

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: West Virginia	
COUNTY: Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 17 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Shepherdstown Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: On and to the east of the junction of W.Va. Routes 45 & 48, extending 2 blocks to the north & south of 45 & four blocks to the east of 48

CITY OR TOWN:
Shepherdstown (2nd. Congressional District)

STATE: West Virginia CODE: 54 COUNTY: Jefferson CODE: 037

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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 (Specify) _____ _____ _____
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Charles Town STATE: West Virginia CODE: 54

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

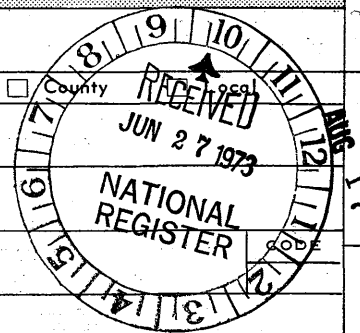
TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:



STATE: West Virginia

COUNTY: Jefferson

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE: AUG 17 1973

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

4-4-74

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE
 The quaint little hamlet of Shepherdstown with its tree-lined streets and meandering "town run" overlooks the Potomac River. The district itself, which is bounded on the north by the junction of West Virginia Route 48 and 45, is twelve miles upstream from historic Harpers Ferry and seventy miles above the nation's capital. Running from west to east are Washington Street, New Street, German Street, High Street, and Rocky Street; Duke Street, Church Street, King Street, Princess Street, and Mill Street run from north to south. All are vivid reminders to the past and all hold buildings which are unique either for their beauty, age, or history.

A few of the more prominent are:

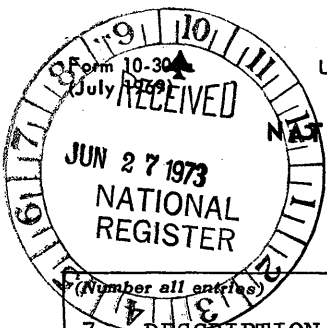
1. Baker House, which is a Federal 2½ story brick house with a stone foundation and one story brick addition toward the west, faces south. Its first floor front windows have flat arched brick splayed lintels in a soldier style while the second floor front windows have splayed wooden lintels with raised wooden keystones. The gabled roof is metal with a chimney at either end. There is presently a truscan columned Roman revival porch with a denticulated cornice. This beautiful old home which was built in the early 1790's is an important part of the district because it was the home of John Baker, the United States Congressman who was noted for being on the council to defend Aaron Burr.

2. The Great Western has been drastically altered since the time of its construction. Originally, it was built of heavy logs. In 1808, Joseph Entler purchased it, making the structure into a suitable hotel. Later the house was remodeled into two houses. Today the building (again one house) is 2½ stories. This Federal structure has a stucco covered facade, and with the exception of its door, the northern facing front openings appear to be symmetrically placed. The roof is metal with a stucco covered chimney on the western side. A porch with square columns is placed on the eastern side of the house.

Its importance to the district lies in the fact that it was an early, prosperous hotel which was owned by Joseph Entler and which catered to the general public. It was on these grounds that traveling circuses came and here that local riflemen drilled before joining the "Bee Line" march to Boston in 1775.

3. The Presbyterian Manse is a brick house of Federal/Classical revival style. The main structure is 2½ stories with a 2 story kitchen wing to its eastern end. The masonry is common bonded. The southern facing front has a large frontispiece consisting of a double-leafed door, side lights, and over lights. The 12/12 front windows have splayed brick lintels. The foundation is stone. It is historically significant because it was the home of John Kearsley, a prominent local land owner who owned over 800 acres in rural Jefferson County, 16 town lots in Shepherdstown, and 2 lots in Martinsburg. For three months in 1776, he served as a private in Captain William Morgan's company; he was a commissioner to the General Assembly in 1799; from 1796-1811, he was a member of Shepherdstown's court of trustees and its president for nine years; he served as a trustee of the Presbyterian Church in 1780 and as one of its ruling elders until his death in 1819. Remembering his church and community services, the Presbyterian Church chose Kearsley's

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 17 1973

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued) No. 1

house for its Manse in 1902.

