

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCERS use only

received JUN 1 1982

date entered 7/8/82

1. Name

historic Stephen Harnsberger House (preferred)

and/or common Harnsberger Octagonal House

2. Location

street & number Holly Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Grottoes N/A vicinity of congressional district 7th (J. Kenneth Robinson)

state Virginia code 51 county Rockingham code 165

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. and Mrs. Carl D. Swanson

street & number Holly Avenue

city, town Grottoes N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24441

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rockingham County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Harrisonburg state Virginia 22801

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date January 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Harnsberger House sits on the eastern side of the South River in southeast Rockingham County, south of the early commercial center of Port Republic. When Stephen Harnsberger built the house in 1856, this land formed part of a very large Harnsberger farm along the river, but it is now in the northwest corner of the incorporated town of Grottoes.

This unusual house is one of only a few examples of octagonal buildings in the central Valley of Virginia. The general shape, construction, and exterior detailing reflect the influence of mid-19th-century architectural pattern books, particularly Orson Fowler's A Home For All, published in 1853. The main walls are constructed of rough stucco added over the brick walls in 1916. As Fowler urged, the cellar story has been raised, so the "whole of the room enclosed by the foundation" has been put "to some good use." Stone steps below the present concrete steps led to a dug-out cellar entrance with a large, two-paneled door. The Greek Revival entrances on both the first- and second-floor levels are framed with transoms and sidelights, and the first-floor entry has been decorated with a variation of the Greek fret motif. The front concrete steps replace steps descending from each side of the porch. Each side is punctuated with a tall, framed window bay enclosing narrow, paired 4/4 sash on both stories. The bracketed eaves and raised one-story, one-bay porch with second-floor balustrade provide the decorative touches for this design.

This shell actually masks the more vernacular, double-pile Georgian plan commonly found in larger houses in the Valley by the mid-19th century, rather than the pie-shaped room designs prescribed in the pattern books. The central passage, which extends over half the depth of the main level, is flanked by two deep front rooms. The two back rooms are considerably smaller--a dining room opening off the back of the passage to the east and a tiny triangular room in the west corner. Two central chimneys between the front and back rooms provide fireplaces in each room. On both the second and basement floors, the central passage extends the entire depth of the house, with two rooms to each side.

The interior woodwork survives in very good condition. The open-string staircase is composed of a heavy turned newel post, square balusters, and plain brackets and spandrels. Two different mantel styles frame the eight fireplaces. Recessed-paneled Tuscan pilasters, plain friezes, and deep shelves compose the mantels in the front rooms on both floors as well as in the rear dining room. The other fireplaces are finished with more plain, Greek Revival designs. Symmetrically molded trim with square corner blocks encloses the first-floor doors and windows, but a simpler Greek Revival architrave molding finishes the second-floor openings. The basement rooms are plastered and have cement floors.

By the 1890s, a narrow, frame kitchen ell had been added to the main octagonal block. This addition is illustrated on the early plat maps of Shendun (now Grottoes) ca. 1890. Such kitchen ells, with side porches, had become standard features in local farmhouses by the end of the century. The kitchen has been remodeled but retains the molded door and window trim with bull's-eye carved corner blocks that characterized local building from the turn of the century. The plat map also shows a smaller, hexagonal structure off the ell, but this has been replaced by a one-story, rectangular, frame service building. The large fireplace, which runs parallel to the longer side walls, quite possibly served the earlier building in this location. A frame, post-Civil War, gambrel-roof barn survives near the house.

According to local history sources, the house was remodeled once in 1916, but no major structural changes are visible from this time. In 1978, the new owners restored the house and added some panel molding, bookshelves, and bedmolding in a few rooms.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1856 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harnsberger House, built in 1856, is a rare Rockingham County example of the mid-19th-century octagonal building fad. While most country builders were constructing single- and double-pile, Georgian-plan houses, Stephen Harnsberger chose the octagonal shape espoused in Orson Fowler's A Home for All, or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building (1853). Although the facade and shape clearly reflect an awareness of new styles, the interior retains the traditional arrangement of spaces in a double-pile, Georgian design. Harnsberger's brother, Robert Samuel Harnsberger, apparently became intrigued by the new fashion as well; he had an octagonal barn constructed on his farm in neighboring Augusta County. The house, together with the barn, reflects local interpretations of the pattern book styles in this conservative agricultural area -- both insert traditional plans and ideals into octagonal shells.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The first Harnsberger in the Virginia colony was John Harnsberger who settled near Germanna between 1717 and 1719. By 1760, one of his descendants, Stephen Harnsberger, Sr., was settled near Elkton, Rockingham County, on the South River. Local historians indicate that the Harnsbergers were of Swiss descent. The 1789 Rockingham County tax books show Stephen Harnsberger charged with 298 acres. Although many of Rockingham County's records have not survived, an extant index shows numerous deeds to both Stephen Harnsberger, Sr., and his son, Stephen, Jr., for land on the Shenandoah River.

