

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**VLR Listed: 9/8/2004  
NRHP Listed: 11/17/2004**

**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

Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House  
other names/site number VDHR file no. 117-0042

**2. Location** \_\_\_\_\_ street & number

453 Lime Kiln Road N/A not for publication  
city or town Lexington N/A vicinity  
state Virginiacode VA county Lexington (indep. city) code 678 zip code 24450

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the 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): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
TRANSPORTATION	road-related (vehicular)
DOMESTIC	single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal  
Victorian

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Stone
walls	Brick
	Wood
roof	Metal
other	

**Narrative Description**

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

- X 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.
X 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.)

Property is:

- 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 fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

Ca. 1834-1925

Significant Dates

Ca. 1834

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Tompkins, John Fulton (built 1860s frame ell)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 0.39 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1	1	636100	4183050	3	1
	2	1			4	1

\_\_\_ 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.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>		date	<u>June 23, 2004</u>
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>		telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston St.</u>		zip code	<u>24450</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u>	state	<u>VA</u>	

**Additional Documentation**

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)

**Property Owner**

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

name	<u>Goodman Properties LLC</u>		telephone	<u>(540) 464-1008</u>
street & number	<u>15A N. Randolph St.</u>		zip code	<u>24450</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u>	state	<u>VA</u>	

**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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House  
Lexington, Va.

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## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### Summary

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House is located at 453 Lime Kiln Road in the City of Lexington, Virginia. The ca. 1834 and later one-story house occupies a 0.39-acre lot on the south side of the intersection of Lime Kiln Road and Enfield Road, both of which once formed part of the course of the Lexington & Covington Turnpike (see Exhibit A). The Toll House stands above a small branch, a tributary of Woods Creek and the Maury and James Rivers. The house is surrounded by mostly historic residential development including a property known as the Stone Cottage or Davis House (VDHR file no. 117-0025) that stands across Enfield Road, and a row of four one-story houses that were apparently built in the 1920s by H. C. Slusser, a former owner of the Toll House. Bordering the Toll House lot on the south side, across the branch, is a steep wooded slope.

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House is oriented with its road front facing north-northeast. (For convenience the house is described as having a north-south orientation with the south elevation described as the rear; see Exhibit B for floor plan.) The original section is the two-room brick toll house, presumably built ca. 1834, which has a Flemish-bond front, a molded brick cornice, and gable end chimneys (one now interior). A board-and-batten frame ell was added during the period 1865-67; its stone basement story probably functioned as a kitchen and the main level as a dining room. Two vertical plank or "boxed" rooms were added to the east gable end of the original section, probably during the early 1870s, giving the house an overall U form. A Victorian porch and mantels may date to 1887; the frame and boxed sections of the house were weatherboarded, apparently in the early twentieth century (possibly in 1904); and a final boxed addition was made to the rear filling in the U (also possibly 1904). The Toll House suffered severe deterioration during the second half of the twentieth century. The house was stabilized and some rehabilitation work undertaken between 1997 and 2004. Rehabilitation in accordance with the Secretary's Standards commenced in the winter of 2004.

### Inventory

1. Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House. Ca. 1834 and later. Contributing building.
2. Spring House Ruin. 19th century. Contributing site.

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Description (continued)

Exterior

The exterior of the Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House records evidence of the complex sequence of additions and alterations that has occurred since original construction. The ca. 1834 original brick construction, weatherboard siding on the frame and boxed sections, and sections of vertical board sheathing on the rear elevation are painted white and probably have been continuously since the early twentieth century. The brick section has a Flemish-bond front elevation and American-bond gable end and rear elevations, and on its west gable end is an exterior brick chimney with three-sided stepped shoulders (rather than shoulders only on the two narrow sides, as is typical). The shoulders were rebuilt about 2000 and the three-sided form retained. The weatherboards cover what was originally board-and-batten siding on the 1860s frame ell (the battens were removed when the weatherboards were added) and the structural planks of the boxed sections. The weatherboards are nailed on with wire nails and may have been added in 1904 (tax records indicate a \$75 improvement that year). The board-and-batten siding and the planks of the boxed section were originally whitewashed and later painted gray. Some walls of the brick section appear to have been given a light red or pink wash, possibly before the Civil War, and were also whitewashed.

The house is covered by a metal-sheathed gable roof in three sections forming a U with the opening of the U facing south. The last boxed addition filled in the U with a shed roof. The roof over the east boxed rooms has shaped exposed rafter ends. The roof over the brick section has original rafter ends that have been hewn down to conform in shape to the rafter ends over the boxed rooms. At some point the entire roof over the brick section was lowered, presumably so as to form a continuous roof plane over the brick and boxed sections. In order to lower the roof the rafter ends were crudely cut through a molded brick cornice.

Under the brick section is an unpainted limestone foundation. Under the frame ell is a limestone foundation covered with a cementlike stucco on the presently interior east wall and with ca. 2000 concrete on the south and west walls. The stucco on the east wall is scored to simulate ashlar masonry; the other walls apparently had a stucco finish with similar scoring prior to resurfacing. Under the northeast boxed room is a crude fieldstone foundation that was partially replaced with cinder block during the 2004 rehabilitation. Under the southeast and middle rear boxed rooms are wood post foundations with an enclosure of vertical boards. Sections of this foundation had rotted away and/or had been removed by the early 2000s, resulting in subsidence of the boxed rooms above. Consequently the wood post foundations were replaced during the 2004 rehabilitation with board-and-batten stud wall on a cinder

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**Description (continued)**

block foundation. Under the boxed rooms and center passage is a crude, undulating rubble wall that may have been a formerly exterior retaining wall (it appears too irregular and crudely constructed to have served as a foundation).

Most of the Toll House window openings are provided with double-hung 2/2 wood sash windows dating to the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. The two windows on the front of the brick section have molded surrounds that may date to ca. 1834; if so, they were reused when the two window openings were created in the late nineteenth century (see discussion next paragraph). Most of the front and side windows have or had louvered wood shutters with iron pintles and other hardware. There is a 4/4 window on the south elevation of the southeast boxed room that may date to the 1870s or is a recycled window inserted later on this less-visible elevation. (This window was replaced during the 2004 rehabilitation owing to its advanced state of deterioration.) The middle rear boxed room has two 2/2 windows that differ from the others in proportion (these were removed as a result of a small rear addition made during the 2004 rehabilitation).

As originally constructed the brick section featured a four-bay road front with two entries flanked by windows at the ends. The entries and window openings were bricked up and two new window openings created in the late nineteenth century. This was apparently done to close off the north elevation from the road (new entries had been created on the east and west sides, as described below) and to create a more regular spacing of windows on the elevation, which now included a window on the north side of the northeast boxed room. The east entry occupies the space between the brick section and the frame ell and contains an entry with a four-panel door, five-light sidelights, a transom, chamfered upright members between the sidelights and door, a semicircular molding on the member that spans the door and sidelights, and sawn brackets at the top. The west entry has a wood and glass panel door, a two-light sidelight, and a screen door with a decorative wooden frame. Other entries with batten doors open on the first and basement stories of the rear elevation. They formerly opened onto a two-tier back porch with a porch stair and a partial enclosure on the second tier. The porch was apparently added to the house in the early twentieth century, and it was removed between 1991 and the early 2000s. The entry next to the southeast corner of the ell foundation has a beaded batten door.

The principal decorative exterior feature is the porch on the east elevation, which has chamfered posts and pilasters with molded neckings above which spring curved, scalloped brackets. Small sawn ornaments project from the bottom edge of the frieze boards between

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**Description (continued)**

the posts. The balustrade is formed of slats with circular and diamond cutouts; the slats are set edge to edge to give the appearance of a solid surface with piercings. The porch also has a beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling and tongue-and-groove floor boards. The porch pilasters and brackets are constructed with cut nails but they are wire-nailed to the weatherboards, and the roof structure appears to be wire-nailed. Presumably the posts and other porch components were removed and reattached when the house was weatherboarded. Mortises and nail holes on one pilaster appear to be associated with an earlier balustrade. Presently the posts, pilasters, ceiling, and brackets are painted white and the top and bottom rails of the balustrade and the frieze boards and pendant ornaments are painted dark green (the house has been painted white with green trim since at least 1938). At one time the posts, pilasters, and brackets were painted brown and the ceiling was painted a vivid light blue.

