

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

LISTED:
VLR: 6/15/2017
NRHP: 8/28/201

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Slusser-Ryan Farm
 Other names/site number: Hickory Ridge Farm/DHR 060-0337
 Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2028 Mt. Tabor Road
 City or town: Blacksburg State: VA County: Montgomery
 Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local
 Applicable National Register Criteria:
X A B X C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Processing, Storage, Animal Facility, Agricultural Outbuilding

FUNERARY: Cemetery

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Extractive Facility (Coal Mine)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Storage, Agricultural Outbuilding

FUNERARY: Cemetery

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19th CENTURY: Greek Revival

OTHER: Log

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD: Log; BRICK; METAL: Steel; STONE: Limestone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Slusser-Ryan Farm, also known as Hickory Ridge Farm, is a working cattle farm located on the north side of Mount Tabor Road in Montgomery County approximately four miles northeast of the Town of Blacksburg. The property is located east of Coal Bank Hollow Road in an area historically known for its role in Montgomery County's commercial coal mining industry, including a mine associated with the Slusser family. The farm is situated on the southeastern slope of Brush Mountain and consists of about 70 acres of pastureland and about 40 acres of woodland (mixed hardwoods) that extends behind the house and to the ridge of the mountain. The hilly topography of the farm is characterized by deep ravines and several sinkholes created by the underlying karst/limestone base and provides for dramatic scenic views from the house and surrounding land. The stream that extends northwest to southeast through the property connects to the North Fork of the Roanoke River. The historic dwelling on the farm began as a two-story log house with V-notches, built around 1855. During the late-nineteenth-century, James P. Slusser enlarged the house with the construction of a side hall and then a west wing, resulting in a single-pile, center-passageway house that displays Greek Revival influences. A two-story ell with a stone cellar was added to the north side of the log section about the same time. The house stands on a coursed-rubble stone foundation, is clad with cementitious boards, and is covered by a metal-clad side-facing gable roof. Large exterior brick and coursed-rubble stone chimneys flank the ends of the house. The front of the three-bay house is distinguished by

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the presence of a two-story, three-bay-wide, front portico with square column supports and sawn work balusters on the upper level. The interior retains good integrity with exposed logs in part of the house, original pine floors, four-panel doors, and an elegant central stair with a late-nineteenth-century newel, turned balusters, and a curving handrail. Woodwork in the 1870s-era addition features flat pilasters, molded surrounds (those on the second floor have pointed tops), and panel aprons below the window openings. Among notable interior finishes are the primitive decoratively-painted baseboards in the west side parlor (now a bedroom). The 12-inch-high boards feature a gray background with black, gold, and brown accents painted to resemble a marble finish. Associated historic outbuildings located within the house yard include a meat/smokehouse, pump house, privy, and log granary. A wagon barn and a large frame hay barn, exhibiting pegged joinery, are located southeast of the house. In addition to the historic buildings, there are two contributing sites on the farm: a family cemetery containing seven marked graves and located in the front field near the fence line; and the shaft of an inactive coal mine, an associated rail-car-wide trench, and an associated slag pile that are located in a draw on the side of the hill behind the house near the edge of the woods. The 117-acre farm, which encompasses two parcels and is part of the original 600-acre Slusser holdings, includes seven contributing resources and two contributing sites.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Slusser-Ryan Farm, also known as Hickory Ridge Farm, is located in the northwest section of Montgomery County at the southeastern base of Brush Mountain. The farm consists of pasture and woodland and is distinguished by karst topography that has resulted in several sinkholes on the farm. Open, hilly pastures (historically used for crop production) are located at the front (south) of the farm and behind the house to the north. Dense stands of hardwoods extend along the west side of the farmland up to the ridge of the mountain. Tom's Branch, which runs behind the house at the base of the hill, traverses the property from northwest to southeast, enters a cave, and eventually connects to the north fork of the Roanoke River. The house and its associated outbuildings are sited at the top of a hill on what appears to be a solid limestone base. The hill drops significantly behind the house, where a sinkhole has formed over the years. The siting affords extensive views of the farm and wooded mountainside. The property is accessed by a gravel driveway and unpaved farm roads extend to the barn and fields beyond. Large, mature black walnut, oak, and maple trees are planted in the house yard, and rows of boxwoods line the driveway and stand at the front of the house.

Slusser-Ryan House

Exterior

The historic dwelling at the Slusser-Ryan Farm is a two-story, three-bay-wide center-passage-plan house that incorporates a two-story log section in its east end. The log section, constructed of hewn logs with V-notched corners, was built around 1855; in the late-nineteenth century (ca. 1870), a side hall with stair was constructed, and then a two-story wing was added to the west side of the house. The phased nature of this addition is evidenced in the hall by a small step at the back (north end) that possibly opened onto a rear porch before the later addition of the two-story ell. The ell, with a stone cellar, was built onto the rear (north) of the log section of the

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house by 1880.¹ The entire house was sheathed on the exterior with weatherboards, and the interior was finished with plaster walls, except in the lower eastern room which retains its exposed logs and smooth daubing.

The three-bay-wide front (south) elevation holds centrally located doors on both floor levels that are flanked by six-over-six replacement sash windows with decorative paneled shutters. The two-story, three-bay-wide gable-roofed front porch projects over the center bay. The porch is distinguished by square wooden columns with molded capitals and flat sawn balusters on the upper level. Boards with wide battens clad the exterior wall of the porch bay. On both levels, the four-panel entrance door is flanked by multi-paned sidelights (of varying sized panes) and is enframed by a wooden surround with simple pilasters that carry a molded entablature. (The door opening is enframed in the same manner on the interior). The porch rests on a stone foundation that is topped with flagstones on the first floor. The upper level of the porch retains its painted tongue-in-groove flooring.

The porch roof and the main side-facing gable roof of the house are clad with recently installed new metal material; however, the late-nineteenth-century glass ball-and-metal lightning rods are retained on the roof ridgeline. The pedimented end of the porch roof and the two gable ends of the house are clad with board-and-batten siding. A round-topped wooden window is located in the pedimented gable end of the porch roof and small four-pane wooden windows are located on the end gables beside the chimney stacks.

The exterior end brick chimney on the east end of the house consists of a stone base and shoulders (to the attic level) with a rebuilt brick chimney stack above. The exterior chimney on the west end of the house is brick set (rebuilt) on a stone foundation and exhibits an irregular bond pattern of stretcher bond and five-course American bond.

The two-story, gable roofed wing at the back (north) of the house is raised on a tall stone foundation and holds an interior brick chimney on the north end. A shed-roofed, two-level porch extends from the west side of the wing. The lower open level features square wooden post supports; the second floor sleeping porch, formerly enclosed with novelty siding and pairs of six-over-six windows, is now enclosed with casement windows and cementitious boards.

A one-story, two-bay frame kitchen wing was added to the east end of the house probably at the turn of the twentieth-century. Porches were present on the front and back of the wing, which was covered by a side-facing gable roof. In 2011, this wing was removed and replaced with a larger kitchen wing with additional living space to the north and below grade. The wide stone fireplace on the east side of the new wing was constructed in part using stone from the original kitchen foundation. The fireplace surround in the upper room was constructed exclusively from the original stone, and the fireplace below was constructed using limestone primarily collected on the farm.² A pyramidal-roofed screened-in porch was added to the northwest corner of the new wing to take advantage of the extensive views of the farm and mountains.

Interior

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The Slusser-Ryan house reflects a single-pile, center-passage floor plan. The center hall holds the stair to the second floor, and an opening on the east side of the hall accesses the log section of the house. This room features the exposed hewn logs of the original structure and a stone fireplace and hearth on the west end. Other details include pine floors, sawn door and window surrounds, four-panel doors, and modern daubing.

The door that formerly led from the center hall to the west parlor has been enclosed. Access to that room, now used as a bedroom, is via a short passage that was added on the north side of the house and accessed from the back (north) end of the center hall. Details in this room reflect the influence of the Greek Revival style and include a post and lintel fireplace with a molded shelf, brick fireplace and non-historic raised brick hearth.³ The window and door surrounds are detailed with flat pilasters and paneled aprons below the openings. A small wooden wall molding, located at the lintel level of the windows, extends around the room. Most notable in this room are the hand-painted baseboards. The stylized design, intended to imitate a marble finish, consists of circular and angular strokes (possible painted with a feather or soft brush) in colors of gray, black, and gold. According to architectural conservator F. Carey Howlett, the impression of the painting is a stylized, “but fairly convincing, imitation of brecciated marble, essentially an amalgam of marble or other stone fragments geologically compressed in a matrix of later stone, either relatively soft limestone or more marble (the compressed form of limestone).” Marbled painting was common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as an inexpensive means of upgrading interiors. Estimates are that the painting dates close to the mid-nineteenth century⁴

A transverse passage or gallery extends between the log section of the house and the rear gable ell, and serves to connect the west end of the house with the new east wing. The dining room, located on the first floor of the ell, is lighted by a row of windows on the west side. A stone fireplace, with a later, vernacular wooden mantel, is located on the north end wall of the dining room. Recessed open bays on both sides of the chimney hold large one-over-one windows and are detailed with wooden trim cut in a curving pattern (installed in the mid-twentieth century).

The second floor of the house holds a center hall, which accesses the front porch on the south and the enclosed porch space along the rear ell to the north. The bedrooms on the upper floor reflect the same finishes as the first floor bedroom, except that the door and window surrounds have pointed, rather than flat, tops. The same narrow wall molding noted in the west parlor is present in both rooms. Both rooms also have the same post and lintel mantels as the one found in the parlor. An enclosed winder stair to the attic is located in the southeast corner of the east bedroom, located on the second floor of the log section. The log structure is exposed in the attic stair, as well as in the small bathroom on the north side of the bedroom. The bedroom located on the second floor of the rear ell, which is accessible from the enclosed porch, as well as from the east bedroom, holds a fireplace on the north end, which is flanked by recessed bays similar to those in the dining room.

Alterations

As noted, the current owners undertook renovation and alteration of the house in 2011.⁵ Included in the work was the upgrade of mechanical and electrical systems, construction of a new kitchen

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wing, installation of replacement sash windows, and installation of cementitious sheathing. The recently constructed east wing houses a large combined kitchen and great room on the upper level with access to the surrounding porch. Small utility spaces, a bathroom, and stairs to the lower level are located along the hall east of the kitchen. The lower level, holding a workshop and family room, features a large hearth and fireplace constructed of local limestone, walls that are clad with reclaimed barn wood from the farm buildings, and a limestone arched opening into the stone-lined cellar space.⁶ The cellar, located beneath the rear ell of the house, formerly was accessed only from the exterior of the house. The cellar is finished with a concrete floor, exposed stone walls, and exposed ceiling joists.⁷ A simple stone fireplace is located on the north end of the space. The details of the new wing, as well as its massing and form, do not detract from the historic appearance of the house and replicate some of the historic exterior details. The majority of the windows are six-over-six sash and replicate the configuration of the historic wooden sash. Materials, both exterior and interior, have been reused where possible (including foundation stones and old barn wood).

Outbuildings

A row of one-story, frame domestic outbuildings is located east of the house. The frame pump house/wash house (ca. 1870) stands closest to the house and is clad with circular sawn board-and-batten sheathing and is covered by a metal-clad front-facing gable roof that extends over a porch at the front (south) of the building. Painted sapling poles with wooden diagonal braces support the overhang of the roof and sawn exposed rafter tails are present on the side eaves of the roof. There are no window openings on the building, but a single-leaf, vertical plank door is present on the front of the building. The wooden porch flooring is a modern replacement. The one-story, frame meat/smokehouse (ca. 1870) stands east of the wash house. The building is clad with circular sawn vertical boards and covered by a metal-clad front-facing gable roof. A single door is located on the front (south end) of the building. Foundations for both the meat house and the wash house appear to have been stone and have been reinforced with timber sills.

