

VLR 12/05/01
NRHP 3/29/02

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Daniel Munch House

other names/site number 85-363

2. Location

street & number 2588 Seven Fountains Rd. not for publication
city or town Fort Valley vicinity X
state Virginia code VA county Shenandoah code 171
zip code 22652

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

1/16/02
Date

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
State or Federal agency and bureau

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 5 </u>	<u> 1 </u> buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 6 </u>	<u> 1 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

 N/A

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6. Function or Use
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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling
Agriculture Agricultural Outbuilding

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling
Agriculture Agricultural Outbuilding

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic: Federal

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Metal
walls Brick
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance
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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.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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 (Enter categories from instructions)

 Agriculture
 Architecture

Period of Significance 1834-1951

Significant Dates 1834

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder _____

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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(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: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 73

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	726 060	4303 700	3	17	725 040 4303 740
2	17	725 720	4303 300	4	17	725 120 4303 880

x See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Shirley Maxwell and James C. Massey

organization Massey Maxwell Associates date September 7, 2001

street & number P.O. Box 263 telephone 540-465-4566

city or town Strasburg state VA zip code 22657

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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

name Margaret A. Trott Trust and James H. Trott Trust

street & number 2588 Seven Fountains Rd. telephone _____

city or town Seven Fountains state VA zip code 22657

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Daniel Munch House
name of property
Shenandoah County, Virginia
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7. Description:

The Daniel Munch House is a fine, two-story, five-bay, brick I-house in the late Federal style (22'-2" x 42'-9"), with a brick rear ell (17'-4" x 30'-6"). Located on State Road 758, it sits on the crown of a knoll overlooking the meandering Passage Creek, framed behind and in the front distance by a line of hills in Fort Valley, a small valley set into the Massanutten Mountain range that splits the Shenandoah Valley. To the northwest, its view is of Woodstock Gap, the west rim of Fort Valley. The farmland is level bottom land that follows the path of the creek.

Built in 1834 by a prosperous farmer and distiller, it is an ample house, the first brick house in the Fort Valley, and is firmly set on bedrock.¹ The front facade faces northwest, with two stories over a raised basement that is set into the front slope of the knoll-top site. The center door is reached from a frame, three-bay-by-one-bay raised front porch with a run of plain wood steps. The main door is the original, in six raised panels, surmounted by a glazed transom. It is protected by a modern aluminum storm door with two lights above a solid base.

Exterior

The windows on the five-bay front, first and second stories, are 2/2-light double-hung wood sash Victorian-era replacements of the originals, which were probably 6/6 lights. There are modern 1/1-light aluminum storm windows. The lintels are brick, with three-course jack arches, the sills plain wood. The basement windows are original six-light wood sash windows with jack-arch brick lintels and plain wood sills. Some of the original wood slat bars survive.

The orange-red brick walls are laid in six-course American bond. The bricks have slightly rough and irregular faces, including some glazed headers and some stretchers with partial glazing. The joints are somewhat rough and were originally finished with a thin lime wash, traces of which can still be seen on the walls. The brick was painted red, and the joints were finished with a white pencil line in paint. The brick was laid slightly irregularly, particularly in the coursing, creating shadow lines in a raking light. There has been some modern repointing in areas near the ground. The cornice is three-course molded brick, rather sophisticated for a remote rural house. There are a modern gutter and downspout on the front wall and pipe snow guards front and rear.

The side, or gable-end, walls (southwest and northeast) are identical except for a full basement door on the low point of the slope of the ground, at the north corner of the northeast side. There are no first- or second-floor windows in the

¹ Although the identity of the master builder and/or mason for the house is unknown, the presence of two inscriptions, one ("John Sonner") found on a kitchen fireplace lintel, the other ("John and W. Sonner") on an unpainted surface inside a closet, suggests that John Sonner may have been the master carpenter.

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one-bay sides, but each gable has two small, four-light attic windows, thought to replace similar originals, flanking the interior chimney mass. The basement door is an old or original vertical-board door.

The gable roof is in standing-seam metal. The original covering is not known. There are no dormer windows. At the end walls are high, brick interior chimneys with stepped-out courses at the top. There are plain eaves boards in the gables.

The rear (southeast) facade, partly covered by the rear ell, has the first floor at grade on the south corner, with one window on each of the first and second floors, matching the ones on the front. Toward the center is a slightly smaller window at the stair landing, with 2/2-light, double-hung wood sash. All three have three-course jack-arch lintels and plain wood sills, plus modern 1/1-light aluminum storm sash.

The one-and-a-half-story two-room brick rear ell, with a partially exposed basement on the northeast side, is traditionally thought to have been built at the same time as the main block, a common pattern in the Shenandoah Valley, although the rear ell was sometimes built later. Here, the physical evidence is not conclusive. There is a fireplace in the rear room, which was probably the kitchen. The ell has an old, open, one-story porch on the southwest side, as well as porches, mostly enclosed, on all three sides. On the southwest side are two six-panel doors, one to each room, with no transoms, and a single-double-hung 2/2-light window. There may have been another window, now covered over. In the half-attic above are two small horizontally sliding two-light sash.

On the northeast side of the ell there were two windows on the first floor, and on the attic floor, two small, two-light, wood sliding-sash windows, matching those on the opposite side. Only one first-floor window survives on the exterior. It is a 2/2-light double-hung wood sash, with a two-course jack arch and plain wood sill, plus a modern aluminum 1/1-light storm window. There is a low basement door on this wall and one basement window, now closed in. This window has a three-course jack arch. The presumed second window on the first floor is now an opening to a modern enclosed porch, which also has a new doorway cut through between the windows to the new porch.

