

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: West Virginia
COUNTY: Fayette
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE DEC 30 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
* Contentment

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Imboden, Colonel George, House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Along U.S. Route #60

CITY OR TOWN:
Ansted

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Second

STATE:
West Virginia

CODE:
54

COUNTY:
Fayette

CODE:
019

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific 	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Fayette County Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:
P.O. Box 828

CITY OR TOWN:
Oak Hill

STATE:
West Virginia

CODE:
54

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Fayette County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Fayetteville

STATE:
West Virginia

CODE:
54

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

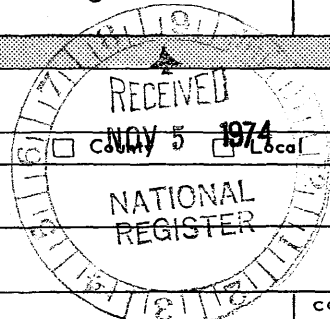
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house which is now called Contentment was built about 1830 on the north side of the Midland Trail or James River and Kanawha Turnpike (now U.S. Route 60). At the time of its purchase by Colonel George Imboden in 1872, the structure consisted of five rooms and a detached kitchen. It is believed that until that time it was as originally constructed of wood framing with vertical clapboards on the front and horizontal clapboards on the sides and back. The metal roof had a rather steep slope, gentled in the front by the lesser pitch of the six-pillared porch. Stout brick chimneys in the gable ends served the main rooms, while the ell had its own, less finished, exterior fireplace outlets. All windows were 6/6 double-hung and shuttered.

When Colonel Imboden bought the house in 1872, he built two rooms on the west end and extended the porch to include the addition, adding a chimney on the gable end for use by the two new rooms. No other changes are known to have been made since with the exception of minor repairs and replacements.

The interior is little changed since 1830. The main entrance door has sidelights half way down and is surrounded by two windows on either side. Arrangements are such that fireplaces are also balanced on each side by the presence of windows. One enters a hall which gives access to the front rooms and leads to a series of steps which take one to the slightly raised rear rooms, sort of an early split level which followed the slope of the land. All five of the original rooms are large and display attractive woodwork and carved walnut mantels. Doors are thick, four-paneled oak with original locks and hinges. Some interior trim is in chestnut. All original flooring is of varying five-inch boards of pine, oak or walnut.

Exterior appearance of Contentment is similar to that of the many "cottages" which were to be seen at the Virginia and West Virginia spring resorts of the time.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **c. 1830, 1872**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input 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

Although Contentment was probably constructed about 1830, its note as an important property rests more on the fact of its occupancy by Colonel George Imboden beginning about 1872. Imboden had been a member of the bar in Staunton, Virginia, at the outbreak of the Civil War, and he immediately joined the Confederate forces, rising to the rank of colonel of the 18th Virginia Cavalry in December 1862. It was as a soldier that he passed through what became Ansted, Fayette County, West Virginia, but his family's association with the territory extended back many years. It had ties with western Virginia settlers around Weston, and George had married the daughter of a man who owned property in the area. After spending some time in Kentucky during the late 1860s, Imboden eventually settled at Contentment and became associated with coal mining interests. His political standing in the locale is also notable, for he served as a member of the bar, was president of the Fayette County Court from 1881 to 1885, became Ansted's first mayor in 1891, and was elected town recorder successively from 1892 to 1907.

George Imboden received good schooling as a child and eventually gained admission to the bar at Staunton, Virginia, in 1858. Energy and ability gained for him a reputation as a potential social and political climber in that section of the state until the outbreak of the Civil War stirred the nation. Imboden enlisted in the Confederate Army in April of 1861 and served at numerous encounters before being promoted to colonel of the 18th Virginia Cavalry in December 1862. He had known "Stonewall" Jackson quite well, and his brother, John, was to become a general in the Southern forces. It was with his brother's troops that he entered western Virginia in April and May 1863 as part of the Jones-Imboden raids to destroy the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as a lifeline of the Union in the interior. George criss-crossed much of the area around Fayette County, where he was to settle after the war, and became familiar with the land while meeting many of its people.

With the Civil War concluded, Colonel Imboden first settled in Kentucky, living there from 1866 until 1869. After a short stay in his native Virginia he moved to Ansted where he became instrumental in the opening of coal-mining enterprises after 1870. It was Imboden who purchased land for David T. Ansted, a noted English geologist who traveled to Fayette County to help establish the Gauley-Kanawha Coal Company, Limited, a firm which greatly helped boost the area's economy while attracting new settlers. The company had been organized in London through the efforts of such people as former Confederate General John Imboden, and George, John's brother, was in large part responsible for work on this side of the Atlantic which made the organization a going concern. His ties with the coal industry remained

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fayette Tribune (Fayetteville, W.Va.), January 12, 1922, p. 1.
 Freeman, Douglas Southall, Lee's Lieutenants. 3 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942-44. (Vol. II, pp. 709-10)
 Peters, J.T. and H.B. Carden. History of Fayette County, West Virginia. Charleston, W.Va.: Jarrett Printing Co., 1926. (pp. 481-94)
 Stutler, Boyd B. West Virginia in the Civil War. 2nd. ed. Charleston, W.Va.: Education Foundation, Inc., 1966. (pp. 210-14)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

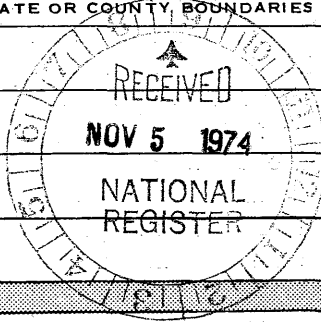
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 08' 06"	81° 06' 10.3"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM
17/490970
4220580

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 1/2 Acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
C.E. Turley, Field Agent and James E. Harding, Research Analyst

ORGANIZATION: West Virginia Antiquities Commission DATE: October 30, 1974

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: Leonard M. Davis
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
 Date: October 30, 1974

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

A. K. ...
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

DEC 30 1974

Date: _____

ATTEST:

Ronald D. Greenburg
 Keeper of The National Register

DEC 30 1974

Date: _____

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE West Virginia	
COUNTY Fayette	
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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

strong from this time onward.

Colonel Imboden was also instrumental in civic growth in Fayette County from 1870 until his death in 1922. Although a member of the bar, he rarely practiced law. His interests, however, brought him to the forefront among community leaders, and when Ansted (named for David T. Ansted) was incorporated as a town in 1891, Imboden was elected its first mayor. Even prior to this he had made his mark in the county, for he had served as president of the Fayette County Court from 1881 until 1885.

With income from his business interests, Colonel Imboden was able to maintain his comfortable home at Contentment even while traveling extensively. International and national exhibitions seemed his favorite, and he attended the 1876 Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, the 1894 World's Fair in Chicago, the St. Louis Exposition of 1904 and the 1907 Jamestown Exposition.

While his first wife, daughter of a man who maintained an inn along the James River and Kanawha Turnpike in the area, lived at Contentment from 1872 until her death, the structure did not receive its distinctive name until Imboden married Angia Dickinson in 1889. Since that time, and especially after the death of George Imboden in 1922, the territory around Ansted in Fayette County, West Virginia, has viewed Contentment as a house of note.