4. The Trinity Episcopal Rectory is a 2½ story gabled brick structure; it is of late Federal styling with some Greek revival details. Its northern facing front is of Flemish bond and all other sides are of common bond. A two story common bonded kitchen wing was later added to the southwestern end. This gabled wing has a central chimney and a two story porch to its eastern side. A separate one story brick office to the west of the house proper has been connected to it. This wing has a fireplace and chimney at its western gabled end. Aside from its beauty, it is significant because it has been the home of many prominent men in Shepherdstown. Two of whom are Congressmen John Baker and Thomas Van Swearingen. Although Baker lived for a while in the Baker House, he and/or his family occupied the rectory from 1817 until the Episcopal Church purchased it in 1846.

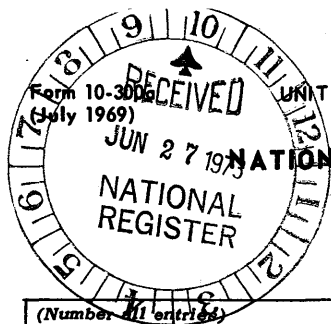
5. The Lane House is a Federal, 2½ story brick house. Its large frontispiece consists of side and elliptical fan lights with slender columns on either side of the door. Originally, there were nine windows placed symmetrically around the door, but 19th century shop windows have replaced those on the first floor. The roof is metal; the cornice and water table, which is near the base of the shop windows, are brick. It is historically significant because it was frequently visited and, for a while, jointly owned by Harriet Lane, the niece and hostess of President James Buchanan.

Although Harriet was the ward of President Buchanan, she and her sister, Mary, attended school in Charles Town. Being only a mere twelve miles from Shepherdstown, she often visited her uncle, James Lane, who owned a considerable amount of land in the county and one of the largest stores in the Shenandoah Valley. When he died, he jointly left his home to Harriet Lane and her siblings.

6. The Sheetz House is a Federal, 2½ story brick structure with a stone foundation. The southern facing front has nine windows arranged symmetrically around the door. All windows have splayed brick lintels. On the southern and eastern sides, the water table is two courses below the first floor window sills. There are curious round arches (now bricked in) below the front water table. These arches may have been basement openings. A chimney is missing from the eastern end of the gabled standing seamed roof.

It is historically significant because it was the shop of one of the oldest and finest gunsmith families in America. Here muskets were made for those in the "Bee Line" march to Boston and here was where that famous Revolutionary soldier, Thomas Rutherford, purchased ". . . Twenty four good and well fixt Riffle guns pr month. . . at. . . Four Pounds and Ten Shillings. . . each. . ."

7. The Old Market House is a 2½ story rectangular structure divided by five bays on its east-west axis. The first floor and the stepped gabled ends are brick while the second floor between the gables are of shiplap wooden siding. The northern facing front contains a door with side-lights, probably replacing



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 17 1973

(Number of entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued) No. 2

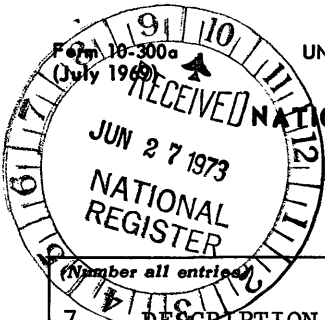
a double-leafed door. Above the door at the second story floor level is a semi-circular lunette; above this, still higher in the gable, is a depressed rectangular plaque. The roof is metal and the building is painted white. It is historically significant because as the town's centrally located market place, it was naturally the nucleus of the town's activities. It was built in 1800 and in 1845, the Odd Fellows added a second story and were given a 999 year lease. Since 1922, the first floor has been used as a public library which now holds the first book printed in West Virginia.

