

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JAN 27 1987

date entered

MAR 11 1987

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

1. Name

historic "Annamede"

and/or common Davisson-Blair Farm

2. Location

street & number RD 1, Box 126 [U. S. Route 19] not for publication

city, town Walkersville X vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Lewis code 041

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Thomas J. Blair III

street & number 1 Bendcrest Drive

city, town Charleston vicinity of state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lewis County Courthouse

street & number Center Avenue

city, town Weston state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Davisson-Blair Farm, known as "Annamede" (an Anglicization of "Anna's Meadows") for the wife of the original owner and grandmother of the present owner, Anna Davisson, is located less than a mile north of the community of Walkersville, West Virginia, near the southern boundary of Lewis County. By far the largest and most important architectural landmark in the area, the Davisson-Blair house is a 2½-story, 15-room, red brick structure designed by the Knoxville, Tennessee, architectural firm of Barber & Klutzz in the Classic Revival style popular soon after the turn of the century. The house incorporates the symmetrical arrangement of architectural forms characteristic of Classic Revival buildings, and exhibits other elements typical of the style, including a combination of Greek architectural orders; the lavish use of leaded and beveled glass; the application of plaster and composition ornamentation on both interior and exterior; as well as what is probably the most distinctive feature of the Classic Revival style, a massive, two-story, neoclassical portico.

The house with its cluster of dependencies and outbuildings is situated on a wooded promontory overlooking the surrounding rolling farmland and the meandering path of U. S. Route 19. House and outbuildings are barely visible from the road, set back in a grove of trees, and flanked by forested hillside on the north and east, by a shaded lawn and drive on the west, and giving onto an open vista at the front, a broad swathe of grassy meadow extending down the hillside to the main road and stone-pillared entrance. The house is approached by a long, tree-lined drive entered from Route 19 which branches near the top of the hill, one branch leading to the rear of the house and the dependencies and the main section continuing around the front of the residence in a semicircular sweep into the porte cochere on the east side.

The brick for the house was handmade from clay found on the Davisson farm and fired at nearby Crane Camp. The hip roof is covered with red slate in an alternating hexagonal and square pattern. The raised foundation is built of rock-faced sandstone block. Basically rectangular in shape, the building features projecting bays on both front and side facades. These three-sided, two-story bays are situated in the approximate center of the side facades, and flank the central entrance on the front. The windows in the structure are large, double-sash, one-over-one light, with stone lintels and wide stone cornice caps set with keystones.

Pedimented dormers with gable roofs are set on all four sides of the roof, two at the front and rear and three on each side. The front and rear dormers are identical to the two outer dormers on each side, all featuring a single round arch window, double sash with leaded glass upper light, flanked by Doric pilasters with dentil-edged capitals. The raking cornice of the broken pediment roof is also enhanced by a dentil course. The central dormer on each side, located directly above the bay, is larger, also pedimented, with similar but more pronounced denticulation and raking cornice, and Doric pilasters flanking three small, square, single-light windows. Above the windows is an elliptical fanlight set with leaded glass and surrounded with molded architrave trim featuring a central wooden keystone. The entablature of the roof is very wide, with a broad, unadorned frieze below a double course of bed molding, followed by a dentil course surmounted by a molded cornice supported by large squared brackets.

The most prominent and striking feature of the exterior is, of course, the massive, two-story pedimented portico, with its large fluted Corinthian columns rising to an elaborate entablature consisting of molded, stepped architrave below an extremely wide frieze - presently unadorned but originally boasting composition ornamentation composed of a stylized shield

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
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Continuation sheet Annamede - Description Item number 7 Page 2

7. Description (cont.)

motif surrounded by swagged garlands flanked by Roman laurel wreaths above the entrance, removed by a later owner - succeeded by a single course of bed molding below a course of large dentils which edge the base of large squared brackets supporting in turn the wide projecting cornice composed of stepped rows of bed molding. The roof of the pediment also features denticulation edging the raking cornice. The tympanum of the portico is pierced by an oval lunette set with leaded glass in a molded wood surround. The tympanum's face is covered with dashed stucco mixed with pebble and mica.

In addition to the neo-classical portico, there is a one-story porch across the front which extends three-quarters of the way around each side, on the east opening onto a porte cochere and on the front surmounted by a second-story balcony above the main entrance. The sloping roof of the porch is covered with flat seam metal roofing, painted red, and is edged by a wide entablature with molded architrave, wide unadorned frieze, dentil course, and narrow molded cornice. The porch columns are of the Ionic order, unfluted, set in triplet at the corners, and connected by a wooden balustrade with turned balusters and square newels, the latter featuring Greek urn style finials. The second-story balcony is edged with an identical balustrade. The same entablature and columns are used on the porte cochere, although the columns rest on large, rock-faced sandstone pedestals. Originally the entablature of the porch and porte cochere was decorated with a series of foliated medallions, later removed. Also the roof of the porte cochere, the roofs of both side bays, and the flat platform at the peak of the hip roof were originally edged with wooden balustrades; the bay and porte cochere balustrades were identical to the one presently encircling the porch, but the main roof balustrade was designed with a different style of baluster, a series of narrow square balusters broken at the corners with elaborate diamond-shaped connectors. All of these balustrades were removed by a later owner.