Stephen Harnsberger, Jr., had become quite prosperous by 1850. The Census of that year indicates that he and his five children lived on real estate valued at \$18,900, a very high sum for that county. It can be conjectured that Stephen Harnsberger built the large octagonal house in 1856 for his son, Stephen M. Harnsberger. The tax books indicate a substantial increase in improvements on the property in that year. Following the Civil War, a deed was re-entered from Stephen Harnsberger to his son Stephen M. Harnsberger. The house was involved in some fairly complex litigation in the 1880s and was finally sold at auction to George M. Nicholas in 1895. Twentieth-century owners include the J. L. Leeth family (1914-1954) and the B. F. Castle family (1954-1978). The present owners are Dr. and Mrs. Carl D. Swanson.

AMc/MTP

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Fowler, Orson S. The Octagon House--A Home for All. New York: Random House, 1973 (reprint of 1853 edition).
- Rockingham County Deed Books 0, 1, 16, 27, 31, 53, 92, 101, 249, 370, 521.
- Rockingham County Land Tax Books, 1851-1863.
- U. S. Census, Rockingham County, Va., 1850. (See Continuation Sheet #1)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 6 acres

Quadrangle name Grottoes, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point at a jog in the NW boundary line of the town of Grottoes, about 1250' E of South River and about 1200' NW of intersection of Town Route 1001 and Town Route 1002; thence extending about 400' SW, crossing NW extension of TR 1002 in process; thence extending about 600' NW to town boundary; thence extending about 400' NE along said boundary; thence extending about 600' SE, thereby following jog in town boundary, to point of origin. These register bounds encompass the house and the barn to the west.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date January 1981

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *H. Bryan Mitchell*

title H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date MAY 10 1982

For HCRS use only

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

date 7/8/82

for Delores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Stephen Harnsberger House, Rockingham County, Virginia

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7,9

Page 1

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

7. DESCRIPTION

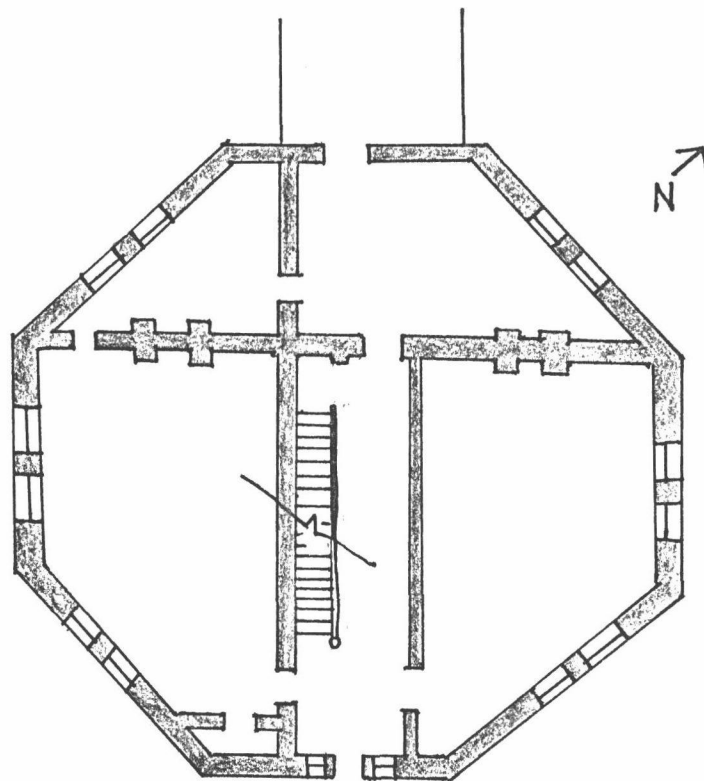
Boundary Justification:

The nominated property consists of six acres, only a fraction of the 859-acre farm owned by Stephen Harnsberger when the house was built in 1856. It includes the house and barn and can be identified in the Grottoes Deed Book as Parcel 1, consisting of Lots 1-40, in Block 201 of the incorporated town of Grottoes. It is one of two adjacent parcels purchased in 1978 by Dr. and Mrs. Carl D. Swanson, the present owners of the Harnsberger House.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wayland, John W. Virginia Valley Records. Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965.

