

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

CAMPBELL MANSION

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: CAMPBELL MANSION

Other Name/Site Number: Alexander Campbell House

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Just off West Virginia 67

Not for publication: \_\_\_

City/Town: Bethany

Vicinity: X

State: WV County: Brooke Code: 009

Zip Code: 26032

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: \_\_\_

Public-State: \_\_\_

Public-Federal: \_\_\_

Category of Property

Building(s): \_\_\_

District: X

Site: \_\_\_

Structure: \_\_\_

Object: \_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

2

1

1

\_\_\_

4

Noncontributing

2 buildings

1 sites

1 structures

\_\_\_ objects

4 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 3

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this \_\_\_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_\_ Entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ Determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ Determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ Removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_ Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic:	Domestic Religion Funerary	Sub:	Single Dwelling Church-related Residence cemetery
Current:	Recreation & Culture	Sub:	Museum

**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Limestone  
Walls: Wood  
Roof: Tin  
Other:

**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.****SUMMARY**

The immediate vicinity of the Alexander Campbell Mansion includes the mansion proper, Campbell's detached hexagonal study and two dependent structures, a schoolhouse and smokehouse/springhouse. Also included is the Campbell cemetery, in which Campbell and members of his family are buried.

The Campbell Mansion was built in stages. The first portion was built by John Brown, Alexander Campbell's future father-in-law (not to be confused with abolitionist John Brown), ca. 1790. It was an elaborate frame residence for what was then a frontier community and contained window glass and glass-doored bookcases said to be the first in that section of what was then Virginia.

The well-laid limestone foundation is still serviceable after 200 years. Tradition has it that the lumber for the house was whip-sawed out of logs from the farm. Most of the wood used in the house is walnut except for the flooring, a large part of which is quarter-sawed oak. These floors are still sound.

John Brown built the original section of the home toward the east. It has three rooms on the ground level, which were used as kitchen, pantry, and bedroom. The limestone walls were later plastered.

The first floor also had three rooms: a parlor or living room, and two rooms (possibly a bedroom and a dining room) to the left, or north of the parlor. The parlor has four windows, three doors, and a fireplace. Alexander Campbell married Margaret Brown in this room in 1811. A stairway led to the second floor. The walls were of walnut sections, with a carved border at the top shaped by Brown, who also fashioned the fireplace. There was a porch on the west side. The second floor contained three or four bedrooms.

In 1819, Campbell enclosed the porch into a hallway with a set of stairs, and provided a large schoolroom and a dormitory room above for the Buffalo Seminary which he founded that year. The entire house was then painted white, and green Venetian shutters were put on. In 1823, after the seminary closed, he divided the large classroom on the first floor into his master bedroom ("The Clock Room") and a dining room. He carved bedrooms for his growing family—he eventually fathered 14 children—out of the second-floor dormitory. In this, which is still its external configuration, the main block of the gable roofed Mansion was 7 bays wide across the front. A 1-story porch shelters the three central bays.

In 1836-40, Campbell built the 3-bay section on the west, called "Strangers Hall" by the townspeople, to accommodate his ever increasing numbers of visitors and houseguests. He extended the back part of the former seminary schoolroom in a brick ell, elongating the dining room, to which he connected the single-story frame guest wing. This wing consisted of a parlor with two small bedrooms to the rear and a porch across the front supported by slender white columns. The original French wallpapers from the companies of Dufour and Jean Zuber are outstanding decorative features of the west wing parlor. When these last additions were complete, the house contained some 27 rooms.

After Alexander Campbell died in 1866, his son William inherited the house, where his mother, the second Mrs. Campbell, lived on for many years. Later, William's sister Decima acquired the house. In 1913, she sold it to Earl W. Oglebay of Wheeling, who in 1920 donated the home, its furnishings, and 15.5 acres of land to the Campbell Historical and Memorial Association.

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In 1946, the Association, which had experienced difficulty in securing funds, asked the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and Bethany College to assume joint management and control. Today, Bethany College retains responsibility for its restoration and preservation.