The first floor is entered through double wooden doors, their upper halves set with beveled glass edged with dentils and egg and dart molding, and their large lower panels decorated with carved wooden laurel wreath appliques. The doors are flanked by leaded glass sidelights and surmounted by a rectangular transom and corner lights, also filled with leaded glass. Unfluted Doric pilasters separate doors and sidelights. The doors open onto an interior vestibule with coat closets set into the wainscoting on either side wall. The vestibule is closed to the main reception hall by an identical set of doors.

Smaller double doors open onto the second-story balcony, also wooden, their lower halves panelled while the upper halves are set with leaded glass. Above the doors is a fanlight filled with leaded glass in a floral pattern; the fanlight is surmounted by a brick relieving arch. These doors are flanked by small oval windows, also filled with leaded glass, in molded wood surrounds.

At the rear of the house is a smaller, one-story kitchen porch with a shed roof supported by slender square columns linked by narrow square balusters. Two doors open onto the porch, one leading to the kitchen proper, one to a pantry and elevator.

The interior of the 15-room house is highlighted by ornamental woodwork and composition

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Annamede - Description

Item number 7

Page 3

7. Description [cont.]

ceiling decoration, beautifully executed. The floors and wood trim are quarter oak throughout, with the exception of the dining and breakfast rooms, which are finished in West Virginia cherry and walnut, respectively. Davisson acquired the wood for the dining room from Sherman Richards, owner of a West Virginia lumber company. The large reception hall, dining room, and breakfast room are wainscoted in oak, cherry, and walnut, as well. The spacious central hall is divided into sections by large wooden Ionic columns set on large panelled pedestals; similar columns flank the entrances to the music room and drawing room, while even larger columns on shorter, stepped bases divide the drawing room from the library. According to Davisson's son, these interior columns were shipped in from Baltimore. The library, in turn, can be closed to both hallway and dining room by pocket doors.

The rear section of the hall is dominated by the wainscoted open stairway, with its landing centered in the large, well-lighted east side bay. The stairway is flared at the bottom, the steps flanked by newels topped with a stylized pineapple leaf finial, their bases decorated with wooden floral and ribbon appliques.

The far end of the reception hall is designed to create a kind of inglenook effect, with wooden seats set into the wall on either side of the large, nearly ceiling-height fireplace. The fireplace is built of brick and molded plaster or composition simulating brick. Above the round arch fire opening is a molded brick mantel edged with simulated brick composition or plaster work highlighted with a row of egg and dart ornamentation followed by a second row in a modified scroll pattern. There are three shallow arched niches set into the fireplace wall above the mantel containing, in the center niche, a bronze statuette of a girl with water jugs, and on either side metal urns with a relief design depicting children with platters of fruit. Above the mantel is a secondary mantelpiece which holds a large plaster or composition free-standing medallion bearing a relief scene of children playing reed instruments and a pelican or crane, the scene surrounded by a stylized foliage and ribbon motif.

One of the more elegant and striking features of the first floor interior is the exquisite ornamental work on the ceilings of the formal reception rooms. This ornamentation is of composition, purchased as sets by the owner and installed by plasterers brought in specifically to do the work.

The main component of the reception hall ceiling is simplicity, to avoid conflict with the other, more dominant architectural elements of the space. The original colors are unknown, since at some point in the past the ceiling was painted over entirely in white. The pattern is a simple outer rectangle of intertwining floral and foliar elements, the corners highlighted with floral sprays, the whole enclosing an inner rectangle of bead and reel molding.

The music room, its purpose obvious from the old victrola and three pianos - an upright, baby grand, and old-fashioned square grand piano - boasts a more opulent ceiling indulging in a baroque fantasy complete with cupids. The high relief composition molding is painted gold on an ivory background and consists of an outer rectangle of bead and reel molding enhanced at the corners with laurel wreaths, surrounding an oval ring of leaves and flowers. On each of the room's four sides the oval is set with medallions depicting cherubs frolicking among wheat sheaves. The fireplace mantel continues the theme, with large paired columns supporting

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Annamede - Description Item number 7 Page 4

7. Description (cont.)

both levels of the double mantelpiece, the column capitals composed of cherub heads in high relief.

The drawing room, in turn, verges on the whimsical, with its entwined festoons of ribbons and floral garlands - roses and daisies - in gold on a cream inner ground, with an outer surrounding ground of soft sky blue. The corners of the design are highlighted with stylized bows ending in swagged ribbons. The drawing room fireplace features Corinthian columns on elaborate bases appliqued with a corresponding ribbon and bow motif; the columns support both levels of the double mantelpiece, and the upper level is carved at each corner with a large, somewhat stylized, three-dimensional human head, in the manner of a grotesque.

