

**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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

**VLR Listed: 12/12/2019**  
**NRHP Listed: 3/18/2020**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Gardner House

Other names/site number: DHR No. 002-5310

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 3137 Shiffletts Mill Rd.

City or town: Crozet State: VA County: Albemarle

Not For Publication:  N/A Vicinity:  X

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

<p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b> <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b></p>
<p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

FUNERARY: Cemetery

LANDSCAPE: Stone Terrace

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

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

FUNERARY: Cemetery

LANDSCAPE: Stone Terrace

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Animal Facility: Barn

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

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: I-house

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD: Log; STONE: Mylonite, Phyllonite, Granite; METAL: Tin, Copper

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Gardner House, constructed in 1851, occupies approximately 39 acres at 3137 Shiffletts Mill Rd (State Road 687) near Boonesville, Virginia, in northwest Albemarle County. The Gardner House, the primary resource/building, is a hand-hewn log I-house set on a stone foundation and built into the hillside, which provides a north-side ground-level entrance. The house has three levels, measuring on the log walls' exterior as 20' x 30', consisting of two log levels above the stone foundation basement. The logs are exposed, hand-hewn, weathered, five inches thick with varying heights from 10" to 14" and varying lengths up to 30'. All log joints are half dovetail. The chinking between the logs is cement-based mortar. Originally built as a two-cell dwelling, the house has two front doors at the main level's westward-facing front porch; during the antebellum era, it is likely that one door opened to the house's public space for receiving guests and the other door opened to the family's private living quarters. The shed-roofed rear porch faces east and is accessible from the main level through a back door. There are two stone chimneys, one at the south side of the house and one at the north side. The south-side chimney is original where one fireplace is in the basement and another on the main level. There are also two fireplaces in the north-side chimney, one in the main level and one in the upper level. The roof is covered with standing-seam metal. Four non-contributing outbuildings have been constructed since 1983: a garage, hay shed, woodshed and horse barn; all postdate the property's period of significance. The site of an older barn that had fallen is located about 100 yards west of the house; only a few foundation stones remain in situ, as many were used to reconstruct the house's north-side chimney in 1985. Due to this disturbance, the old barn site is not contributing, but professional archaeological testing may someday identify intact cultural deposits. Surface

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artifacts are routinely found around that area such as rusted farming implements, wooden wheel steel rims, a horse collar, vintage bottles, and broken pottery.

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## **Narrative Description**

### **Setting**

The Gardner House is located on a north-sloped spur of Gibson Mountain at an elevation of approximately 830' overlooking Blackwell's Hollow along the head waters of Buck Mountain Creek. (Photo 1) Views to the west are of Big Flat Mountain and Loft Mountain in the Shenandoah National Park. To the north is Lick, County Line and Brokenback Mountains. The Loft Mountain overlook on Skyline Drive is the centerpiece of this site's northwesterly view. The approach to the house is a gravel driveway of two-tenths of a mile heading south from SR 687 (the northern boundary of the property). Five acres +/- are cleared and four-board fences line both sides of the driveway. South of the house up the mountain is wooded with trails. Stone piles where the land was cleared are numerous. An interesting landscape feature of unknown construction date and purpose is a ten-level series of stacked-stone walls that is located approximately 990 feet southeast of the log dwelling. The stacked stones create level terraces in a portion of the property that currently is heavily wooded. Given the property's historic association with distilling, it is possible that the terraced area once had fruit trees, but this is not known for certain.

### **Inventory of Resources**

Log dwelling, contributing building  
Cemetery, 19<sup>th</sup> century, contributing site  
Hay shed, 1983, noncontributing building  
Garage, 1992, noncontributing building  
Wood shed, 2000, noncontributing structure  
Horse barn, 2005, noncontributing building  
Barn site, unknown date of construction, disturbed in 1985, noncontributing site

### **Log Dwelling**

The Gardner House stands near the southern end of the property's approximately five acres of cleared land. It faces west toward the current entry drive. An earlier entry drive is located just west of the collapsed barn site, but this drive no longer serves the subject property. Constructed of hand-hewn logs with half-dovetail joints, the three-level house has an I-house form, a full-width front porch, a partial-width back porch, and stone chimneys on each of its gable end walls.

### *Basement Level*

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Historically, the basement was utilized for food storage, dining and cooking by hearth, then wood cookstove.<sup>1</sup> Today the basement level is still used for cooking and dining, but what was once a food storage room at the north end now hosts a utility room and half-bath. (Figure 1)

