United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property	SUNSET HIL	R	ECEV	ED
historic name: other name/site number:	"Sunset Hill" Alderson Home	NA	TONAL REGISTER, HIS 8 EDUCATION	STORY
2. Location			NATIONAL PARK SERV	ICE
street & number: <u>Flat Mountair</u> city/town: <u>Alderson</u> state: <u>WV</u> county: I		vicin	or publication: NA ity: N/A zip code: 24910	
3. State/Federal Agency Cer	rtification			
As the designated authority unc certify that this _x_ nomination	ion request for d	termination	n of eligibility mee	ts the
certify that this _x_ nomination documentation standards for re- meets the procedural and profest the property _x_ meets this property be considered sign 	ion request for d gistering properties in ssional requirements s does not meet the Na dificant nationally	termination the Nationa et forth in 3 tional Regis	n of eligibility mee Il Register of Histo 6 CFR Part 60. In	ts the pric Places ar my opinion pmmend that
	ion request for d gistering properties in ssional requirements s does not meet the Na hificant nationally 5 1 Date	termination the Nationa et forth in 3 tional Regis	n of eligibility mee Il Register of Histo 6 CFR Part 60. In ster Criteria. I reco	ts the pric Places ar my opinion pmmend that
certify that this _x_ nomination documentation standards for re- meets the procedural and profes the property _x_ meets this property be considered sign 	ion request for d gistering properties in ssional requirements s does not meet the Na hificant nationally c 5/2 1 Date reau Date	termination the National et forth in 3 tional Regis statew 1/00	n of eligibility mee el Register of Histo 6 CFR Part 60. In ster Criteria. I reco idex_locally.	ts the pric Places a my opinior ommend tha

State or Federal agency and bureau

Sunset Hill Name of Property

Monroe County, WV County and State

	Certification		
I, hereby certify that this pro- entered in the Nationa See continuation she determined eligible for to National Register See continuation she determined not eligible National Register removed from the Natio	al Register eet. for the onal Register	gnature of Keeper	Date of Action
5. Classification Ownership of Property: (Check as many boxes as app	ly)	Category of Pro (Check only one	
<u>x</u> private public-local public-State		x building(s district site	;)
public-Federal		structure object	
public-Federal Number of Resources within	- ·	object	
public-Federal Number of Resources within	sted resources in th Noncontrib	object	buildings
public-Federal Number of Resources within (Do not include previously lis Contributing	sted resources in th Noncontrib	object le count.) buting	buildings sites structures objects

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

Sunset Hill Name of Property

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions DOMESTIC: single dwelling AGRICULTURE: agricultural fields, agricultural outbuildings

Current Functions

DOMESTIC: single dwelling AGRICULTURE: agricultural fields, agricultural outbuildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH CENTURY: I-house

Materials

Foundation:stoneWalls:clapboard, vinylRoof:metalOther:stucco

Narrative Description

(See continuation on sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

 \underline{x} **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

<u>C</u> 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.

<u>Sunset Hill</u> Name of Property

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Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

_____A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

_____ B removed from its original location.

_____ C a birthplace or grave.

_____ **D** a cemetery.

_____E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

_____ F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance Agriculture Education

Period of Significance 1880-1942

Significant Dates 1924

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) Alderson, George, Sr. Alderson, Emma Cornelia

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (See continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository: Owners

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: <u>Approximately 321.82 acres</u> Quad map: <u>Alderson</u>

UTM References

	Zon	e Easting	g Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
А	17	532600	4174765	Е	17	532000	4173762
В	17	532320	4174442	F	17	531478	4173760
С	17	532290	4174460	G	17	531410	4174000
D	17	532360	4173885	Н	17	531570	4174940

Verbal Boundary Description

(See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(See continuation sheet.)

Monroe County, WV County and State

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11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title:

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Erin Pogany and Katl with Mr. & Mrs. John		an
Organization: State Historic Preserv	ation Office	Date: March 2000
Street & Number: <u>1900 Kanawha B</u>	vd East	Telephone: <u>304/558-0220</u>
City or Town: Charleston	State: <u>WV</u>	Zip: <u>25305-0300</u>
Property Owner		
(Complete this item at the request of	SHPO or FP	PO.)
Name: <u>Mr. and Mrs. John Alderson</u>		
Street & Number: P.O. Box 678	Tele	ephone: <u>304/445-7195</u>
City or Town: <u>Alderson</u> State:	WV Zip:	: 24910

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"Sunset Hill" Farm is situated on a shaded plot of land off Flat Mountain Road in Monroe County. The house and its outbuildings are reached after passing through the main gate, which has stone pillars connected with a wrought iron archway reading "Sunset Hill." A narrow lane leads to the rear of the house and to a stone walkway. A small pond is to the southeast of the house.