A small frame privy (ca. 1870) is located behind and down the hill from the meat house, but still within the fenced house yard. The building, clad with vertical sawn boards and covered by a metal-clad shed roof, was moved to this location probably around the mid-twentieth century. According to local family members, the building was moved to various locations within the yard over the years.

The one-and-a-half-story building (ca. 1870) located in front of the house and near the driveway stands on a limestone and concrete foundation, is of hewn log construction with V notches, and is covered by a metal-clad gable roof. An entrance door is located on the west end of the building and six-over-six wooden sash windows are present on the south and east sides. The gable ends are clad with board-and-batten siding and hold small six-over-six windows. The single pen interior holds a wooden ladder to the loft in the southeast corner. No chimney or fireplace is present and the foundation appears to be uninterrupted. The building was known to have been used as a dwelling during the early twentieth century, but originally may have been a domestic or agricultural outbuilding. Although family oral tradition states that the building was a slave quarter, its location at the front of the house, as well as the lack of a fireplace or chimney and

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other architectural evidence suggesting a late-nineteenth century construction date, would not be consistent with that use.⁸

Agricultural Buildings

Two barns historically associated with the Slusser farm stand southeast of the house and are accessed by the unpaved farm road. The exterior of the small, one-story wagon barn (ca. 1870) has been re-sheathed with vertical wooden siding replicating the original. Hinged doors located on the east end provide access into the single interior space. The building stands on timber post supports and is covered by a metal-clad front-facing gable roof.

The large, five-bay-wide, story-and-a-half frame hay barn (ca. 1870), located south of the wagon barn, is covered by a metal-clad gable roof with a hip-roofed aisle on the west end. Sliding doors on the north and south sides of the barn access the center aisle with side aisle partitions and the remains of a manger on one side. The main section of the barn is of mortar-and-tenon joinery with simple bents (posts with down braces), structural members were noted as circular-sawn and hewn. The barn, which is slightly banked into the hill on the north side, stands on a limestone foundation, and is clad with vertical wooden boards.⁹ The east end of the barn features enclosed grain bays with loft space above; the main section of the barn is open to the rafters. The main floor of the barn is covered with wooden flooring, while the lower west end aisle is earthen. At present, the barn is not in use and is in fair condition.

Cemetery and Mine

The Slusser family cemetery (1872) is located on the south end of the farm on axis with the dwelling. Seven burials are marked by engraved stones, several of which exhibit late nineteenth century funerary motifs. The stones, which are located in an active pasture, have been gathered and set into a long concrete sarcophagus-like slab that presumably covers the areas of the burials. A post and barbed-wire fence encircles the area immediately around the burials.

A former coal mining site, denoted by a shaft opening, railcar-wide trench, and slag pile, is located in the wooded southeast-facing draw extending through the pasture behind the house and near the edge of the woods. The mine, probably dating from 1880 or later, may have provided coal for household consumption (known as "house coal") or may have been part of the Slusser family mining operation. The interior of the mine has not been investigated.

Three known resources that were on the farm but are no longer extant include a twentieth-century frame garage, formerly located west of the house. The site is denoted by a stand of boxwoods that formerly encircled the building. When the garage was removed, the driveway also was rerouted from the west side of the log building to the south side and extended to the east side of the dwelling. A detached kitchen is also said to have been located in the house yard, but exactly where it stood is not known. The current owner also stated that a tenant house was built in the early twentieth century and formerly stood on the hill behind the house.

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Integrity

In general, the architectural resources on the Slusser-Ryan Farm retain good overall integrity and continue to convey their historic appearance and character from the period in which they were constructed. The original log house, built in the early nineteenth century, was enlarged in a manner typical of the period. Construction of a center hall and west wing addition resulted in a single-pile, center-passage-plan house. Detailing on the house is generally vernacular, but reflects stylized use of classical details (such as pilasters), as well as the more regionally or culturally related decoration of painted marbled baseboards in the west parlor. Additions and alterations made in recent years have been sensitive to the original form of the house and have used similar or sympathetic materials and reused materials where possible. Most significantly, the house retains excellent integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. Although modern residential development lies nearby, the Slusser-Ryan Farm retains its rural surroundings. Adjacent parcels, which were also part of the former Slusser family holdings, are actively engaged in agricultural practices.¹⁰ The presence of historic domestic and agricultural buildings on the Slusser-Ryan Farm further enhance the historic context of the property.

INVENTORY

Single dwelling, ca. 1855; ca. 1870; 2011	Contributing building
Pump house/Wash house, ca. 1870	Contributing building
Meat/smoke house, ca. 1870	Contributing building
Privy, ca. 1870; moved	Contributing building
Log building/granary, ca. 1870	Contributing building
Wagon barn, ca. 1870	Contributing building
Hay barn, ca. 1870	Contributing building
Cemetery, 1872 (earliest burial)	Contributing site
Coal Mine, ca. 1880	Contributing site

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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.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

ca.1855-1880

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Slusser-Ryan Farm, also known as Hickory Ridge Farm, is eligible for listing in the National Register at a local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Agriculture and Industry for its association with the agricultural and industrial history of Montgomery County and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a collection of regional examples of domestic and agricultural buildings from the nineteenth century. The centerpiece of the property is the two-story, evolved center-passage-plan house that retains significant character-defining features including its three-bay, single-pile form, exterior stone and brick end chimneys, and a prominent two-level front porch with a decoratively sawn balustrade. The building retains important materials as well, including limestone foundations and chimneys, log construction, and interior woodwork including decoratively painted baseboards in the parlor. The historic context of the dwelling is enhanced by numerous historic domestic and agricultural buildings, the presence of a family cemetery, and a former coal mine on the property. These elements also firmly establish the property's ties to the Slusser family who were among the principal farmers and coal miners in the Mount Tabor area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The earliest, log-framed section of the house exhibits wide, hewn logs with V-notched corners and was built around 1855 by James P. Slusser, who also expanded the house (around 1870). The historic outbuildings and farm buildings on the property, which appear to date to the 1870s, also were built during Slussers' ownership. The earliest burial in the cemetery is that of Slusser's first wife, who died in 1872. The identified Period of Significance for the Slusser-Ryan Farm extends from circa 1855, the estimated construction date of the earliest section of the dwelling, to circa 1880, when the west and north additions were completed. Early twenty-first-century alterations and additions have been made to the dwelling, but these do not detract from the historical character and appearance of the house. The current owners have maintained the property in excellent condition and are committed to preserving both the surrounding farmland and the historic architectural resources on it.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Architectural Discussion

The Slusser-Ryan Farm, also known as Hickory Ridge Farm, is located on the southeastern slope of Brush Mountain in the northwestern section of Montgomery County and is a working farm that dates back to the early nineteenth century. The farm is distinguished by its dramatic landscape, consisting of open pasture, woodlands, and steep hills with ravines and sinkholes created by the underlying karst topography.

The architectural centerpiece of the farm is the two-story, evolved vernacular dwelling, which began as a mid-nineteenth century two-story log house and was enlarged to a single-pile, center-passage plan during the late-nineteenth century. The house is an excellent example of the type of house built by early settlers that was later enlarged and altered over time, reflecting the changing needs of the family, as well as changing architectural tastes and trends. The original hewn-log

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house was rectangular in plan, stood on a stone foundation, and held an exterior stone chimney with a brick stack on the east end. The house consisted of a single room on both floors; the location of the stairs may have been in the southwest corner where indentations were noted in the logs. In the upper level room, an enclosed winder stair is located in the southwest corner and leads to the attic space. The stair may also have been located on the west end of the house and was removed when the center passage and west end wing were constructed.

In Montgomery County, log construction continued to be popular into the mid- and late-nineteenth century, due in part to the building traditions brought by the German immigrants who settled there.¹¹ The use of hewn logs secured with notched corners with the spaces between the logs filled with wood or stone chinking and daubed proved to be a more permanent . The Slusser house reflects a high level of workmanship in its log construction with its tight fitted notched corners and logs hewn both on the interior and exterior. Over the years, the daubing appears to have been replaced and resurfaced in areas, but the overall profile of the walls is intact. The Slusser house also reflects the historical practice of expanding the floor plan of the original house rather than replacing the original structure. Although log houses of the period were often one-and-a-half-story hall-parlor houses, the Slusser house appears to have been a two-story, single-pen house. The log construction is visible on the interior, but investigation of the exterior was limited to a single photograph taken during early twenty-first century renovations.

Oral history from family members, as well as architectural evidence, indicate that a side hall was added to the west side of the log structure, which was followed by the addition of a two-story wing to the west and a two-story ell on the back (north). Stairs to the second floor are located on the west wall of the center hall. The stair is detailed with decorative sawn brackets beneath the treads, a turned newel post (possibly missing a finial), and turned balusters with an attenuated and curved handrail. A change in the floor level in the center hall (negotiated by a slight step down to the north) and change in flooring orientation may reflect a change in construction phase.

A somewhat unusual feature found in the house is the painted decoration on the west parlor baseboards (now a bedroom). The marbled effect reflects the tradition of this imaginative and creative method that was used to enrich domestic interiors with artificial finishes. The marbled technique was meant to imitate more expensive materials, and thus elevating the element, and the room, into something less ordinary. Architectural conservator F. Carey Howlett estimates that the artwork was completed at the time of construction (ca.1870) and recent research indicates that it is a rare surviving example in the area.¹²

By the early twentieth century, a one-story, frame kitchen wing had been constructed on the east end of the house. This wing replaced an earlier detached kitchen on the property (location unknown). In the early twenty-first century, the wing was removed and replaced with a larger one-story wing that incorporates a great room and a basement level living space. Stones from the kitchen wing foundation were reused on interior mantels and decorative features.

Given the hewn-log construction of the Slusser House and comparable examples in the area, it is estimated that the earliest section of the house was built circa 1855. Documentary evidence

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shows that the Slusser family moved to the area during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and began purchasing land in the Mount Tabor area (see below). John B. Slusser, the progenitor of the family, accumulated over 1,000 acres in the Tom's Creek area and his home lies not far from the subject property. John's son, James, married for the first time in 1855 and his first child was born in 1860. It is likely that James provided a new, modest home for his family at that time. Given language of later conveyances from his father, James may have built on a portion of John Slusser's property that later became James' farm.

Slusser Family in Montgomery County

Members of the Slusser family, of German descent, are known to have lived in Lancaster, PA, and Hagerstown, MD prior to moving to Virginia around 1800. Sometime during the early nineteenth century (ca. 1820), brothers John B. and Daniel Slusser moved to Montgomery County and began buying property in the northwest section of the county near Tom's Branch and in other areas as early as 1825. An 1839 deed shows that John B. and Daniel Slusser were party to a conveyance of over 15,000 acres that had been patented by land surveyor Benjamin Martin in 1795. Part of the land lay on the "north fork of the Roanoke River." In 1840, another deed shows John B. Slusser purchased 1,089 acres "on the south side of Brush Mountain on Tom's Creek adjoining [John] Tinsley."¹³ Although no plat for this parcel was recorded, it was located near John Slusser's home and would have encompassed the land later conveyed to his son James.