Restoration, performed about 1940 on the ground level, first floor, and exterior, sought to return them to their appearance about 1860. The upper, or second story, was not restored. Many original Campbell furnishings were acquired, new wall coverings were installed, and quarters were provided for a curator to live in the house. In 1992, a further careful restoration was completed. A landscape documentation and restoration study, including preliminary archeological investigation, has also recently been completed.<sup>1</sup>

Campbell's hexagonal brick study is located some 100 feet to the west of the mansion. It is one-story with a central lantern on the roof. It has a pointed arch entrance and niches, buttresses, and a small rear ell. The study was constructed for Campbell by Louis Hobbs who did other work for Campbell in the Bethany area. Campbell did most of his writing and conducted his business activity from the study. He was often at work there as early as 4 a.m. There is also a contributing well located between the main house and school house.

Included as a contributing site is the Campbell Cemetery located on a hill south of the Mansion across West Virginia State Route 67. Campbell chose the site for the cemetery following the death of his fifth child, Amanda. After Campbell's death in 1866, a stone wall was erected around the cemetery. The stones came from two old flour mills located along Buffalo Creek. A large white monument marks Campbell's grave. Other members of the Campbell family also are buried in the cemetery as well as some faculty and presidents of Bethany College.

Also on the immediate grounds are a smokehouse/springhouse and a schoolroom. The former, which lies east of the kitchen, was reconstructed in 1951-63, although it rests over the old stone trough. It is in need of repair. The schoolroom, a one-room frame building originally built in the 1820s near the northeast corner of the house, was reconstructed on its same site in 1950-60, using the original floorboards. Both of these buildings are non-contributing. There also is a non-contributing site, the stone foundation of a former greenhouse/summer house located southeast of the main house in the front yard. A parking lot located south of the Mansion off of West Virginia State Route 67 is a non-contributing structure.

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<sup>1</sup> John Nicely *et al.*, *The Alexander Campbell Mansion, A Landscape Documentation and Restoration Study* (Morgantown, West Virginia: Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, 1992).

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:  
Nationally: X Statewide: \_\_\_ Locally: \_\_\_

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B X C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A X B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ G \_\_\_

NHL Criteria: 2

NHL Criteria Exceptions: 1

- NHL Theme(s) [1994] I. Peopling Places
  - 3. Migration from Outside and Within
- II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
  - 3. Religious Movements
- III. Expressing Cultural Values
  - 1. Educational and Intellectual Currents

Areas of Significance: Education  
Politics/Government  
Religion

Period(s) of Significance: 1811-1866

Significant Dates: 1811, 1829-30, 1840

Significant Person(s): Campbell, Alexander (1788-1866)

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Brown, John; Campbell, Alexander (Mansion), Hobbs, Louis (Study)

- NHL Comparative Categories: XXVII. Education
  - H. Special Populations
    - 2. Ethnic Populations
- XXX. American Ways of Life
  - E. Ethnic Communities: Scots-Irish

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**Page 7****State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.****SUMMARY**

The Alexander Campbell Mansion is the historic home of the multifaceted "Sage of Bethany," founder of Bethany College and the leading influence in America's largest indigenous religious movement. A figure of uncommon prominence in his own day, he was also an educational pioneer, renowned debater, political reformer and philosopher, prolific author, successful businessman, and agricultural leader. This house was his home from his marriage in 1811 until his death in 1866.

Built in four stages between 1793 and 1840, the house was the scene of Alexander Campbell's career. His father Thomas Campbell, a religious figure of note in his own right, lived in the house almost 20 years before his death in 1854. Many famous guests were entertained, including the English Socialist Robert Owen; evangelist Walter Scott; future president of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis; and future U.S. President James A. Garfield, the latter a co-religionist of Campbell, who served as president of Hiram College, one of Bethany's daughter institutions.

The charming farmstead with its separately standing hexagonal study are well-preserved and authentically furnished reminders of a man who had vast influence on American religious and educational reforms and social thought during the 19th century.

**HISTORY<sup>1</sup>**

Campbell was born in County Antrim, Ireland, in 1788. He completed his formal education at the University of Glasgow, where he was introduced to the leading currents of thought in his day. In 1809, he immigrated to western Pennsylvania with his mother, two brothers, and four sisters to join his father, a noted Presbyterian preacher who was forming an association to promote Christian unity. Father and son formed an independent church at Brush Run, Pennsylvania, near their western Pennsylvania home in 1811. When his father moved to Ohio, Alexander began to emerge as the leading spokesman for this new reformation movement, known variously today as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Churches of Christ, and the independent Christian Churches. Meanwhile, Alexander had married John Brown's daughter Margaret and made his home with her just across the State line in the northern Panhandle of what is today West Virginia.