8. McMurrin Hall is a xanthic colored two story painted brick structure with white trim and dark green louvered shutters. The building is of Greek revival style in the Corinthian order with a two story portico and four columns on the front. Originally, McMurrin Hall was only the width of its temple portico and the depth of four bays. Later wings were added to the east and west of the portico but they are in the same style as the original structure; the "new" bays or window spacings are not as wide as those in the central building. The foundation is of stone and forms the stylobate (steps) of the portico. As found in Roman temple construction, the foundation walls come forward under the end columns of the portico to each side of the steps. The building's rich detail is enhanced by using acanthus leaves to decorate the column and pilaster capitals, the cornice supporting modillions, and the columns on the octagonal lantern of the steeple. Pilasters are found on all corners and the portico. There are cast iron consoles, or bracket keystones with antefix and palmette ornaments over the first floor windows. Brick recesses are below the windows of the second floor. Corinthian pediments are on the east-west ends of the wings and on the southern facing portico. The pediment of the latter has a central oval window. Set over the portico is a square plinth supporting a similarly shaped clock tower. The tower has pediments over all four clock faces. Above this construction is the hexagonal columned, louvered lantern with high metal cupola. The lantern is a variation of the Greek design of the Monument of Lysicrates at Athens. A finial and weather-vain rest on the cupola. The Corinthian capitals of the columns and pilasters are cast iron. The metal acanthus leaves on the underside of the cornice modillion are bent in an "S" shape to fit the bracket.

It is historically significant because it is on the site of the town founder's temporary home. Due to hostilities it became the Jefferson County Courthouse during and after the Civil War, and also it was the first building used by Shepherd College.

9. The Entler Hotel, which is of Flemish bond, has thirty-two rooms, seven bathrooms, two entrance halls, and an unfinished basement. This six-sectional, 19th century building already has National Register significance.

10. The Shepherd District Free School is a one story brick structure of Classic revival style. The western facing front is divided into three bays by protruding, plain brick pilasters. The northern, southern, and eastern sides have no pilasters except for the corner ones and are of one bay. The corner pilaster extend twelve courses above the roof. Excluding the southwestern pilaster which is also a chimney, the other three are purely deco-



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 17 1973

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued) No. 3

native. The cornice is brick. Its facia is flush with the pilasters; below the facia is a recessed course of bricks; directly below the recession the course protrudes half as much as the pilasters and extends between them. The standing seamed roof is hipped. There is no water table.

The Shepherd District Free School, now used as a museum by Shepherd College, is representative of the early efforts Jefferson County, and (West) Virginia as a whole, took in establishing the public school system.

In 1868, the Shepherd District School was erected on the corner of New and Princess Streets for use in District No. 3. It continued operating until 1881 when districts No. 2 and No. 3 were consolidated. This building is said to be of the same architectural style as the now defunct Potomac School. For a while after the school's closing, it was used as a store room by Frank Carter, then in 1961, U.S. Martin donated it in honor of his father to the State Board of Education for the use of Shepherd College as a museum.

1. The Chapline-Shenton House is in two adjoining sections. In the main 31 foot square two storied unit are five rooms and a large hall with an open winding stairway to the attic. The single story wing with loft was added in 1813. Under each section is a completely excavated cellar.

The facade is of brick from the Welsh brickyard in Shepherdstown. It is laid in Flemish bond on the front and common bond on the other three sides. An ornamental watershed of molded brick, several feet above the stone foundation, is one of its features. Hand hewn decorative wooden keystones top the front windows and doorway. The front and back first floor windows are eighteen paned with the original shutters intact; other windows have twelve glasses each. The second story window on the south side is an anachronism, cut for a bathroom taken from the master bedroom.