The library displays the most elaborate and intricate ceiling design, based on the lighter English Rococo style. The design is gold on a green ground, composed of individual sections each incorporating a variety of elements. In the center of the ceiling is a rectangle of egg and dart molding enclosing an inner, asymmetrical section of simple beading. Medallions are placed at each corner of the inner section which depict four of the classical arts: According to the family, these medallions were intended as symbolic, but the nature of the symbolism has been lost. Three of the medallions are easily interpreted as standing for literature, art, and architecture. The fourth is more obscure, and may stand for navigation, astronomy, or music (by a stretch of the imagination, but the most logical fourth element), or perhaps something else entirely. Each medallion is wreathed with a stylized ribbon ending in an elaborate bow with swagged ends.

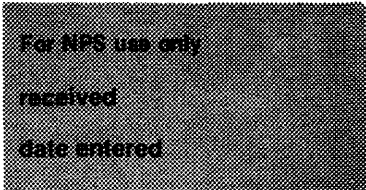
The main section of the library ceiling is flanked on its two longer sides by identical rectangles of smaller egg and dart molding surrounding a lozenge of plain molding. The lozenge is embellished at either end with a small floral medallion and centered with a larger, elongated medallion composed of foliar elements. On the two shorter sides of the center design are rectangles of the same egg and dart molding enclosing a rectangle of plain molding, the latter set at either end with elongated, foliated medallions. Filling the four corners created by the conjunction of these various sections are blocks of plain molding, each centered with a single rosette.

The library fireplace carries out the theme of the ceiling with a beaded course edging the upper shelf and egg and dart molding applied along the upper edge of the mantel. The smooth columns supporting both upper and lower mantelpieces have capitals composed of egg and dart molding, and feature an applied wooden wreath motif on their pedestals.

The dining room ceiling is classically elegant in design. Originally painted in pastel colors on an eggshell pink ground, the work is somewhat faded now but retains the beauty of its conception and execution. A rectangle of intertwined acanthus leaves with floral rondelles at each corner surrounds an oval ring, also of acanthus leaves. The two sections are connected at the center of each side by a large medallion in high relief which is centered with a delicately modeled classical head, very nearly art nouveau in style, which is in turn wreathed with an elaborate garland of foliage and flowers.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Annameade - Description Item number 7 Page 5

7. Description (cont.)

The dining room mantel is simpler in design than those in any of the other first floor rooms, but echoes the ambience of the ceiling design in the elegance of that simplicity, with scrolled columns supporting both upper and lower mantelpieces, delineated by dentilled capitals and with square denticulation edging the upper mantel. The fireback is faced with cream colored tiles which have a low relief pattern of floriated wreaths which is picked out in gold.

The ceiling of the breakfast room is decorated with a simple molded run, somewhat assymetrically hexagonal in shape, surrounding a foliated oval ring. These two sections are connected on four sides by medallions in a triangular shape depicting floral and foliar subjects.

Further accenting the formality of the house are the myriad small details, all carefully and elegantly executed, including the ornamentation of the lintels of the doors between each room, each featuring a series of wooden wreath and ribbon appliques; the spindle-style wooden corner guards protecting all projecting corners; and the exquisite hardware of the doors, from push plates to locks, each of which is shaped in a fanciful pattern of twined ribbons and flowers surmounted by a tiny classical head with flowing hair, in three-dimensional relief.

Over the years the Davisson-Blair house has remained virtually unaltered, and as can be inferred from the above description, is remarkably intact. The house as completed was built with only minor changes from the original plans.* The only real changes made during construction were the addition of a second stairway to the attic from the second floor hallway reception area; the installation of an elevator at the rear of the house in what was indicated on the plans as a pantry; the decision not to enclose the area designated as a "Den" on the second floor (although this latter space is furnished and used for this purpose); and the unfinished "Billiard Room" in the third floor attic space. Unfortunately, the billiard table that this space was intended to accommodate turned out to be too large to fit up the attic stairway. This huge table, dating from before 1910, still occupies a large part of the second floor hallway, where it had to remain when it was discovered that the attic stairs would not permit its passage.

The only changes of any note made in the house over the years have been the installation of electrical service around 1950 and the concurrent remodeling of the kitchen and bathrooms. With the surrounding area rich in natural gas deposits, and the original owner active in the development of the local oil and gas industries, the house was naturally plumbed for gas, and the original gas plumbing and fixtures - including gasolier chandeliers in most of the first floor rooms - were left intact when the house was later wired for electricity in the event that they might someday be needed again.

*A copy of the original Barber & Klutz architectural plans is submitted with this nomination to the Historic Preservation Unit of the West Virginia Department of Culture and History.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
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Continuation sheet Annamede - Description Item number 7 Page 6

7. Description (cont.)

The property immediately to the rear and northwest of the house contains a cluster of dependencies and outbuildings, the former including the original carriage house, the smokehouse, and the caretaker's house, plus a secluded stone grotto and goldfish pond. The design of the carriage house echoes that of the main house, although it leans more toward a kind of Georgian Revival vernacular. Rectangular in shape, it is one and a half stories and covered with clapboard siding, with vertical corner boards. The gable roof features a projecting central pediment and is covered with flat seam metal roofing. There are two sets of double doors for carriages or vehicles, which flank a central wooden slat door. Set above the door in the projecting pediment is a slatted ventilation grille. In the center of the roof ridge is a square cupola with slatted sides and a metal-covered hip roof edged by scrolled brackets.