Gilmer Map, 1864, Rockingham County. (Virginia Historical Society Collection)



STEPHEN HARNSBERGER HOUSE
Rockingham County, Va.

FLOOR PLAN
Not to Scale

VHLC (DTU) 1978

Harnsberger, Stephen, ~~House~~ ^{House},
Rockingham County,
VIRGINIA,

Working No. 6/11/82-1711

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/1/83

Date Due: 7/8/82 - 7/26/82

Action: ACCEPT 7/8/82

RETURN

REJECT

Entered in the
National Register ref. # 82004593

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Federal Agency: _____

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Area of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UNIT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

Title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
221 GOVERNOR STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219

HARNSBERGER HOUSE

Rockingham County, VA

Credit: VA Historic Landmarks Commission

1980

Negative Filed: VA State Library

View from southeast

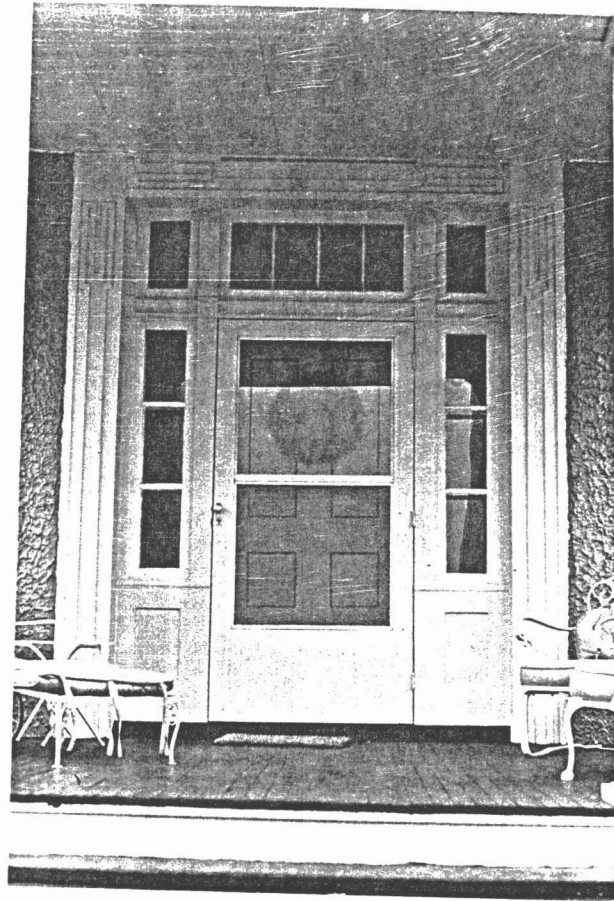
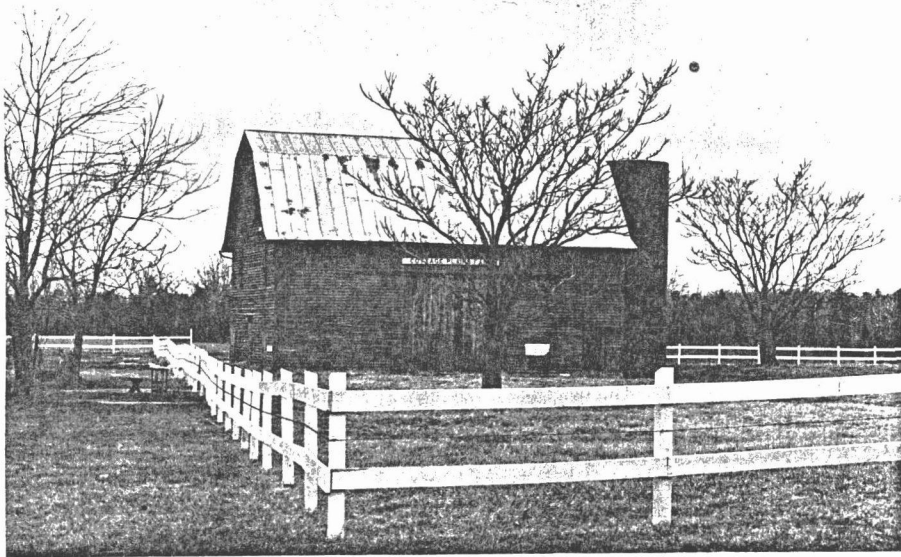
4953

