

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

1526

1. Name of Property

historic name: Speck, Peter House

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number: 1149 Ben Speck Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Martinsburg

vicinity: X

state: West Virginia-WV

county: Berkeley

code: 003

zip code: 25401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.)

*Susan M. Pierce*

10/29/02

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

Date

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

Date

Speck, Peter House \_\_\_\_\_

Berkeley \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginia-WV \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet

\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_ other (explain):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
*Edson H. Ball*      *12/12/02*

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of property**

(Check only one box)

- private
- \_\_\_\_ public-local
- \_\_\_\_ public-State
- \_\_\_\_ public-Federal

- building(s)
- \_\_\_\_ district
- \_\_\_\_ site
- \_\_\_\_ structure
- \_\_\_\_ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2 _____	0 _____	buildings
0 _____	0 _____	sites
0 _____	0 _____	structures
0 _____	0 _____	objects
2 _____	0 _____	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously in the listed National Register N/A

Speck, Peter House

Berkeley

West Virginia-WV

Name of Property

County and State

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Domestic: Secondary Structure

**Current Functions**

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Domestic: Secondary Structure

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

Early Republic: Federal

**Materials**

Foundation Stone

Walls Stone; Log

Roof Metal

Other Clay tile

**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.

\_\_\_\_\_ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

**C** 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.

Speck, Peter House \_\_\_\_\_

Berkeley \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginia-WV \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Property**

**County and State**

**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**

Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1814-1815

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1814-1815

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(See continuation sheets.)

Speck, Peter House \_\_\_\_\_

Berkeley \_\_\_\_\_ West Virginia-WV \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Property

County and State

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliographical**

(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

Other

Name of Repository Berkeley County Historic Landmarks Commission \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than 1 acre \_\_\_\_\_

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Quad Map Name: Hedgesville \_\_\_\_\_

A 17 24434 438178  
Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(See continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(See continuation sheet.)

**Name of Property**  
Speck, Peter, House

**County and State**  
Berkeley, West Virginia

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Geoffrey B. Henry and Jared N. Tuk, Architectural Historians

Organization: GAI Consultants, Inc. Date: June 2002

Street & Number: 570 Beatty Road Telephone: 412-856-6400

City or Town: Monroeville State: WV ZIP: 15146

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: David Elliott

Street & Number: 1149 Ben Speck Road Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town: Hedgesville State: WV Zip: 25401

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## **SUMMARY DESCRIPTION**

The Peter Speck House is located at 1149 Ben Speck Road, in rural northern Berkeley County, West Virginia. The contributing resources on the property consist of the log-and-stone main house (built ca. 1814 and ca. 1815) and a ca. 1815 stone spring house. The log half of the house, built ca. 1814, is a two-story, two-bay, gable-roofed building. Three of its exterior log walls were replaced with brick tile walls in the late 1940s and its exterior is stuccoed on three sides. The log half's interior retains its two-over-two floor plan, original wood trim and fireplaces, and the two-story open staircase that it shares with the ca. 1815 stone half. The stone half of the Peter Speck House also is two stories high and two bays wide with a gable roof. Its interior features a two-over two plan and much original woodwork, including fireplace mantels, door and window trim, and floors. Each half of the house has its principal entrance on the north, and the north façade is covered by weatherboard siding. There is a one-story, hip-roofed porch built across the north façade in the early 1900s. Also on the property is a one-story, gable-roofed fieldstone springhouse, built ca. 1815, and now used as a shed.

## **LOCATION AND SETTING**

The Peter Speck House is located in the Hedgesville Magisterial District of Berkeley County, West Virginia. The surrounding topography is gently rolling, and consists of a mixture of dense hardwoods and fenced pastures. The Peter Speck House is located on the south side of Ben Speck Road, a narrow winding road that runs north from WV Route 9, northwest of Martinsburg. Ben Speck Road separates the Peter Speck house from three agricultural buildings (two barns and a shed), formerly part of the property but separated from it in 1999 and thus not part of the nominated Peter Speck House property. The house and springhouse are set in a small, landscaped clearing, shaded by mature hardwood trees.