Historic photographs from 1938 and later show the former porch on the west side, which may have been added to the house at the same time as the 1860s frame ell. The porch had square posts (apparently chamfered), square or rectangular balusters, and a lattice underpinning. This porch had been replaced by a deck by the late twentieth century. A porch on turned posts was added at the location during the period 1997-2004. At the south end of the porch on the house wall are mortises associated with the balustrade and roof structure of the historic porch.

Other structural and decorative features appear on the exterior. In the east gable is a narrow bargeboard with a cut-out pattern of alternating three and four-lobed ornaments. Many of the ornaments had broken off by 2004, and the bargeboard was replaced by a new one of the same design. In the weatherboards of the two rear gable ends are small diamond-shaped cutout vent holes. Under the window at the east end of the north elevation is a paneled apron which is repeated on the interior. The top of a brick chimney rises above the front roof ridge (it is the top of the formerly exterior chimney at the east end of the original brick section). A brick chimney with stepped shoulders (only the two sides) rises from a high stone base (now with concrete parging) at the south gable end of the frame ell.

**Interior: Main Level**

The interior is characterized by wood floors, four-panel and batten doors, molded and plain baseboards, and a variety of wall and ceiling treatments. The two rooms of the brick section retain a number of original features. The east room has a simple architrave mantel described by architectural historian Mark Wenger as consisting of a "quirked ovolo back band applied



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**Description (continued)**

to a plain field of flush joiner, all surmounted by a plain shelf." The mantel also has a narrow cove molding under the shelf, a brick hearth, a formerly plastered brick fireplace surround, an iron lintel, and two stove flue holes (one on top of the lintel, the other in the wall above the mantel). The east and west rooms are divided by a beaded vertical board partition that may originally have been painted an off-white color with one or more later coats of brown paint. An enclosed stair formerly rose along the partition in the west room. The stair was accessed from the east room through a doorway cut into the partition at its south end (whether it could also be accessed from the west room can no longer be determined). The stair may not have been original since its stringer appears to have been applied over one or more layers of paint. The stair entry was closed off with unpainted boards. A doorway with plain trim now connects the two rooms.

The east and west rooms also have features and traces of features from the historic and modern periods. Both rooms formerly had chair rails. In the east room, the four-panel door on the south wall has pottery knobs and peak-section panels with simple brown graining on the passage side. The four-panel door on the east wall has an oval lock plate and butt hinges with three-lobed hinge plates (resembling a fleur-de-lis). On the walls are vestiges of late nineteenth century wallpaper with a design of dark olive green arabesques on a cream field. The paper is also decorated with hatching, gold highlights, and pendant fleur-de-lis finials on the arabesques (perhaps a design tie-in to the fleur-de-lis-like hinges). The east room ceiling has a swirl-pattern modern plaster finish over plain wallpaper.

The west wall of the west room was rebuilt between 1997 and 2004. It is exposed brick with a projecting segmental arch brick surround around the fireplace, which is lined with yellow fire brick and has a brick hearth. Two steel rods project above the fireplace as supports for a wood mantel shelf that was not installed. Formerly the fireplace had a Victorian mantel that is stored in the house (presumably the room originally had a mantel similar to the one in the west brick room). The Victorian mantel has a frieze and pilasters with molded faces, carved brackets in pairs at the ends of the frieze, a bed molding under the shelf, and chamfering. On the south wall of the room is a four-panel door with deteriorated brown graining on the passage side over an earlier light brown color. The door has had the moldings removed from its surround but it retains pottery and porcelain knobs and a three-light transom. The sash-sawn ceiling joists have plaster key stains indicative of a former plaster-and-lath ceiling. Over the door opening to the east room is a patch of nineteenth century wallpaper with a diaper design of interweaving light pink ribands, pink and olive green arabesques, and dark pink wreaths (see Exhibit C). Later, twentieth century wallpaper includes an Art Nouveau-

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Description (continued)

influenced paper with red and green arabesques on a tan field and a later Colonial Revival paper with blue and cream flowers and undulating vertical garlands on a pink field.

Between the west room of the original section and the frame ell is the west end of the passage that passes entirely through the house. During rehabilitation a stair was found under the cut-nailed floor boards of the passage. The stair descended to a passage in the basement that may originally have been a porch on the east side of the ell. Presumably the stair once served to connect the ell basement (apparently a kitchen) with the ell main level (apparently a dining room). The stair was as wide as the passage, and there is evidence that the west end of the passage may at one time have been partitioned off from the rest. The stair was halved in width by the end of the nineteenth century, presumably so persons could walk around it from one end of the passage to the other. When the stair was floored over a section of a wooden handrail with mortises for slender balusters was used as a joist. In the late 1930s and 1940s the stairwell was enclosed, and a door that opened into it from the passage was permanently closed.

The room in the ell is divided from the passage by a vertical beaded board partition (studs and drywall were later added to the boards) with two door openings (one in use, the other infilled with boards). The other walls of the room have plaster over split laths that are cut-nailed to mortise-and-tenoned, circular-sawn framing. The room formerly had a plaster-and-lath ceiling. In the room, and apparently original to it, is a simple Greek Revival mantel of cut-nailed circular-sawn board construction. The fireplace has a brick hearth and iron lintel over the opening.

The oldest of the three boxed rooms are the northeast and southeast rooms, which probably date to the early 1870s (see architectural analysis). The most recent is the middle rear room, which apparently dates to the early twentieth century, perhaps 1904. In the northeast room is the formerly exterior east chimney of the original toll house. It was cut back so that it does not project as far as originally, presumably to create more space in the room, and there is evidence of two (upper and lower) stove flue holes. Despite the alteration to the chimney it retains its original three-sided stepped shoulders above ceiling level. On the formerly exterior brick wall to the south side of the chimney are six wood pegs set into the brickwork, two on the south side of the door and four on the north side. They may have served as nailers for some long-vanished feature (signage giving turnpike toll rates?). The plank walls have what appears to be original cardboard-like wallpaper with a pattern of green, red, pink, and white floral arabesques on a three-tone green field with horizontal hatching (see Exhibit C and

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**Description (continued)**

architectural analysis). The original beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling boards, painted gray, were cut-nailed to circular-sawn joists. The ceiling and some walls were covered over with studs and drywall.

The southeast boxed room has beaded tongue-and-groove wall and ceiling sheathing now painted light green. In the northwest corner is a built-in cabinet of the same material with decorative metal pulls and locks, a stained interior, and tin rat proofing. Also in the room are a ceiling stove flue hole and a sink. The middle rear boxed room is entered through a batten door with graining on the side facing the passage. The partition between the room and the passage is constructed of vertical tongue-and-groove boards painted pink with a gray border at the top. A brick flue formerly attached to this wall. The ceiling and west wall are plaster over circular-sawn lath attached with wire nails; the west wall has several generations of floral wallpaper.

The passage that runs through the house from east to west is defined by the formerly exterior American-bond rear wall of the original toll house and the vertical board and tongue-and-groove walls of the various additions. The brick wall has yellow paint into which are scratched the initials and date AJ 1953. At the point where the original west end of the passage was extended are vestiges of dark red wallpaper with a floral pattern in shades of pink.

**Interior: Attic**

In the attic over the original section are visible the original sash-sawn rafters, lapped and pegged at the ridge and carved with Roman numeral builder's marks. The attic was formerly floored; the floor boards have been removed but the cut nails that fastened them remain. There is evidence for original wood shingle roofing. Above the east wall of the original section is a partially dismantled brick gable. Enough of the gable survives to indicate that it had two squarish windows on each side of the chimney, and there is a stove flue hole in the parging of the chimney. The windows--presumably there were also two in the west gable--and the evidence for the floor and stove as well as the former stair in the west room all point to the attic having been a habitable garret. The attic over the frame ell, which could be accessed from the original section attic, has common rafters that are butted and nailed at the ridge. The common rafters over the northeast boxed room are also butted and nailed.