John B. Slusser (1802-1875) married Elizabeth Rebecca Smith (1804-1863) in 1828. Slusser's home, a circa-1820s two-story hall-parlor house that evolved from a story-and-a-half log dwelling, stands at the fork of Mount Tabor Road and Coal Hollow Bank Road, about .5 mile southwest of the Slusser-Ryan Farm. The location of J. B. Slusser's house, cited in local sources as the oldest house in the Mount Tabor area, is depicted on several maps from the mid-nineteenth century along the road now known as Mount Tabor. John and Elizabeth Slusser had one daughter and five sons, including son James P. (1834-1914). The 1850 census lists John as a farmer with the substantial amount of \$7,000-worth of real estate. By 1860, John's estate had grown to \$15,000. The 1860 slave schedule also records Slusser as owning three slaves (a man, aged 48, a woman aged 34, and a female child of 11—possibly a family unit). According to local histories, a story-and-a-half- log quarters formerly stood at the back of Slusser's Mount Tabor area house.¹⁴

In 1860, James P. Slusser is listed in the census separately from his father's household. By this time, James P. was married to his first wife, Susannah McDonald (1837-1879), and they had an infant girl (Lavinia). No value is listed for James' real estate holdings, but he is credited with \$200 of personal property. James P. Slusser does not appear in the slave schedule for 1860, suggesting that unlike his father, he did not own slaves. In 1860 only 21 percent of the county's white families owned slaves, which was above the average for the rest of Southwest Virginia but lower than the statewide average of 38 percent.¹⁵

By 1870, James is listed in the census with \$2,000 of real estate and \$1,080 of personal property, reflecting his ownership of 100 acres of farmland and at least a modest dwelling. In 1872, John B. Slusser conveyed to his son James P. 560 acres (more or less) "near the headwaters of Tom

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Creek...where John B. Slusser lives.”¹⁶ This parcel, presumably, was part of the large parcel John purchased in 1840 and in total, James became the owner of over 600-acres of land in the Brushy Mountain area.

After his first wife, Susannah, died in 1879, Slusser married her widowed cousin, Martha V. McDonald (1847-1893). Slusser had eight children by his first wife and two by his second wife. The family cemetery on the property holds the graves of James, Susannah, Martha, and four of the Slusser children.

At the time of his death, James P. Slusser’s 605.5-acre farm was partitioned among his widow and children. Slusser’s widow, Martha, received the house lot (Dower Lot) containing approximately 63.1 acres. Son Byron received Lot 1 of farmland (18.2 acres) and Lot 1 of mountain land (46.4 acres) and later purchased the Dower Lot and all “coal, millstone, mineral and metals of the land.”¹⁷ [These three parcels comprise the nominated property.] Each of the other surviving children also received one lot of farmland and one lot of mountain land. The cemetery was called out in the 1917 partition as a 25-foot-by-60-foot parcel and was retained by the family in later conveyances. The land remained in the Slusser family into the mid-twentieth century, when the present family purchased the property. A division of the Byron G. Slusser farm (1946) shows that Mark Smith and Fred Bull purchased Lots 1, 2, and 9, roughly corresponding to the present property boundaries. The partition reserved the road and graveyard site, and also noted that “all crops now growing” were to go to the purchasers “with the exception of the bean crop, garden, and one-half interest in the corn crop, “confirming that the farm was still in production at the time.”¹⁸ The farm remains in the extended Smith family and at present the fields are leased for cattle grazing.¹⁹

As a prominent family in both agricultural and industrial pursuits, the Slusser family played a significant role in the civic, economic, and religious life of the Mount Tabor community in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. James P. Slusser, his brother John Harvey, and James’ nephew Frank and his wife Ida, were instrumental in the establishment of Slusser’s Chapel (Church of God) in the 1903. The land and lumber for the tabernacle, as it was called, were donated by Slusser family members and the family led the Sunday School classes and prayer meetings, although preaching was generally done by a traveling minister until the late 1920s. The older building is still extant, but the congregation moved to a larger, brick church (located just to the east) in the late 1980s. The church congregation is still active and continues to be an important part of the Mount Tabor community.²⁰

Agriculture

The Slusser-Ryan Farm is significant in the area of agriculture as an intact example of a late-nineteenth century farm in this region of Montgomery County. The land has been in agricultural use at least since the early nineteenth century, when John B. Slusser first purchased land in this area. Prior to the Civil War, livestock and subsistence crop production were the primary agricultural pursuits in this area. The Slusser farm exhibits the types of buildings and spatial organization associated with farms from this period. The house is sited on a hillside surrounding by active farmland; domestic outbuildings such as a meat house and pump house are located

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within the fenced house yard, while barns and other agricultural buildings are located in the surrounding fields.

At over 600 acres, the James P. Slusser Farm would have been a large farm in the county during the mid- to late-nineteenth-century. In 1850, 168,000 acres, or 66 percent of Montgomery County's land was farmland, of which 37 percent (60,000 acres) was improved farmland (tilled and fallow fields, meadow, pasture and orchard); average farm size was 299 acres, but there were several farms of 1,000 acres or more.²¹ During the antebellum period, corn was the most abundant crop in the county, followed by wheat, oats, rye, and buckwheat, and the important cash crop of tobacco; between 1840 and 1860, livestock production (horses, cattle, sheep, and swine) in the county waned as more land was given over to crops.²² Postbellum agricultural production in the county showed a decline from antebellum levels, as in other areas of the state. Between the late 1870s and 1900, however, agriculture, aided by the re-establishment of transportation networks and the extension of rail lines, regained its footing. The number of farms in the county during this period nearly doubled, and the size of farms, as well as the numbers of improved acreage also increased.²³

James P. Slusser, like his father before him, became a prominent farmer in the Mount Tabor area. He is listed among the county's principal farmers in the 1888 and 1890 gazetteers. At his death in 1914, James P. Slusser owned 600 acres on the east slope of Blush Mountain. His children divided the farm into 6 parcels, including a dower lot for their mother. James was buried in the family cemetery on the hill in front of the house he built.

The James P. Slusser family appears to have been a prosperous farm engaged in livestock and crop production. The 1870 agricultural census records James in the Blacksburg District with 100 acres of improved land and 200 acres of woodland, with a value of \$2,000 for his farm. Work animals on the farm included six horses and four oxen. Livestock for production included a few milk cows and other cattle, swine, and sheep. Butter (225 pounds) was a major product from the farm, as was wool (40 pounds). Slusser grew wheat, rye, Indian corn, and oats, as well as tobacco (800 pounds). Hay, clover, peas, potatoes, apples, molasses, and honey completed the farm's annual output. In 1880, Slusser's farm had grown in size, reflecting the conveyance of land from his father. The agricultural census for that year recorded the Slusser property with 60 acres of improved land, 90 acres of pasture, and 375 acres of woodland (total 525 acres). The value for livestock was listed at \$600 (down from \$900 in 1870). Slusser's livestock mainly consisted of a few oxen, cattle, chickens, and sheep, which produced butter, eggs, and wool. For crops, Slusser reported 10 acres of Indian corn, 12 acres of oats, and 30 acres of wheat. One-half acre of sorghum was used to manufacture molasses. Other products from the farm included apples and lumber. The Slusser farm was a relatively large farm that produced market crops, as well as products for home consumption. The farm remained active throughout the early twentieth century and photographs of the farm from that time show that corn was being grown in the front field—an area now used for pasture. The farm retains its agricultural use and at present its fertile fields are used for livestock grazing.²⁴

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Following the Civil War, Montgomery County continued to be dominated by an agricultural economy. As the amount of improved land increased in the county (up to about 80 percent in 1870), so too did the number of farms, many of which were in small acreage (99 acres or less). Barns built during this period began to be constructed of frame rather than log, and were larger in size. The Slusser barn, considered a large barn of a prosperous farmer, is slightly banked into the north side of the hill and exhibits a traditional English form, with sliding entrance doors on the side elevations that give access to large interior areas used for hay storage.²⁵ A small wagon barn and a log building, presumed to be a granary, completed the collection. Oral history indicates that a stable also stood on the Slusser farm, but that building is no longer extant and its location is not known.²⁶

Industry: Coal Mining on the Property

In 1863, James P. Slusser served as a private in Company C, 7th Battalion, Virginia Infantry, Local Defense (CSA), also known as the 1st Nitre Battalion. The Nitre Corps was established by the Confederate government in 1862 and the following year became the Nitre and Mining Bureau. The bureau gained authority to enlist workers from men who were eligible for military service. Montgomery County was part of the area designated as Nitre and Mining District 3 and members of Company C, including J. P. Slusser, enlisted on November 21, 1863, at Christiansburg with Captain J. T. Trolinger as the only officer. The redesignation of the battalion as the Seventh Battalion, Local Defense Troops, took place in May 1864.²⁷ Although some felt these miners were evading military service, they were desperately needed as laborers to mine coal, saltpeter and other important raw materials for the use in manufacturing ammunition for the Confederate troops. Skilled workers were used to mentor those just coming into the operations. By 1863, the bureau had a workforce of 4,000 men (as compared to 80,000 in the same service for the Union). James P. Slusser's son Byron recounted that his father had been away during the war "making Salt Peter." During the war, saltpeter, sulphur, and magnesium were mined in Montgomery County.²⁸

Although historically an agricultural county, the coal mining industry played a significant role in Montgomery County's economy beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and was "the largest non-farm industrial employer in the county" prior to the opening of the Radford Ordnance Works in 1940 (later, Radford Arsenal).²⁹ Coal, first documented in Montgomery County in the mid-eighteenth century and likely used by local blacksmiths to fuel their shops, occurs in two distinct areas of the county: at Brush Mountain along the northwest edge of the county, and Price Mountain south of the Town of Blacksburg (near Price's Fork). The mine developed at the Price Mountain site, which was utilized extensively by Confederate forces during the Civil War, took the name "Merrimac" after the war when the Virginia Anthracite and Coal Company began operating the mines. Together, these deposits became known as the "Valley Coalfield of Virginia," and spanned Montgomery and Pulaski counties.³⁰

The coal found in the region originally was known as New River hard coal or "stone coal," and later as Virginia semi-anthracite. This coal differs from the soft bituminous coal found elsewhere in Southwest Virginia in content and is "characterized by fixed-carbon and volatile matter [fuel ratio] contents that are intermediate between bituminous and anthracite coal." The coal is very

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hard and burns hotter than anthracite. A 1925 report by the Virginia Geological Survey noted that the coal from the M. C. Slusser mine had the highest fuel ratio of any coal found in the area.³¹

The coal mining industry became an important economic force in the area during the late nineteenth century. In 1897, there were 15 mines recorded in the county, but the industry peaked in the county during the early twentieth century. Large mines producing between 250 and 500 tons of coal a day, but several smaller mines also operated in the county. The Merrimac, McCoy, and Parrott mines were the largest mines in the county. The Merrimac Mine, owned by the Virginia Anthracite Coal and Railroad Company, operated as a fully developed town or mining camp and drew workers from diverse backgrounds. Eastern European immigrants, as well as African Americans, found work in the mines. The Big Vein and Great Valley Mines (McCoy) and Wake Forest mines were predominantly worked by African Americans.³²

Smaller mines, often referred to as truck or buggy mines, operated in the Brush Mountain and Price Mountain areas. These mines produced about 20 tons of coal a day and “provided coal for the local coal market, which included house coal, and coal to supply the boilers at Virginia Tech. Most of these mines only produced coal in the fall and winter months and would shut down during the summer months.”³³ The operators of these mines were often primarily farmers who were supplementing their agricultural income. Initially, coal was transported from the area by wagon to Lynchburg (or Buchanan), then placed on the river and taken to Richmond. By 1854, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad extended through the county and greatly facilitated transportation routes from the New River Valley mines to larger eastern markets.