## **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

### **Peter Speck House (ca. 1814; ca. 1815)—Contributing Building**

The Peter Speck House consists of two main sections, a log half, dating from ca. 1814, and a stone half, built ca. 1815. The 2-story, 2-bay, gable-roofed log half comprises the west half of the house, with the stone section making up the east half. Both sections are oriented north, and each section has its own north entrance. The front façade is covered with painted weatherboard siding applied in the late 1940s. The two halves of the house are joined with a boxed cornice with molding strip and there are gable-end returns on the east and west.

#### *Log Half-Exterior*

The log half is two stories high and two bays wide and has a gable roof covered with standing seam metal that was installed in 1999. There are 6/6 double-hung sash windows

on the north elevation and 1/1 double-hung sash windows on the west and south. The entrance on the north features a rectangular transom and six-paneled wooden door with metal box lock. There is an enclosed shed-roofed porch, dating from the mid-twentieth century, located on the south.

The log half of the Peter Speck House was altered during a major renovation carried out by owner Ben Speck in the late 1940s. At this time, the west, south, and north walls were removed and were replaced with brick tiles. The tiles were stuccoed on the exterior and plastered on the interior. Header bond brick trim was used around the window openings, and the attic level of the west gable end was covered with weatherboard siding. The east wall, all interior supports, flooring, and woodwork of the log half were retained in place.

#### *Stone Half-Exterior*

The stone east half of the house was built ca. 1815. The east gable end of this half is the only one on which the original exterior stonework is still visible. The native, uncut field stones are laid in irregular courses, with large, squared stones used as quoins. Stones range in size from 6"x6" to nearly 2' in length. The seam of the original roofline is visible in the stonework, revealing where the roofline was raised approximately 4 feet, probably during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Squared stones are used as lintels above the windows and the cellar door opening. On the east elevation, there are two windows with 6/6 double-hung sash on the first story with plain sills and molded frames, and two windows placed closer together on the second story. The second-story windows also feature 6/6 double-hung sash with plain sills and molded frames. The east gable end is trimmed with a ca. 1900 wooden box cornice with a gable-end return.

Three cement steps lead to the cellar entrance on the east gable end. The door surround is pegged and the early-nineteenth-century door has a metal box lock with spoon handle. Both the north and south elevations of the stone half of the house are covered with stucco, applied in the late 1940s. Windows have 6/6 double hung sash on the north façade, and 1/1 double hung sash windows on the south elevation. The entrance on the north features a rectangular transom and a paneled wooden door with a glass window. There was a one-story, gable-roofed log wing on the south that reputedly housed both an early schoolhouse and a later doctor's office. This wing was demolished in the 1970s.

The two halves of the Peter Speck House are united across the north façade by a one-story, three-bay, hip-roofed front porch, dating from ca. 1900-1910. The porch has a poured concrete foundation, tapered square-section columns resting on paneled square-section piers atop short, three-course brick bases. The piers are joined by a wooden balustrade. The porch roof is covered with standing-seam metal. The porch ceiling is covered with narrow boards and is painted light blue.

#### *Log Half-Interior*

The log half features two rooms on each floor in addition to a rear stair hall that is shared with the stone half of the house. The first-floor north room is now used as a dining room.



This room features wide pine floors and is trimmed with a molded baseboard and chairrail. On the west gable wall is a fireplace mantel consisting of paneled pilasters, a paneled frieze flanked by short paneled pilasters and a molded mantel shelf that breaks forward at the corners. The fireplace opening has been sealed and a metal stove pipe has been inserted in the wall above the shelf. To the left of the fireplace are two paneled doors and a pull-drawer; the three features are surrounded with fluted trim punctuated with bull's eye corner blocks. The doors on the north and east have fluted trim with bull's eye corner block. The door on the south has paneled jambs, in addition to the fluted trim with bull's eye corner blocks. The room on the south is now used as a kitchen, with most of the cabinets and appliances dating from the second half of the twentieth century. Although the floors are covered with modern linoleum, the molded baseboard and door trim are original.