Immediately west of the carriage house is the caretaker's house, also one and a half stories, with a gable roof covered with standing seam metal, clapboard siding, corner boards, and two-over-two-light double-sash windows. The five-room house is rectangular in shape, with an addition at the west end apparently constructed early in the building's life. There is a one-story single-bay front porch with a metal-covered shed roof supported by slender Doric columns.

The smokehouse is less prepossessing than its companion carriage house. Located directly behind the main house, it is one story in height and rectangular in shape. It has a gable roof presently covered with asphalt roll roofing and edged with brackets. The building is sided with clapboard, with vertical corner boards. There are only two windows in the building, one at each end, and two wooden panelled doors in the front facade.

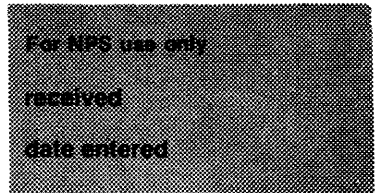
All the dependency buildings are painted identically, with white siding and green roofs.

Northeast and to the rear of the house, located a short distance over the side of the hill, are the goldfish pond and stone grotto built by the original owner. Badly deteriorated over the years, it is now being rebuilt and restored by the present owner. It is circular in shape, constructed of simple laid-up fieldstone, with a circular stone seat built into the interior side of the wall, and is reached by a walkway and steps of the same fieldstone.

Northwest of the main house, just past the caretaker's house, is a field containing three farm outbuildings: a small, open-front weatherboard shed; a larger, open-front barn-like shed with vertical weatherboard siding and shed roof; and a long storage building of board and batten siding, also with a shed roof.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 7

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources

Residence	1 building
Caretaker's Residence	1 building
Carriage House	1 building
Smokehouse	1 building
Grotto - Goldfish Pond	1 structure
Farm Outbuildings	3 buildings

TOTAL Buildings	=	7
TOTAL Structures	=	1
TOTAL Others	=	<u>0</u>
TOTAL Resources	=	8

8. Significance

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

Specific dates c. 1901–1904

Builder/Architect Barber & Kluttz, Architects, Knoxville, TN

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

"Annamede," the Davisson-Blair Farm, situated on a hill overlooking the surrounding farmland of Lewis County, near the community of Walkersville, West Virginia, is significant as the home of a prominent north central West Virginia family, built by a man who was influential in the state political arena and who played a major role in the development of the area's prolific and profitable oil and gas industries and in the revitalization of Lewis County agriculture. Designed by a nationally recognized Knoxville, Tennessee, architectural firm, Barber & Kluttz, the house is also significant as an important surviving example of Classic Revival architecture, a style not often encountered in the north central part of the state, particularly not in a rural, rather isolated area. Annamede also exhibits some of the finest intact representations in the region of the elegant, post-Victorian style of composition and plaster ornamentation, as well as a wealth of particularly fine detailing.

Explanatory Notes (MEETS CRITERIA B & C)

Construction of the Annamede house belonging to E. G. Davisson was begun in 1901, from plans prepared by the Knoxville, Tennessee, architectural firm of Barber & Kluttz, and was completed before 1907 when Davisson's daughter was born there. Davisson (1867–1939) was a member of one of the prominent families of Harrison and Lewis counties. His father was Captain George Izzard Davisson, a Lewis County merchant and farmer who served in the 26th Virginia Cavalry of the Confederate Army during the Civil War. He achieved the rank of captain at the age of only 19, and spent the final 18 months of the war as a prisoner at Camp Chase, Ohio. One of the influential members of the state's Democratic Party, he served two terms in the West Virginia Legislature. His store at Jacksonville, a town known locally as Little Dixie, was said to be the largest in the county and was famous for the quality of its goods, reportedly better than could be found in the larger towns of the region. Particularly prized was the produce he offered, which came from one of the state's richest agricultural pockets, nearby "Egypt district." Davisson also supplied cities in surrounding states with agricultural produce, once shipping a single 3,000 bushel consignment of wheat to a Baltimore market.

George I. Davisson was the son of Granville G. Davisson of Clarksburg and Charlotte Diana Despard Davisson. Granville Davisson was clerk of the Harrison County Court, and his wife was the daughter of Burton Despard, gentleman farmer, oil and gas developer, and influential attorney practicing in association with Edwin Maxwell, later justice of the State Supreme Court, and Nathan Goff, Jr., Secretary of the Navy under President Rutherford B. Hayes (who had been stationed in Clarksburg and Weston during the Civil War). Granville's father was the first George Izzard Davisson, who himself achieved the rank of captain during the War of 1812. He served as clerk of the circuit court in Harrison County and was one of the first attorneys to qualify before the first Federal Court established west of the Alleghenies, at its first session in 1819. George Izzard was a member of both the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 16.1 acres

Quadrangle name Roanoke, W. Va.
WALKERSVILLE QUAD.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	5	4	8	5	4	0	4	3	0	3	0	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	7	5	4	8	1	8	0	4	3	0	2	7	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	7	5	4	8	2	2	0	4	3	0	3	1	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margo Stafford

organization Ralph Pedersen Architect

date July 2, 1986

street & number 351 Washington Avenue/P. O. Box 1885

telephone (304) 624-9298

city or town Clarksburg

state West Virginia 26301

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1.14.87

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 3/11/87

[Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Annamede - Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

B. Significance (cont.)

and served several terms as Commonwealth Attorney for Harrison County.