The ell has a tall interior chimney at the southeast end, with stepped-out courses at the top and a modern arched tin covering. The gable roof is low and covered in standing-seam sheet metal. There are plain eaves boards at the rear and plain closed eaves at the sides, without cornice or gutters.

The wraparound porch is in several sections. On the southwest side, it is original to the ell, covering a former door leading directly to the front hall and the two ell doors. In 1961, part of this porch, up against the main block, was enclosed to form a bathroom and was clapboarded in vinyl. It has one window with modern 1/1-light double-hung wood sash. The former rear door from the hall in the main block now leads to this bath. The original three-bay porch, which ran the entire length of the brick ell, now consists of the bath and two open bays.

The porch was extended one bay to the rear ca. 1940, then across the rear of the brick ell. It was enclosed with vinyl

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siding in 1989. There are a door to the porch and two double 1/1-light windows and one triple 1/1-light window across the back. Inside are a new bath and passage. The one-bay-deep porch addition, ca. 1994, continues for three bays along the northeast side, including a single window, a three-sided oriel or bay window, and on the return a triple window. All contain 1/1-light double-hung sash, except a single, fixed light in the bay projection. The original porch roof is continued around the new, added enclosed porch, with a matching slope in standing-seam sheet metal. There are a gutter, downspouts, and a pipe snow guard.

The construction date of the raised front porch is uncertain, possibly as late as 1900. It is three bays wide by one bay deep, with chamfered posts supporting a hipped roof and a pedimented central portion. The covering is standing-seam sheet metal above a molded cornice. There is a plain baluster railing and wood steps to the ground. The exterior is covered in lattice work below the floor to the ground, with an entry hatch on the left side. The porch terminates over the center of basement windows on both sides. The original porch or stoop was narrower, as seen in the joist holes under the present porch.

Interior

The front, or I-house, portion has a central stair hall with one room on each side on both stories. These original spaces are little changed from their construction, and are marked by extraordinarily fine painted polychrome finishes on the woodwork. Although the precise date of the work is unknown, it certainly dates between 1834 and the end of the Civil War, and it is perhaps the finest of its type surviving in Shenandoah County.²

The stair hall, 9'-3" x 20'-3", is centered on the front door, an original, 6-panel door with raised panels, and a four-light rectangular transom and molded surround. There is a fine iron box lock with a brass lever knob on top (a Dutch elbow lock) and a large iron key, which appears to be original. Such locks are found on several other doors in the house.

To the left and right are doors to the other two rooms, each a six-panel, raised-panel door. One door has an original brass-lever Dutch-elbow lock knob. The rear door has two vertical panels and may not be original. It was the rear

²Other examples include the James W. Smoot House (VDHR 85-484) and the Armentrout House (VDHR #34), near Moore's Store. The latter has "smoked" finishes said to have been produced with tallow candles. The multicolored painted woodwork of the mid-nineteenth-century Jacob Bowman House (VDHR #85-207) near Bowman's Crossing in southern Shenandoah County, lacks the faux finishes seen in the Munch House on its multi-colored painted woodwork. The extensive trompe-l'oeil decoration at Vesper Hall (VDHR #85-073), near Strasburg, attributed to William F. Rupp, who emigrated from Germany in 1854, is considerably more sophisticated, as is that at Green Hope (VDHR #85-124), also believed to be by Rupp. (See Shenandoah County Historic Resources Survey Report, 1995, pp. 88-89.)

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entrance and now opens to a modern bathroom. A simple, molded chair rail and a baseboard extend around the hall on the otherwise plain plaster walls. The floors here and throughout the house are original tongue-and-groove heart-pine boards, 4" to 5-1/2" wide.

At the right rear wall of the hall, the main staircase rises to a landing, and continues with a final flight to the second floor on the left wall. The stairs have a simple, square and turned newel post, with a round knob on top and plain rectangular balusters with molded handrail. The open-string stairs have scrolls on the stair edges, and the field below the stairs has flat panels and a four-panel door, making a closet under the stairs. There are no interior basement stairs in the front section. The landing continues the railing, but the hand rail rises in a straight angled line to compensate for the absence of ramping at each flight.

The woodwork is finished with unusually fine and complete color finishes executed in a traditional Germanic manner that remain in good condition. The doors are marbled, with diagonal coal-black slashes, perhaps made with a rolled rag, on the rails and stiles. The panels are green on the rise of the raised panels, yellow-ochre in the panel fields, and cream on the molding. The chair rail and door frames are yellow-ochre, and the baseboard matches the door rails and stiles. The stairs are treated in the same manner as the door rail and stiles, with yellow-ochre balusters, scrolls, and panel fields.

The room to the right of the hall (13'-4" x 20'-3") has two windows on the front wall and one on the rear wall. The windows are cased and have molded surrounds. On the side wall is a fireplace with fireback and mantel. It is flanked by glass-door cupboards, each with two 15-panel glazed doors. There are a baseboard and chair rail but no cornice. This room is wallpapered in a ca. 1900 paper with a vertical stripe and landscape designs. The color finishes on the woodwork are most elaborate and are glazed with shellac. On the mantel there is yellow-ochre on the shelf and cornice, plus dark green, purplish-red, and cream and coal-black spongework over cream on the pilasters. The balance of the woodwork is yellow-ochre. The interior face of the cupboard glazing is covered with a translucent lace pattern, not original. There are plaster walls and ceilings. Although the design of each fireplace mantel and surround in the house is different, all are of wood and all are in a bold, vernacular Federal style with pilasters, friezes, and molded mantel shelves.