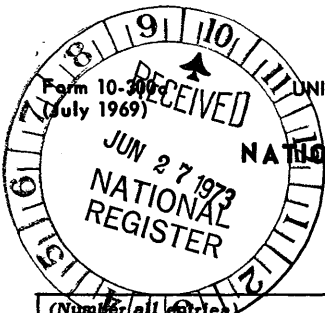
When the town enacted its first sidewalk ordinance, the broad stone entrance steps were replaced by a wooden stoop which has been renewed three times. A backporch was added in the early 20th century, taking the place of the two sets of steps which had led from the back hall and kitchen to a brick pavement.

In 1916, the original shingles were replaced with a metal roof. The gabled ends are finished with large boards.

In the house are five fireplaces--one in the kitchen and four in the main unit; all flues join in the attic and lead into a single chimney.

The interior features high ceilings, "H" and "L" and strap hinges, latches and Pennsylvania locks, "cross and Bible" doors, original floors, baseboards, and chairboards. There are also four mantels, one with overlay.

The importance of Chapline-Shenton House lies in its authentic state of preservation and its longevity on the townscape, during which time it has served many purposes. Built in 1793 on the site of the original Sheetz gunnery, it was bought in 1818 by Captain William Delyea, a stepson of General William Darke. He rented it to Congressman Thomas Van Swearingen who with his family "wintered" on the property. The widow of Captain Delyea "lent" the house to the Confederacy for the billeting of troops and the caring of the wounded after the Battle of Antietam.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 17 1973

AUG 17 1973

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued) No. 4
12. The Weltzheimer Tavern is a 2½ story brick house with stone foundation and Victorian gingerbread porch to the western facing front. A chimney lies on each gabled end and a 1½ story brick lean-to lies to the east. The white wooden framed structure to the south is a later addition.
- In the autumn of 1790, a Massachusetts printer, Nathaniel Willis, came to Shepherdstown to establish a newspaper. Willis, a former member of the Boston Tea Party of 1773, had previously published a newspaper in Winchester, Virginia. In November he set up a printing press in Shepherdstown at his "Printing House on Princess Street" and in the same month issued the first copy of Potowmac Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser. This was the first newspaper published in present West Virginia. In 1808 the building became known as Weltzheimer's Tavern.
13. Shepherd's Grist Mill, the oldest and largest grist mill, is currently on the National Register of Historic Places.
14. Billmyer House is a 2½ story brick building in the Federal style. The main block of the house is brick with stone foundations to the underside of the basement window lintels.
- There are three connected outbuildings at the south-west corner of the house. The larger outbuilding was probably the earliest existing structure on the property. Originally, this was a one story structure about twenty-two feet square. At a later date, a second story brick lean-to roof was added with its highest side being on the west. Later, the nine foot distance between this structure and the main house was bricked in.
- The middle outbuilding is the gable-roofed, one half story brick smoke-house of common-bonded brick masonry.
- The end structure is a brick toilet, also of common-bond, about seven by thirteen feet.
- On the northern side of the house facing the street, there is a brick water table terminated with a half-round brick ten courses above the stone foundation wall. The basement window lintels are a flat brick arch in soldier style.
- Handsome features found on the front only are the splayed wooden window lintels with double raised keystones painted to look like stone. The window sills are rounded with an apron below. All other windows have Flemish bonded flat lintels and square plank window sills. All of the window frames are wood pinned at upper corners.
- The one story Doric columned porch on the eastern and southern sides of the house, continuous with rounded corner at junction, is a late 19th century addition.
- The main house is of Flemish bond on all sides except the southern side, which is of common bond brick work with headers every fifth course. The gable ends have double chimneys.
- The roof on all sections of the house is painted metal. There are no dormers.
- The frontispiece consists of a six-paneled front door with middle panels being replaced with glass and an over light.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 17 1973

(Number all entries)

7. DESCRIPTION (Continued) No. 5

The Billmyer House is an important part of the district because it was extensively used for an inn as early as the American Revolution; it was also the home of John F. Hamtramck who was both the ward of William Henry Harrison and the greatest military figure in Shepherdstown's annals. After attending West Point, he became a United States Indian agent, colonel in command of the Virginia regiment during the war with Mexico, and from March to July 1848, he was Military Governor of Saltillo, Mexico. He also commanded several local groups.



