

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0669113

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 18 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 24 1978

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Mathias, John, House

AND/OR COMMON

The Mathias Homestead

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

W. Va. Route 259

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Mathias

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Second

STATE

West Virginia

CODE

54

COUNTY

Hardy

CODE

031 ✓

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Commun- ity Center

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mathias Civic Center Association, %Richard Strawderman, Vice President

STREET & NUMBER

and % Annabelle Vance, Chairman, John Mathias Restoration Committee  
Mathias Home Demonstration Club

CITY, TOWN

Mathias

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

West Virginia 26812

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hardy County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Elm Street

CITY, TOWN

Moorefield

STATE

West Virginia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John Mathias Homestead is made up of two hewn-log houses built close to each other and joined by a frame "dog trot," or what has been referred to locally as the "entry." It is located at the intersection of two highways, placed in a depression with open land on all sides.

Each section is a two-story rectangle, but the older unit (c. 1797) is slightly longer, though narrower, than the newer one (c. 1825). The frame connector takes the general dimensions of the former; the division between sections is especially evident in the differing height of the roofs. Each unit has an exterior stone chimney at the gable end.

Fenestration in the c. 1797 section is regular and symmetrical, with windows flanking slightly off-center doors on each level of the front, a placement (except for the doors) repeated at the rear. There is also a first-floor door on the north side next to the chimney, but this was likely installed after construction for access to a dependency once located here. There is no access from this section directly into the connector. Fenestration in the c. 1825 section is much more haphazard, especially at the front where a door and two windows are at the first level and two windows on the second floor are spaced roughly between these. The rear has two windows on the first floor (one was probably added or changed) and one on the second. An opening has been made into the connector on the upper floor of this section. The "entry" has doors on each level at the front and windows at the rear. All windows are 6/6 double-hung sash except for a 6/3 opening at the north rear of the newer section.

A double porch whose roof is a continuation of that on the main house is at the front of the c. 1797 unit, while a one-story porch continues along the c. 1825 part. The former was rather attractive at one time with its squared balusters, but deterioration has detracted from its lines. Weatherboarding has been placed over the entire structure, and the roof (sagging and in poor condition on the older section) is metal covered.

Inside, the house is rather pleasant. Each floor of the c. 1797 part is partitioned into two rooms with a stair at the rear of the building between rooms. Basic fabric is original, but the quality beaded vertical-board paneling and nicely styled mantels (there is one fireplace on each level) may not date from the time of construction. Partitions are also of beaded vertical boards of varying widths. Methods of joining, types of molding, clean lines and wide boards indicate a well-finished house whose interior woodwork is quite old. A lesser quality is evident in the c. 1825 section, although it too is pleasing. The first floor has been divided into two rooms, while the second level is an open loft (with logs exposed). In this unit the stair is at the side of the chimney that houses only one fireplace. Plain wide boards are used as a paneling on the first floor (this type of wall treatment might be original), and the mantel here is high and wide with supporting pilasters that taper from floor to frieze level.

Now owned by the Mathias Civic Center Association, the house was lived in by descendants of the builders until the 1960s. It is contemplated that restoration will begin soon with a structural study and roof replacement.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1797 and c. 1825 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Mathias House at Mathias, Hardy County, West Virginia, is representative of the early buildings that were constructed over much of this developing area between the Revolutionary War and about 1850. John Mathias, Sr., was among the earliest settlers of this rather isolated region in the western part of Virginia's ridge-and-valley province, and his family played an important role in its evolution.

As with so many before and after, John (Johanne) Mathias emigrated to the emerging United States from Alsace-Lorraine to escape persecution. Along with two brothers he first took up residence around Philadelphia, but he soon followed an established trend of migration to the interior. Moving first to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Mathias later went on to Frederick County, Maryland, then across the Potomac River into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and finally over the mountains to the Lost River Valley of Hardy County.

It was in 1791 that he acquired property around present-day Mathias, and his family apparently moved into their well-constructed log house around 1797. The building was substantial by standards of the time, having four rooms, an attic loft, good interior stairs, sufficient windows and doors, a double porch and fireplaces on both floors. Logs were hewn and fitted well in the structure.

Farming and land holding were interests of the several generations of John Mathiases who followed. By 1825 or so the old log house was just not large enough any longer, and another was built close by and connected to the first by a frame "entry." This was a grand residence for the place and time despite the fact that farmers along Lost River were not as prosperous as planters in the South Branch Valley to the west. They constructed smaller houses of somewhat lesser quality materials, using logs quite frequently rather than the brick so prevalent in fine homes around the county seat at Moorefield.

The family became prominent in the valley, and their location along the road to what became the Howard's Lick resort (now Lost River State Park) most probably was inviting to many who passed through. Tradition holds that hospitality in the form of bed and board was offered. "Light Horse" Harry Lee, owner of a good deal of land and a cabin (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) at Howard's Lick is said to have made the house his headquarters before purchasing his property.

Hardy County was deeply divided during the Civil War when most of the citizens of what is now Grant County supported the Union and those around Moorefield and to the east sympathized with the Confederacy. The division was evidenced in county politics,

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Croft, Grace H. Descendants of Johann Jacob Dispionit. Provo, Utah: by the author, 1977 (pp. 278-79).  
 Hardy County Court Records. Various.  
 Kenny, Hamill. West Virginia Place Names. Piedmont, W.Va.: Place Name Press, 1945.  
 Moore, Commander Alvin Edward. History of Hardy County of the Borderland. Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Co., 1963 (pp. 97-100).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Lost City, W.Va.--Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 68,50,0,0 4,30,51,3,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Mathias House is bounded on the east by W. Va. Route 259 on the north by County Route 12 on the west by a tree line approximately 25' behind the house and on the south by a fence line about 200' beyond the house.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James E. Harding, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation Unit  
 W.Va. Department of Culture and History

DATE

April 17, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

Cultural Center  
 Capitol Complex

TELEPHONE

(304) 348-0244

CITY OR TOWN

Charleston

STATE

West Virginia

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Clarence Morrow*

TITLE West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE May 16, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 ATTEST: *William Helovich*  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

*11/24/78*

DATE

*Nov 22, 1978*

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MATHIAS, JOHN, HOUSE, MATHIAS, HARDY COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

CONTINUATION SHEET

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too, and records seem to show a Virginia County Court meeting at the John Mathias House on May 2, 1864, nearly a year after the state of West Virginia was established. Be that as it may, however, the family has remained centered at the homestead and has branched into the surrounding countryside in the years since then.

Farming continued as the major occupation, but side interests in other businesses began to take on greater importance. Perhaps this reached its most diverse stage in the person of Phillip Mathias, great-great-grandson of John, Sr., for he not only farmed but was a merchant, ran a store, was involved in a trucking business and became postmaster of the community called Mathias, a name that apparently was not officially recognized until the latter part of the nineteenth century (the settlement had been called variously Rockland, Barbarasville and Howard's Lick).

As time went on the old homestead became less and less suitable or satisfying as a place to live. After the mid 1960s, it was pretty much abandoned, and it has deteriorated to some extent since. Interest in reuse of this oldest of buildings in the town (one of the oldest in the county) as a community center grew, however, and the property was deeded to the Mathias Civic Center Association in 1974. When repairs and restoration work are completed, the landmark should have an important role once again.