The room to the left of the hall (13'-4" x 20'-3") has similar woodwork--fireplace and mantel with pilasters, frieze and cornice and shelf; a double-door cupboard at left, divided into upper and bottom sections; and a two-door closet with three-panel leaves at the right. The room has a baseboard and chair rail, two front windows, board floors, and plaster walls and ceiling. A door to the rear opens to the rear ell. This room was painted white about 40 years ago, covering the probably original decorative paint finishes.

On the second floor of the front I-house portion, the stair hall is in the center, with a lower landing window at the rear and a front window. Stairs rise to the attic. There is a plain, chamfered, square newel post with a rounded top. The stairs are closed off at the top of the front run with a recently installed old board door from the attic. The stairs and hall

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floors have wall-to-wall modern carpeting. The finish is as the first floor.

The room to the right of the stair hall has a fireplace and mantel flanked by two double-door closets, three raised panels to each leaf, and three windows (two on the front wall and one on the rear). There are baseboard, chair rail, and window and door surrounds. The walls and ceiling are plaster. The floor is covered in wall-to-wall carpet except for the brick hearth. The fireplace is filled in, and there is a modern propane heater. The mantel has pilasters, three-panel frieze, and shelf. It is finished in a wine red and cream, with blue accents in the frieze and cornice. The closet doors are framed in the wine red of the mantel, and the doors are painted green on the rails and stiles, blue on the rise of the raised panels, and a cream on the panels.

The room to the left of the hall is similar, with two windows on the front wall. There are a fireplace and mantel, with the fireplace closed in and a modern coal-burning stove on the brick hearth. Flanking the fireplace are two closets, each with double, three-panel doors. There are a baseboard, chair rail, and window and door surrounds. The walls and ceiling are plaster. On the floor is a ca.1940s "Quaker rug" (a printed linoleum-like floorcloth) in a floral pattern on a dark-green background; it is in fine condition. The exposed floor area around the floorcloth is painted dark green to complement the floorcloth. The mantelpiece has fluted pilasters, a paneled frieze, and molded cornice and shelf. The mantel is painted green, with a frieze of tan, with worn panels sponged in coal black on cream. The woodwork is in the same greenish-gray and the closet doors are sponged, dabbed, and streaked in the bold, crude diagonals of the room doors, coal black over a cream background. The center of the panels is sponged in a crude shield form, and otherwise streaked.

Rear Ell

The brick ell is in two rooms on the first floor, one behind the other, both opening to the original porch at right, and the further room also opening to the modern addition at left. The first room was probably a dining room, the rear a kitchen, as it is now. The ell opens from the left-hand front room, and the pattern of windows and doors is discussed in the "Exterior" section of this document. The first, or dining, room has a baseboard and chair rail and door surround similar to the front. There are plaster walls and ceilings and modern striped wallpaper. The wall between the rooms has a wall-mounted propane heater. The floor is carpeted wall to wall. There is a board closet in the far left corner.

The rear room (kitchen) has a large cooking fireplace, with simple, molded mantel shelf and brick hearth. The floor is in modern resilient sheet flooring. Walls and ceiling are plaster, and there are modern counters, cabinets, and appliances. The original porch door is covered by cabinets and counter. There is an enclosed staircase to the basement and attic.

The low attic is divided into two rooms, plainly finished with sliding sash windows, as noted elsewhere.

Basement

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There is a full basement under the house, partly at grade, with brick walls and foundation. It is comprised of three rooms, two in the main block of the house and one in the ell.

The large room on the right side of the I-house basement has windows only on the front. A large summer beam, 8-1/2" x 8", extends side to side through a brick partition to the left wall and runs the full width of the house. Joists, 4" x 8", run from front to back over the beam. There is one 4-1/2" x 8" post at the center of the beam, probably inserted later. The floor is dirt. There is a brick partition between the two front basement rooms, with a vertical-board door with old lock and handle, and an old beaded frame and sill, probably original.

The left corner basement room has a front window and vertical-board exterior door in a wood frame, probably original, on the northeast side. The room has an old or original wide-board (10"-12") floor, laid on sleepers, and a fireplace, now closed in. The ceiling features exposed joists and the continuation of the side-to-side summer beam. To the rear is a door in a brick wall to the rear room under the ell. There is a modern, flush-panel exterior door, and a stair to the kitchen. The floor is dirt, and the ceiling has exposed joists (4-1/2" x 8"). The walls are brick. To the rear is the old concrete cistern, with a door cut through, now used for storage.

Outbuildings

The present bank barn was built in 1929, with a northwest ell, constructed the same year,³ that leaves an open passage at grade between the two sections. It is located at State Road 758, at the bottom of the knoll that the house sits on. It is frame with a heavy timber frame, two stories at grade, and the upper level is accessed at the first rise of the hill. A set of stairs leads to the grade-level animal space and milking room. The large ell is frame, with heavy timber frame, and a low-slope shed room. It is completely open inside, without a second-floor level. The foundations are concrete. A pump shed has been added onto the southwest side of the original portion of the barn. The upper level is accessed by a large sliding board door from the earth ramp outside.

The original barn, 1833, survived until a 1972 storm, when it collapsed and was removed. It was located farther southeast of the house and barn, also off SR 758. Although its location is shown on the 1994 USGS map, there are no visible remains of the barn today.

The remaining outbuildings are on the knoll behind the house and are served, along with the house, by a curving

³The new barn was built by Lorenzo Ritenour and his two sons, Frank and Silas, during the winter of 1929-1930. Both components of the barn were built at the same time. The strange construction and the extra door may be the result of a last-minute decision by Cyril Munch to add the shed when the barn was nearly finished. (Interview, James Trott with Frank Ritenour, September 4, 2001. Mr. Ritenour was 88 years old at the time.)