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

INTRODUCTION: Shepherdstown, the oldest town in West Virginia,* is on the Potomac River, 70 miles upstream from Washington, a dozen miles above Harpers Ferry, across stream from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and three miles from the site of the Battle of Antietam. Never having experienced a major population explosion, it retains much of the old atmosphere, despite the several thousand students enrolled at Shepherd College and the surrounding "development explosions." In the 1730's when the early settlers began crossing the river here to enter the Shenandoah Valley, the vicinity was known as Pack Horse Ford, though the passage was a mile downstream from the settlement. George Washington in one of his journals referred to it as Swearingen's Ferry, the service having been started in 1755. In 1762, the town was chartered Mecklenburg; the name was officially changed to Shepherdstown in 1798. First the town was in Frederick County, Virginia; then Berkeley County, Virginia, 1772; then Jefferson County, Virginia, 1801; then Jefferson County, West Virginia, 1863.

THE EARLY TOWN: Thomas Shepherd had obtained a grant of land in 1734 on a river branch above the ford. Laying out a town on a part of this grant on both sides of Falling Spring (Town Run), along which he had built a grist mill about 1739, he obtained a charter in December 1762 from the Virginia Assembly for Mecklenburg, named in honor of Charlotte of Mecklenburg, the bride of George III of England. The founder used an English pattern for the naming of the streets with the exceptions that German Street, substituted for Queen, crossed King to form the public square. The German appellations had been given to entice German artisans into the valley. The effect was accomplished, and today Shindler kettles, Kraft clocks, Sheetz guns, Weis pottery, and Rickard locks--all made in old Shepherdstown--are collector's items. In the 1790's, in addition to Thomas Shepherd's grist mill, the town run was furnishing power for eleven small operations along its three-quarter mile course within the corporation.

SCHOOLS: Institutions of learning came and went in Shepherdstown's first hundred years. By 1762, both English and German schools were in operation. Robert Cockburn, a Scotsman, was in charge of elementary education for the

** The Governor's signature incorporating Romney was obtained on December 23, 1762, the same day that he signed the bill incorporating Mecklenburg. In the group of bills signed by the Governor, Romney's bill is listed twentieth and Mecklenburg's, twenty-first. There is no doubt, however, that there was a settlement at Mecklenburg several years before there was one at Romney.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Shepherdstown Schools, 1762-1872" A.D. Kenamond; The Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society, Vol. 5, 1939.
Historic Jefferson County, Millard Bushong, 1972.
I Drove Mules on the C & O Canal, Hooper Wolfe, 1969.
History of Shepherdstown, 1730-1931, C.J. Musser, 1931.
Historic Shepherdstown, Danske Dandridge, 1910.
Prominent Men of Shepherdstown, 1762-1962, A.D. Kenamond, 1962.
Tow Path Guide to C & O Canal, Thomas F. Hahn, 1972.
James Rumsey: Pioneer in Steam Navigation, Ella May Turner, 1930.

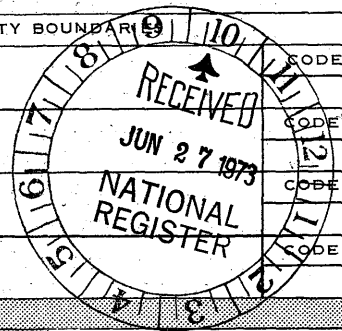
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	39 ° 26.03.3	77 ° 48.27.5		0	0	
NE	39 ° 25.55.7	77 ° 48.05.7		"	"	
SE	39 ° 25.40.9	77 ° 48.14.5				
SW	39 ° 25.48.8	77 ° 48.36.7				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **71.2 Acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARY

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mr. Ted McGee

ORGANIZATION: **West Virginia Antiquities Commission** DATE: **April 2, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Old Mountainlair, West Virginia University