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Interior: Basement

In the crawlspace under the original section are visible log floor joists with the bark still on them. The earliest basement is located under the ell. It has mud plaster over stone walls, a ceiling of plaster over circular-sawn lath, and evidence of a former baseboard that was probably part of a now missing wood floor. In the plaster on the south wall is a stove flue hole. The room is entered on the east side through a batten door painted brown with initials and numerals written on it in chalk. A pulley is affixed to the top of the door, near a large cut nail with an augmented head that may have served as a hook for hanging items (a similar nail is driven into a plate in the east basement room). A window next to the door was converted into a storage cabinet with shelves constructed with cut nails. This probably occurred in the late 1880s since scraps of a November 7, 1885 issue of the *New York Weekly Tribune* were used to paper over the gaps between the boards of the cabinet lining. The cabinet has a double-leaf door. One leaf appears to be original and is constructed of beaded vertical boards painted brown with chalked initials and names including V.R.C. and Louise. The other leaf is a replacement constructed from reused planks from one of the boxed additions (the planks still have whitewash and gray paint). A window on the west wall is boarded up.

Under the middle rear and southeast boxed rooms are basements that have or formerly had exterior plank walls, ceilings with plaster over wire-nailed circular-sawn lath, and wood floors on sleepers (the middle room has a frond-pattern green linoleum mat. Between the two rooms is a vertical board partition constructed with beaded and plain boards painted brown. The two post supports between the rooms have diagonal up-braces that are encased with beaded tongue-and-groove. Under the northeast and southeast boxed rooms are sills with mortise-and-tenoned and pegged joints. In the southeast basement room appear the dated initials RC June 15 1935.

The middle basement room was used as a workshop in the 1930s, and it once may also have functioned as a kitchen (superseding the one in the ell). The room's plaster-and-lath north wall, which backs up to unexcavated dirt and the stone wall-like feature described above, has a built-in cabinet that may have served as a cooler. An opening at the west end of the wall probably served for additional storage, and/or to access a stove flue that ran from the room into the base of the brick flue that formerly passed up through the middle rear room. Graffiti in the room include the initials H.V.P., N.L.S., and V.H.C. The basement served primarily for storage in the mid-twentieth century.

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**Description (continued)**

**Springhouse Ruin**

In a low-lying area to the west of the house is a springhouse ruin of coursed limestone construction. The ruin comprises three rectangular chambers. Of the two chambers at the south end, the east one has a trough-like character. The single chamber at the north end has vestiges of an entry and possibly steps on the east side, and its north end has a crudely rounded or V-shaped form. Spring water enters the structure from an opening under a large stone lintel at the north end and flows through small rectangular openings to pass out of the structure at the south end (and thence to the branch).

The springhouse had a two-level frame superstructure with weatherboard siding and a gable roof. The section over the north chamber of the foundation had latticed walls; over it projected the enclosed second level. The upper and lower levels were illuminated by small rectangular openings with louvered wood shutters. The form and construction of the former superstructure suggests it may have been built in the late nineteenth century, possibly in the 1860s or 1870s. An 1891 map shows the spring and appears to show the superstructure.

**Integrity Statement**

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House possesses good integrity from the period of significance (ca. 1834 to 1925). All phases of the architectural evolution of the house are apparent, and it retains many original and later historic exterior and interior features. The property also possesses good integrity of setting. Adjacent houses date primarily from the antebellum period to the 1920s, and they record a gradual transition from sparsely populated rural landscape to an early string-town suburb of Lexington. Among these houses is the National Register-eligible Stone Cottage (Davis House; 117-0025). The course of the Lexington & Covington Turnpike remains in use, and the house preserves its historic close proximity to the road.

In 2004 a state and federal tax credit rehabilitation began that at this writing (early May 2004) is nearing completion and has been approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The rehabilitation has already corrected severe subsidence and water infiltration problems. The character-defining exterior features of the house will be preserved. Some alteration will be made to the less-visible rear elevation, including a small basement and main level addition that extends the middle rear boxed room. Greater alteration will be necessary on the interior, especially in the boxed rooms that are inherently insufficiently insulated and

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**Description (continued)**

do not have wall cavities for electrical wiring or other systems. It will be necessary to construct stud walls against the boxed walls, altering their thickness but not resulting in their removal. In order that the central passage plan and basic room arrangement of the house may be retained, bathrooms and storage will be created in the middle rear room, the latest and most crudely finished of the boxed rooms. The rehabilitated Toll House will be used as a single-family rental dwelling.

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**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Summary**

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House, located in the City of Lexington, Virginia, was built ca. 1834 to serve as a toll house on the Lexington & Covington Turnpike. The one-story, two-room brick building features a Flemish-bond front, a molded cornice, and vestiges of original Federal detail. The turnpike served the farmers and iron furnaces of Rockbridge and Alleghany Counties, and although it was intended as a link in a chain of turnpikes connecting Richmond with the Ohio, it declined in the 1850s and eventually reverted to county road status. The Toll House was sold to J. Fulton Tompkins in 1864, who lived there with his mother, sisters, and (beginning in 1867) his newlywed wife Sallie. Former CSA general, army engineer, and Washington College president Robert E. Lee, who often rode through the Rockbridge countryside on his horse Traveller, once stopped while Tompkins was building a stone foundation for an addition. Lee discussed mortar with Tompkins during the visit. Tompkins's ca. 1867 frame ell was the first of several additions to the Toll House. These include two probably early 1870s rooms of vertical plank or "boxed" construction, a low-cost alternative to frame construction popular in the Upland South during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Victorian details that may date to 1887. Carpenter/builder William C. Colvin may have been responsible for the Victorian upgrades to the house. Later owners included the McKeever, Slusser, and Smith families. In 2004, after years of neglect, the Toll House was rehabilitated as a single family dwelling.

**Applicable Criteria**

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House is eligible under Criteria A and C with significance in the areas of transportation and architecture. In 1991 architectural historian Mark R. Wenger conducted a Phase II architectural evaluation of the property and made eligibility recommendations. Wenger noted generally:

The Smith or Toll House . . . represents the early development of the nation's road system under the auspices of private investment companies [The Toll House] incorporates an unusual example of vertical plank construction, dating from the last quarter of the 19th century. This surveyor has not encountered another like it. By its very nature, this insubstantial technology is highly vulnerable, all the more so for being post-bellum. Yet it is tremendously important for scholars who wish to track the

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Statement of Significance (continued)

evolution of housing standards among the general populace.<sup>1</sup>

Wenger recommended the house as eligible under Criteria A and C and presented the following arguments in support of eligibility:

- 1) As a toll house on the Lexington and Covington Turnpike, this structure represents the brief privatization of transportation in the early years of the nation's history. Virginia figured prominently in this movement, and by the 1830s had witnessed the construction of a number of roads by private investors. These enterprises were seldom profitable, though, and by the late 1830s, turnpike building had slowed considerably. Ultimately, responsibility for road building and maintenance shifted to local and state governments. Completed in 1832, the Lexington and Covington Turnpike represents one of the later episodes of turnpike construction in Virginia.
- 2) It is a later and physically insubstantial example of vertical plank construction, an alternative construction technology rarely encountered here in domestic buildings. Post-bellum examples are particularly vulnerable to attrition, since there is no general agreement on their importance.
- 3) The expansion of the house in the 1860s seems to have created a separate dining space, indicating how the practice of formal dining had become more general during the course of the 19th century. Here, then, is evidence of rising standards in the material life of early Virginians.
- 4) As in the case of the Stone Cottage (Davis House) (117-25) [an adjoining property also considered in Wenger's report], the physical history of this property is highly suggestive with regard to the commercial history of the area. It points to growing volume of traffic along Lime Kiln Road and the growing desire of residents to insulate themselves from it.<sup>2</sup>

This discussion refines and expands upon these arguments for significance. The Lexington &

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<sup>1</sup> Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation," iv-v, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., iv-vi, 40-41.