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gravel drive from the parking and service areas around the knoll and down to SR 758.

There is a small, frame tool shed (early twentieth-century), with clapboard walls and a low gable roof over a low upper half-story, reached by stairs at the rear. There are a door on the front gable end and one window each in the front and rear gables.

The modern, frame, gambrel-roofed, one-and-a-half-story two-car garage (1989) has rolling doors, each with four small windows at the top. On the right side is a side door and two windows. The garage is sided in vinyl clapboards. Inside, the left car space remains, with a stair at the rear. The right side has been subdivided into a photo lab and work space in three rooms, accessed from the right corner door.

To the left side of the garage is a two-bay equipment or vehicle shed, with a corn crib between the bays. The structure is frame, with vertical-board siding, and there is a low gable roof. The corn crib is accessed by a vertical-board door in the northwest side. The floors in the equipment bays are dirt; the corncrib has board floors. There are concrete pier foundations, and the right side wall is concrete against the cemetery knoll.

Along the drive to SR 758 is a small, frame livestock shed (early twentieth-century). It has a concrete foundation, clapboard walls, a steep shed roof, and a vertical-board door.

Ridenour Family Cemetery

The Ridenour family cemetery is on the peak of the knoll, between the equipment shed and the garage, and is 12-1/2 feet higher than the graveled work and parking area around the service buildings. There are only a few small traces of shale stone markers, severely weathered and only partly legible, and the cemetery is surrounded by trees and shrub growth. (The Munch Family Cemetery is located off the nominated property, farther south along SR 758 on a higher knoll, as shown on the USGS map.) The cemetery is described by Duane L. Borden in *Tombstone Inscriptions: Woodstock and Fort Valley Vicinities, Shenandoah County, Virginia* (Ozark, MO: Yates Publishing Co., 1983, p. 133) as containing four graves, including that of John Adam Ridenour. At the time the book was written, the letters "AR" (presumably Adam Ridenour) could be read on one of the remaining stones.

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8. Statement of Significance:

The Daniel Munch House, located at 2588 Seven Fountains Rd., on Passage Creek near the tiny cross-roads village of Seven Fountains, Shenandoah County, Virginia, is architecturally significant under Criterion C as an outstanding example of vernacular late Federal-style building in Fort Valley, an isolated and scenic small "valley within a valley" in the Massanutten Range. Built in 1834, the Munch House was the only brick building constructed in Fort Valley as of 1927. The house contains exceptionally fine and intact examples of nineteenth-century polychrome painted decorative woodwork executed in the German tradition. As the home of Daniel Munch, a prosperous and progressive Fort Valley farmer and distiller, whose parents were among the early settlers of the valley, it is historically significant under Criterion A as the site of one of Fort Valley's largest and most successful mid-nineteenth century agricultural enterprises. The house remained in the Munch family until 1961, playing a continuing role in the agricultural life of the community. The nominated site contains 73 acres and has six contributing resources: five buildings (the brick residence, 1834; a frame bank barn, built in 1929; a frame equipment shed with attached corn crib; a frame storage shed; and a frame livestock shed, the latter three all dating from ca. 1910-1930); and one site (the Ridenour family cemetery with four graves, ca. 1815-1840). There is one noncontributing building (a modern two-car garage, 1989).

Historical Information:⁴

Daniel Munch (1784-1852)⁵ was one of four surviving sons of Philip and Magdalene Muller Munch, early settlers of Fort Valley, a small fertile valley at the northern end of the Massanutten Range in what is now eastern Shenandoah County. The Munch family, German- and French-speaking immigrants from the Rhine Valley in Alsace, arrived in Philadelphia in 1768.⁶ With a 222-acre land grant from Thomas, Lord Fairfax, they set up farming along Passage Creek in Powell's Fort Valley (also called simply Fort Valley or "the Fort") by 1779.⁷ Here, Philip Munch died in

⁴Over the course of their thirty-year ownership of the Daniel Munch House, Margaret and James Trott, have diligently investigated the physical and social history of the property, interviewing neighbors, searching Shenandoah County land records, acquiring copies of relevant documents, local history books and articles, and carefully cataloging the results of their research. This history of the house is based largely on records in their collection.

⁵*Adam and Magdalene (Munch) Ridenour and Some related Families*, by Iva C. Yarlick (Arlington, VA: Cooper-Trent, 1973).

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 281

⁷*Ibid.* It is possible that Philip Munch was in Fort Valley several years earlier, as Yarlick says that a 1773 "census" of Shenandoah County lists Philip Munch as head of a family of six.

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1796 and Magdalene in 1807.⁸

In 1812 Daniel Munch married Mary Ridenour⁹ (1791-1856), the daughter of another Rhenish immigrant, John Adam Ridenour, who had also acquired a 200-acre land grant in Powell's Fort Valley. In 1815, before the death of his father-in-law, Daniel purchased a 149-acre tract that included the Ridenour homeplace from Adam Ridenour's heirs-to-be. In the years that followed, he steadily increased his land holdings and his farming activities.

Secure in the profits of his agricultural enterprises, Daniel contracted with Solomon Veach in 1833 to erect a massive frame and weatherboard bank barn. Eighty-six feet long, including sheds, the barn was to have eight exterior doors and six windows and was to contain a tongue-and-groove lower floor; a threshing floor; hay mows; four hewn-timber troughs 28 feet long by one foot wide and 10 inches deep; and six animal stalls. It was to be built at a cost of \$150, partly of timbers taken from an "old" barn and partly from new lumber cut and hewn by Veach¹⁰ The barn stood until 1972, when it was so badly damaged by winds from Hurricane Agnes that the present owners of the Munch House were forced to demolish it.