John Harvey Slusser, brother to James P. Slusser, opened the J. H. Slusser and Son mines in the mid- to late-1800s. Although James P. is consistently listed as a farmer in census and gazetteer records, he may have played a role in the family’s mine operations, given his service in the Nitre Battalion and apparent skill in mining. The Slusser Mines, which extended along Coal Bank Hollow Road east of Route 460. The company built several houses located opposite of the mines (on the north side of the road) and a post office and store, and the community took the name of “Slusser.” At least one company house is still extant and other visible remnants of the mining operations include abandoned mine openings and the coal tipple (where the coal was processed and sorted prior to loading into trucks or railcars), which stands at the intersection of Coal Bank Hollow Road and Route 460. A 1925 map of the county indicates the location of several mines in the Mount Tabor area along the southeastern slope of Brush Mountain and a recent map drawn by Hazel Kanode Hodge reconstructs the Slusser Mine area along Coal Bank Hollow Road, consisting of homes, stores, mine location and mine-related structures, such as the tipple.³⁴

Murray C. Slusser, nephew to James P., took over mine operations when his father died in 1909, and changed the name to M. C. Slusser Coal Company. The mine was productive in the 1910s and 1920s and at its peak employed about 60 men. The mine ran two shifts a day, six days a week, and like other mine companies paid employees by the carload of coal. Between 1909 and 1930, about 20 percent of the Slusser mine’s production supplied coal to fuel the boilers at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI), located less than 10 miles away.³⁵

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Smaller mines, which were often in rural areas, faced difficulties with transporting their product to larger markets. No rail transportation was available to Slusser mine; instead, coal was hauled by horse-drawn wagon to the nearest railroad station about nine miles away. During the late nineteenth century, rail lines were extended in the county, but Slusser coal would still have been carted to Blacksburg for distribution. Later, trucks were loaded at the nearby tippie and transported to other markets.

Oral history confirms how mines were worked in the Brush Mountain area:

The whole mountain back there was full of coal. We mined down there in small mines. Some of them went in on a level, some on a 45 [degree angle], some of them was down a thousand feet deep, some of them was about 150-200 feet.³⁶

The coal mine located on the Slusser-Ryan farm may have been part of the commercial industry of M. C. Slusser. The mine may also have provided fuel for home use and consumption (“house coal”) during the late nineteenth century. In either use, the mine is a physical reminder of the important history of mining to this section of Montgomery County and contributes to this area of significance.³⁷ As noted, the land along the southeast side of Brush Mountain, and especially along Mount Tabor Road, is a karst area that is heavily covered with sinkholes. There are also numerous abandoned coal mine shafts, as well. One resident notes that the mines are “not just isolated to the Coal Bank Hollow area where the Slusser Mine was located—that was only the larger mine; there were lots of smaller mines all along that area, that aren’t as well documented.... Most of the smaller mines wouldn’t be shown on any geological map, because most were small privately run operations.”³⁸

By the mid-twentieth century, the county’s coal industry began to die out. Many workers sought employment in other, less dangerous occupations and at the newly opened Radford Ordnance Works. The demise of the coal mines in Montgomery County is linked to several factors including the increased preference for bituminous coal found elsewhere, increased government regulation due to accidents, the outbreak of World War II, and the availability of other employment (such as the ordnance works). The Slusser Mines closed operations in 1950.³⁹

ENDNOTES

Section 7

1. Byron G. Slusser, letter to Susan Bull Ryan, 1968. This letter also identifies Ed Caldwell as the mason who constructed the chimneys on the house.
2. The local limestone, nicknamed “Hokie stone,” is a favored building material in the area. The name derives from the popularity of the limestone for buildings at nearby Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The rough-faced stone blocks, quarried on the campus, were first used in 1899 on the YMCA building at the school. The material was soon adopted by the university as “our native limestone.” As Architectural Historian and Virginia Tech alumnus J. Daniel Pezzoni notes, “Native” stone construction helped to define an architectural identity for the Virginia Polytechnic Institute by distinguishing the school from the predominantly brick character of the state’s other institutions, chief among them the University of

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Virginia....” J. Daniel Pezzoni, “Our Native Stone: Architectural Identity at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1872-1922,” in *Smithfield Review* Vol. 1(1997), 44.

3. The current owner states that a wood-burning stove was located in this room, as well as the dining room, during the late-twentieth century. Susan Bull Ryan, personal communication, January 16, 2017.

4. F. Carey Howlett, chief conservator and president of F. Carey Howlett & Associates, electronic mail message, March 2, 2017; Laura Phillips, Architectural Historian, Winston-Salem, NC, electronic mail message, March 2-3, 2017.

5. R. Craig Balzer, architect, Balzer and Associates, Inc., of Roanoke, VA.

6. Gerald Altman was the stone mason for the downstairs arch and fireplace.

7. The concrete was added by Byron G. Slusser, son of James P. Slusser, in the early twentieth century.

8. Byron G. Slusser, son of James P. Slusser, noted that this structure was “built last” on the property “not as a slave house but was probably used by slaves as sleeping quarters.” Slusser does not provide dates of construction. Letter from Byron G. Slusser to Susan Ryan, July 22, 1968.

9. Bank barns gained popularity in the county in the late nineteenth century. A “model” bank barn was constructed at the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College [later VPI] that influenced the construction of this traditional barn form. The Slusser barn, which predates the VPI model, is only slightly banked on the north side with an earthen ramp leading to the sliding entry door on the side elevation. There is no forebay or lower feeding level, as in more traditional German examples. See Lindon, 215 and Worsham, 226.

10. The Slusser-Ryan Farm is leased for cattle farming; the adjacent “Advantage Ranch” operates a therapy horse program.

Section 8

11. Gibson Worsham, et als., “Montgomery County, Historic Sites Survey, Vol. 1,” 1986:59, 189. One of the oldest log dwellings in the county is the two-story log portion of “Solitude,” (DHR #150-0100-0003) built in 1801 and later incorporated into a larger frame dwelling. The cited survey recorded at least one log house, the two-room Ham Dove House (DHR #060-0128) that was built as late as 1919.

12. Howlett and Phillips, electronic mail messages, March 2017.

13. For Slusser family information, see Spenser D. Slough, “A Tale of Two Homes: Architectural History Surveys and Cross-Comparison Study in Historic Preservation Techniques.” Unpublished Manuscript. May 2016:12-14. The author is grateful to Mr. Slough for sharing his research into the Slusser family and the Slusser homes in the Mount Tabor area.

Montgomery County Deed Book M:535, Montgomery County Deed Book O:191. Benjamin Martin was a land surveyor who was listed as living in Bedford County, PA. In this conveyance, the Slussers are listed as already living in Montgomery County.

14. 1840-1860 U.S. Census, Montgomery County, 1860 Slave Schedule, Montgomery County; James L. Douthat, *Montgomery County, Virginia: Early Settlers 1810-1850 Census* (Signal Mountain, TN: Mountain Press, 1985); Charles T. Burton, indexer, *Montgomery County, Virginia 1850 Census* ([Troutville, VA?]: By Author, 1982); Slough, 12-13. John Harvey Slusser, who began commercial mining operations, lived in his father’s house after John Slusser’s death.

15. 1860 U.S. Census, Montgomery County; 1860 Slave Schedule, Montgomery County; Worsham, 112. Worsham notes that “The German-descended farmers of Toms Creek were apparently anti-slavery and later Pro-Union.” Although this was not the case for the Slusser family (which owned slaves and served in military units supporting the Confederacy), it does explain the low number of slaves in the property area. Mary Elizabeth Lindon, ed., *Virginia’s Montgomery County* (Christiansburg, VA: Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, 2009), 211.

16. Montgomery County Deed Book S:489.

17. Montgomery County Deed Book 71:546, 110:445.

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18. Montgomery County Deed Book 142:135.
19. Susan Bull Ryan, Personal Communication, January 16, 2017.
20. "Slusser's Chapel Church of God: Memory Book, 1903-2003" ([Blacksburg, VA: Slusser's Chapel, 2003])1-6.
21. Worsham, 158-159.
22. Lindon, 211-212.
23. Lindon, 215.
24. 1870-1880, U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedule, Montgomery County. Viewed on microfilm at the Library of Virginia, Richmond.
25. Worsham, 225-226.
26. Letter from Byron G. Slusser to Susan Bull Ryan, July 22, 1968. Copy in possession of property owner.
27. Robert W. Donnelly, "Local Defense in the Confederate Munitions Area," in *Military Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Autumn 1954):124-125.
28. National Archives and Records Administration, "Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Virginia," Roll 464, 1960, "J.P. Slusser." Viewed on microfilm at the Library of Virginia, Richmond; Byron G. Slusser, 1968; Robert C. Whisonant, *Arming the Confederacy: How Virginia's Minerals Forged the Rebel War Machine* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, [2015]), 48-50, 141.
29. Lindon, 371.
30. Sherry Joines Wyatt, Collections Manager, Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, Christiansburg, VA, "Coal Mining in Coal Bank Hollow, Montgomery County: Historical Background Documentation." Historical research regarding the history of coal mining in Montgomery County provided to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, 2015; Charles W. Crush, *The Montgomery County Story, 1776-1957* [Christiansburg, VA: Montgomery County Jamestown Festival Committee, 1957], 159; A. Brown, H.L. Berryhill, Jr., D.A. Taylor, and J.V.A. Trumbull, "Coal Resources of Virginia: U.S. Geological Survey Circular 171" (1952). By 1770, open pit mining was occurring in Montgomery County and Hessian prisoners of war, with backgrounds in mining, are said to have been enlisted into the production. Whisonant, 141. See also Robert C. Whisonant, "Geology and History of the confederate Coal Mines in Montgomery County, Virginia," in *Virginia Minerals* Vol. 46, No. 1, Feb. 2000:1-7.
31. Mary B. La Lone, *Appalachian Coal Mining Memories, Life in the Coal Fields of Virginia's New River Valley* (Blacksburg, VA: Pocahontas Press, Inc. 1997), 9; M.R. Campbell, et als., "The Valley Coal Fields of Virginia: Virginia Geological Survey Bulletin 25," (1925), 34, 173; Virginia Division of Geology and Mineral Resources, "Coal Production in Virginia," accessed online March 3, 2017 at <https://www.dmme.virginia.gov/Dgmr/coal.shtml>.
32. Wyatt, 2015; Mary B. La Lone, "The Coal Mining Way of Life in Virginia's New River Valley: Hard Work, Family, and Community," in *Smithfield Review* Vol. 1(1997), 54.
33. "Forgotten Mines of the New River Valley," on Pickandshovel website, February 11, 2011. <http://pickandshovelblog.blogspot.com/2011/02/forgotten-mines-of-new-river-valley.html>; La Lone, 1997, 56.
34. William Deemer and Hazel Kanode Hodge, "Brief History of Management and Mines of M.C. Slusser Coal," in *Brief History of Several Coal Mines of Montgomery County*, 1994:23-24. Copy on file, Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, Christiansburg, VA.
35. Deemer and Hodge, 25.
36. William Odock Fisher, coal miner and son of a coal miner, as quoted in Wyatt, 2015.
37. In recent years, local efforts have been made to highlight the region's importance to the state's coal production. The county has developed a Coal Mining Heritage Park and Loop Trail near the former

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Merrimac Mine, and has created an advisory group to assist with research and educational efforts aimed at promoting this industrial heritage. Dr. Mary B. La Lone, Department of Sociology, Radford University, and her students have been instrumental in gathering oral history and conducting other research in this area.

38. Electronic message from Mary La Lone to Sherry Wyatt, August 26, 2015. The present owner of the Slusser-Ryan Farm stated that in recent years a coal mine shaft on the farm collapsed beneath a tractor as it cross one of the farm fields.

39. Deemer and Hodge, 25. The Barney Montgomery Mine, the last operating mine in the county, closed in 1974. In 2005, the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy filled and sealed several of the abandoned mine openings of the Slusser mines along Coal Bank Hollow Road. Tim Thornton, "Old Mine Sealed as Development Nears," *Roanoke Times*, August 25, 2005.