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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Covington Turnpike Toll House is associated with a locally significant turnpike that benefitted the agricultural and industrial enterprises of Rockbridge and Alleghany Counties during the antebellum period. The Toll House is also architecturally significant for its original Flemish-bond brick toll house section and its late nineteenth century boxed additions. Boxed construction was popular during the era as a low-cost alternative to frame construction, and although boxed houses are numerous in western Virginia (the author has surveyed them in Franklin, Grayson, and Wythe Counties), it is rare that they received the level of finish and ornamentation seen in the Toll House. The Victorianized boxed construction of the Toll House provides insight into attitudes about the complex socioeconomic phenomenon of boxed construction, explored by architectural historian Michael Ann Williams and others.

The period of significance for the Toll House extends from ca. 1834 through 1925, a period that encompasses the transportation association and the temporally uncertain periods of later construction. The Toll House is eligible at the local level of significance.

**Acknowledgments**

A number of organizations and individuals assisted in the preparation of this report. Foremost among them were the owners of the property, Timothy and Janeen Welsh of Goodman Properties LLC. Others who provided assistance included George J. Tompkins of Glasgow, grandson of former owner J. F. Tompkins; Pearl Goodbar, sister of former owner C. R. Smith; Lisa McCown and C. Vaughan Stanley of the Leyburn Library Special Collections at Washington & Lee University, Lexington; George Warren of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Lexington; and Bob Carter, Angie Edwards, John Kern, Mike Pulice, Catherine Slusser, and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

**Historic Context**

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House is associated with the Lexington & Covington Turnpike, incorporated by the General Assembly on February 19, 1829. The L&C was one of the many turnpikes and other internal improvements constructed in Virginia during the antebellum period to facilitate the transportation of goods and people through the Commonwealth. The road linked Lexington, the seat of Rockbridge County, with Covington, the seat of Alleghany County to the west, a distance of forty-one miles through mountainous terrain. At Lexington the turnpike connected to major routes leading to Lynchburg, the lower Shenandoah Valley, Southwest Virginia, and (eventually) the Maury River extension of the

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James River & Kanawha Canal. At Covington the L&C connected to the Kanawha Turnpike, which extended to navigable reaches of the Kanawha River in what is now central West Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

The Lexington and Covington Turnpike Co. was authorized to issue \$20,000 in capital stock, and a committee comprised of leading citizens of Rockbridge and Alleghany Counties was appointed. The width of the non-macadamized road was determined at twenty feet--sixteen feet where it crossed the steep North Mountain at the county line. The Commonwealth provided assistance to the turnpike company in the form of technical expertise. The state civil engineer Claudius Crozet surveyed potential routes for the Lexington & Covington.<sup>4</sup>

According to historian Winifred Hadsel, Crozet and the turnpike company disagreed on the best route. Crozet recommended a route from Lexington through the Kerrs Creek Gap of North Mountain--approximately the route followed by US Highway 60 and Interstate 64 today. Instead, the turnpike company opted for a shorter but apparently more rugged and winding route (the present SR 770) that passed through the considerably higher Colliers Gap. (The sections of road near this gap are to this day supported by large stone abutments that presumably date to the turnpike's original construction.) A major factor in the turnpike's route appears to have been the existence of the Lucy Selina Furnace at Longdale in Alleghany County, located on the west side of Colliers Gap. The furnace was erected in 1827 by John Jordan and John Irvine to serve their 26,000-acre iron plantation in Alleghany, Rockbridge, and Bath Counties. Other furnaces and forges, either along the route of the turnpike or nearby, were erected in Alleghany County in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. A group of contractors that included John Jordan, who had much to gain from the Lexington & Covington Turnpike, was the low bidder for its construction and was awarded the contract.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Hadsel, *Roads of Rockbridge*, 161-163; Lexington and Covington Turnpike Co. Records; Knapp, "Trade and Transportation in Rockbridge," 21; and Smith, "Lexington and Covington Turnpike."

<sup>4</sup> Hadsel, *Roads of Rockbridge*, 161-163; Lexington and Covington Turnpike Co. Records; and Smith, "Lexington and Covington Turnpike."

<sup>5</sup> Hadsel, *Roads of Rockbridge*, 162-163; Giles, "Longdale Furnace Historic District;" Clark et al, "Collierstown Story," 167; and Smith, "Lexington and Covington Turnpike."

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Statement of Significance (continued)

Construction of the L&C commenced in 1831 and was largely completed by the end of 1832. In April 1831 the General Assembly granted certain powers to the turnpike company to facilitate construction. The turnpike's engineer, William Paxton, noted in a November 1831 report that the nine-mile section over "Jordan's Gap" (the common name for Collier's Gap during the period) was completed to the extent that "heavy loaded wagons" could pass. Construction of bridges and toll houses lagged behind the rest of the work. By November 30, 1832, land for the toll houses had been condemned and the "Toll gate [was] recently put up" (which toll gate is not stated, although the one at the Lexington end of the road seems likely). On November 25, 1833, William Paxton reported that "Arrangements have nearly been completed for building Toll houses, and erecting gates, preparatory to the further collection of tolls." A list of expenses from November 30, 1834, stated that \$251.56-1/4 had been spent on "Toll hous [sic] & gates" and that \$600 had been spent on "Condemnation of Lands for Toll houses and for Building Toll houses." From this evidence it seems likely that the Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House at Lexington was built in 1834.<sup>6</sup>

The turnpike records contain the names of bridge contractors and road subcontractors but not the toll house contractor or contractors. Several names stand out as possible candidates, however. The turnpike's principal contractor, John Jordan, was a prolific area builder. In September 1832 he had a sawmill at Longdale that might have provided materials for the toll house, which has sash-sawn ceiling joists (although other sawmills undoubtedly existed closer to the building site). The subcontractor for the six miles of road beginning at Lexington was Andrew Alexander, whose farm stood a short distance east of the toll house. A few names of

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The other contractors were Joseph Winn and Dennison Rose. Articles of agreement between the contractors and the turnpike company are dated December 15, 1830.

<sup>6</sup> Lexington & Covington Turnpike Co. Records. A survey of the section of the turnpike route that passes by the tollhouse site, made in October 1826, does not show a structure at the location. The survey does however provide detailed information on the surroundings. An "old distillery," possibly a ruin, stood on the north bank of Woods Creek at the crossing of the road that more or less followed the turnpike's future course. The farms of a Mr. Reid and Andrew Alexander occupied the two sides of the road, and the "cultivated fields of Mr. Reid's" covered the high ground to the west. The preexisting road made the same curve at Lime Kiln and Enfield that it does today. The surveyor drew sawtooth lines on each side of the road: probably a depiction of worm fences.

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toll keepers or "gatherers" have been recorded. In November 1834 John Cox and Hugh Mackey served the company in this capacity, and a Mr. Burgess may have been a toll keeper the following decade. In September 1847 the turnpike president reported that "The compensation to the collectors is the use of a house & lot & 15 p.c. on their collections." In 1847 the Lexington gate garnered \$157.50 in tolls of which \$23.62-1/2 would have gone to the toll keeper. An early reference to the "Toll House" appears in the 1848 will of Colonel Alexander T. Barclay, the turnpike president in 1837, who lived across present-day Enfield Road from the house.<sup>7</sup>

Hadsel writes that because of its route the L&C "turned out to be more useful as a local road from Lexington to Collierstown [in Rockbridge County] than it was as part of a highway from Lexington to Covington and the west." At the time, however, local leaders hoped that it would become part of a major east-west thoroughfare. In September 1835 the editor of the *Lexington Gazette* wrote in support of a proposed turnpike from Lexington to Richmond. "The importance of the road is obvious," he explained:

When it is finished there will be a continuous turnpike passing through the heart of the State from the City of Richmond to Guyandotte on the Ohio--from 20 to 30 miles nearer than the road through Staunton. All western travel and stock destined to the lower part of the State, will of course take this road. A large portion of the visitors to the Springs from the lower country will prefer this route.