George Izzard Davisson was the son of Daniel Davisson, known as the proprietor of Clarksburg. This original founder of the West Virginia Davissons immigrated to Western Virginia from Philadelphia following the Revolutionary War, serving for a time as commander of Nutter's Fort near present-day Clarksburg. His forebears had themselves immigrated from Dundee, Scotland, to Ipswich, Massachusetts, and from there to New York State and Hopewell, New Jersey. After the formation of the town of Clarksburg and Harrison County in the 1780's, Daniel Davisson was appointed by the Virginia Assembly as a commissioner for the opening of the road from Kingwood to the mouth of the Little Kanawha River (one of the first roads constructed in what is now West Virginia that was wide enough to accommodate wagons as well as horses), and in 1799 was commissioned a major in the 11th Regiment of the Virginia Militia and a justice of Harrison County. He served two terms in the Virginia Assembly and was later High Sheriff of Harrison County. The greater part of the city of Clarksburg is situated on land originally issued to Davisson in a 1781 land certificate. Davisson deeded the land for the first county courthouse in Harrison and also for the first church and cemetery to be established in the county. He was the progenitor of a large and prosperous family whose members achieved fame and influence in a variety of fields, particularly in the area of West Virginia politics. But one of his great-great-grandsons was Melville Davisson Post, the novelist known as the "master of the detective story" and the first West Virginian to be nominated for a Nobel Prize in Literature (1922). Another descendant of Daniel Davisson was Granville Davisson Hall, author of the still popular novel, Daughter of the Elm, and owner and editor of the Wheeling Intelligencer, one of the state's largest and most influential newspapers. Hall was West Virginia's second secretary of state, and was the recorder of the minutes of the Wheeling Conventions which established the new state of West Virginia.

E. G. Davisson himself began his professional career clerking in his father's store at Jacksonville. From there he entered the wholesale hardware business in Weston and Clarksburg as a member of the firm of Williams & Davisson, still in operation today. In 1895 he became cashier of the National Exchange Bank of Weston, a re-organized version of the Weston branch of the Exchange Bank of Virginia which, in the years prior to the Civil War, was one of only two official banking institutions between Chillicothe, Ohio, and Staunton, Virginia, established in part to handle Virginia state funds for the construction of the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum (now Weston State Hospital) and also for the construction of the Northwestern Railroad, later part of the B&O system. Within a few years a becoming cashier, Davisson had become vice president of the National Exchange Bank and in 1904 was elected president, an office he held until his death. (The family still holds a substantial interest in the bank, under its current name). Davisson was also president of Weston's combined public utilities, which supplied the town with gas, electricity, water, and ice.

In addition to his business and commercial interests, E. G. Davisson played a major role in the development of Lewis County's oil and gas industries. In the period between 1900 and 1920

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Annamede - Significance

Item number 8

Page 3

8. Significance (cont.)

Lewis County was regarded as the center of the largest gas field in the world, and the county's wells supplied markets as far away as Pittsburgh and Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio. Davisson established the Rural Gas Company at Walkersville and also supplied the first natural gas to Johnstown, Harrison County, and Frenchsted in Upshur County. A single well drilled on his Crawford farm in 1904 supplied both Walkersville and Crawford for nearly 10 years - and this well was considered to be a disappointing producer, although it brought in nearly a million dollars in rentals to the farmers of the surrounding area.

Davisson's first oil well, drilled on the J. C. Waggoner farm, produced 400 barrels a day and was at the time considered the best well in the county. After the Great Strike at Camden Well No. 1 in 1899, Davisson and his partner J. W. Ross forced a confrontation with South Penn Oil Company, which at the time held most of the oil rights in the county under long-term 10¢ leases. The dispute eventually ended in Federal Court and resulted in the renegotiation of a more equitable lease arrangement for Lewis County farmers and property owners, and awarded them thousands of dollars in royalties which they had been denied under the previous lease agreements. This settlement was a rare achievement for Davisson: Few individuals in the history of the West Virginia natural resource industry ever emerged the winner in a dispute with one of the large production companies, particularly not with John D. Rockefeller's powerful South Penn Oil Company.