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Personal Communication, Susan Bull Ryan, Property Owner. Interview in Blacksburg, VA, January 16, 2017.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR #060-0337

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 115

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.302050 Longitude: -80.399750
2. Latitude: 37.302330 Longitude: -80.398810
3. Latitude: 37.287540 Longitude: -80.391430
4. Latitude: 37.288500 Longitude: -80.389300
5. Latitude: 37.282230 Longitude: -80.385110
6. Latitude: 37.281820 Longitude: -80.387690

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property

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7. Latitude: 37.28067 Longitude: -80.38858

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries for the nominated property, as denoted on the enclosed Montgomery County GIS Map, Parcel 002772 (consisting of two tracts) coincide with Lots 1, 2 (formerly a portion of the Dower Lot of the James P. Slusser Estate, 1914) and Lot 9 of the survey of the Byron G. Slusser Farm (1946); Parcel 002771, corresponding to Lot 3, Parcel 1 of the Byron G. Slusser Farm; and Parcel 110080, known as the Slusser Cemetery. These parcels total approximately 115 acres. The true and correct historic boundaries are shown on the attached Tax Parcel Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries encompass the historic house, associated domestic and agricultural buildings, family cemetery, coal mine site, and historic setting. Although only a portion of the original 600-acre farm, all known historic architectural resources associated with James P. Slusser's residency, and the identified period of significance, are located on these tracts.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Debra A. McClane, Architectural Historian
organization: Debra A. McClane, Architectural Historian
street & number: 4711 Devonshire Road
city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23225-3135
e-mail: dmcclane1@verizon.net
telephone: 804/233-3890
date: March 10, 2017

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property

Montgomery County, VA
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Slusser-Ryan Farm

City or Vicinity: Blacksburg

County: Montgomery

State: VA

Photographer: Debra A. McClane

Date Photographed: December 2, 2016; January 16, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1 of 27 | VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0001 |
| View | Overview of property looking N. House and outbuildings at center and barn to right. |
| 2 of 27 | VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0002 |
| View | Looking NW at house |
| 3 of 27 | VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0003 |
| View | Looking NNE at house |
| 4 of 27 | VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0004 |
| View | Looking SE at back of house |
| 5 of 27 | VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0005 |
| View | Detail porch and main entrance |
| 6 of 27 | VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0006 |
| View | Looking NE at Pump House |

Slusser-Ryan Farm

Name of Property

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- 7 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0007
View Looking NE at Meat House
- 8 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0008
View Looking NE at Privy
- 9 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0009
View Looking NE at Log Building/Granary
- 10 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0010
View Looking S at Wagon Barn
- 11 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0011
View Looking NW at Barn
- 12 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0012
View Looking SE at Barn
- 13 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0013
View Interior of Barn showing Pegged Joinery
- 14 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0014
View Cemetery
- 15 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0015
View Headstone for James P. Slusser
- 16 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0016
View Center hall of house
- 17 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0017
View Looking E through east room (log section of house)
- 18 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0018
View View looking S from rear transverse hall through center hall. Note log construction, circular sawn door surround.
- 19 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0019
View West parlor (now a bedroom) showing woodwork, mantel
- 20 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0020
View Detail, marbled baseboard in west parlor
- 21 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0021
View Dining Room
- 22 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0022
View Second floor hall and opening onto porch
- 23 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0023
View West bedroom, second floor
- 24 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0024
View Detail showing door surround in west bedroom, second floor
- 25 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0025
View Winder stair to attic, second floor, east bedroom
- 26 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0026
View Stone fireplace in great room, first floor, built with reused stone from old kitchen wing foundation.
- 27 of 27 VA_MontgomeryCounty_SlusserRyanFarm_0028
View Stone-lined cellar beneath rear ell

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property

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ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

1. James P. Slusser House, ca. 1880
2. "Map of Blacksburg Railroad Showing Tracks, [Ca. 1905]
3. Post Office and Store at Slusser, formerly located on south side of Coal Bank Hollow Road, 1903
4. 1917 Plat, James P. Slusser Estate
5. Hand-drawn map of Slusser Mine area, 1994
6. James P. Slusser/Byron G. Slusser House, ca. 1940
7. 1946 Plat, Byron G. Slusser Estate Showing Boundaries of Nominated Property
8. Slusser Coal Mine Tipple at intersection of Route 460 and Coal Bank Hollow Road
9. Slusser-Ryan House Showing Old Kitchen Wing, Prior to 2011
10. Early Twentieth-Century Garage Formerly Located In West Side Yard
11. Slusser-Ryan House during Renovation Showing Log Construction Of East Wing, Prior to 2011

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Slusser-Ryan Farm

Name of Property

Montgomery County, VA

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 1



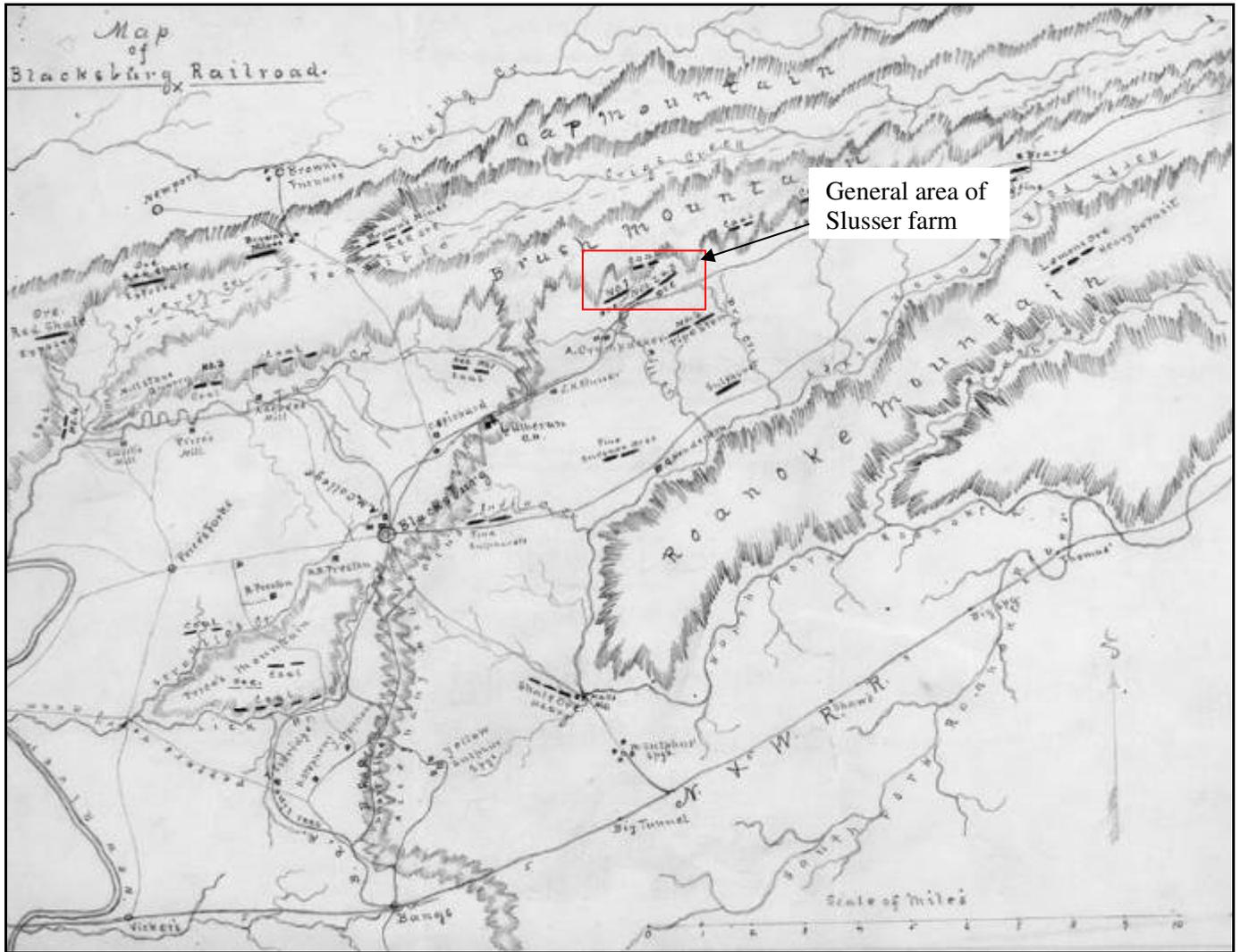
1. James P. Slusser House, ca. 1880. Source: Tom Slusser (Grandson of James P. Slusser) and Susan Bull Ryan, current property owner.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property
Montgomery County, VA
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 2



2. "Map of Blacksburg Railroad Showing Tracks," [Ca. 1905]. Map shows settlement in area of Brush Mountain, as well as coal deposits. Note that several coal deposits are noted in area of James P. Slusser Farm. The residence of "J. H. Slusser" is noted at the location of the ca. 1820 John B. Slusser homes; "A. Crumpacker," located between the two Slusser house sites, was the home of Molly Slusser (sister to J. H. and James) and her husband Abraham. Source: Norfolk & Western Historical Photograph Collection, Special Collections, University Libraries, Virginia Tech, https://imagebase.lib.vt.edu/image_viewer.php?q=ns089.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Slusser-Ryan Farm

Name of Property

Montgomery County, VA

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 3



3. Post Office and Store at Slusser, formerly located on south side of Coal Bank Hollow Road, 1903.

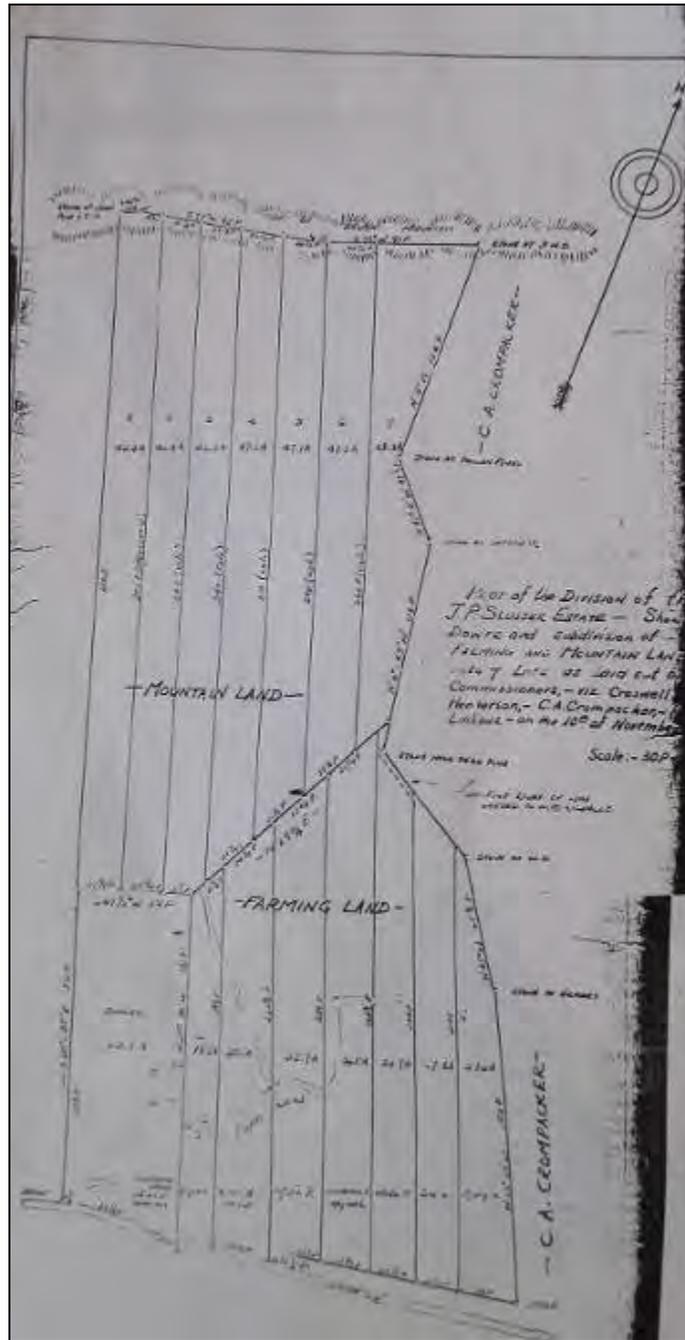
Source: "Slusser's Chapel Church of God Memory Book, 1903-2003."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property
Montgomery County, VA
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 4