CITY OR TOWN: **Morgantown** STATE: **West Virginia** CODE: **54**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Maurice G. Brooks
Maurice G. Brooks

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date June 4, 1973

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

Robert W. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

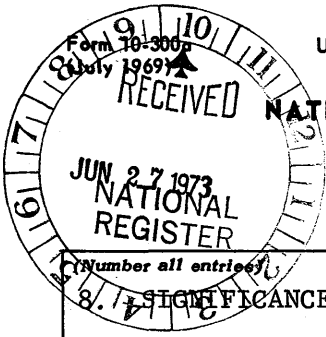
Date 8/17/73

ATTEST:

[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 8.15.73

18 4368480 258620
 18 4368020 258410
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS
 18 4368280 258240
 18 4368736 258500



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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AUG	7 1973

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued) No. 1

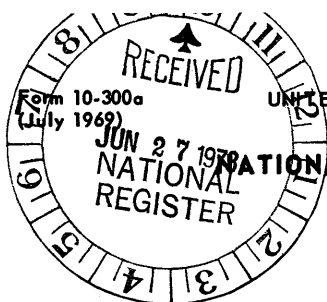
English in 1762. The old log German schoolhouse, 1774, still stands on the Lutheran graveyard plot, corner of East German and College Streets. In 1776, the schoolmaster was Herr Kraal, "who did his work conscientiously." There were male schools, female schools, classical schools, seminaries, and academies, but the forerunner of Shepherd College, the Shepherdstown Academy, established in 1796, was the longest lived. Two district free schools were built here immediately after Jefferson County had authorized a free public school system in 1847. The second of constructions, built in 1868, is well-preserved. The earlier building, 1847, now demolished, was the first free school in West Virginia.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR: Shepherdstown furnished more soldiers for service in the War for Independence than any other town of its size in Virginia. Men responded promptly to a call in 1775 for volunteers to join Washington in the defense of Boston. A company of 97 men under Captain Hugh Stephenson, recruited and equipped locally, left from Morgan's Spring on July 16, reaching Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 11, after a "Bee-Line March to Boston." These men, the first to arrive from south of the Potomac, were greeted personally by General George Washington. A stone tablet marks the starting point here. About thirty graves of Revolutionary soldiers are identified in the graveyards of the town.

RUMSEY'S STEAMBOAT: On the Potomac River at Shepherdstown, in 1787, James Rumsey made the first public demonstration of steam propelling a boat when he used the jet propulsion principle to drive it against the current. At that time, George Washington and others were greatly interested in making the Potomac navigable. A company had been organized in 1785 to extend the navigation of the river, and Rumsey had been named head engineer on the project. Dying in England in 1792, where he had gone to solicit funds for the furthering of his invention, he was buried in St. Margaret Church, Westminster. His biography by Ella May Turner, published in 1930, was entitled James Rumsey--Pioneer in Steam Navigation.

PUBLICATIONS: Nathaniel Willis came to Shepherdstown in 1790 and began publishing the Potomac Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser in "a print shop on Princess Street," which still stands. P. Rootes and C. Blagrove, the publishers of a second paper, the Impartial Observer, printed a book entitled The Christian Panoply, 1797, the first volume to be run in what in now West Virginia.

PLACES OF ENTERTAINMENT: Since Shepherdstown was on the high road between Baltimore and the Southwest and wagoners hauling goods from the Chesapeake Bay port as far away as Tennessee, stopped here overnight, there were numerous saloons, ordinaries, and inns. Frequently mentioned in the old records were Mrs. Prudence Thornbaugh's, 1790; Mr. Wynkoop's Tavern, 1791; Entler's, 1796 (Entler Hotel, 1820); Philip Shutts', 1799, the House of Henry Eckhart, 1800; Mrs. Catherine Weltzheimer's Tavern, 1808; Jacob Sheetz Tavern, 1810; James Tavern, 1810; Great Western Hotel, 1820. All but two still stand. Gambling,



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Jefferson	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	AUG 17 1978

(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued) No. 2

horse racing, and cock fighting were engaged in by the teamsters, and at times, entertainment became rough and uncouth.