The second floor features a southwest room, now used as an office. This room retains the original floors, baseboard trim, window and door moldings and chairrail, although the original fireplace has been removed. The northwest room is now a bedroom. It retains its original floors, baseboard trim, and chairrail, as well as a shallow, built-in closet on the east. On the west gable wall is a fireplace mantel consisting of paneled pilasters, a paneled frieze flanked by short paneled pilasters and a molded mantel shelf that breaks forward at the corners. To the left of the fireplace are two paneled doors and a pull-drawer; the three features are surrounded with fluted trim punctuated with bull's eye corner blocks.

#### *Stone Half-Interior*

The stone half features two rooms on each floor in addition to a rear stair hall that is shared with the log half of the house. The first-floor north room is now used as a living room. This room features modern wood floors laid over the original wide pine floors. Woodwork trim includes a molded baseboard and a chairrail. On the east wall is a fireplace mantel consisting of fluted pilasters and a frieze with bull's eye corner blocks. The molded mantel shelf extends nearly eight inches on each side. The original hearth and opening have been bricked over and a metal wood stove added. To the right of the fireplace is a built-in open cabinet with five shelves, with a double-door cabinet below. A six-panel door with porcelain handle leads to the present bathroom. This room features the original pine floors. The fireplace (now sealed) in this room has a mantel consisting of fluted pilasters and bull's eye corner blocks.

The second floor consists of a northeast bedroom and a small storage room. The bedroom features modern wood floors laid over the original pine floors. The fireplace mantel consists of paneled pilasters with reeded edges, bull's eye corner blocks, a paneled frieze, and molded mantel shelf with a molding strip below. To the right of the fireplace is a closet with six-panel door and wooden latch. The storage room is reduced in size, because it leads to the enclosed stairway to the attic. The attic covers the entire width of the house and no break between the stone and log halves is visible. The attic was finished in the late 1940s, with all visible woodwork probably dating from this period.

*Stair Hall*

The stair hall is probably the most unusual feature of this house and was built ca. 1815 to join the log and stone halves of the house. Unlike most stair halls from this period, it is located at the rear, rather than to the front or to the side. The stair hall is accessed on the first floor from three grained wooden doors with metal box locks and porcelain knobs. There is a small closet set below the stairs, also with a six-panel grained wooden door. The open staircase rises in two stages and features a turned mahogany newel post, turned posts at each landing, a round handrail, and two plain balusters per stair tread. A small molded baseboard runs along the stair wall.

**Spring House (ca. 1815)—Contributing Building**

Located to the northeast of the main house is a one-story, one-bay, gable-roofed stone spring house oriented west. The building stones are laid in irregular courses, with a few squared stones placed near the corners. There is an entrance on the west gable end with a vertical board door. The building is covered with a corrugated metal roof. The framed shed-roofed lean-ton on the south is not original.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Peter Speck House is significant under Criterion C for Architecture on the local level, with the period of significance being 1814-1815. The house is significant as embodying the distinctive characteristics of vernacular Federal-style architecture in northern Berkeley County in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Both log and stone were the most commonly used building materials during this period, with the Peter Speck House being a good example of their use for two halves of the same house. The two-story, open rear stair hall is the most unusual feature of the house and was built to unite the 1814 log house and its 1815 stone addition. The Peter Speck House is also distinguished by its seven Federal-style fireplace mantels and four built-in closets.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The original builder, Peter Speck was born in 1780 and moved from Pennsylvania to Berkeley County in 1813, where he purchased land on Tulisses Branch, northeast of the present town of Hedgesville. His home plantation was made up of three tracts: the first tract was purchased from Peter Hout on 3 March 1813; the second was purchased from Andrew Keesecker in 1814; and the third was purchased from Alexander Robinson in 1814 (Berkeley County Deed Book 25, page 85). The total farm acreage was 170 acres. Soon after, he married Eva Christine Cushwa of Washington County, Maryland and they raised six children on their Berkeley County property.