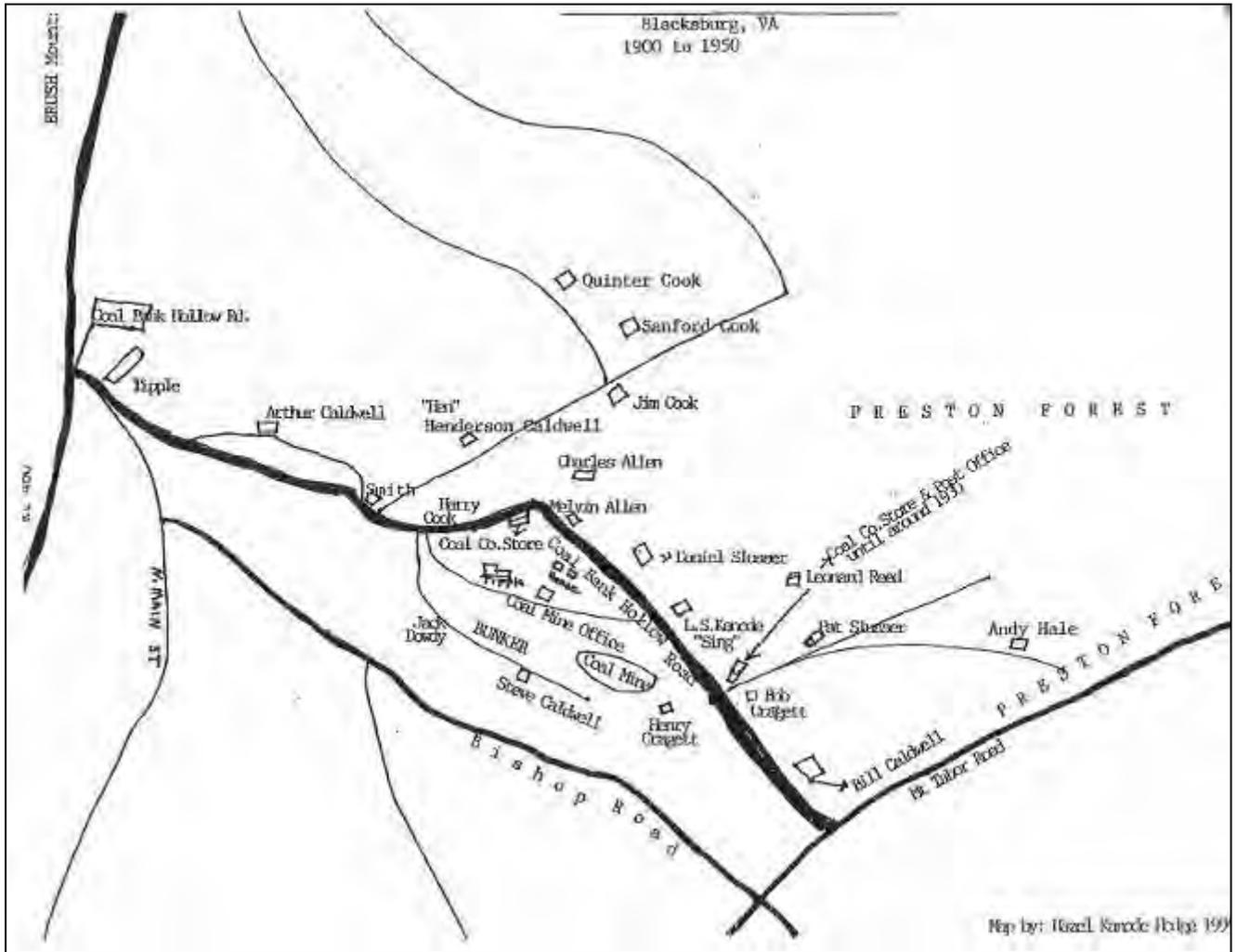
4. 1917 Plat, James P. Slusser Estate. Source: Montgomery County Deed Book 71:546

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property
Montgomery County, VA
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 5



5. Hand-drawn map of Slusser Mines area, 1994. James P. Slusser farm off map to right (beyond Preston Forest Subdivision). Source Hazel Kanode Hodge in "A Brief History of the Management and Mines of the M.C. Slusser Coal Company."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Slusser-Ryan Farm

Name of Property

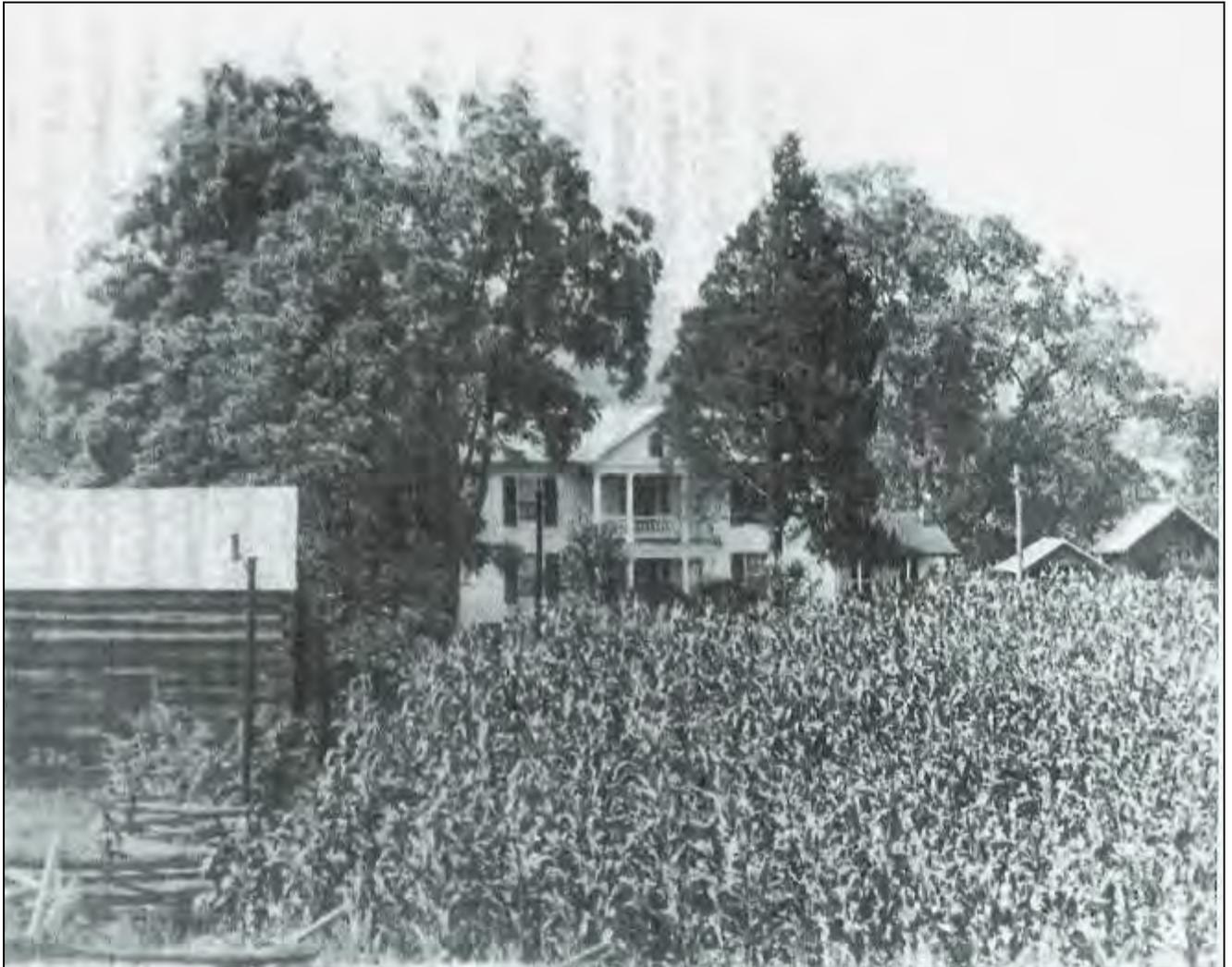
Montgomery County, VA

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 6



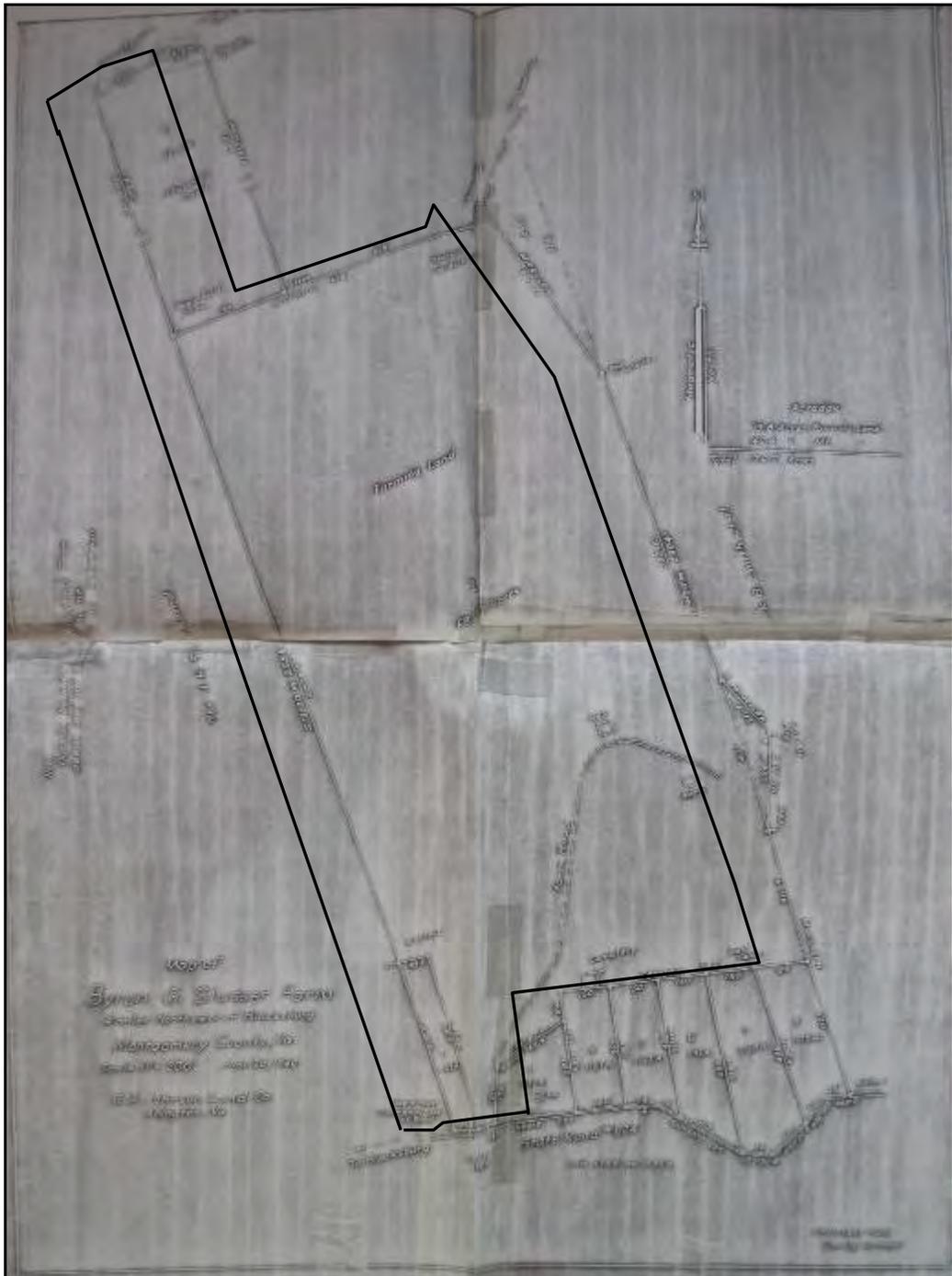
6. James P. Slusser/Byron G. Slusser House, ca. 1940. Note log building to left and pump house and meat house to right. Source: Tom Slusser (son of Byron G. Slusser) and Susan Bull Ryan, current property owner.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 7