Soon afterward, in 1834, Daniel Munch also built an unusually stylish house on a knoll overlooking his in-laws' home site. The new house was of oversized red brick fired on the property. It is said to have been the only brick house constructed in Fort Valley as of 1927.¹¹ The center-hall I-house, with a four-room brick ell, was a clear symbol of Munch's financial and social success. Although the austere Federal-style design might have appeared somewhat old-fashioned in Tidewater Virginia by 1834, it was progressive indeed when viewed in the context of the traditional Germanic culture of the central Shenandoah Valley, and particularly of little Fort Valley. The interior woodwork, believed to have been executed by John Sonner, whose signature appears on the massive wooden lintel of the kitchen fireplace and again (with that of "W. Sonner") on an unpainted surface inside a closet, may have been based on similar designs in architectural pattern books that were widely available in the first third of the nineteenth century, but these were certainly adapted to fit the traditional Germanic decorative ideals of the Shenandoah Valley. Moreover, the imaginative polychromatic painting, marbling, and graining applied to the mantelpieces, cabinets, and doors

⁸Ibid.

⁹For the sake of consistency, "Ridenour" is used as the spelling of the family name throughout this document. However, some descendants of John Adam Ridenour chose to use "Ritenour."

¹⁰Op. cit., p. 283.

¹¹John Wayland, *A History of Shenandoah County, Virginia* (Strasburg, VA: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1927), p. 182.

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throughout the house (most still extant and unaltered) are clear expressions of a regional esthetic.¹² Each room is fitted with large built-in cupboards and closets, a distinctive feature of early Shenandoah Valley houses. The parlor fireplace is particularly elaborate, its mantel flanked by ceiling-height built-in bookcases with glazed and decorated shelves above and storage beneath.

By 1846, Daniel Munch had acquired a total of 1,798 acres,¹³ much of it located on forested slopes that produced the trees needed to keep Munch's sawmill busy. A great deal of the land, however, was highly productive bottomland devoted to the cultivation of wheat, most of which was sent to Baltimore, Philadelphia, Georgetown, Richmond, and Alexandria as a cash crop, and other grains, such as corn, rye, and oats, which might either be converted into whiskey for easier transportation to distant markets or used at home to feed families or livestock. In the same way, apples, a staple crop of the region, were easily turned into cider and brandy in Munch's distillery. Munch donated the land for a free church at Dry Run

Daniel Munch died in 1852, survived by his wife and three grown sons. Despite the vicissitudes often suffered by farmers in the early nineteenth century and the decline of American wheat in foreign markets, surviving records of the auction held after Munch's death give a fair picture of the broad range of his farming, distilling, and milling activities. Four hundred bushels of wheat, 80 to a hundred bushels of corn, and "a small quantity" of oats are listed on the bill advertising the administrators' sale in August 1852, along with a Strickler fan, plows (including a one-horse McCormick plow and a McCormick plow share). A small lot of clover seed suggests that Munch followed the carefully diversified farming practices of many German farmers, planting clover as a soil-enriching cover crop and then allowing his cattle to graze on it. The advertisement lists horses, cattle, sheep and hogs for sale, as well as bees and bee hives. Two copper stills, with apparatus for distilling, forty or fifty cider tubs, and "a lot of barrels, half barrels, and kegs attest to the pursuit of his distilling interests. At Munch's saw mill, 4,000 feet of one-inch planks

¹²Similar examples of such work in Shenandoah County include the James W. Smoot House (VDHR 85-484) and the Armentrout House (VDHR #34), near Moore's Store. The latter has "smoked" finishes said to have been produced with tallow candles. The multicolored painted woodwork of the mid-nineteenth-century Jacob Bowman House (VDHR #85-207) near Bowman's Crossing in southern Shenandoah County, lacks the faux finishes seen in the Munch House on its multi-colored painted woodwork. The extensive trompe-l'oeil decoration at Vesper Hall (VDHR #85-073), near Strasburg, attributed to William F. Rupp, who emigrated from Germany in 1854, is considerably more sophisticated, as is that at Green Hope (VDHR #85-124), also believed to be by Rupp. (See Shenandoah County Historic Resources Survey Report, 1995, pp. 88-89.)

¹³Yarlick, p. 283.

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and smaller quantities of 3/4" and 1/2" planks were offered for sale after the auction.¹⁴

Daniel had provided farms adjoining his own for his oldest and youngest sons, Addison and Silas, during his lifetime. It was the middle son, Enoch, who inherited the Munch House at his father's death. Although Enoch continued farming the land, the decline of the wheat market and the relatively small size of his share of his father's divided property reduced the profitability of the farm. Enoch Munch's list of taxable property in 1862 included four horses, seven head of cattle, six sheep, and 14 hogs.¹⁵

The outbreak of the Civil War proved both divisive and tragic for many inhabitants of Fort Valley, as it was for the larger Shenandoah Valley. The conflict was felt even within the Munch family itself. Silas Munch attracted the enmity of some of his neighbors when it became known that he was the only man in Fort Valley to vote for Abraham Lincoln in the presidential election of 1860; he found it necessary to flee to Ohio to escape the unwelcome attention of bushwhackers who roamed the area, and Silas's son George fought in the Union Army. Although he was too old to be included in the initial conscription and, in fact, had paid a substitute to take his place in the Confederate army, when the Confederate reserves were called up near the end of the War, Enoch became fearful of retribution if he continued to remain at home. Reluctantly, he left Fort Valley for service in the rebel army. As it turned out, his action was an unnecessary concession to public opinion, and a tragic one, for Enoch contracted dysentery while on duty in the Richmond area. While on the way home on a medical furlough, he died in Staunton in December 1864..

