

VLR- 2/20/73

NRHP- 7/2/73

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: VIRGINIA	
COUNTY: ROCKBRIDGE	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
BROWNSBURG HISTORIC DISTRICT

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
see continuation sheet

CITY OR TOWN:  
Brownsburg

STATE: Virginia      CODE: 51      COUNTY: Rockbridge      CODE: 163

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) town
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Multiple Ownership

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Brownsburg      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Rockbridge County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Lexington      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1972       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 51

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

VIRGINIA      STATE:

ROCKBRIDGE      COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated above Hays Creek in the rolling hills of the Valley of Virginia, Brownsburg is the central community of the surrounding area and has not substantially changed in size or appearance since the early twentieth century. On the south the village is approached through a picturesque avenue of maple trees several miles long, but the north, east and west roads run across the open fields and hills. The town was laid out in lots with a main street and intersecting alleyways, and although many of the alleys have been closed off in recent years it has retained that basic form. The tree-lined main street is now state route 252 and is crossed on an east-west axis by county route 724.

Most of the buildings in the village date from one of two periods--the first half of the nineteenth century and the period 1870-1910. The prevalent mode is an unembellished "Valley Federal" style, found in both frame and brick construction and built from the early to the mid-nineteenth century. Although these structures show elements of formal styles, they are basically more sophisticated outgrowths of the vernacular expression of the area. These buildings take the form of a two-story, three to five-bay rectangular structure with a rear ell or 'T' addition, molded brick cornice, gable roof and exterior-end chimneys. The most common floor plan is either the central hall or the hall-and-parlor plan. Many of the frame dwellings have a single-pen or a dogtrot log core, which, for the most part, are covered by clapboard, or occasionally by shingle. The houses of this earlier period are often distinguished by handsome, finely detailed interior woodwork. Several elements appearing in the Brownsburg dwellings are unusual in the local building tradition. These include a simple crow-stepped gable as on the Carson and McChesney Houses, and a floor plan consisting of two rooms on one side of a broad hall.

The other prevailing type, popular in the town's later period of construction, usually takes one of two forms. The first is a three or five-bay two-story rectangular frame building with end chimneys, gable roof and cross gables. The other is a three-bay square frame house with a central chimney.

The twentieth century also saw some utilization of stucco construction; several houses and a bank in this mode date from the second decade. Other twentieth century buildings are non-residential. The former funeral parlor in the south end of the town now serves as the general store. On the hill to the west of the main street, facing the town's only block, is the brick school, built in 1938, and the Asbury Methodist Church, a weathered frame structure.

Although it once was a busy rural center, Brownsburg is now almost entirely a residential village with placid streets and pleasant yards. Business activity in Rockbridge County has shifted from the villages, but many of this town's combination store/dwellings retain their early store fronts. The remaining handful of commercial buildings are interspersed among the dwellings.

G.P.H.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S), (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>local history</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The small town of Brownsburg remains largely unchanged since the late nineteenth century, and provides an excellent picture of a typical early Valley village in a well-preserved state. Although the town was once more prosperous and energetic, the mainstream of Valley activity bypassed Brownsburg when both the Valley Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad of 1880, and the modern U.S. Route 11 were located several miles east of the community. As a result Brownsburg has remained somnolently settled in appearance for the past seventy years, and has retained most of its early-nineteenth century dwellings and supporting structures. Today, the town is primarily a residential community.

Legally established in 1793, Brownsburg was laid out on the lands of Robert Wardlaw and Samuel McChesney. Brown was a common name among the area's early settlers, but it is not known for which particular Brown or family of Browns the town was named. By 1835 the town was a hub of activity, containing about twenty dwellings, three stores, two shoe factories, three wheelwrights, two blacksmith shops, two tailors, a tanyard, a saddlery, a cabinet-maker, a carpenter, a hatter, a grist mill and a commercial flour mill. Ten years later, Brownsburg had grown to include thirty dwellings. The town also was noted during many years in the nineteenth century for a series of fine private schools. Although the stage-line from Staunton to Lexington originally ran through Brownsburg, the building of the railroad away from the town caused it slowly to lose its commercial enterprises. However, an exception occurred in the late-nineteenth century when the Wilburn Saddle, a type of reminiscent of the cavalry officer's saddle and used throughout the Valley, was manufactured there.

G.P.H.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Heffelfinger, G.P., "The 'I' House in Rockbridge County, Virginia," unpublished Master's Thesis at Cooperstown Graduate Programs of New York State University College at Oneonta, New York, 1972.

Morton, Oren F., A History of Rockbridge County, Virginia, Staunton: The McClure Co., Inc., 1920.