7. 1946 Plat, Byron G. Slusser Estate Showing Boundaries of Nominated Property.
Source: Montgomery County Deed Book 142:135.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Slusser-Ryan Farm

Name of Property
Montgomery County, VA

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 8



8. Slusser Coal Mine Tippel at intersection of Route 460 and Coal Bank Hollow Road.
Photo by Debra A. McClane, 2017.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Slusser-Ryan Farm
Name of Property
Montgomery County, VA
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Section number Additional Documentation Page 9



9. Slusser-Ryan House Showing Old Kitchen Wing, prior to 2011. Source: Susan Bull Ryan.



10. Early Twentieth-Century Garage Formerly Located In West Side Yard. Source: Susan Bull Ryan.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Slusser-Ryan Farm

Name of Property

Montgomery County, VA

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 10



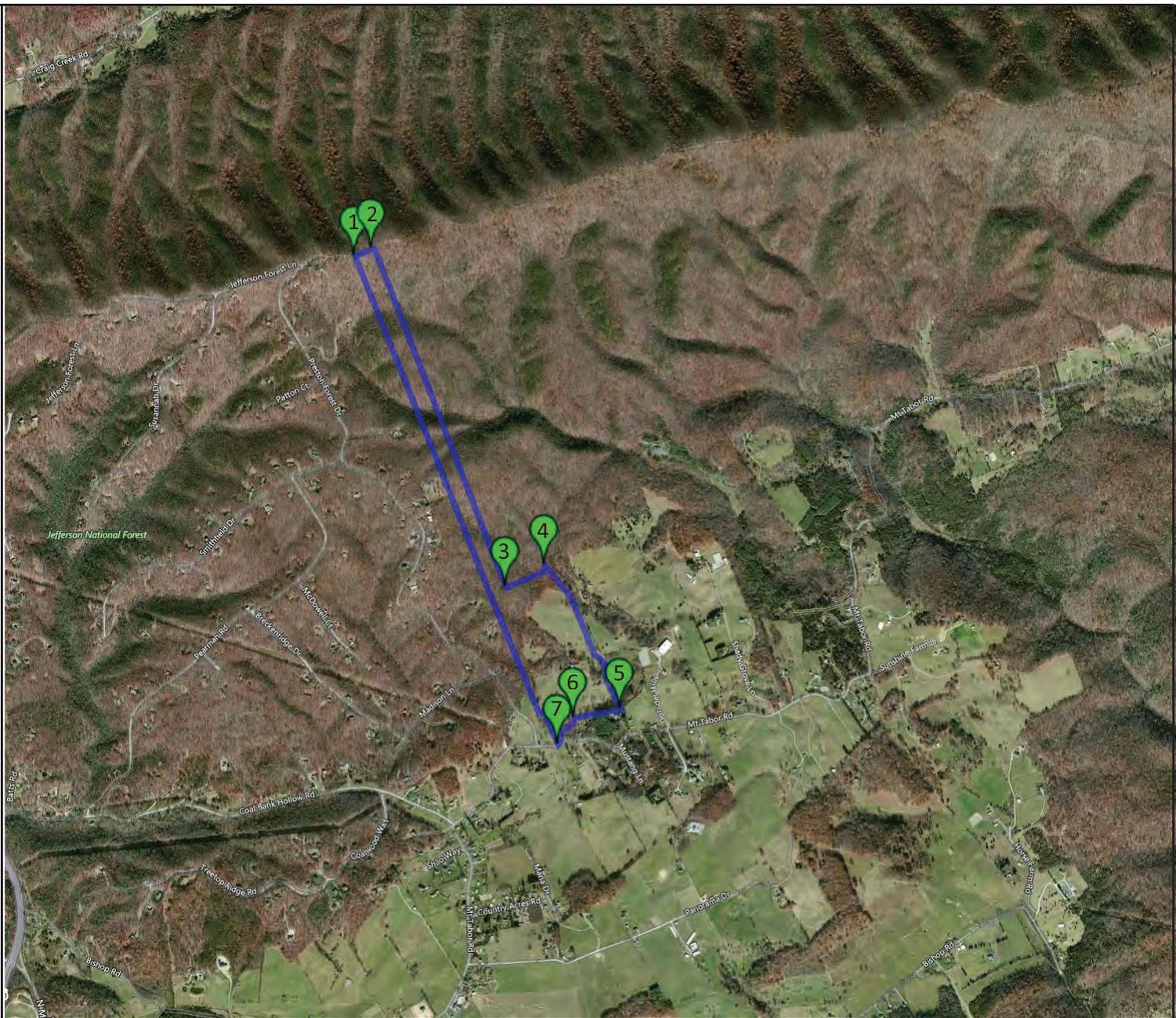
11. Slusser-Ryan House during Renovation Showing Log Construction of East Wing, Prior to 2011.
Source: Susan Bull Ryan.

LOCATION MAP

LATITUDE/LONGITUDE

COORDINATES (Decimal Degrees)

1. Lat: 37.302050/ Lon: -80.399750
2. Lat: 37.302330/Lon: -80.398810
3. Lat: 37.287540/Lon: -80.391430
4. Lat: 37.288500/Lon: -80.389300
5. Lat: 37.282230/Lon: -80.385110
6. Lat: 37.281820/Lon: -80.387690
7. Lat: 37.280670/Lon: -80.388580



Feet

0 600 1200 1800 2400

1:36,112 / 1"=3,009 Feet

Title: Slusser-Ryan Farm, Montgomery County, VA DHR #060-0337

Date: 2/15/2017

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

Slusser-Ryan Farm, Montgomery County, VA

DHR #060-0337

Montgomery County GIS Map Parcel 002772



M 1:80669

Brush Mtn

woods

Coal mine site

Sketch Site Plan

Resource Name: Slusser-Ryan Farm

VDHR #060-0337

Location: Montgomery County, VA

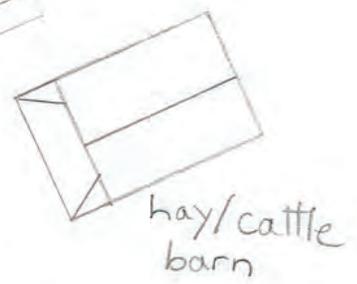
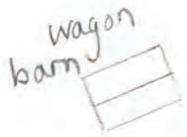
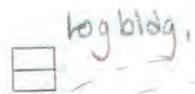
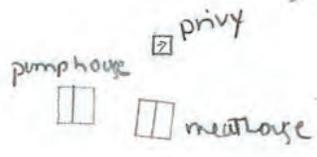
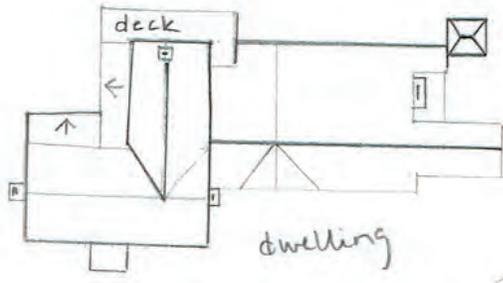
NTS

01/2017

sink hole

Tam's Branch

All resources are contributing



sink hole

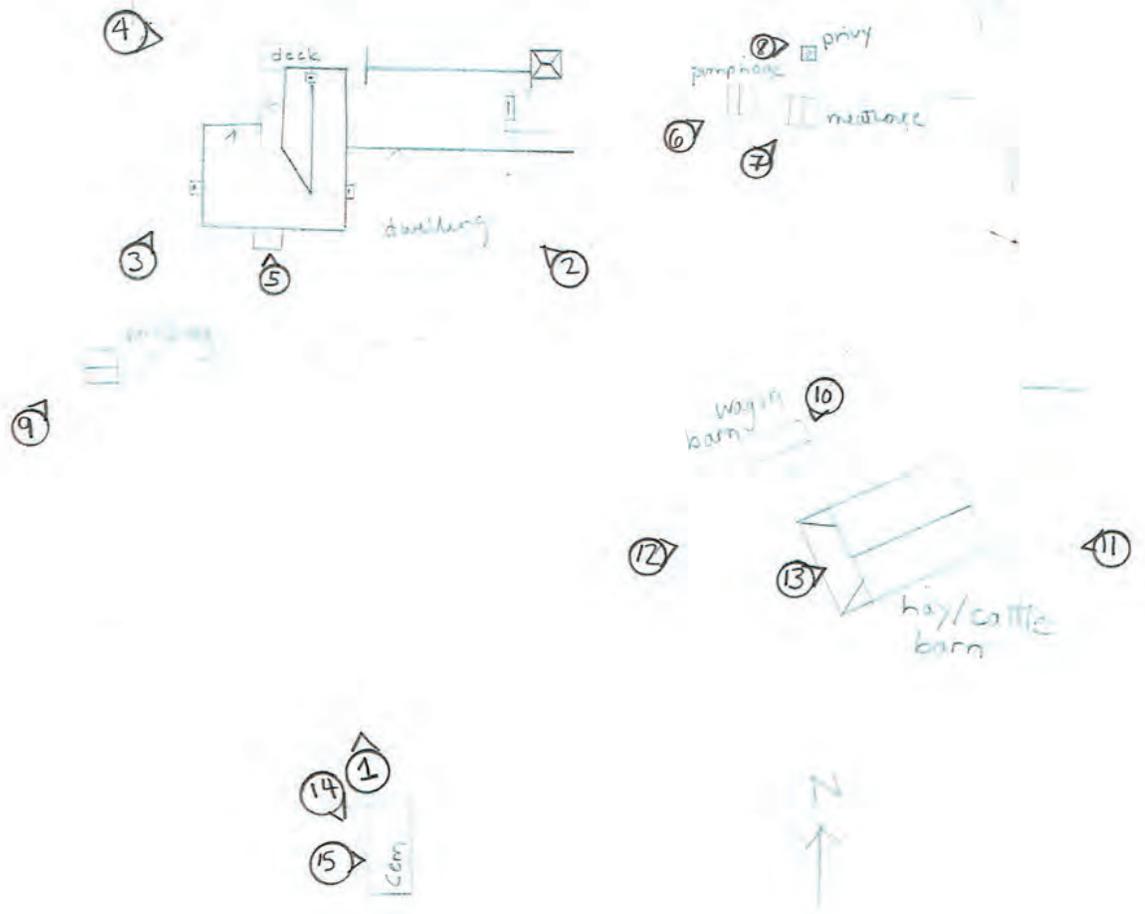
sink hole



Mount Tabor Rd

Photo Location Map 1 of 3
Slusser-Ryan Farm
Montgomery County, VA
DHR No. 060-0337

East of Mt. Tabor



Mount Tabor Rd

Photo Location Map 2 of 3
Slusser-Ryan Farm
Montgomery County, VA
DHR No. 060-0337