**Religious Leader**

Campbell's effort to simply follow Christ as a solution to Christian disunity ironically led him ultimately to found what became the largest indigenous American religious denomination—the Disciples of Christ. Initially associated with Baptist churches, by 1832, his congregations joined with like-minded secessionist Methodists and Presbyterians and became known as the Christians or Disciples of Christ.

Campbell did not merely preach. He prepared a common speech translation of the New Testament (1827), a hymnal (1828), wrote numerous books, and published periodicals

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<sup>1</sup> The principal sources of this biographical sketch and summary of Campbell's career are Perry E. Gresham, ed., *The Sage of Bethany, A Pioneer in Broadcloth* (St. Louis, Missouri: Bethany Press, 1960) and James M. Seale, ed., *Lectures in Honor of the Alexander Campbell Bicentennial* (Nashville, Tennessee: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1988).

reflecting his beliefs, the *Christian Baptist* (1823-30) and the *Millennial Harbinger* (after 1830).

### **Educator**

Campbell had a long-standing conviction that education should start with the cradle and end with the grave—"lifelong learning."<sup>2</sup> He conducted Buffalo Seminary, a fellowship of students who met at his home in 1818-23. He founded Bethany College, which was chartered by the State of Virginia, in 1840, with an educational philosophy welded out of his Glasgow experience and acquaintance with Jefferson's pedagogic principles at the University of Virginia. He donated the land and money for the college and served as its president until his death. Campbell, who struggled to raise an endowment for Bethany, taught classes in the Bible, intellectual and moral philosophy, and political economy. In 1843, he also established a primary school—a boarding school—which operated until 1860.

Campbell's educational accomplishment must be viewed in the context of the time, for when Campbell founded Bethany higher education was generally available to only a very few in the United States. Even high school education was an attainment. College was available essentially only to a privileged elite in the East. There were around a hundred colleges in the Nation and none in western Virginia.

Bethany College prospered and its influence, along with Campbell's and the Disciples' of Christ, diffused in the next decades as the Scots-Irish pushed out of Appalachia and helped drive the midwestern and southern frontiers across the Mississippi. As they poured west, Bethany graduates seeded their towns on the advancing frontier with Campbellite churches and new colleges in the mold of Bethany. Campbell's example influenced more than 200 institutions of higher learning and some 200 academies and institutes in America. Of these colleges, some 25 are still in existence, including Texas Christian University, Transylvania (in Lexington, Kentucky), Butler (in Indianapolis, Indiana), and Drake (in Des Moines, Iowa).<sup>3</sup>

The Disciples of Christ also led the Nation in establishing schools for women, following Campbell's injunction that:

It is not the education of the daughters of the affluent and honorable only, or chiefly, of which we speak—it is the education of all—it is common, it is universal female education, and to a more liberal extent than has been yet imagined—for which we speak, when we plead for that female education indispensable to the full and proper amelioration of the social state.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See D. Duane Cummins, *The Disciples Colleges: A History* (St. Louis: CBP Press, 1987), pp. 30-41 for a succinct outline of Campbell's educational philosophy and his founding of Bethany College.

<sup>3</sup> These institutions are cataloged and discussed in Cummins, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv; 23 et seq. The importance of Old Main, the key extant early building at Bethany, in the history of American architecture and Scots-Irish ethnicity, has been recognized through its designation as a National Historic Landmark.

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Campbell, "On the Amelioration of the Social State," *Popular Lectures and Addresses* (Philadelphia: James Challen and Sons, 1863), cited in Lester G. McAllister, "At the Side, Not the Foot," *The Disciple*, July 1988, p. 20.