"(If) he would have staid at home he would not have been molested," Addison Munch concluded in a letter to Silas, "as but few went and the balance were never disturbed."¹⁶

¹⁴Handbill, "Administrator's Sale. . . Public Sale on Friday, the 20th Day of August at the residence of Daniel Munch, deceased. . ." There also exists what appears to be a partial list of items sold at the same sale, since the list coincides closely with what is listed for sale on the handbill. Copies of both documents are in the research collection of James H. and Margaret Trott..

¹⁵"Enoch Munch's List of taxable property in 1862," along with the enclosing envelope) addressed to "Mr. Enoch Munch, Burners White Sulphur Springs, Shenandoah County, Virginia." (Copy in Trott collection.) This is a reference to the nearby Burner's Hotel and post office at Seven Fountains, so-called for the presence of seven different types of mineral springs.

¹⁶Letter, Addison Munch to Silas Munch, March 17, 1865. Copy in collections of James H. and Margaret Trott.

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A neighbor brought Enoch's body back to Fort Valley for reinterment.¹⁷

As it happened, the entire Fort Valley area was almost untouched by the physical destruction of the time. The wholesale "Burning" visited upon the valley proper by Union general Philip Sheridan's troops did not generally affect Fort Valley. Even Daniel Munch's fine bank barn escaped intact. In the same letter, Addison told Silas Munch:

"You no doubt will be pleased to hear that the Fort has been greatly favored by Federals. The torch was applied to almost every barn and mill along the pike and river from above Harrisonburg downwards, whilst in the fort nothing but the Furnaces were burned. In the fort houses were not searched but along the pike and river they were; hay destroyed, horses cattle hogs and sheep taken. Truly the fort ought to be grateful, we are now virtually in Yankeedom, and all the soldiers are at home."

Addison also assured Silas that the family he had left behind in his flight to Ohio were unharmed and that his farm was at least not falling to ruin:

"...your wife and children are all well and hearty... they are not suffering for any necessaries & the wheat sowed by Mr. A. Peters looks remarkably well. . . so you can see that the prospect of having plenty of grain is good."

After the war, the Munch home place was further divided among a larger and larger number of Munch heirs. The family remained devoted to their land and continued to farm it, but on a progressively smaller scale. Four generations of the Munch family now turned to school teaching and other occupations to supplement or supplant their farm income. Still, except for a brief period around 1910, when it was vacant long enough for local children to begin speaking of it as "the Spook House," the farm house continued to be occupied by members of the family. In 1929, Cyril Munch, the last of the Munch family to live in the house, hired Lorenzo Ritenour and his sons to build a large new barn (still standing) on the property.

For nearly a century, members of the Munch family had served the Fort Valley community as school teachers, justices of the peace, storekeepers, postmasters, real estate brokers, and, of course, farmers. Cyril Munch died in 1957, and the property passed out of family hands in 1961. One of the few changes the new owners made to the house was to add an indoor bathroom--the first in the history of the Munch House.

In 1970 the Daniel Munch House was acquired by its present owners, James and Margaret Trott. The Trotts added a second bathroom and laundry room, modernized the kitchen, and enclosed and glassed in rear porches to provide a

¹⁷Ibid.

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large dining room with views to the mountains. Except for demolishing the 1833 barn, which had been damaged beyond repair by a storm in 1972, and erecting a modern two-car garage in 1989, they made few changes to the outbuildings.

Although no longer at the heart of a working farm, the house and the 73 acres surrounding it show the benefits of many generations of careful stewardship. They appear today much as they did when Daniel Munch built his small empire on Passage Creek.

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10. Geographical Data:

UTM Coordinates, cont.

	Zone	Easting	Northing
5.	17	725 280	4303 940
6.	17	725 580	4303 740
7.	17	725 780	4303 920

Boundary Description:

The nominated property includes Parcels 91, 92, 103, 104, 105, 106, Shenandoah County Parcel Map No. 61A, a copy of which is attached to the nomination.