Davisson also engaged in the practice of agriculture, both of a serious nature and in a more indulgent vein. In the latter category, he became interested in equestrian pursuits and began importing Arabian horses from France, although this interest remained more of a hobby than a commercial venture. (Lewis County was famous for the quality of its horses: For example, Judge W. G. Bennett's Riverside Farm produced Lord Roberts, a prize-winning trotting stallion which was purchased by the Czar of Russia for \$25,000, a handsome sum for a horse in those days.) On a serious level, Davisson's farm was established as a purebred stock operation, and is widely credited within the county as the primary factor behind the revival of the stock farming industry in Lewis County. In the latter years of the 19th century, cattle raising replaced sheep farming as the area's main agricultural interest, as competition from western and Australian ranchers made wool production less profitable. The passage of the Wilson Bill in 1893 destroyed what remained of Lewis County sheep farming, and the remaining stockmen in the area turned to cattle. However, the increasingly widespread practice of dehorning provided another setback to the county's agricultural industry in the 1890's. Dehorning, viewed by many as cruel and inhumane, caused serious weight loss in cattle and subsequent economic loss for the farmers. The oil and gas boom which began in the late 1890's further exacerbated the decline in agricultural production as farmers were able to realize far greater profits from leasing arable land for exploration. In the first decade of the 20th century the acreage in corn in the county dropped by 20% while land prices jumped to \$300 an acre, appreciably higher than today's depressed rate for rural real estate.

Several factors, however, combined to revitalize Lewis County agriculture. The oil and gas boom also brought increased prosperity to those farmers who continued to work their land by bringing in inflated profits from the ready market provided by the sharp population increase experienced by early 20th century Lewis County, with new workers pouring in to work the new oil and gas

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Annamede - Significance Item number 8 Page 4

B. Significance (cont.)

fields. The introduction of Aberdeen Angus cattle, a breed which matures more quickly than Herefords, helped to renew interest in stock farming. Davisson's farm, the first in the area to establish a purebred stock operation, is considered the primary impetus behind the recovery and subsequent improvement of Lewis County's agricultural industry. In fact, nearby Roanoke superseded the county seat of Weston as the main shipping point for livestock after the turn of the century, due to the high numbers of animals moving out of this section of the county.

Davisson also took an active interest in politics, running for the State Senate in 1912 and acquiring a wide circle of political friends who valued his advice and influence. Recently retired U. S. Senator Jennings Randolph (D-WV) recalls the time he accompanied his father on a visit to Annamede in 1917. The elder Randolph, twice a candidate for Congress and several times a representative to the National Democratic Convention, had gone there to meet with Davisson on the condition of north central West Virginia politics and Party policy. Although only 15 years old at the time, Senator Randolph still remembers how much he admired the ceiling in the dining room. On a later occasion, in the 1930's, Homer Holt came to Annamede to enlist the assistance of Davisson's son George in securing Lewis County support for his gubernatorial campaign. Although he had only planned a stay of a couple of days, Holt remained at Annamede for an entire week and in the election that November carried Lewis County to become West Virginia's 20th governor.

E. G. Davisson was married to Anna Mayburry Harrison, for whom Annamede is named. She was herself a member of an influential and prominent West Virginia family, the daughter of Matthew Waite Harrison and Sarah Hoffman Harrison. Her father was the son of Judge William A. Harrison of Clarksburg, a vice president of the National Exchange Bank of Weston and treasurer for the B&O Railroad. Additionally, Matthew was treasurer of Weston State Hospital from its inception until his death, and served one term in the West Virginia Legislature. He enjoyed the local distinction of having erected the first brick residence in the town of Weston. His brother, Thomas W. Harrison, followed their father onto the bench of the Third Circuit Court, and was a member of the West Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1861. He was married to the former Mary Platt Robertson, sister of Julia Robertson Pierpont, who was the wife of the first governor of West Virginia, Francis H. Pierpont.

Matthew's and Thomas's father, William A. Harrison, came to Clarksburg from Prince William County, Virginia, in 1821. He was named assistant district attorney for the District Federal Court, practicing before a total of seven federal judges of the Court of Appeals of Virginia. In 1835 he was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates and was later appointed district attorney for the Western District of Virginia and attorney for the Commonwealth in Harrison County, thereby succeeding his granddaughter's husband's great-grandfather to that position. A staunch Unionist during the Civil War, he was named judge of the 21st Circuit (of Virginia - later the Third Circuit of West Virginia) in the fall of 1861 when former Judge Gideon Camden declared himself a supporter of the Confederate cause. The Wheeling Convention appointed Harrison to the Governor's Council and in 1863 he was elected to the first Supreme Court of Appeals of the new state of West Virginia.

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**National Register of Historic Places
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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Annamede - Significance

Item number 8

Page 5

B. Significance (cont.)

The house built by E. G. Davisson at the age of 35 - the cost of which he refused to reveal throughout his life, even to his wife - has been continuously owned and occupied by members of the same family since its completion around 1904. After Davisson's death, his wife Anna sold her dower interest in the property to their daughter Emma, wife of T. J. Blair, Jr. The farm itself is made up of land which Davisson inherited from his father, Captain George I. Davisson, and additional acreage purchased from Porter Arnold and others, today totalling 1,200 acres. The property is still a working farm: The present owner, Thomas J. Blair III, grandson of E. G. Davisson and Anna Harrison Davisson, now owns the 120-acre core on which the house and outbuildings stand; his cousins own the surrounding parcels, 800 acres of which Mr. Blair leases for agricultural use. He still runs cattle on the land, currently a herd of about 60 head.

