the *Lexington Star* (published in the early 1920s), and with his brother Joseph he operated the Woods Brothers real estate firm. In 1947 Clarence had the good fortune to win $40,000 in an English horse race, and he and his wife allocated some of the proceeds towards improving the family property along Highway 60, building a Ford dealership, an Esso gas station and the Dari-Delite drive-in ice cream parlor by 1957. Outside the family businesses Clarence wrote insurance for the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company; he participated in a federal government program teaching night school for adults during the late 1930s; and in 1940 he was named administrator of the newly opened Green Pastures Recreation Area (the present Longdale Recreation Area) in neighboring Alleghany County, which during the era of

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[17] Diehl, *Brief History of Public Education in Rockbridge County*, 32-33, 36-38, 45; *Lexington Star*, November 22-23, (1920?); Walker-Wood family papers; and Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication.

[18] Walker-Wood family papers; Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication.

Statement of Significance (continued)

segregation provided outdoor recreation opportunities to blacks in nearby cities and counties.[19]

Clarence and Nannie Wood reared six children at Blandome, all of whom received college educations. After Clarence M. Wood Sr.'s death in 1957, Nannie Elizabeth Wood managed the family businesses until her death in 1993. In 1997 her son Alexander B. Wood and his wife, Wythe County native Freddye H. Wood, took up residence at Blandome. They have since become active in Lexington and Rockbridge County historical organizations and have contributed to an awareness of the area's African American heritage.[20]

Architectural Analysis

Blandome's architectural significance lies primarily in the quality of its Federal-Greek Revival and Italianate styling, and in the presence of the unusual septagonal office. Of particular interest in Blandome's original styling is the studied modulation of the form and detail of the home's mantels, which reflects the "variations on a theme" approach to interior design that is a hallmark of the more sophisticated Federal and Federal-Greek Revival houses in the region. Blandome's technically challenging "telephone-cord" moldings, and the home's status as the final resting place of several mantels from Lexington's Wilson-Walker House--a well-known architectural landmark in the heart of the downtown--are also notable attributes. Through the presence of such features as the belvedere, bracketed cornice, and sawnwork porches, which were most likely added to the house at the time of its purchase by Laura and J. R. Tucker in 1872, Blandome embodies several of the defining characteristics of the Italianate style. The Italianate remodeling served to update the appearance of the house and presumably placed it more in line with the tastes of the cosmopolitan Tuckers.[21]

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[19] *Lexington Star*, November 22-23, (1920?); Walker-Wood family papers; Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication; and *Roanoke World-News*, June 10, 1947. The *Lexington Star* was published by W. N. Holt & Sons.

[20] Walker-Wood family papers; Alexander B. and Freddye H. Wood personal communication; and *Roanoke World-News*, June 10, 1947.

[21] Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 32-33, 57, 59; Eager, "The Italianate Villa: Blandome and Silverwood." The dates in the belvedere provide the best evidence for its date of construction. The earliest observed date is April 6, 1872. A spurious seventeenth-

Statement of Significance (continued)

J. R. Tucker's septagonal law office suggests a connection to the octagon fad of the third quarter of the nineteenth century. (From most angles the office appears octagonal.) Architectural theorist Orson S. Fowler trumpeted the form in his book *The Octagon House, A Home for All* (1848, revised 1853). Fowler claimed a number of practical benefits for the octagon as a building plan, but it seems the form's true popularity resided in its novelty. Fowler also proposed the octagon as an ideal form for schoolhouses, and in fact many school districts in Fowler's native New York State took him at his word. The schoolhouse connection may be what appealed to the educator Tucker. Or perhaps Tucker considered his office a scholarly retreat after Jefferson's octagonal Poplar Forest, located less than thirty miles away across the Blue Ridge, and was only indirectly inspired by Fowler's ideas. Whatever its source, J. R. Tucker's septagonal folly provides an interesting footnote to the Blandome story.[22]

Significant Person (continued)

Preston, John Thomas Lewis
Tucker, John Randolph
Walker, Harry Lee
Walker, Eliza Bannister

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century date may be discounted.

[22] Darby, "Orson Fowler, the Domestic Octagon, and 'The Little House at Blandome'"; Fowler, *Octagon House*, 151-153; and McAlester and McAlester, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 235.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel corresponds to City of Lexington tax parcel map Section 24 parcel ((1)) 43.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated parcel correspond to the present property lines of the parcel on which Blandome and associated outbuildings and landscape features are located.