PROPOSED CAPITAL SITE: Shepherdstown lost in its bid to become the setting of the nation's capital in 1790. When it was known that the seat of government was to be located somewhere along the Potomac, Shepherdstown and Sharpsburg began negotiations for the honor, pledging over \$25,000 and nearly 500 acres of land. Correspondence in the Library of Congress reveals that Sharpsburg itself would provide five springs, assuring ample water supply for the city. Marlow and Williamsport tried, too, but by the choice of President Washington, preferment went to the Arlington-Georgetown area.

FIRST POSTOFFICE: Shepherdstown became a Federal postoffice site on March 20, 1793, the first in what is now West Virginia. Horatio Ross was the postmaster. This date followed closely those for Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore.

THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO CANAL: Prospects of a local industrial revolution came when plans for the building of the C & O Canal were announced. The citizens of the town subscribed to capital stock, and a flour mill near Pack Horse Ford was converted into a cement mill for supplying materials when construction was begun in Georgetown in 1828. The opening of the waterway as far as Harpers Ferry in 1834 resulted in a wave of prosperity and growth in the area, but by 1850 when the passage was completed to Cumberland, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad "had beaten it to the pass." The canal was never the going concern it had been designed to be. However, lock 38 did offer Shepherdstown a mode of transportation east and west, since the B & O had crossed the Norfolk and Western Railway six miles south of town. The recent purchase of Ferry Hill, at the Maryland end of James Rumsey Bridge, for headquarters of the Chesapeake and Ohio National Park promises to draw Shepherdstown into the canal scene again.

THE CIVIL WAR: The river crossing at Shepherdstown was a strategic point in the War Between the States. The ferry had been replaced in 1850 by a wooden toll bridge. Threats of invasion of the Valley from the North were met by action on the part of Confederate forces to burn the bridge in 1861.

In 1862 the town and the ford became pivotal points in the battle of Sharpsburg. The divisions of Lee's army which were engaged in the capture of Harpers Ferry under the leadership of Jackson marched over roads leading to Shepherdstown, crossed the river at Pack Horse Ford, and rejoined Lee's army on the battlefield. After the great battle, Lee's entire army crossed the Ford into Virginia.

Shepherdstown, in effect, was a part of the battleground. The town was hit by shells and after Antietam it became one big sprawling hospital. When Jefferson County was made a part of the newly created state of West Virginia, problems intensified, for though two companies of its men were fighting for the Confederacy, its government was in control of the Union. In February 1865, the county seat was moved from Charles Town here for a few years so that the troops guarding the B & O could be between it and the Confederacy.

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
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	AUG 17 1973