Main House 1880 Contributing Building

The main farmhouse at Sunset Hill is a typical two-story I-house with side gables, each having a brick chimney. A two-story gable ell extends off the rear, or east facade of the house. The home has vinyl siding over the original wooden clapboard siding and is supported by a foundation of stone. Stucco covers the rear springhouse, which along with the former kitchen are now attached to the house through a later vestibule on the rear ell of the house.

A one-story center porch is on the main facade, or west side of the farmhouse. This is a later porch with a gable portico supported by four Doric columns and dentil molding along the cornice. A centered multi-light door has a transom with four square panes and sidelights with two rectangular glass panes. To either side is a 6/6 double-hung sash window with shutters. The three windows on the second floor and the side windows are the same.

A one-story sun porch is situated in the angle between the house and the rear ell. It has a hip roof, a series of multi-light windows which came from the old Greenbrier Baptist Church building (c. 1900), and a door with fifteen glass panes. A one-story gable structure is now connected to the rear ell by a gable vestibule. This is the entrance to the "mud room" which is the connector to the old springhouse and kitchen.

The main section of the house has a center hall with staircase leading to the second floor. To the left of this hall is an arched entrance into the living room. Behind the staircase is a door to a small bathroom built in the corner of a room to the right of the main hall. At both ends of the home are fireplaces with the wooden mantlepieces having cutout masonic symbols. The living room has another arched doorway leading into a dining room. These three rooms have chair rails along the walls and dentil molding around the ceiling. French doors from the dining room open into the sun porch. The center hall has French doors into the sun porch. Off of the dining room is the rear kitchen, with an enclosed space for a furnace room where another brick fireplace is found. Beyond the kitchen a set of steps lead down into a mud room, added to connect the former springhouse (library/study) and a former kitchen (laundry room).

Cottage c. 1900

Contributing Building

The cottage, once called "the Bungalow," has side gables and clapboard siding with the exception of portions of the sides which are now sided with plywood. The cottage faces north on the south side of the main house. Originally, it was a small, one-story building with a hip roof used by four members of the family who had tuberculosis. Over time the cottage was expanded to meet the needs of the owners. Today the cottage is $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories and is supported by stone under the older section, and concrete block under the newer east end. The shuttered windows are 2/2 glass panes

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which swing open. In the gable peak the windows are 1/1 double-hung sash. The original door is centered with two lower panels and one light with a two light transom above. A brick chimney was to the rear of the original section, and now rises through the center of the cottage. A one room addition was added to the south and east sides. The original room has board and bead walls with plain trim and wood floors. There is a five-panel door which leads to an addition to the rear of the original section and two doorways leading into a room on the east side of the cottage. A staircase to the rear of the original section leads to a second floor above.

Coal House/Garage c. 1880 Noncontributing Building The present garage was fashioned from the former wood and coal house, and is one-story having one garage bay. The building has a front gable and a metal roof. It has board and batten siding and a stone post foundation. There is a swing open door and window on the north side of the garage which leads to a storage section partitioned off in the rear of the garage, or west end. The front of the garage, facing east, has a set of swing open doors which are also board and batten.

Privv c. 1935-36 **Contributing Building** A single hole privy, built by the WPA, is located north of the garage. It has a corrugated metal shed roof and vertical plank sides and door. The privy sits on a concrete pad.

Chicken House c. 1946 Noncontributing Building The chicken house is to the east of the log building. It has a seamed metal shed roof with rafter ends showing and vertical wood siding. A pair of fixed windows with six glass panes is to the right vertical wood plank door. Due to its poor condition the building is noncontributing.

Barn c. 1900 The 1 ½ story barn has vertical wood siding a front gable, and a metal roof. It is on a stone pier foundation. The barn has a shed porch to the front and a shed extension on the north facade.

Cistern c. 1880 **Contributing Structure** Round or beehive shaped cistern made of bricks with concrete covering. It has a stone cover over opening with a pump in the middle. The charcoal filter for the cistern has red tiles and rests beside the cistern to filter the water that comes off the metal roof.