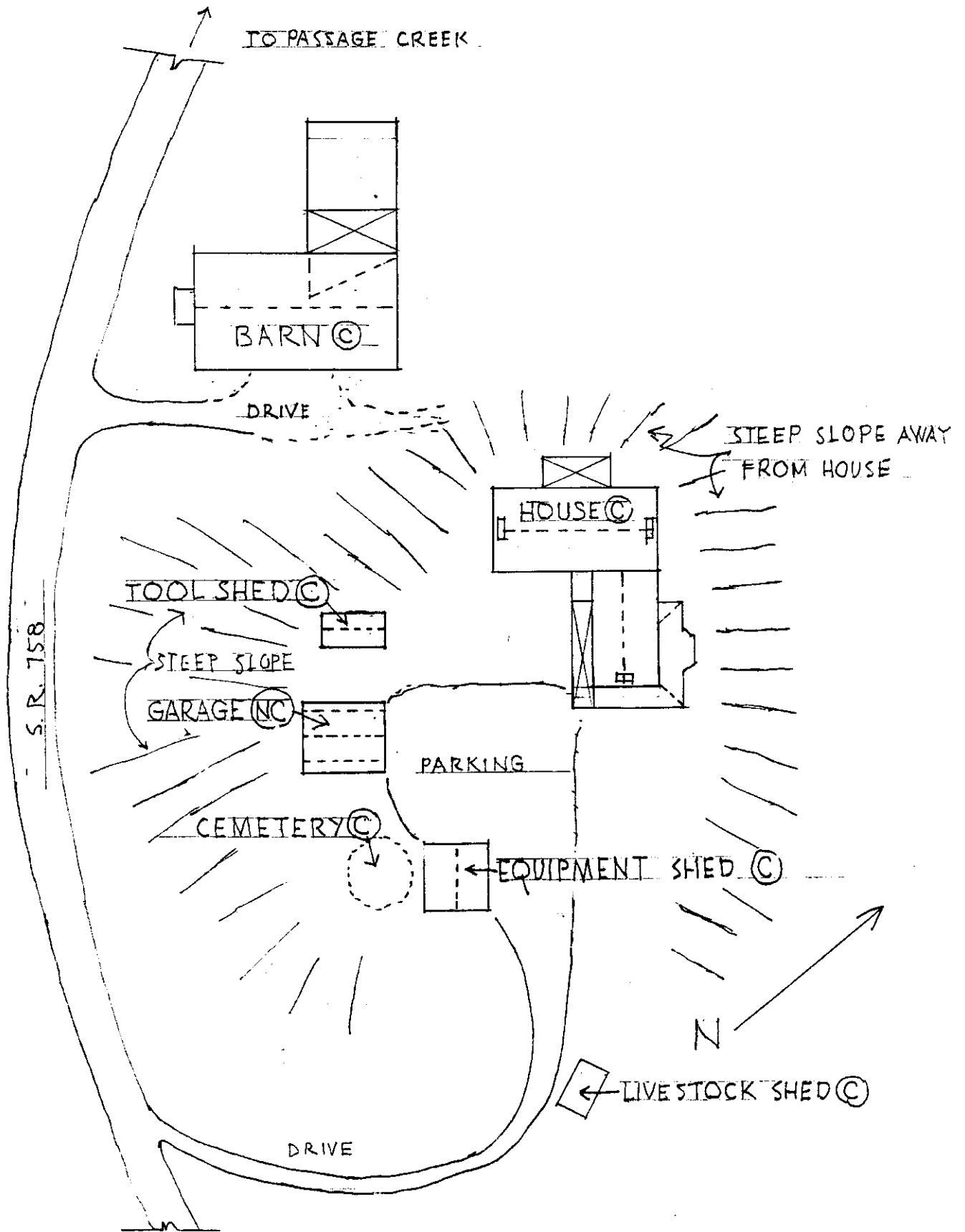
Boundary Justification:

The nominated property boundaries include those portions of the historic Munch family farm comprised of Plats 91, 92, 103, 104, 105, 106, Shenandoah County Parcel Map No. 61A, a copy of which is attached to the nomination. The boundaries extend to and across SR 758 on the southwest, across Passage Creek on the north and west, and beyond a forested ridge on the east, forming a cohesive rural setting for the house that is strongly suggestive of its historic role as a prosperous farm.