Beautifully preserved and virtually unaltered, even to the in-place original gas fixtures, the Davisson-Blair house is significant architecturally not only as one of the finest surviving examples of Classic Revival architecture in north central West Virginia, but in part for its location in a relatively isolated, primarily rural/agricultural area. In West Virginia, this style of architecture was confined almost exclusively to the larger and more affluent towns and cities; particularly fine examples can be found in Charleston and Wheeling. There is, however, no superfluity of Classic Revival buildings in the north central part of the state, and almost none are found in secluded agricultural settings, as the nuclei of working farms. The only other known case is Oglebay Mansion in Wheeling, built soon after the turn of the century by Earl W. Oglebay as the centerpiece of his experimental farm. But Oglebay, while located in a rural area at the time of its construction, was hardly isolated, situated as it was only a few miles from one of the state's busiest and largest cities, while Davisson's elegant and handsome residence was built far from the county seat, miles away from a town of any size, in an area long famous for the poor quality of its roads.

Although the Davisson-Blair house is constructed of brick rather than the stone more commonly associated with Classic Revival architecture, other features clearly denote the style: The symmetrical arrangement of architectural forms; the use of Greek architectural orders; the enrichment of the entablature (now removed); and most of all, the massive pedimented neo-classical portico. Particularly noteworthy and important to the building's significance is the finely detailed composition and plaster ornamentation of the first floor reception rooms and other well-executed decorative elements and fine finishing touches which attest to the careful planning and forethought that went into the building of Annamede.

Also relevant to the significance of the Davisson-Blair house is the fact that it was designed by the Knoxville, Tennessee, architectural firm of Barber & Kluttz. Barber achieved national prominence as the author of a series of plan books, containing primarily Queen Anne designs, which enjoyed a widespread popularity in the years immediately following the turn of the century. According to the Blair and Davisson families, there is a duplicate of Barber's design for Annamede in Knoxville, and a scaled-down version of the house in Boulder, Colorado.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet

Annamede - Significance

Item number 8

Page 6

B. Significance (cont.)

The Davisson-Blair house, with its attendant outbuildings, is, then, significant as one of the finest intact examples of the relatively rare Classic Revival style in north central West Virginia, even more unique for its location in an isolated, rural setting, as the show-piece of a working farm. It exhibits one of the best surviving examples in the region of the refined and elegant style of composition and plaster ornamentation popular during the turn of the century, post-Victorian period, and was built by an individual who was a prominent and influential member of an important West Virginia family, who himself played an instrumental role in the economic evolution of Lewis County and the expansion of two normally antithetic industries, agriculture and natural resources, in a county long known for the quality of its production in both areas.

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National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 7

E. G. Davisson, builder of "Annamede", was the member of a family prominent in West Virginia from the late 18th century. It is for this reason that considerable detail is given in Item Number 8, pp. 1-4, explaining the contributions and accomplishments of this influential family in the realms of state agriculture, business, and politics during a nearly two-centuries-long period.

Reference to Item Number 8, p. 2, paragraph 1.

A book written by Granville Davisson Hall, The Rending of Virginia (1902), is another well known work. It is a coverage of Civil War period events leading to the formation of the State of West Virginia.

Reference to Item Number 8, p. 4, paragraph 3.

Francis H. Pierpont, sometimes called the "Father of West Virginia", was actually the Union Governor of Virginia (the Reorganized Government of Virginia).

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Continuation sheet

Annameade - Bibliography

Item number 9

Page 2

9. Bibliographical References

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Continuation sheet Annamede - Geographical Data Item number 10

Page 2

10. Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

Description:

Beginning at a stake in the center of the road known as U. S. Route 19, an original corner to Tract No. 10, the former Anna M. Davison dower tract, as set out on the plat of said sub-division in Lewis County Plat Book 2, p. 49, and being also at a corner near the entrance to the private driveway of the residence known as "Annamede," located on said tract; and thence with the center of U. S. Route 19 and with a part of an original line of said sub-division in a northeast direction for 1320 feet to a stake; thence at right angles to this line in a southwest direction in a line parallel with the rear of the Blair residence and dependencies for 1130 feet to a corner perpendicular to the northwest corner of a large shed on the Blair property and on the line of the original sub-division; thence with the line of Tract No. 10, parallel with the line of the Blair driveway, south 1120 feet to the place of beginning; and forming a roughly triangular plat containing 16.1 acres, more or less.

Justification:

The boundaries as defined above do not include the entire 120-acre core of the farm, the majority of which is meadow and pasture land. The 16.1 acres of the nominated property contain the main house, dependencies, grotto and fishpond, and three outbuildings, as well as the large expanse of meadow which separates the house from U. S. Route 19. The structures included in the nomination comprise the heart of the working farm, and are concentrated within a relatively small area on the top of a hill overlooking the remaining acreage. There are other structures on the property, in particular the large main barn, but these are located at an appreciable distance from the core section and are separated from the main residential buildings and dependent structures by the vagaries of the topography.