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Files.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	37 °	56'	04"	79 °	19'	28"			
NE	37 °	56'	04"	79 °	18'	50"			
SE	37 °	55'	23"	79 °	18'	50"			
SW	37 °	55'	23"	79 °	19'	28"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 100 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: December, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: VIRGINIA CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Junius R. Fishburne, Director  
Title Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

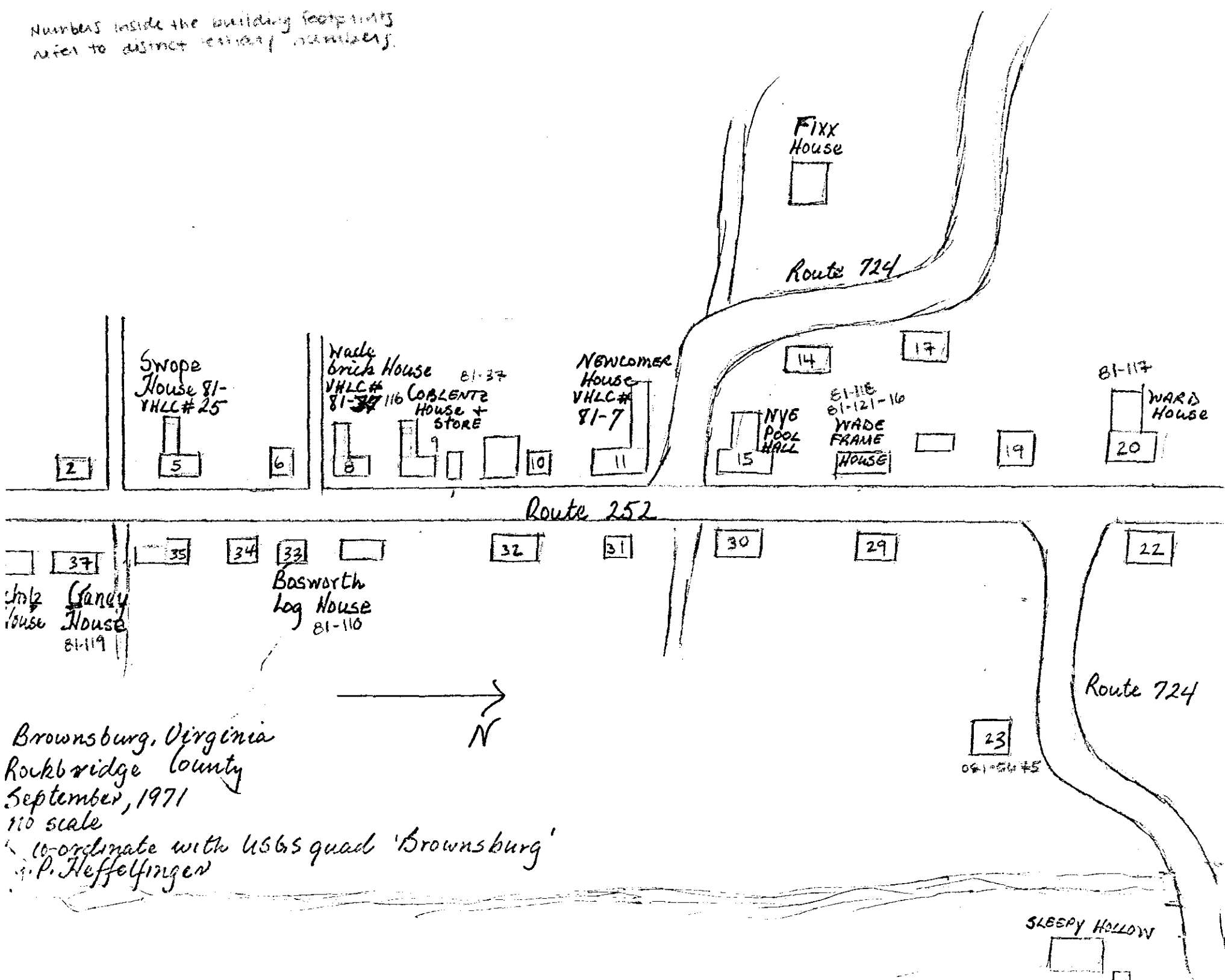
STATE VIRGINIA	
COUNTY ROCKBRIDGE	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

2.

The boundaries extend .2 mi. to the east and .2 mi. to the west of Rt. 252, and extend .2 mi. to the north and .6 mi. to the southwest of the intersection of Rt. 252 and Hays Creek.

Numbers inside the building footprints refer to distinct features/numbers.



J.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24,000)  
Brownsburg, Va. 1967

BROWNSBURG HISTORIC DISTRICT

latitude	longitude
NW37°56'04"	79°19'28"
NE37°56'04"	79°18'50"
SE37°55'23"	79°18'50"
SW37°55'23"	79°19'28"