## Philosopher and Thinker

Campbell's debates with other religious leaders and social thinkers were a sensation in his own time and much of his oratory was captured in printed form. These debates were among the accomplishments that made him widely known in an era noted for giants in debate. The most celebrated of these was an eight-day series of debates in Cincinnati in April 1829 with the utopian socialist Robert Owen, in which Owen sought "to prove that the principles of all religions are erroneous, and that their practice is injurious to the human race."<sup>5</sup>

A believer in man's freedom to determine his own fate, Campbell effectively rebutted Owen's environmental determinism—the precursor of Marx's and Engel's economic determinism. Campbell clearly won the day in terms of popular sentiment in America for after the Campbell-Owen debates observers noted a cooling of socialist enthusiasm in America. The writings of Frances Trollope, who witnessed the debates, helped establish Campbell's reputation in Europe.

## Political Reformer

Although Campbell believed in separation of church and state, he came into prominence in political issues as a delegate to the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1829-1830. By 1830, Virginia had been surpassed by New York and was no longer the most populous State in the Nation, but her constitutional revision of that year still commanded national attention.

Campbell justified his participation on the basis that the convention was "one of the most grave and solemn of all political matters, and not like the ordinary affairs of legislation."<sup>6</sup> During fifteen weeks in Richmond he took an active part in debate and made three major addresses—on representation in legislative bodies, arguing against the counting of slaves; on suffrage, in which he favored the widest possible extension of the franchise to white males; and on the county court system, campaigning for the election of judges. He also sought to persuade the convention to establish, in his words, "a system of common school education" and to "lay a foundation for the abolition of slavery."<sup>7</sup> In a nutshell, he espoused a liberal political philosophy that favored the small farmers and artisans of the frontier over the slaveholders of Tidewater. Indeed, he had sought election "as a practical farmer." He had achieved wealth through his farming interests and as one of the first Americans to raise Merino sheep.

Campbell stood out for his acumen and oratory, even in the illustrious company of more conservative elder statesmen like James Madison, James Monroe, John Randolph, and John Marshall. In contrast to these men, he represented a new generation of leaders who sought to bring Virginia into the 19th century. Campbell's views were in the minority, however, in every instance cited here.

Some of Campbell's views were assimilated in a later constitution in 1852. They were also reflective of the sharply divergent views of Virginians west of the mountains and epitomized

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<sup>5</sup> A good summary of the debate with key extracts cited may be founded in Perry Epler Gresham, "Alexander Campbell Against Socialism," pp. 131-145, in *The Sage of Bethany...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Harold L. Lunger, "Voice Ahead of the Times," *The Disciple*, January 1988, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Eva Jean Wrather, "Campbell: Marx to Jackson," in James M. Seale, *Lectures in Honor of the Alexander Campbell Bicentennial*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

the differences that led to the permanent division of the State and the formation of West Virginia.

Campbell took positions on nearly all important political issues. As one biographer has noted:

He opposed woman suffrage, considered Roman Catholicism a threat to American institutions, advocated free public schools, opposed the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, sought the elimination of slavery, defended capital punishment, opposed the Mexican War, and was an ardent pacifist.<sup>8</sup>

Campbell's moderate views and actions on slavery and his pacifism, as much as anything else, may have done much to dim his popular reputation after his own time. While he condemned slavery as "that largest and blackest blot upon our national escutcheon," he favored gradual emancipation with provision for education and land for those freed and steps to assist the South in establishing a new economic order based on free labor. In 1832, he proposed that Congress appropriate \$10,000,000 annually for the purchase, education, and colonization of slaves. In 1849, as Northern sentiment swung more and more toward abolition, he prepared a "Tract for the People of Kentucky" in support of an emancipation plan Henry Clay was seeking in Kentucky's constitutional convention of that year. In it, Campbell denounced slavery on economic, social, psychological, and moral grounds. Yet, after passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, he counseled obedience to it until it could be constitutionally changed.<sup>9</sup> It appeared that his fear of the divisions of the churches on the issue of slavery and the specter of civil war consistently drove his opinions on this issue, as in an 1835 editorial in the *Millennial Harbinger*, where he decried those who wished that the issue

shall only be discussed by the light of burning palaces, cities, and temples, amidst the roar of cannon, the clangor of trumpets, the shrieks of dying myriads... the horrid din and crash of a broken confederacy... and the agonizing throes of the last and best republics on earth.<sup>10</sup>

Campbell's 1848 "Address on War" to the Wheeling Lyceum set out generally his opposition to war, as illustrated in the following extracts: "war is folly, because it can never be a satisfactory end of the controversy;" "the innocent are punished with the guilty;" and "wars are the pioneers of all other evils to society, both moral and physical."<sup>11</sup>

## CONCLUSION

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<sup>8</sup> Harold L. Lunger, "Alexander Campbell's Political Activity and Views," in Perry E. Gresham, ed., *The Sage of Bethany, op. cit.*, p. 160. Campbell also condemned the Federal seizure of Cherokee lands.