With a direct mention of the L&C he concluded "To our village and to the stockholders of the Covington Turnpike its importance is too obvious to require remark." In July 1835 a stage coach service connecting Lexington and Guyandotte (in present-day West Virginia) passed over the turnpike.<sup>8</sup>

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Co. experienced financial problems later in the antebellum period. An early sign of distress appears in Alexander Barclay's 1848 will. Barclay instructed his executors to postpone the sale of his Lexington & Covington Turnpike

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid; Rockbridge County Will Book 11, p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> Hadsel, *Roads of Rockbridge*, 162-163; *Lexington Gazette*, September 18, 1835; and Smith, "Lexington and Covington Turnpike."

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shares, which he advised "are of little value in the market, at the present." Andrew Fudge of Covington, the turnpike's president in 1850, wrote the state auditor that the company's finances were in "an embarrassed condition." At the beginning of the 1850s, turnpike president James Montgomery, director John Letcher (who later served as Virginia's Civil War governor), and two other directors petitioned the state to relax the turnpike width requirement in hopes of reducing maintenance costs. In 1851 a creditor sued the turnpike company and a decree was issued instructing the company to pay its debts from accruing revenues. The payments did not materialize, and on December 31, 1855 the road and its appurtenances were sold to John J. Paxton of Alleghany County for \$2,000. Advertisements in the *Lexington Gazette* for late 1855 noted that four houses and lots were included: "the Brick Toll House near Mrs. Barclay's & half a mile from Lexington [the Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House], the Toll House at the Cow-pasture Bridge, the Stone Toll House at Clifton Forge, and the Toll House near the Island Ford Bridge." Also noted was Samuel Tines's contract for repairs with the turnpike company. The difficulties experienced by the turnpike in the early 1850s may have been a consequence of competition from the James River & Kanawha Canal. Although the canal was not completed beyond Buchanan in Botetourt County, other river improvements were made up-river as far as the Clifton Forge area in the 1850s, making river shipping more attractive than overland transportation for the area's iron manufactories.<sup>9</sup>

The Toll House probably continued to function in its original capacity for later owners such as the absentee John J. Paxton. The house remained virtually unaltered through the mid-1860s, which may be an indication of continued toll house use. The occupants of the Toll House during the antebellum period are unknown, however the 1850 census may provide a clue to the identity of one of them. The census lists sixty-year-old Alexander Montgomery, a laborer who possessed no real estate, as the occupant of dwelling no. 608 in the enumeration. Dwelling no. 606 was the residence of Mary E. Barclay, widow of Alexander Barclay, who lived several hundred feet from the Toll House. The proximity of the two residences in the

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<sup>9</sup> Rockbridge County Will Book 11, p. 89, Chancery Order Book 1847-52, pp. 362, 392, Chancery Order Book 1852-58, pp. 185, 299, Deed Book GG p. 42; Hemphill, "Records of Rockbridge in Richmond," 49; *Lexington Gazette*, November 29, 1855; Morton, *History of Rockbridge County*, 165; Lexington & Covington Turnpike Co. Records; and Russ, McDaniel, and Wood, "Archaeology of Nineteenth-Century Iron Manufacturing," 136. The Chancery Order Books refer to accounts, depositions, and various exhibits; at the time of the preparation of this nomination these items were being microfilmed at the Library of Virginia.

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enumeration suggests they were located near each other in actuality. There is also the coincidence of the surnames of Alexander Montgomery (b. ca. 1790) and turnpike president James Montgomery (1786-1866). The author has not been able to establish a relationship between the two Montgomeries, but it may be that they were brothers, and that James employed Alexander as the toll house keeper. If so, one wonders why the relatively affluent James Montgomery, who owned a farm in the Toad Run area of the county just off the Lexington & Covington Turnpike, would have a brother who was an unpropertied laborer.<sup>10</sup>

On February 28, 1861, John J. Paxton and his wife Eliza Jane Paxton sold the 15-1/4-mile Rockbridge County portion of the turnpike to Mackey Anderson & Co. for \$900. One member of the firm appears to have been Samuel C. Mackey, who lived near the turnpike on Toad Run. On January 1, 1864, Samuel C. Mackey (a Toad Run area farmer), John S. Cummings (a Lexington dry goods merchant and grocer in the 1830s), and Cummings's wife Sarah sold a ten-mile section of the turnpike from Lexington to the Logan & Lackey Tanyard to John F. Tompkins.<sup>11</sup>

John Fulton Tompkins (1830-99) was listed as a "trader" in the 1860 federal census. What he traded is not specified, although in later life he bought and sold properties for profit. He was a single head of household residing with a number of unrelated persons including a Methodist preacher and a hotel manager and their families. He apparently lived in Lexington that year. During the Civil War he served with the Rockbridge Artillery, was wounded, and ended up in Lynchburg where his prior training as a pharmacist earned him a supervisory position in a

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<sup>10</sup> U. S. census, Montgomery Family genealogy; Clark, *The Faithfulness is Unto All Generations*, 32; Rockbridge County Will Book 18, p. 259; and "Rockbridge County (Section Number 1), 1863." James Montgomery had a son Alexander Montgomery (1818-1860) who was a property owner at the time of his death (Rockbridge County Will Book 16, pp. 128, 183).

<sup>11</sup> Rockbridge County Deed Book II, pp. 433, 473; Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation," 10, 12; "Rockbridge County (Section Number 1)," and Ruley, "Lexington in the 1830s," 35. It is possible that Union soldiers stopped at or were stationed at the Toll House, for a belt buckle with the letters OVM (Ohio Volunteer Militia) was found on site during the 2004 rehabilitation. (There may be many other explanations for the artifact's presence).

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hospital. Returning to Lexington after Appomattox, Tompkins lived in the Toll House with his mother and sisters. In June 1867 Tompkins married Sallie Dudley Ragland Pendleton (1834-1918) and the Sallie moved to the Toll House. In the 1870s Tompkins was employed as the Virginia Military Institute pharmacist and lived with his family at Stono. The Tompkinses acquired the Rockbridge County house Marlbrook in 1875.<sup>12</sup>

Fulton and Sallie Tompkins's first son, E. Pendleton Tompkins (1868-1952), was a Rockbridge County historian and family chronicler who wrote about his parents' association with the Toll House. The sequence of events is somewhat confused in Tompkins's ca. 1939 memoir, but it is invaluable for the information it contains on the evolution of the house, and for its account of a visit by Robert E. Lee. Tompkins wrote:

[J. Fulton Tompkins] bought a small house on the outskirts of Lexington . . . It was a brick cottage, he at once set to work with his own hands to enlarge it by adding a frame addition. The work must have been a few months after his return, about the time General Robert E. Lee came to Lexington as President of Washington College; because I remember Father mentioning that while he was building a stone foundation, and had a bed of mortar mixed; Gen. Lee rode by on Traveller, he recognized Father and stopped for a chat. They discussed for one thing the bed of mortar; many years after I heard the incident from my father I read that General Lee as an army engineer, was always looked upon as an authority, on the mixing of various mortars.<sup>13</sup>

Robert E. Lee arrived in Lexington in September 1865 to serve as president of Washington College (renamed Washington & Lee in his honor). In letters to his family, who joined him in Lexington by Christmas 1865, Lee praised the area's beautiful scenery and described rides he took through the countryside. On October 29, 1865, he wrote his daughter Mildred: "Traveller is my only companion . . . He and I, whenever practicable, wander out in the mountains." Lee's son and biographer, Robert E. Lee Jr., noted that on his rides along the road between Lexington and the nearby resort of Rockbridge Baths, Lee "made himself

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<sup>12</sup> McClung, *Historical Significance of Rockbridge County*, 228; Letcher, "Tompkins Heritage," 367; Giles, Pezzoni, and Kastner, "Marlbrook;" Tompkins, "Some Recollections of My Father;" and Tompkins, "House that David Built," 20, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Tompkins, "Some Recollections of My Father."