Gates c. 1925 **Contributing Structure** Paired stone pillars stand on each side of the drive, approximately 15 feet apart, with the outer pillar being slightly lower. Between the pillars is a pedestrian gate. Arching between the two taller pillars and reach over the drive is a steel sign reading "SUNSET HILL."

Contributing Building

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Log Building

c. 1783/c. 1950

Noncontributing Building

Moved from its original location in nearby Fort Spring, Greenbrier County the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ story side gable log building now stands to the east side of the main house and faces west. It has a seamed metal roof, a foundation of stone, and steeple notching. To the sides of the centered plank door are 6/6 double-hung sash windows. Matching windows are on the second floor. To the far side of the building is another door which leads to the second floor. A stone chimney was removed from the building during its move. Originally the chimney was on the south side. Now this side has swing open plank doors on the first and second floors with 6 pane fixed windows in the gable peak. A two-story shed porch with log rail and posts is on the east facade. The log house was originally built by Joseph Newton in 1783. The section on the farm represents the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ story main section. The 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ story separate kitchen was rebuilt about 1/4 mile from its original location and is used as a camp.

Summary:

The house, cottage and farm outbuildings reflect the life of the family of George Alderson, Sr. and his daughter Emma. Although altered by vinyl siding, the home's interior is still reflective of the 1880s construction. The cottage was used by family members who returned home to the family farm after contracting tuberculosis; and was later enlarged for the use of tenant farmers. On the property is a WPA outhouse erected during the 1930s.

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Sunset Hill is significant under Criterion B for its association with George Alderson, Sr., a local farmer, and his daughter Emma Cornelia Alderson, an influential personality in the development of Alderson Academy. The areas of significance related to the property and the two owners are Agriculture and Education. The period of significance is 1880 to 1942, spanning when the house at Sunset Hill was built, until Emma's death.

Elder John Alderson, Jr., the family patriarch, was born in New Jersey in 1738. While he traveled as a young man, in middle age he followed in the steps of his own father and became a preacher. He moved to the Greenbrier County area in 1777 and began preaching the Baptist faith to nearby neighbors. He often traveled to nearby forts to preach, and in 1781 he organized the Greenbrier Baptist Church. This was the first Baptist church of southwestern Virginia. The Greenbrier Association of the Baptist denomination formed under Alderson's leadership. Later he formed eight more churches. Elder John was one of the most prominent men in the Baptist denomination in western Virginia.

Elder John received several grants for acreage after the Revolutionary War between 1785 and 1800. He built a log cabin along the Greenbrier River and began clearing the land for crops and livestock. As he was able to acquire more land, this was also cleared and farmed. His home and property passed to his son John in 1821. Elder John is buried in the cemetery adjoining the Baptist church in Alderson. Upon son John's death in 1853, the farm passed to his son, George, Sr.

Elder John's grandson, George Alderson, Sr., was born in 1833 in Alderson. He became a captain and special aid to General W.C. Wickham in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. George, Sr. married Mary Jane Hines and they had three children: Charles Otey (1857), Emma Cornlia (1860), and Ida E. (1864). Emma was born in the home of her great-grandfather in Alderson. In 1864, the family house burned to the ground. George, Sr. rebuilt the home near the banks of the Greenbrier River. Soon after completing the house, his wife Mary Jane died. He then married Virginia M. Stevenson Boyd and had six additional children: John Cary (1868), Bernard Carroll (1870), William W. (1873), George, Jr. (1875), Virginia S. (1877), and Coleman Cabell (1880). To meet the needs of his growing family, George, Sr. decided to move to a larger plot of land on the family farm and build a new house. In 1880, when Emma was 20, he built Sunset Hill; so named because it stood on top of the hill facing west for a sunset view.

George, Sr. was a trustee of Allegheny College at Blue Sulphur before the Civil War and was a Justice of the Peace for several years. He was known locally as "Squire George." He served in the West Virginia Legislature during the last session in Wheeling. He was active in the Baptist church, business and civic organizations. Perhaps more than any other man, George Alderson was associated with the establishment of the town of Alderson.

In 1870 there were only four homes along the river, a store and Baptist church. When George Alderson, Sr. was sure of the railroad's route in 1871, he had the surveyor Elliot Vawter plat some of the original Alderson farm land into lots, and then offered the lots for sale at \$200 each. He also allowed for streets and in general was responsible for the layout of South Alderson,

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which is the original incorporated town. By the time the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad arrived in 1872, Alderson was already a growing settlement, but now became a railroad "boom town." By 1877, the town had a population of 400 and 60 houses all on the south side (Monroe County) of the Greenbrier River.