1 of 1

4953



View from Northeast
View of Barn



Front Entrance

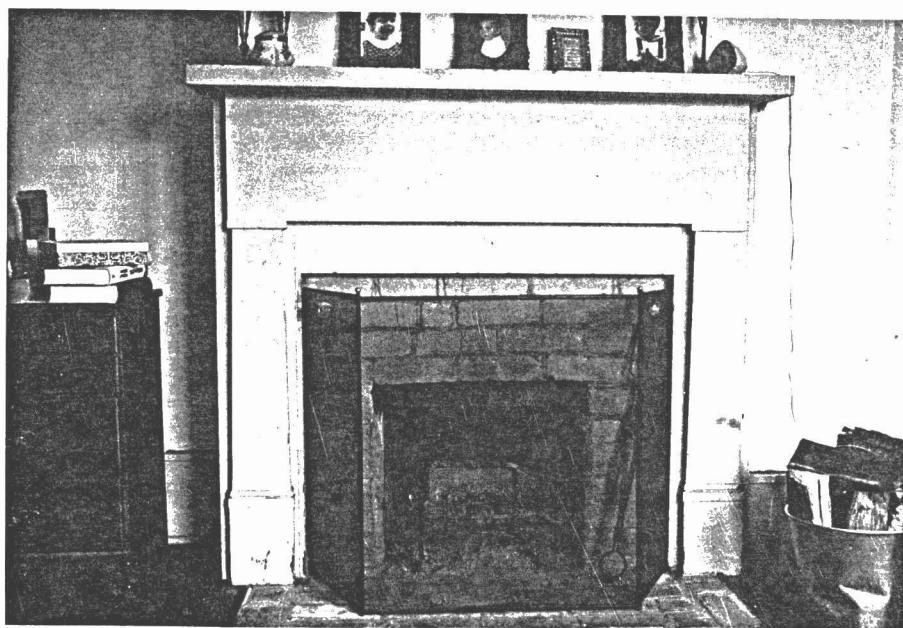


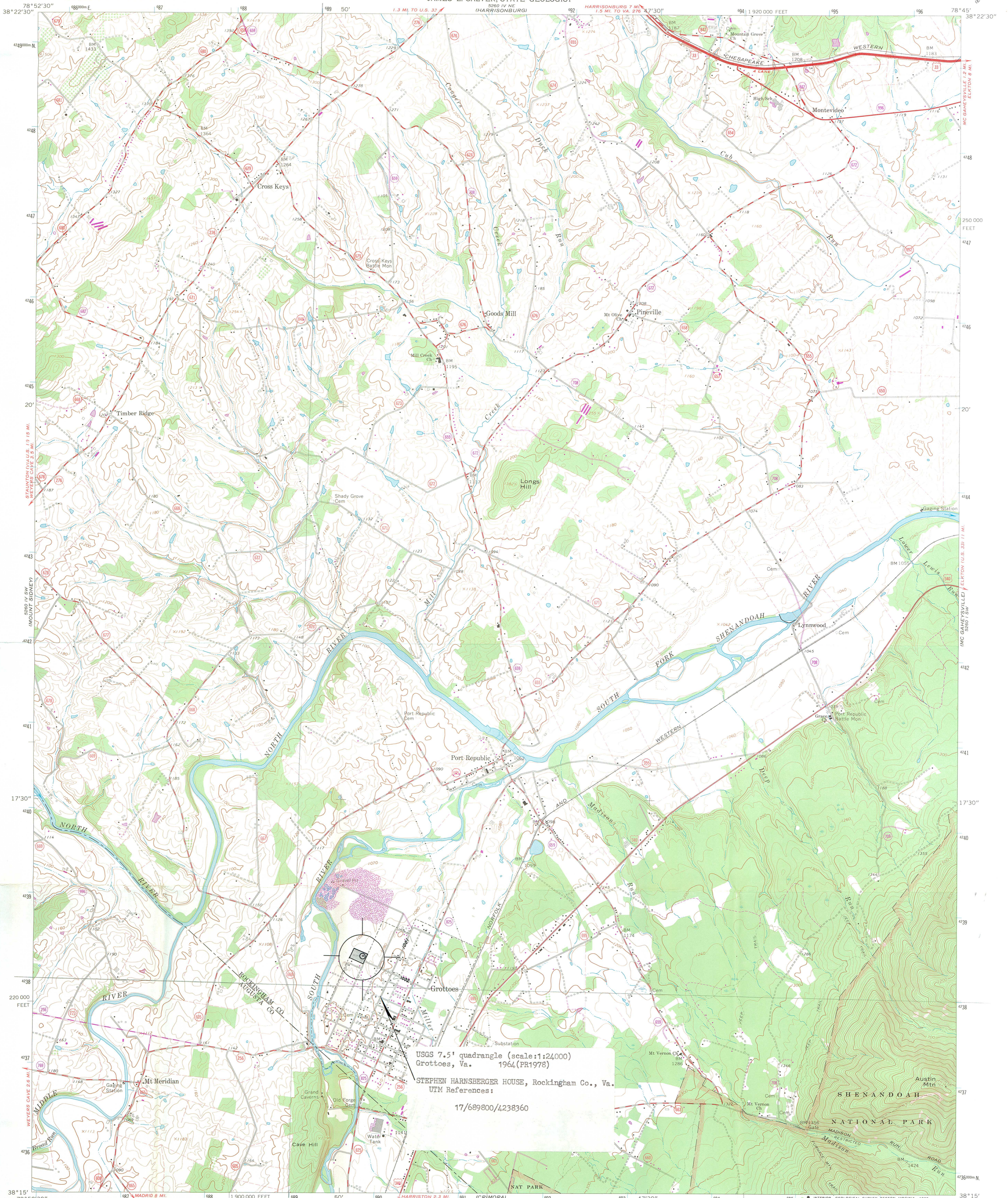
First-Floor Stair



Stair Detail

Mantel, 2d Floor East Room





USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)
Grottoes, Va.
1964 (PR1978)
STEPHEN HARNBERGER HOUSE, Rockingham Co., Va.
UTM References:
17/689800/4238360

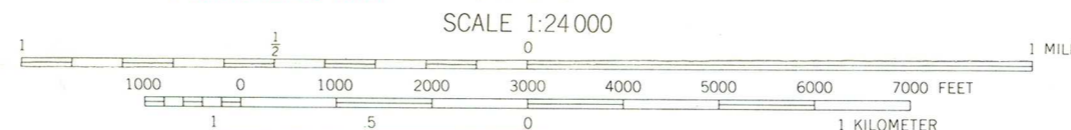
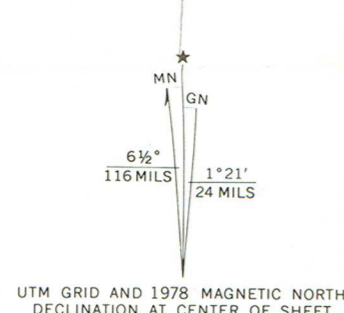
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1964

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue

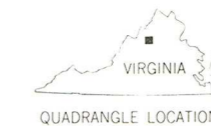
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with Commonwealth
of Virginia agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1978



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 10-FOOT CONTOURS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTEVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
U. S. Route ——— State Route ———

GROTTOES, VA.

N3815—W7845/7.5

1964
PHOTOREVISED 1978
AMS 5260 IV SE—SERIES V834



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

221 Governor Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Hugh C. Miller, Director

TDD: (804) 786-1934
Telephone (804) 786-3143
FAX: (804) 225-4261

13 December 1991

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register
National Park Service
1100 L Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Harnsberger Farm, Shenandoah Co., VA

Dear Ms. Shull:

The enclosed nomination, Harnsberger Farm, Shenandoah County, Virginia, is submitted for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

This nomination has been considered by the State Review Board and there have been no owner objections received.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Vosmik".

Julie Vosmik
Survey and Register Programs Manager

Enclosure

assistance please let us know.

Do you have any word yet on the plaque for the house? We would be glad to help with the cost of same.

Sincerely,

Carl A. Swanson

3-20-82

Dear Mrs. Hudgins:

Thanks for your letter of March 19th. Please know that we feel honored that you are in the process of nominating the "Hornsterges House" to the National Register of Historic Places. If we can be of any