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acquainted with the people living near it, talked to them about their affairs, encouraged and advised them, and always had a cheery greeting and a pleasant word for them." Lee rode frequently for exercise, in all but the worst weather. In July 1867 Lee traveled by horseback to Covington, possibly by the route of the Lexington & Covington Turnpike.<sup>14</sup>

The period of Lee's residence in Lexington and his jaunts through the surrounding countryside help to date the construction of the Toll House ell. The earliest he may have ridden past the house would have been Fall 1865, which seems an unlikely time for Tompkins to have begun work on an addition. Lee himself, while contemplating repairs to the President's House at the college, commented in October 1865 that "there is no lumber here at hand." The Toll House ell is constructed with circular-sawn lumber that was presumably difficult to obtain in 1865. The year 1866 may be a more likely date, in which case Tompkins may have had the kitchen/dining room ell added for the convenience of his mother and sisters, or the Spring of 1867 before his marriage to Sallie Pendleton. That Lee may have advised Tompkins on mortar is plausible, for as E. Pendleton Tompkins notes, Lee was knowledgeable about masonry construction having built or maintained several forts and river improvements during his career.<sup>15</sup>

E. Pendleton Tompkins concluded his discussion of the Toll House by noting that after his father had "owned the house for about six months, he traded it for a larger house not far away, on the banks of Woods Creek." Tompkins apparently confused the span of his father's ownership of the property (nearly four years) with the time his parents lived in the house as newlyweds (about six months), but he is accurate in his account of a trade. On December 16, 1867, Fulton and Sallie Tompkins traded the "Toll House and lot" and another small parcel to William Kincaid for Kincaid's house at 301 McLaughlin Street, which backs onto Woods Creek.<sup>16</sup>

William Kincaid, who may have been a confectioner by trade, died in the early 1880s. Since

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<sup>14</sup> Lee, *My Father, General Lee*, 185, 186, 188, 193, 242-243, 264, 274.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>16</sup> Tompkins, "Some Recollections of My Father;" Rockbridge County Deed Book JJ, pp. 480, 482.



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no one applied to administer his estate, the county court intervened in February 1886 and the house was auctioned on July 24, 1886. (The newspaper advertisement for the sale described the house as a "valuable Suburban Residence.") The purchaser was W. P. Houston, apparently the William P. Houston who was the presiding judge in the settlement of Kincaid's estate, but in September 1886 an advanced bid of \$450 was made by the property's previous owner, J. Fulton Tompkins. By June 23, 1888, Tompkins had paid the entire purchase price and the property was transferred to his name. He immediately transferred title to W. C. Colvin who, according to the deed, had purchased the property prior to the transfer date for an unspecified sum. The 1887 tax record noted that one A. S. Hanger was in possession of the property that year. Hanger (probably Andrew S. Hanger) may have been appointed administrator of the property, which was still listed as belonging to the heirs of William Kincaid, until Tompkins had paid the entire purchase price.<sup>17</sup>

William C. Colvin (1856-1939) was listed as a Lexington carpenter and/or builder in an 1893 business directory. He was presumably a partner in the firm St. Clair & Colvin, which completed the woodwork contract for the construction of the Col. Pogue House in Lexington in 1886. Since Colvin acquired the Toll House sometime between September 1886 and June 1888, it may be that he was responsible for \$200 in improvements recorded for the property in 1887 (see architectural analysis). Colvin and his wife Nannie S. Colvin (1865-1948) sold the Toll House to William McKeever (1834-1908) in 1895. The selling price for the house and two small lots was \$1,000. McKeever also acquired water rights to the spring on the property.<sup>18</sup>

William McKeever died in 1908 and left a life estate to his wife, Annie Lee McKeever (1868-1911). The inventory of McKeever's estate valued the house and land at \$2,000. (This value appears inflated; tax records for the period value the house in the \$500-\$600 range.) The house passed to the McKeever's son, William Jr., and in 1922 it was described as a rental property. In 1925 McKeever and his wife sold the property to Anne Gilliam Davis

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<sup>17</sup> Rockbridge County Deed Book 52, p. 308, and Order Book 1886, p. 58; Quail, "Toll House;" Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation," 12; and *Lexington Gazette*, July 15, 1886.

<sup>18</sup> *Chataigne's Virginia Gazetteer and Classified Business Directory, 1893-94*, 1096; *Lexington Gazette*, July 15, 1886 and Rockbridge County Deed Book 82, p. 168.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

(1882-1961) for \$3,000. Davis, whose husband F. C. Davis was president of the McCrum Drug Co. in Lexington, was involved in many local and state political and social causes (mostly after her association with the Toll House). She chaired the Rockbridge County Democratic Committee and the Stonewall Jackson Hospital Committee, and she twice served as president of the Lexington Women's Club. Four months after purchasing the Toll House the Davises sold it to Harry Coe Slusser (1884-1948) for \$3,500.<sup>19</sup>

H. C. Slusser was a lumber dealer and developer who built the row of small frame houses that line Lime Kiln Road to the east of the Toll House beginning in the mid-1920s. At the time of Slusser's purchase in 1925 the house was described as having six rooms and a cellar, indication that it had attained its present form. H. C. Slusser and his wife Eglantine B. Slusser apparently did not live in the Toll House, for in the 1930s they rented it to various individuals. According to Pearl Goodbar, whose family (the Smiths) rented the house from the Slussers in the late 1930s and 1940s, a blind man possibly by the name of Hall used the middle basement room as a workshop for caning and repairing chairs prior to the Smiths' residence. Goodbar also recalls that a former resident of the house sold liquor from it that was produced at a nearby still.<sup>20</sup>

Pearl Goodbar's mother, Mary Virginia Smith (1883-ca. 1972), moved into the Toll House with her family by the end of 1938. In 1947 her son Charles Raymond Smith (1913-1973) bought the house from the Slussers. Smith was a groundskeeper at Washington & Lee University; after his death the property passed to his brother Daniel Ruffner "Rooster" Smith (1911-ca. 1977), who was a plumber at W&L. In the early years of the Smith family's association with the property a chickenhouse and hog pen stood in the backyard. The house was sold by the Smith heirs to Sidney Brown in 1997, and Brown and his wife Nancy Stout began the work of reversing decades of deterioration. In early 2004 the Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House was acquired by the present owners and a rehabilitation in

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<sup>19</sup> Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation," 12-13; Quail, "Toll House."

<sup>20</sup> Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation," 12-13; Hadsel, *Streets of Lexington*, 78; Pearl Goodbar personal communication; and Rockbridge County tax records.

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

accordance with the Secretary's Standards is in progress.<sup>21</sup>

**Architectural Analysis**

The Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House appears to be typical of Virginia turnpike toll houses of its era. It is comparable in size and form to a ca. 1820 stone toll house erected by the Leesburg Turnpike at Broad Run Bridge in Loudoun County, one of the few individually designated toll houses in the Commonwealth. Presumably one of the original two rooms served as the toll room, a room for transacting the business of the turnpike. A toll room was a feature of an 1848 Gothic Revival toll house design developed for the Southwestern Turnpike (Salem, Virginia, to the Tennessee line). The Toll House's other room would likely have served for the private use of the toll house keeper.<sup>22</sup>

The kitchen/dining room ell added by J. Fulton Tompkins, most likely in 1866 or 1867, initiated the transformation of the Toll House into a private residence. Tax records provide some insight into the subsequent evolution of the property. In 1868, the first year the house was recorded under William Kincaid's ownership, the value was listed as \$400. In 1871 the value increased to \$675, in 1872 to \$700, and in 1876 to \$800. The 1871 increase is large enough to suggest major construction work. Possibly the northeast and southeast boxed rooms were added that year. The increases in 1872 and 1876 may represent completion of the boxed rooms and other refinements--or they may represent the construction of ancillary buildings (as in fact may be the case with the 1871 increase and all other increases).<sup>23</sup>

After 1876 the value of the Toll House inexplicably dropped to \$650 in 1885 but increased in 1887 to \$850. The 1887 tax record listing includes the marginal note "\$200 Added for new buildings." (The plural "buildings" was a convention that could apply to the construction or

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<sup>21</sup> Quail, "Toll House;" Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation," 12-13; and Pearl Goodbar personal communication.