Based on property tax records, it is believed that Speck built the log house in 1814, to which he attached a stone section in 1815. The interior woodwork in both sections is similar and indicates a close proximity in dates of construction. According to tradition, a stone wing formerly attached to the 1815 stone half was used as a school house. Speck placed an advertisement in the local *Martinsburg Gazette* newspaper in 1815 requesting a school teacher. This wing was removed in the 1970s.

Both stone and log construction were common throughout Berkeley County in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with brick far less common. Several examples of buildings consisting of a log portion to which was added a stone portion stand in the vicinity of the Peter Speck House. According to a 2000-2001 architectural survey of the Hedgesville/Harlan Spring area of Berkeley County, the stone sections of Spring Hill (ca. 1744) and Fort Hill (ca. 1745-48) are among the oldest stone buildings in the county. The Peter Hedges House (ca. 1769) and the Hughes-Cunningham House (ca. 1772) are the oldest extant log buildings in this region of the county (GAI Consultants 2001: 25). All four of these buildings were later enlarged with wings of a different building material. Depending on the intended use and the financial resources of the builder, stone buildings were added onto pre-existing log structures, and visa versa. The two halves were often stuccoed, although they were also sometimes left unpainted and un-stuccoed, with both construction periods clearly visible on the exterior.

The two-story, open stair hall is the most unusual feature of this house and reflects an innovative approach to uniting the interior spaces of the two building halves. Often, an addition to an existing house would have its own separate staircase, and sometimes the two halves were united only at the basement or attic levels. Instead, Speck (or his unknown builder) chose to visually integrate the two halves through the construction of an open staircase at the rear of the house. In the Federal period, stair halls were usually located on the side or at the front entrance, making this stair hall particularly unusual.

The Peter Speck House is also distinguished by the amount of original interior woodwork remaining. The woodwork was apparently executed all at one time, and was probably based on the designs contained in popular builder's manuals or pattern books in circulation at this time. The fireplace mantels feature such typical Federal-style design elements as paneled and fluted pilasters (sometimes trimmed with a reeded or beaded edge), a paneled or fluted frieze, and a molded mantel shelf. Four of the rooms also contain built-in cupboards or closets.

Peter Speck died on 30 April 1830 (*Berkeley County Journal* 1975: 25-26). His wife remained in their home until her death on 26 July 1856. The home property was surveyed for her heirs, and the house and 170 acres were purchased soon after by son Benjamin Speck (Berkeley County Deed Book 25, page 84). Speck was married to the former Mary Ann Seibert of Berkeley County. Benjamin Speck had purchased 90 acres adjoining the home farm in 1845.

Benjamin Speck died in 1879, leaving the home farm to his son Benjamin Seibert Speck (Berkeley County Will Book 23, page 99). The younger Speck renegotiated the terms of his inheritance to allow his three unmarried sisters to live in another Speck-owned house located one mile to the south. He retained the house and 160 acres. Speck was an active member of Spring Mills Presbyterian Church, where he served as an elder for 35 years. He was struck by an automobile on 15 July 1926. Speck was probably responsible for the construction of the porch along the north side of the two houses.

The farm was inherited by his sons Thomas Speck and Benjamin S. Speck, Jr. (Berkeley County Deed Book 155, page 435), with Ben Speck receiving the house and ninety acres. Speck was responsible for the renovation of the log half of the house carried out in the late 1940s, at which time the log walls were removed and replaced with brick tiles and the exterior was stuccoed. The house descended to Ben Speck's three grandchildren. The current owners purchased the farm in 1999.