DANIEL MUNCH HOUSE SITE PLAN

VA 85-363

FORT VALLEY, SHENANDOAH CO. VIRGINIA

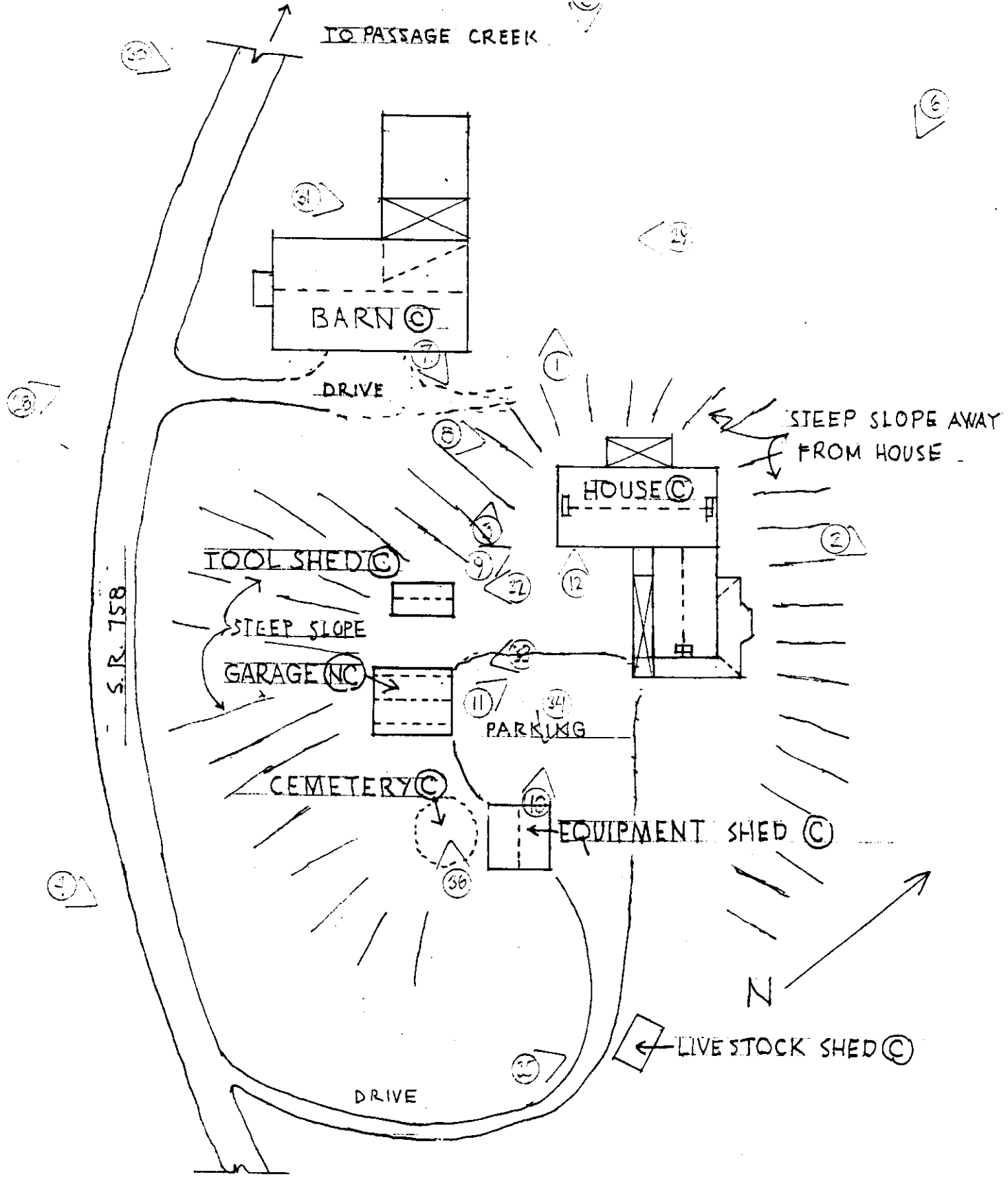


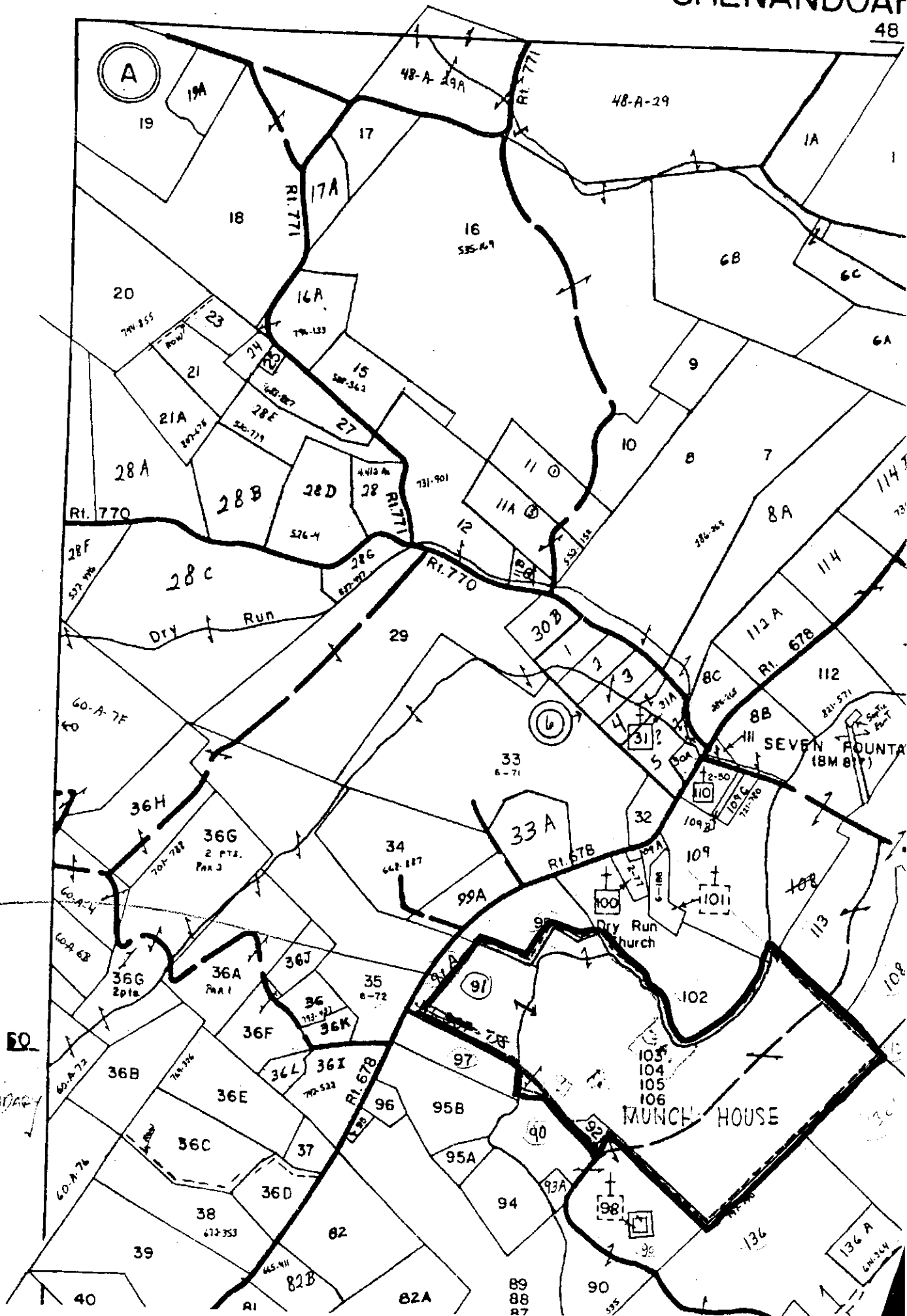
NOT TO SCALE

J.C. MASSEY 9/01

DANIEL MUNCH HOUSE SITE PLAN - PHOTO KEY VA 85-363

FORT VALLEY, SHENANDOAH CO. VIRGINIA





MUNCH HOUSE
 SHENANDOAH
 COUNTY,
 VIRGINIA

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LEGAL BOUNDARY