<sup>22</sup> Loth, *Virginia Landmarks Register*, 267; Worsham and Pezzoni, "Montgomery County Historic Sites Survey," vol. 1, p. 124.

<sup>23</sup> Rockbridge County tax records. Mark Wenger dates the boxed additions to the 1880s (Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation," 35).

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Statement of Significance (continued)

improvement of one or more buildings.) The east porch and other Victorian details may represent the work done in 1887. The property's value again began to decline about 1890, and by 1901 it had fallen to \$500. The 1905 tax record listing shows an increase to \$575 and includes the marginal note "\$75 added for buildings 1904." The 1904 increase may represent the addition of the middle rear boxed room, the 2/2 windows, and/or the weatherboard siding. That the weatherboard siding was applied late in the evolution of the house is indicated by the fact that it was attached with wire nails, which were not produced in large numbers until the late 1890s. The whitewash and gray paint layers on the board-and-batten siding of the frame ell and the planks of the boxed sections indicate that these surfaces were exposed for some time.<sup>24</sup>

The boxed construction of the northeast, southeast, and middle rear rooms of the Toll House is one of the property's significant architectural characteristics. The rooms are constructed of vertical planks secured at top and bottom by plates and sills but without intervening studs; the planks themselves form the structure. This form of construction has antecedents in the "plank-frame" houses of colonial New England and later, nineteenth century manifestations throughout the nation. In Appalachia and more generally the Upland South, vertical-plank construction has been researched by folklorist Charles E. Martin and folklorist/architectural historian Michael Ann Williams, who have adopted the terms "box" or "boxed" construction from regional parlance. Many researchers point to the vigorous American wood products industry as the key factor in the development of boxed construction from the colonial period onward. Sawmilling produced board lumber in abundance, and builders discovered that boxed construction was less expensive and less time-consuming than frame construction. By the early twentieth century, in some areas of Appalachia, boxed construction may have been the predominant form of construction for rural dwellings.<sup>25</sup>

Michael Ann Williams notes that boxed construction was regarded as inferior to frame construction, even by inhabitants of mountain communities where boxed houses were common, but the affordability of boxed construction made it popular with Southerners of

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<sup>24</sup> Rockbridge County tax records. The weatherboards covered over a former front entrance on the north side of the northeast boxed room to the right of the window.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, "Pride and Prejudice," 218, 226, 230; Martin, *Hollybush*, 27; and Cummings, *Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay*, 89.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

limited means. In some areas boxed houses were built as late as the 1960s. One factor in the form's eventual decline was electrification. As Williams writes "By the 1950s, and especially as electricity became available in the more remote communities, making single-wall construction impractical, construction of the boxed house declined."<sup>26</sup>

In some ways the Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House fits into the picture of boxed construction. For example, boxed houses were inherently poorly insulated and drafty. Some boxed house dwellers compensated by papering their walls--in some instances with newspaper and magazine pages--and using hotter-burning coal in stoves. The northeast boxed room in the Toll House had cardboard-like wallpaper that helped eliminate drafts, and all three boxed rooms were heated with stoves. (The wallpaper in the northeast boxed room appears later than the presumed early 1870s construction of the room.) The southeast boxed room was sheathed with beaded tongue-and-groove boards that served an insulating or draft-reduction function. The middle rear boxed room--the latest and crudest of the boxed additions--had no insulating layer. Two of the Toll House's three boxed rooms had impermanent wood post foundations, a feature that relates to the complex question of the permanence of boxed houses. Williams suggests that the relative impermanence of boxed houses in comparison to log and frame houses was not an overriding concern in communities where houses were intended to last only as long as the lifetime of the builder.<sup>27</sup>

How the Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House differs from most documented examples of boxed houses is in its outward appearance. At first the planks were exposed, as is the case with the majority of boxed houses in Virginia. It may be that the boxed construction was chosen to harmonize with the preexisting board-and-batten siding of the ca. 1867 frame ell. The sidelight/transom entry on the west side, the paneled apron under the northeast room north window, and the east gable bargeboard are typical treatments of the 1870s and may date to the original boxed construction. This may also be the case with the Victorian east porch, although it appears more likely that the 1887 increase in building value records this relatively substantial addition. A porch of similar appearance, with curved brackets that spring from the post neckings and pendant frieze ornaments between the posts, was built for the ca. 1885 house at 602 South Main Street in Lexington. (Interestingly, the

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<sup>26</sup> Williams, "Pride and Prejudice," 228, 230.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 229-230.

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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

Kincaid House acquired by Tompkins in 1867 has scalloped porch bost brackets identical to those of the Toll House.) The Victorian embellishments of the Toll House and finally the weatherboard siding, presumably added in the early twentieth century, masked the boxed construction of the house and created the effect of a stylish Victorian frame cottage. If the principal Victorian embellishments date to 1887, then there is a possibility that they were added by carpenter/builder William C. Colvin, who purchased the property sometime between September 1886 and June 1888.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 115.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated area is portrayed on the approximately 1:30-scale map that accompanies the nomination.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the nominated area correspond to the present boundaries of the parcel on which the Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House stands.

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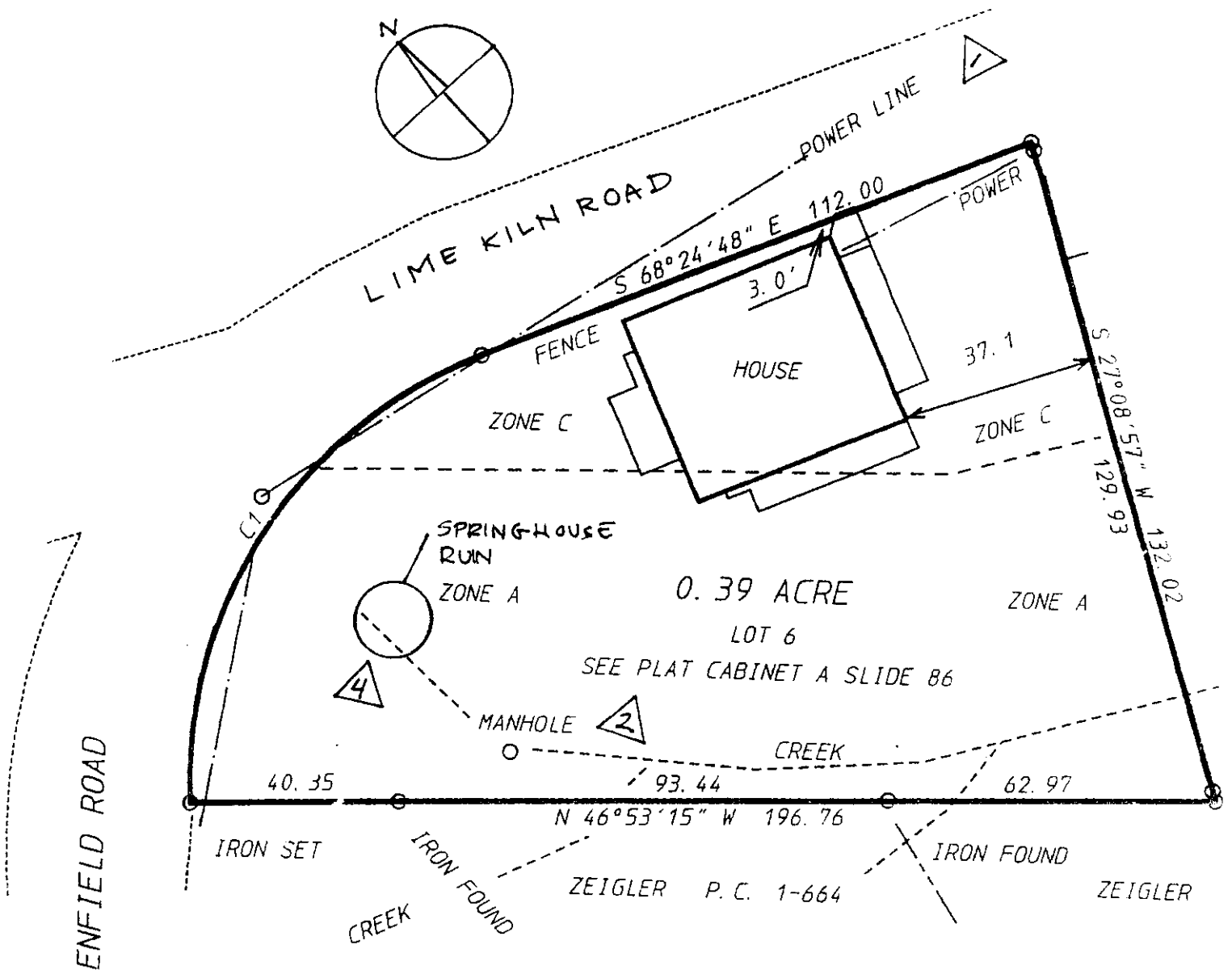