**REFERENCES**

Berkeley County Deed Records, Martinsburg, WV

Berkeley County Land Books, Martinsburg, WV

Berkeley County Will Records, Martinsburg, WV

Frederick County Deed Records, Winchester, VA

GAI Consultants, Inc. *Architectural Survey and National Register Evaluation: Spring Mills and North Mountain Area, Berkeley County, West Virginia.* (Monroeville PA), 2001.

No Author, "The Peter Speck Family of Berkeley County." Files of the Berkeley County Historic Landmarks Commission.

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary of the Peter Speck House property is shown as the solid black line on the accompanying tax map (Berkeley County tax assessor's map number 12, parcel 53).

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the Peter Speck House property are drawn to include the ca. 1814-1815 log-and-stone main house and the nearby ca. 1815 stone spring house. The two bank barns and shed located across Ben Speck Road on the north are no longer part of the current owner's property.

(NPS Form 10-900)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Speck, Peter, House  
Name of Property

Berkeley, West Virginia  
County/State

Section number      Photo                                      Page      1

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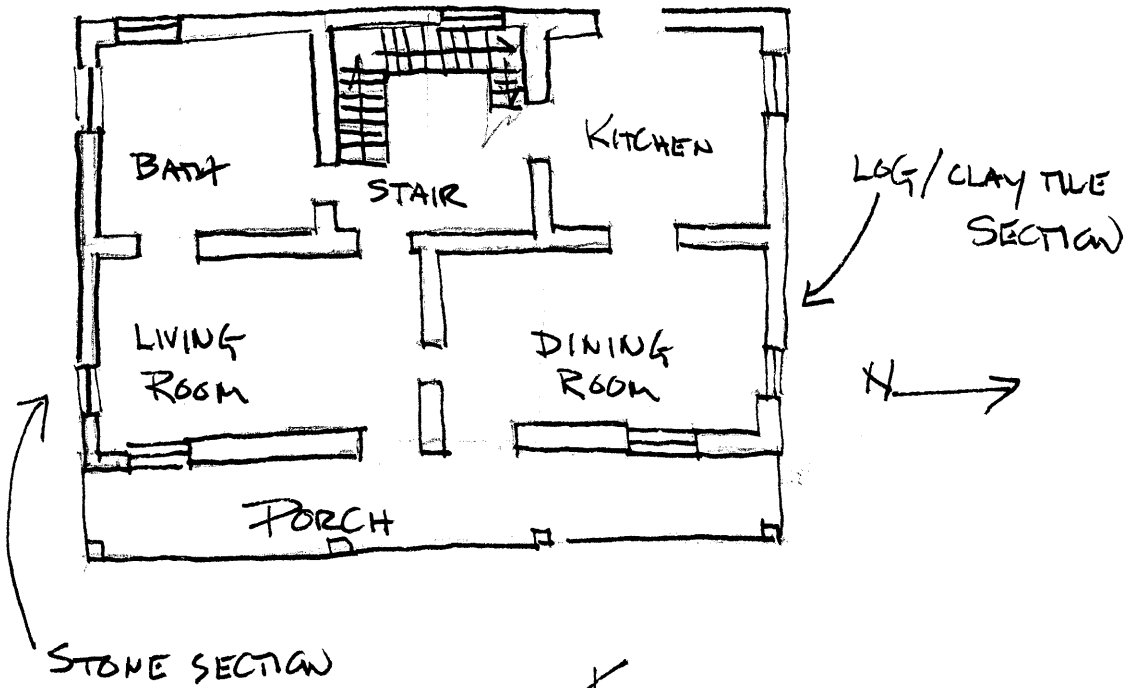
**Photographs**

All photographs are of the Peter Speck House, 1149 Ben Speck Road, Martinsburg, Berkeley County, WV 25401