PHOTOGRAPHS

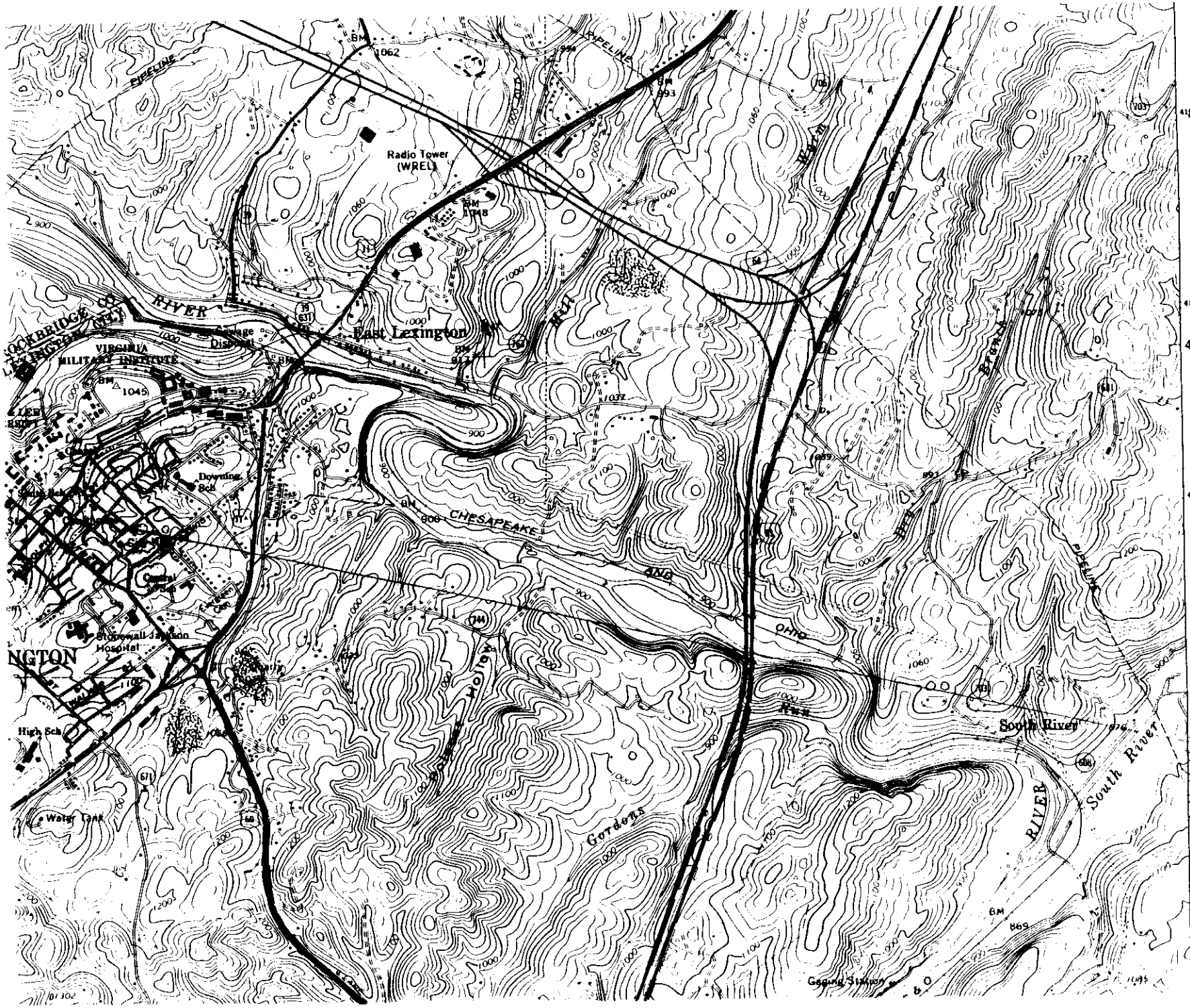
1. 1. Subject: Blandome (same for all photos)
   2. Location: Lexington, Va. (same for all photos)
   3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)
   4. Photo date: November and December 2000 (same for all photos)
   5. Original negative (VDHR # 18945) archived at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond (same for all photos)
   6. Description of view: Front (north) elevation of house showing east side porch and office. View looking southwest.
   7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)

2. 6. South and west elevations of house with garage to left. View looking northeast.

3. 6. First-floor right-hand rooms.

4. 6. First-floor stair.

Exhibit A: Illustration from the January 31, 1920 issue of the *Washington Eagle*.



Blandome
Lexington VA
UTM ref. (zone 17)
E637480 N4182810