With the building of the first bridge across the river in 1881-82, the land to the north of the river (Greenbrier County) became more accessible and started to grow. It was not until 1905 that North Alderson came into the incorporated town.

By the time the George, Sr., had platted the section of the farm for the developing town, he had cleared additional land to the east for farm acreage. Near the home he built in 1880 are approximately 100 acres of level land which are still farmed by mechanical means. Additional acreage which George, Sr., had cleared was once plowed by teams of horses and was of a steeper grade. Much of this once tillable hillside was "planted in trees" by the family during the 1960s. Additional acreage surrounding the property has timber which has been periodically harvested by the Alderson family. Today the farm acreage stands at roughly 321 acres.

The family raised a variety of crops and operated their self-supporting farm. Crops were rotated with wheat and corn being the most viable. A percentage of the land was in hay to help support the cattle and other livestock raised on the farm.

George, Sr. died at his home, Sunset Hill, on March 18, 1924. He was preceded in death by four of his children who died of tuberculosis: Virginia, Bernard, George, Jr., and William. The home passed to daughter Emma along with 200 acres of the original patent, but her stepmother continued to live on the farm until her death in 1929.

After the death of George, Sr., the farm continued to support Emma and her stepmother. A tenant farmer and his wife were employed by Emma, and lived in the small cottage on the farm. When a tenant farmer was not available, Emma managed the farm with the help of sharecroppers. The Alderson family provided the land and split the profits from crops raised by the sharecropper. The family also had a personal garden raising a variety of fruits and vegetables which were canned for home use.

Emma Cornelia Alderson received her early education in private schools in Alderson and began her teaching career at local schools while still in her teens. Alderson had a strong belief in the Baptist faith. Perhaps because of the strong family connection to the Baptist denomination, she longed to establish a Baptist school. In 1901 the property, which had been a Presbyterian academy, across from her great-grandfather's Baptist church in Alderson became available. Upon conferring with Reverend J. C. Killian and her half brother Bernard, her dream came true and the Alderson Academy was founded.

The three founders persuaded members of the community to serve as stockholders and trustees of the school. Bernard Carroll Alderson became the first principal in 1901. At the beginning of the second year he became too ill to continue as teacher and principal and was forced to leave. He continued to attend the Greenbrier Baptist Association meetings to seek support for the Academy, and gave financially. He and Rev. Killian made trips to various parts of the state to gain support for the school. When Bernard's health failed even further, he went south to a

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warmer climate. He returned home to Sunset Hill where he died in 1905 of tuberculosis.

While in charge of the primary department at Alderson Academy Emma spent the summers studying to further her education at Johnson College in Union and at Aspinwall School in Warm Springs, Virginia. She later took courses in administration at Chautaqua, New York to learn advanced methods in educating others. Emma became the acting principal when her half brother Bernard became ill. In 1911, the family gave the school to the Baptist church. Emma was later elected principal and continued to hold the position until 1919. During this time she not only performed responsibilities as acting principal, but also held many other duties. She taught classes, planned meals, did office work including correspondence and counseling, and planned entertainment for the students. For all of this she received no salary, but saw that the school ran in the black. She was rewarded by knowing she was doing something for "my Lord and the Baptists." Luckily Emma had the strong support of her family, and the livelihood of the farm to carry the family through these years.

The original Alderson Academy school building was a two-story frame structure with a wraparound porch. Also on the school grounds were a boy's dormitory and a gymnasium. The school and gymnasium buildings stood until the 1940s. The boy's dormitory was a rental property until the mid-1960s.

In 1919 the school became a junior college and Emma served as dean and teacher until 1922 when she resigned her position and returned home, allegedly, because of the illness of her father, but most likely because she and the new president could not agree on school policy.

It was after 1919, that the plans for a new building outside of the town were drawn-up and the foundation was erected. The new school was not completed until 1921 and was north of Alderson on a rise of land. The large Neoclassical brick building reflected the "high hopes" of the school. In 1925, after the death of her father, Alderson returned to the college as president emeritus and dean of women. She brought her stepmother to the dormitory so that she could care for her. Emma served as dean of women until 1932, when Alderson Junior College, because of financial reasons, merged with Broaddus College in Philippi, West Virginia.