Photographer: Geoffrey B. Henry, GAI Consultants, Inc. 28 April 2002

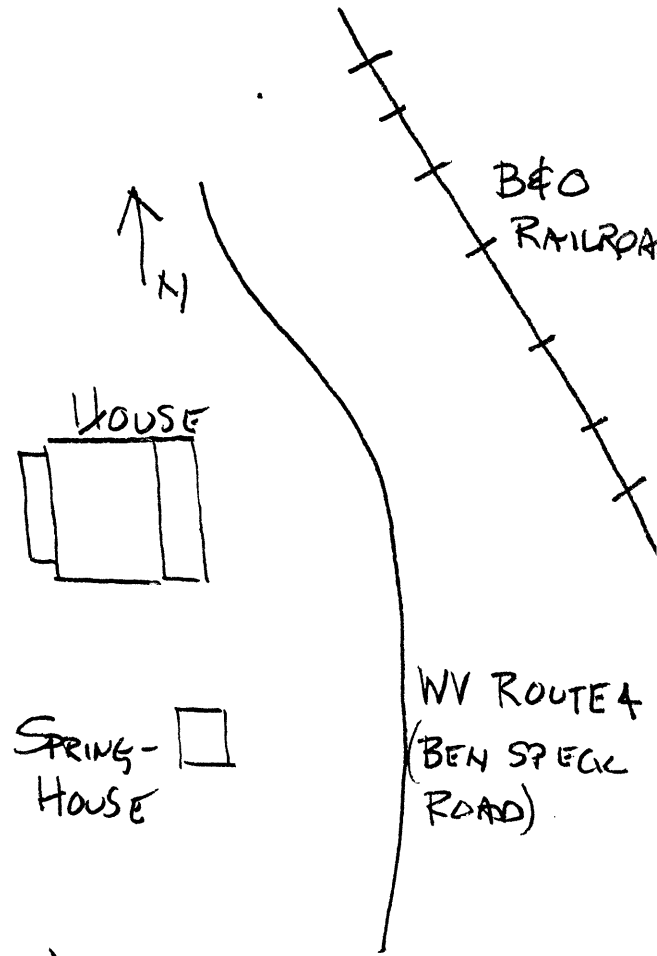
Negatives located at West Virginia Division of Culture and History (SHPO), Charleston WV

Photograph 1	Main House, Southeast elevation, looking northwest
Photograph 2	Main House, Northeast elevation, looking southwest
Photograph 3	Main House, South elevation, looking north
Photograph 4	Main House, South elevation detail, looking north
Photograph 5	Main House, Bedroom mantel, looking south
Photograph 6	Main House, Main stair, looking east
Photograph 7	Main House, Bedroom mantel and cupboard, looking north
Photograph 8	Stone Springhouse, North elevation, looking south