<sup>9</sup> Campbell's positions on aspects of the slavery and emancipation questions and his agony over their potential for dividing the nation in fraternal strife are summarized in Roland Bainton, "Alexander Campbell and the Social Order," pp. 123-127 in Gresham, *The Sage of Bethany, op. cit.*, and Robert O. Fife, "In the Spirit of the Prophets: Alexander Campbell as a Social Thinker," pp. 30-34, in Seale, *op. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> *Millennial Harbinger*, 1835, p. 587, cited by Bainton in Gresham, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

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Alexander Campbell won extraordinary praise from his contemporaries. James Madison, despite his differences with Campbell, nevertheless has been quoted as judging him to be "the greatest man" at the 1829-30 convention<sup>12</sup> and "the ablest and most original expounder of the Scriptures I have ever heard." Robert E. Lee thought he would suggest a grand idea of the human race were he an ambassador to superior worlds. Henry Clay, who had presided at one of his debates in Lexington, Kentucky, introduced him to foreign visitors as one of "the most eminent citizens of the United States."<sup>13</sup>

The "Sage of Bethany" died in 1866 where he had lived so long—in this home nestled in the hills north of Wheeling—full of years and accomplishments. But his family had been riven by the war he had so long abhorred and sought to avoid. One of his favorite nephews had been a leader of the successful wartime movement to establish West Virginia. His eldest son was a colonel in the Confederate army and hundreds of his former students at Bethany had supported the South. It was only over the old man's grave that his son and his nephew spoke to each other again.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Lunger in Gresham, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>13</sup> Cited by Wrather in Gresham, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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McAllister, Lester G. "At the Side, Not the Foot," *The Disciple*, June 1988, pp. 19-20.

Nicely, John *et al.* *Alexander Campbell Landscape Documentation and Restoration Conservation Report*. West Virginia Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, 1992.

Richardson, Dr. Robert. *The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*. Nashville, 1956.

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Seale, James M., ed. *Lectures in Honor of the Alexander Campbell Bicentennial*. Nashville, Tennessee: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1988.

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: #WV-212 (Mansion); WV-119 (Study)  
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State Agency  
 Federal Agency  
 Local Government  
 University: **BETHANY COLLEGE**  
 Other (Specify Repository):

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property:            Approximately eight (8) acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	A 17	538500	4450700

## Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point formed at the intersection of a line drawn parallel to the east wall of the Mansion 110 feet to its east with the north edge of the right of way of West Virginia State Route 67, thence southeast across State Route 67 approximately 700 feet to the northeast corner of the Campbell Cemetery, thence south approximately 210 feet to the southeast corner of the cemetery, thence west approximately 160 feet to the southwest corner of the cemetery, thence north approximately 210 feet to the northwest corner of the cemetery, thence west approximately 70 feet to the east side of the cemetery drive, thence northwesterly along the east edge of the cemetery drive to its intersection with State Route 67, thence east along the south edge of the right of way of State Route 67 to a point formed by the intersection of that right of way with a line drawn parallel to the west wall of the Mansion 270 feet to its west, thence north 200 feet along said parallel line, thence east along a line drawn parallel with the north wall of the rear ell of the Mansion 60 feet to its north, to the parallel line's intersection with the line drawn parallel to the east wall of the Mansion 110 feet to its east, thence south along said latter parallel line to the point of beginning.

## Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes the Campbell Mansion, the three dependent buildings referenced in this study, and the landscaped grounds in their immediate vicinity, as well as a portion of the orchard area south of the Mansion across West Virginia State Route 67 and the Campbell Cemetery, which were historically part of Alexander Campbell's property.

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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Date: December 9, 1993