The buildings of the core form an interdependent unit, both in use and visually, as approached by U. S. Route 19 and the driveway. The main house, of course, is the most significant structure on the property, and the outbuildings are included as relevant to the property's significance in the area of agriculture. The broad sweep of grassy meadow at the front of the house forms the setting for the buildings and is important for the vista it creates, interference with or destruction of which could detract substantially from the physical appearance of the property as well as from the particular ambience exclusive to Annamede during the past 80-plus years of its existence.

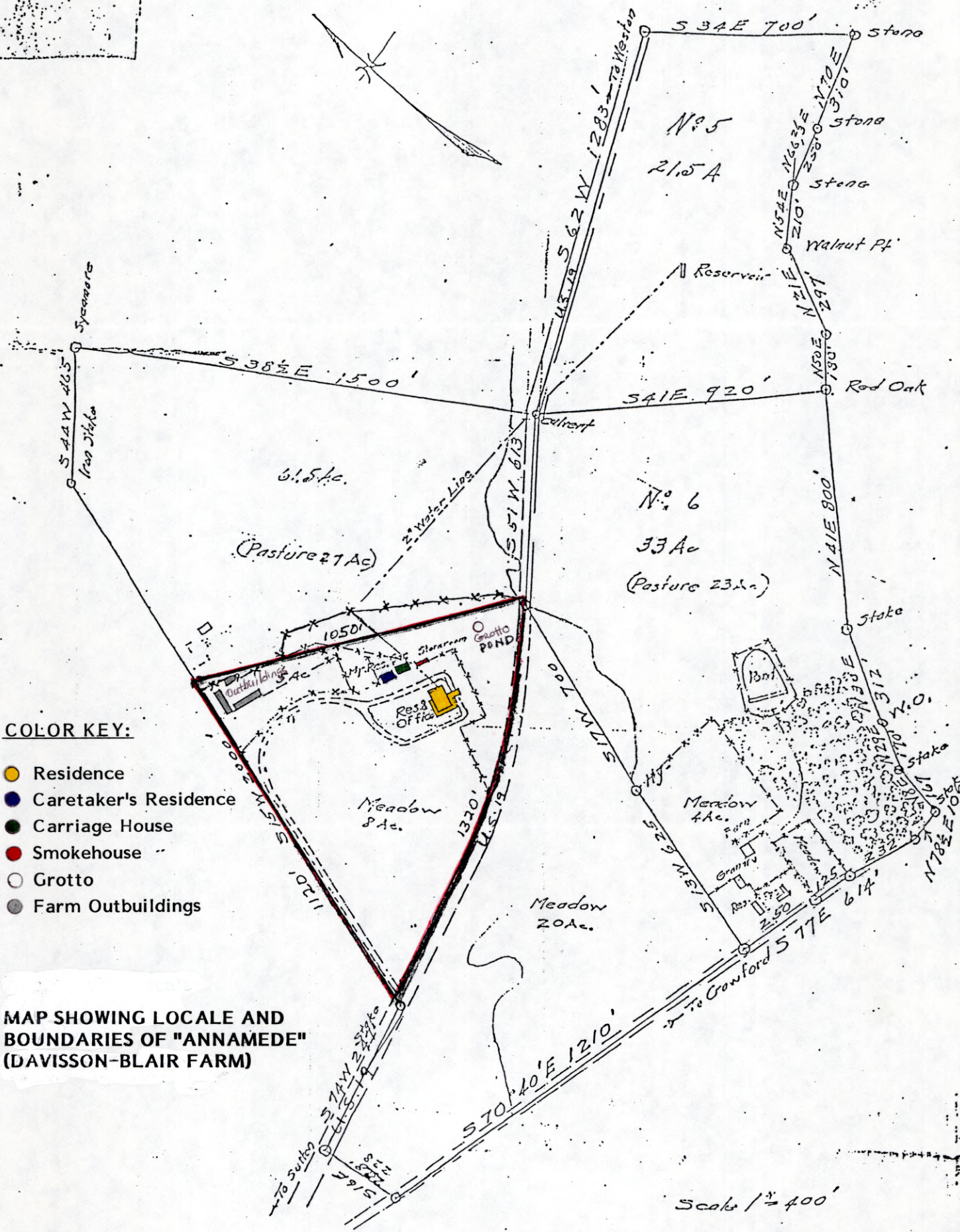
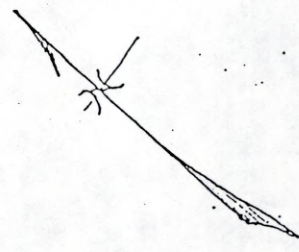
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SHEET NO.....

JOB NO.....

Emma D. Blair Farm - Crawford, Mo.



COLOR KEY:

- Residence
- Caretaker's Residence
- Carriage House
- Smokehouse
- Grotto
- Farm Outbuildings

MAP SHOWING LOCALE AND BOUNDARIES OF "ANNAMEDE" (DAVISSON-BLAIR FARM)

Scale 1" = 400'