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

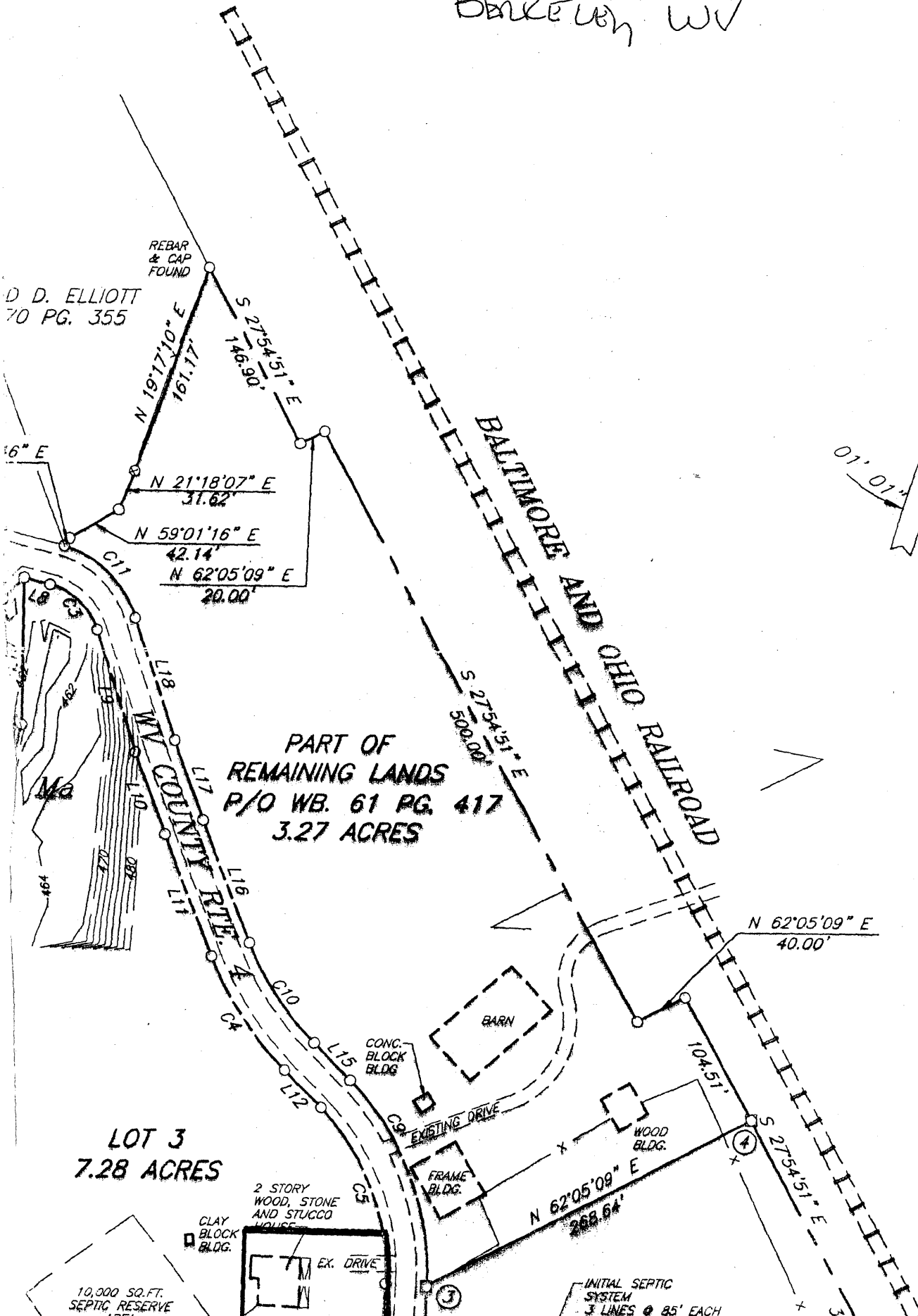
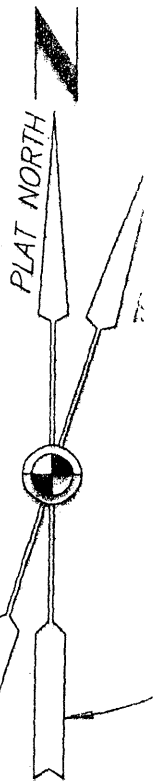
PETER SPECK HOUSE  
 BERKELEY, WV  
 6/2002  
 NOT TO SCALE



SITE PLAN  
 (NOT TO SCALE)



PETER SPECK HOUSE  
 BERKELEY WV



D. D. ELLIOTT  
 70 PG. 355

PART OF  
 REMAINING LANDS  
 P/O WB. 61 PG. 417  
 3.27 ACRES

LOT 3  
 7.28 ACRES

10,000 SQ. FT.  
 SEPTIC RESERVE  
 AREA

INITIAL SEPTIC  
 SYSTEM  
 3 LINES @ 85' EACH