Many students of the Alderson academy became ministers and missionaries. Others acknowledged Emma's influence in molding their lives "into Christian character." Personal letters indicate that she made small loans to her students, and had a fondness for "bad boys" who wrote her notes to deny any wrongdoing. Emma was a respected citizen of Alderson, West Virginia. At the time, the name of "Miss Emma" was known throughout this and other states in Baptist circles. There are few women in Alderson's history who have been more respected or loved by the people of the town. Emma died in 1942 at Sunset Hill. The farm continued to pass by will to cousin John M. Alderson, III, who left it to his son and present owner, John M. Alderson, IV in 1986.

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Summary:

The house was constructed in 1880 outside of the town of Alderson, which was part of the original farm. The family continued to raise livestock and crops after the death of George Alderson, Sr. The cottage was constructed c. 1900 for the use of several family members who had tuberculosis (TB). Following typical medical practices for TB, the ribbon windows could be opened for fresh air.

Other buildings connected with the farm were the barn, and chicken house. The last privy was constructed in the 1930s through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program in Monroe County. This served the family until plumbing was installed in 1946. The cistern was used from 1880 to 1942 and was outside the kitchen. Although now incorporated into the rear of the house, there was a two-story springhouse and exterior kitchen. The log home on the property was originally the home of Joseph Newton, this one section of the building was moved c. 1950. The log home is not associated with the Alderson family and is noncontributing.

The Alderson home, also called "Sunset Hill," is the last property closely associated with the family. It was the home of George, Sr. a farmer, local businessman, and politician and his family. His daughter, Emma Alderson, was the driving force for the establishment of the Alderson Academy, which was connected to the Baptist denomination. This educational facility operated in Alderson between 1901 and 1932, serving a large student population.

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- Alderson, Emma Frances, ed. "My Life: Emma Cornelia Alderson" by Emma Cornelia Alderson. <u>West Virginia History: A Quarterly Magazine</u>. Cecile R. Goodall Editor. Volume VII, 1945-46. Pp 109-42.
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Interview with John Alderson, by Katherine Jourdan, March 16, 2000.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property known as Sunset Hill does not have an accurate survey map. Various out - takes over the years has reduced the original land grant. The USGS map is being used as a verbal boundary description. This is supported by the ariel agricultural survey map which is labeled "verbal boundary description."

Boundary Justification

The boundaries represented on the map include the acreage historically associated with the Alderson farm. Because the land has passed to family members through wills, there is no current survey or Deed Book description. Sections which have been sold from the farm may show connecting footage and survey information. Those deed references may be found at the Union County Courthouse in the Land Books.

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Name of Property: Address: Town: County:	Sunset Hill Flat Mountain Road Alderson Monroe County, WV			
Photographer:	Joe Alderson			
Date:	March 1999			
Negatives:	Joe Alderson			
Photo 1 of 18	Front or West Facade Camera facing Northeast			
Photo 2 of 18	Front or West Facade Camera facing East			
Photo 3 of 18	West and South Facades Camera facing Northeast			
Photo 4 of 18	South Facade Camera facing North			
Photo 5 of 18	South and East Facades Camera Facing Northwest			
Photo 6 of 18	North Facade			

Photo 7 of 18 Rear or East Facade of House, Front/East facade of Garage Camera facing West

Photo 8 of 18 West Facade of House and Cottage Camera facing East

Camera facing South

Photo 9 of 18 South Facade or Front of Outhouse Camera facing North

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Photo 10 of 18	South and West Facades of Log Out Camera facing Northeast	building	
Photo 11 of 18	East Facade of Log outbuilding and House Camera facing Northwest	South and	East Facade of Chicken
Photo 12 of 18	South and East Facade of Cottage Camera facing Southwest		
Photo 13 of 18	East and North Facade of Barn and Camera facing Northwest	East Facade	e of Log Outbuilding
Photo 14 of 18	East or Rear Facade of Barn Camera facing West		
Photo 15 of 18	East or Rear Facade of Barn and Pro Camera facing West	operty	
Photo 16 of 18	View looking west from NE edge of house to NW (left) Camera facing West	f field next	to the river. Barns and
Photo 17 of 18	Hallway door from front parlor/livir Camera facing NW	ıg room	
Photo 18 of 18	Stairs Camera facing East		

Sunset Hill Alderson, Monroe County

Site Map - Not to scale