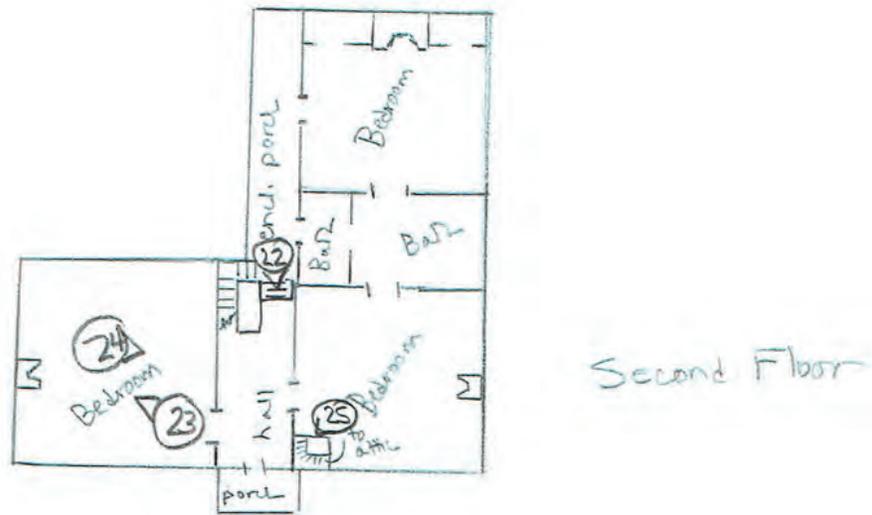
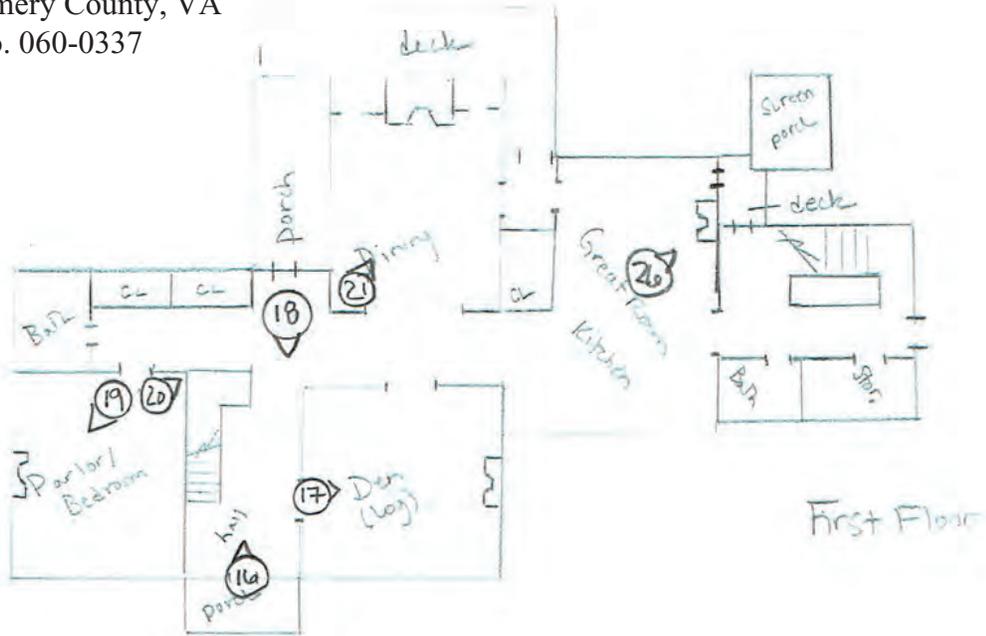
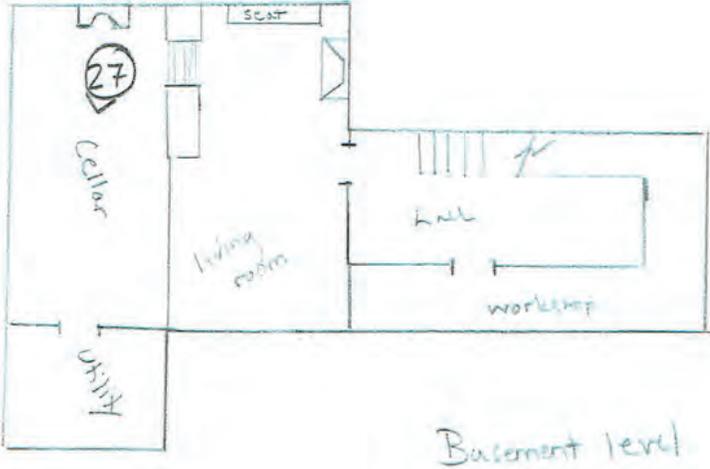


Photo Location Map 3 of 3
Slusser-Ryan Farm
Montgomery County, VA
DHR No. 060-0337



Sketch Floor Plan

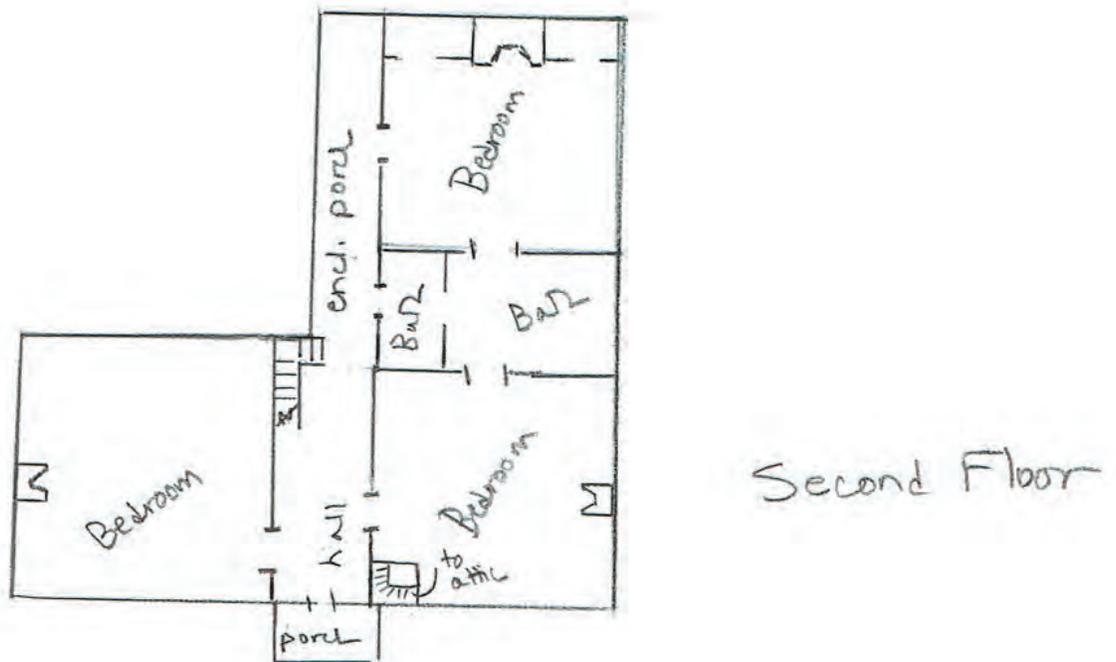
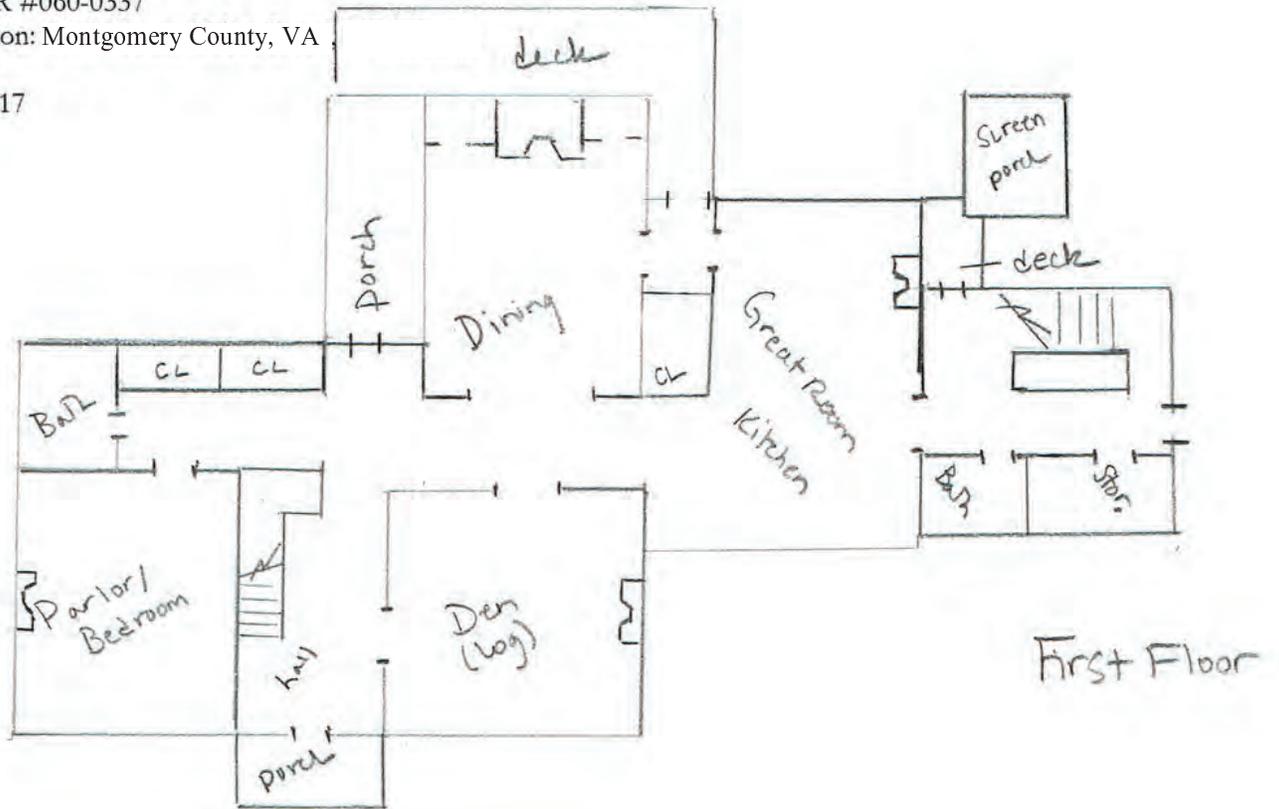
Resource Name: Slusser-Ryan Farm

VDHR #060-0337

Location: Montgomery County, VA

NTS

01/2017



Sketch Floor Plan

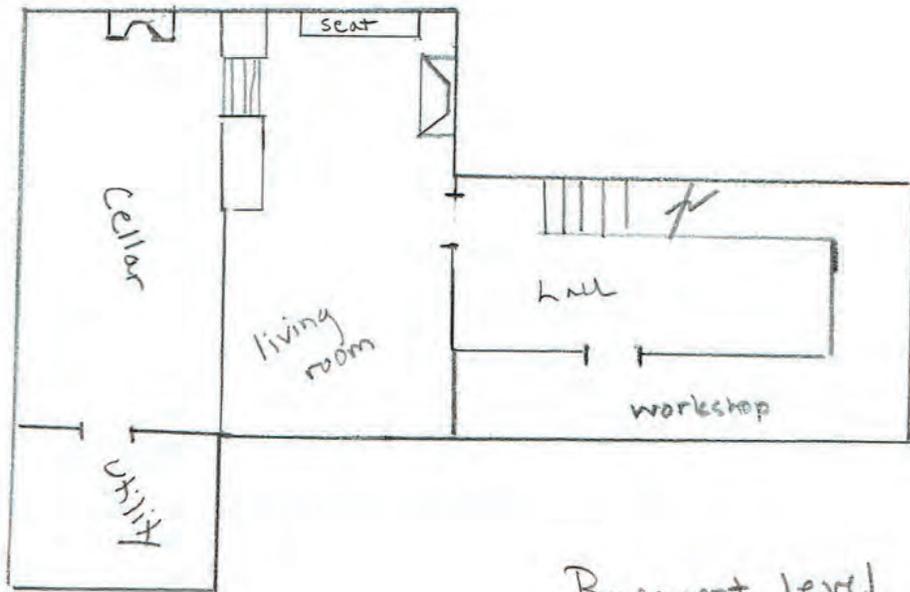
Resource Name: Slusser-Ryan Farm

VDHR #060-0337

Location: Montgomery County, VA

NTS

01/2017



Basement level