Exhibit A: Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House nominated parcel. Map adapted from October 15, 1997 survey by Dorsey Surveying PLC. Scale: 1 inch equals approx. 30 feet. Number and direction of view of exterior photographs indicated by triangular markers.

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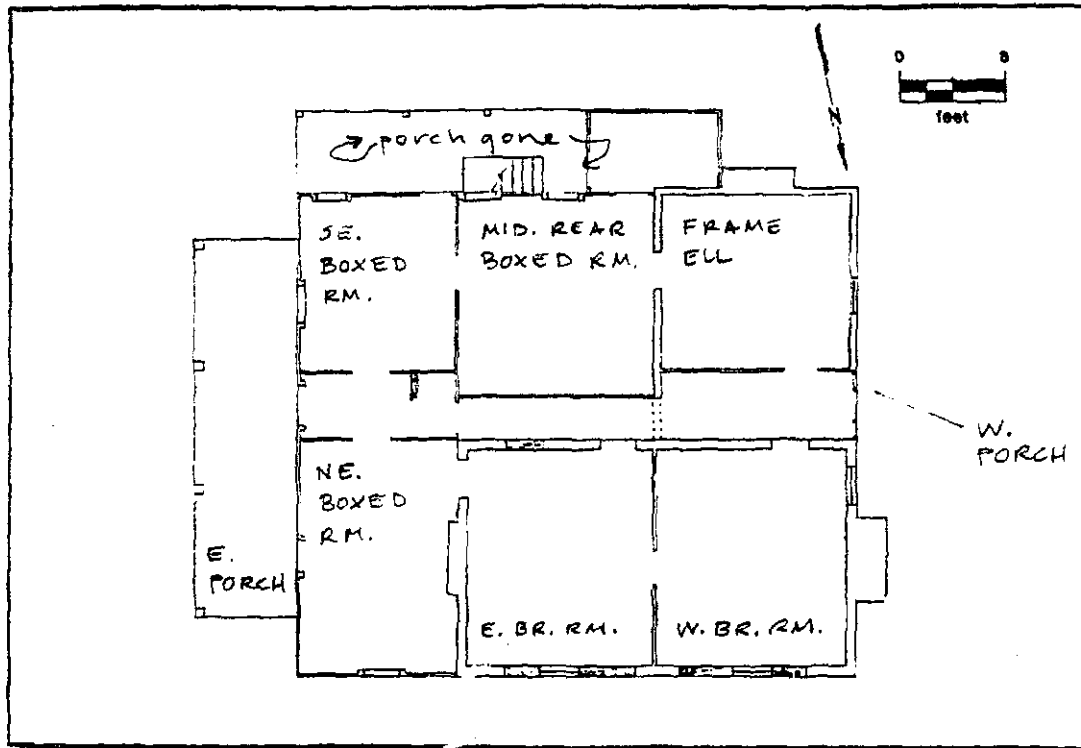
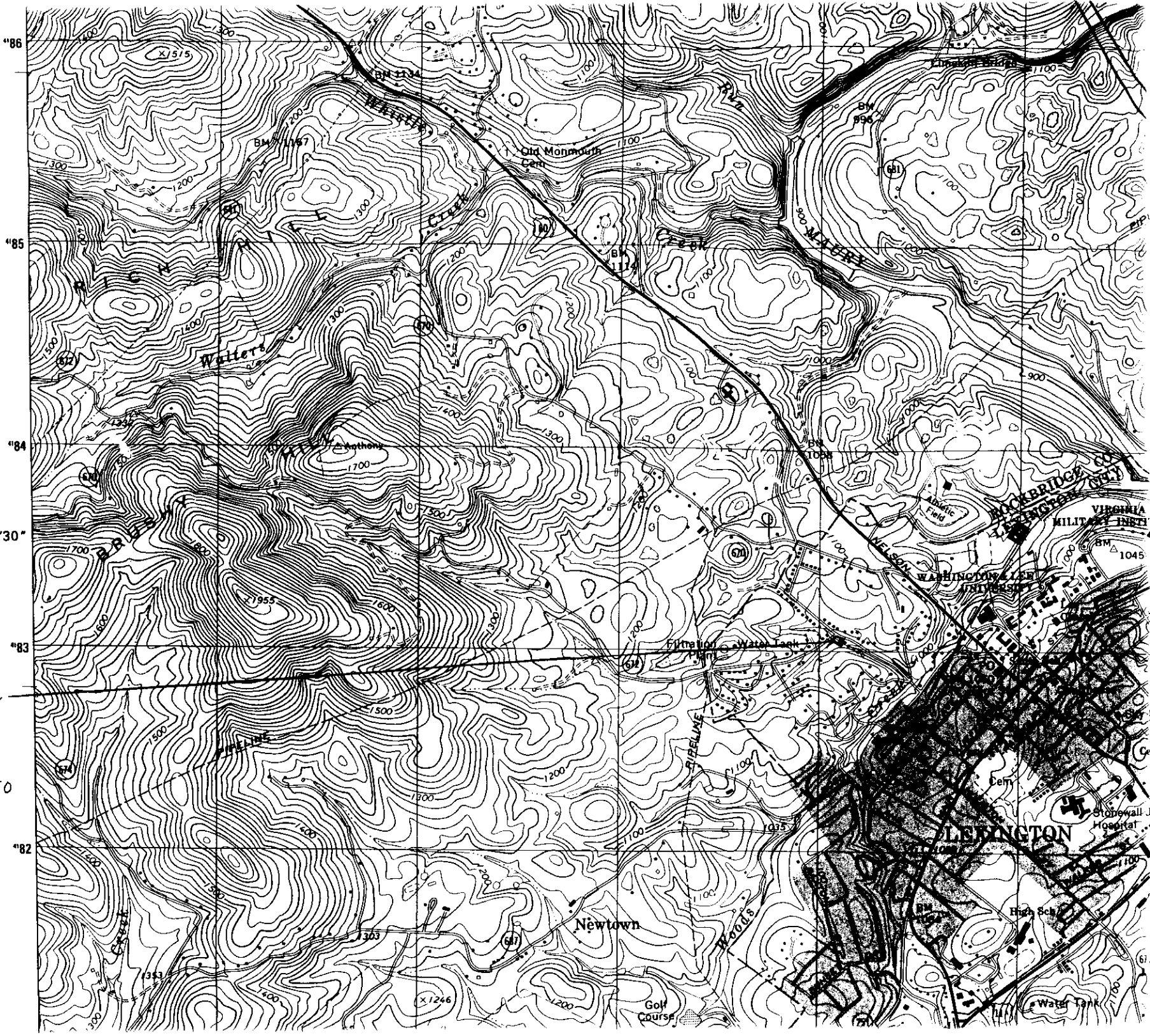


Exhibit B: Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House main level floor plan. Plan adapted from Linebaugh and Wenger, "Phase II Architectural Evaluation" (1991).



Lexington & Covington  
Turnpike Toll House  
Lexington, Va.  
UTM ref. (zone 17):  
E636100 N4183050