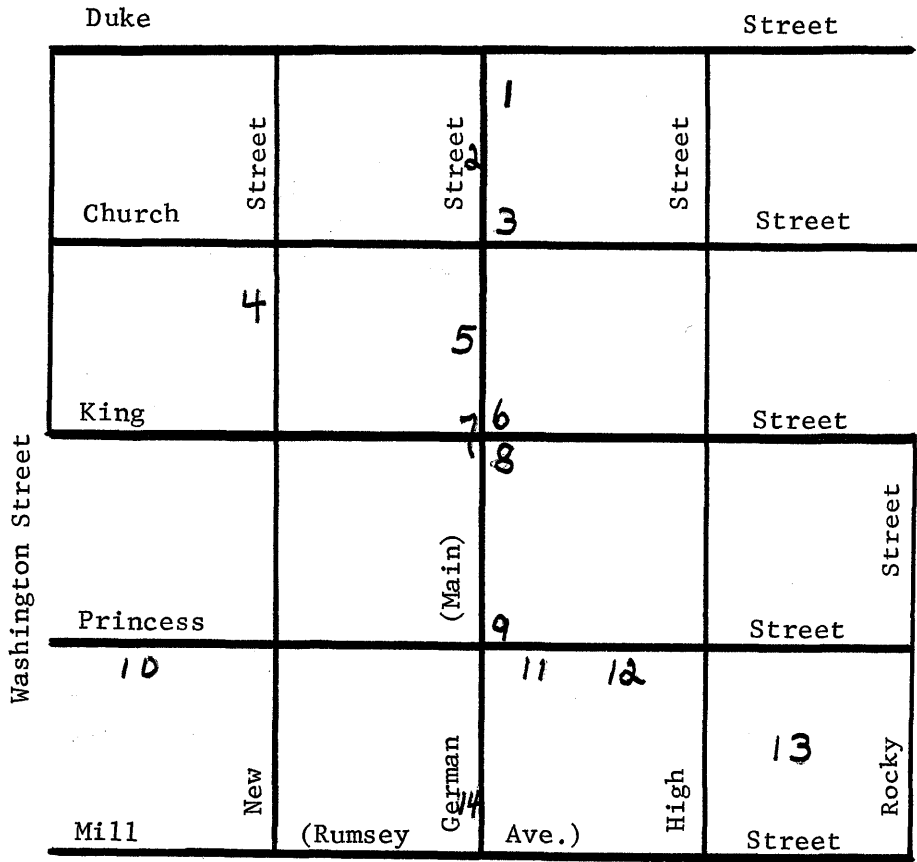
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8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued) No. 3

SHEPHERD COLLEGE: In 1871, when the courthouse was moved back to Charles Town, in the abandoned building a group of seven leading citizens opened a classic and scientific school, which became a state institution called Shepherd College in 1872. A letter from Shepherd Brooks, who had inherited the structure at the corner of German and King Streets, which had been built by Rezin Shepherd for a town hall, granted its use to the school for one year. On July 1, 1872, trustee George M. Beltzhoover secured a long term lease on the building for a token payment of five dollars a year. Joseph McMurrin was the first principal. Throughout the years, the school has grown steadily. Today, the fully accredited, state-supported, four-year liberal arts and teacher education institution has expanded to encompass a 156 acre campus, 25 major buildings, a faculty of 99, and administrative staff of 48, and a student body of 2,000.



SHEPHERDSTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT



1. Baker House (Frank House)-The temporary home of John Baker, the United States Congressman noted for being on the council to defend Aaron Burr.

2. The Great Western- A prosperous early hotel on which grounds local riflemen drilled before joining the "Bee Line" march to Boston in 1775.

3. Presbyterian Manse-The home of John Kearsley, a prominent local land owner and president of the town's court of trustees who was also a Commissioner to the General Assembly.

4. Episcopal Rectory-The home of many prominent men including U.S. Congressmen Thomas Van Swearingen and John Baker.

5. Lane House (Prather House)-A home frequently visited and for a while jointly owned by Harriet Lane, the niece and hostess of President James Buchanan.

6. Sheetz House (Old Town Restaurant)-The home of one of the oldest and finest gunsmith families in America who manufactured many arms used in the Revolution.

7. Old Market House-The nucleus of the town's activities as early as 1800 and the lodge of the Odd Fellows since 1845.

8. McMurrin Hall-A building on the site of the town founder's fort, later to become the courthouse during and after the Civil War, and finally, the first building of Shepherd College.

9. Rumsey Hall (Entler Hotel)-An early hotel in which James Rumsey and C & O Canal officials stayed. (Received National Register approval March 30, 1973).

10. Shepherd District Free School- A museum which represents the efforts Jefferson County and West Virginia took in establishing the public school system.

11. Chapline-Shenton House- A home occupied by many prominent people and used for the billeting of Confederate troops and the caring of the wounded after the Battle of Antietam.

12. Weltzheimer's Tavern- The site where John Willis printed the Potomac Guardian and Berkeley Advertiser, the first newspaper printed in West Virginia.