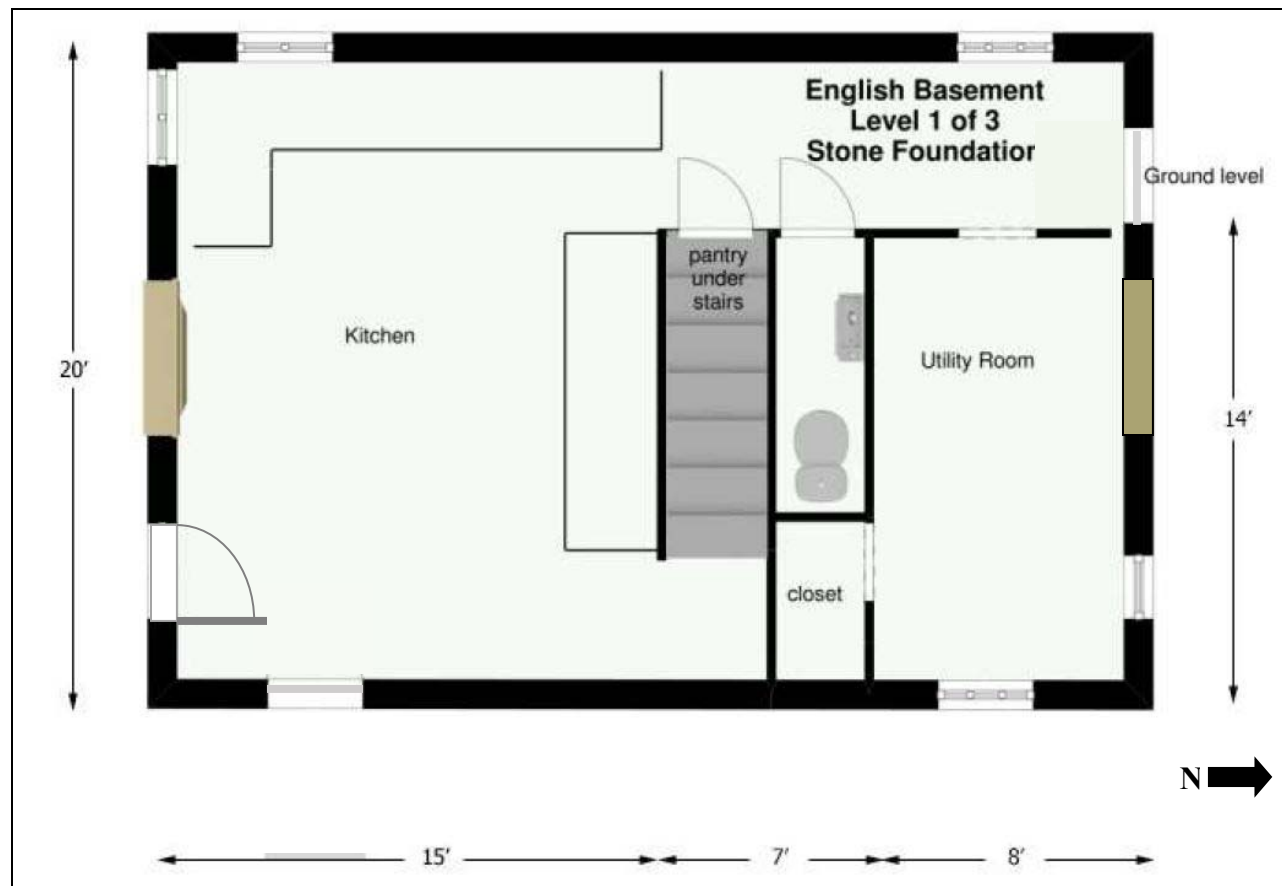


Figure 1. Basement level floor plan

The basement rooms are partitioned with standard framing. The foundation wall is constructed of random fieldstones, most likely supplied directly from the immediate area given the commonality of abundant stone at the site. Room height throughout the basement is 7½' from the floor to the ceiling (underside of main level flooring). The basement foundation stone walls are 18" thick and built into the slope of a hill. At the stone foundation's exterior southwest corner, the basement wall is 30" from ground level to the sill plate log. The southeast corner measures 36" inches from the sill plate log to ground. The stone foundation wall is entirely exposed at the north end of the basement where a ground-level entrance door exists. (Figure 2)

The exterior original stonework is not known to have been repointed or restored since the house was vacated in 1964. Plaster and mortar have been applied along the joints, rendering the overall look of the stone surface relatively flush. The original stonework includes the basement's west

<sup>1</sup> Morris, Vernell, (b:1931 -), interview, (March 2019), Greenwood, Virginia. Daughter in-law of Clara Morris who grew up in the Gardner House and frequent visitor during the late 1940s and 1950s.

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wall, east wall, and south wall as well as the south chimney. The chimney on the north side of the house had fallen down and was reconstructed in 1985. The mortared joints showing on the rebuilt north basement wall and chimney are recessed. Unlike the exterior stonework, the interior stonework has been pointed, whitewash removed, joints recessed, filled with mortar mix (Portland cement, sand, lime), and strengthened.



Figure 2. Basement-level entrance door on south elevation

In 1985, the board & batten entrance door at the basement's north side was removed, being too short to comply with local codes for re-occupancy. The new door (at left) was constructed taller but in the same manner, using vertical heart pine boards (beaded) with hand-forged strap hinges by Charles McRaven, author of *Country Blacksmithing*<sup>2</sup>, and a hand forged thumb latch by Newton Millham.<sup>3</sup> The original door has been retained and remains in storage on site.

The basement door at the south end in the kitchen is a nine-light two-panel wooden door that was handcrafted of Douglas fir in 2013 to replace a much older deteriorated door of the same style and size. The size is not standard, 34" x 74".

Six windows light the basement, with two spaced along each wall and installed horizontally just above ground level. Three windows have 2/2 horizontal sliding wood sash in 2' x 4' masonry openings. Each window has four panes, of which just one older wavy glass pane is still extant. Of the three windows in the kitchen, one casing is original and pegged. Of the three windows in the Utility room area at the north end of the building, all three are original. The window casings are all original and pegged. The north window on the west façade still has horizontal wooden bars across the sash, as shown in Photo 6. Such bars traditionally were used on windows of food storage spaces.

Originally, there was no interior access entrance to the basement from the main level. Stairway construction to join the two levels internally was completed in 1985, using heart pine for the stairs. (Photo 11) The stairwell was installed directly under the existing stairs leading to the house's top floor from the main level. The basement stairwell's wall paneling is reclaimed

<sup>2</sup> McRaven, C. (1981). *Country Blacksmithing* (1st ed.). HarperCollins, New York.

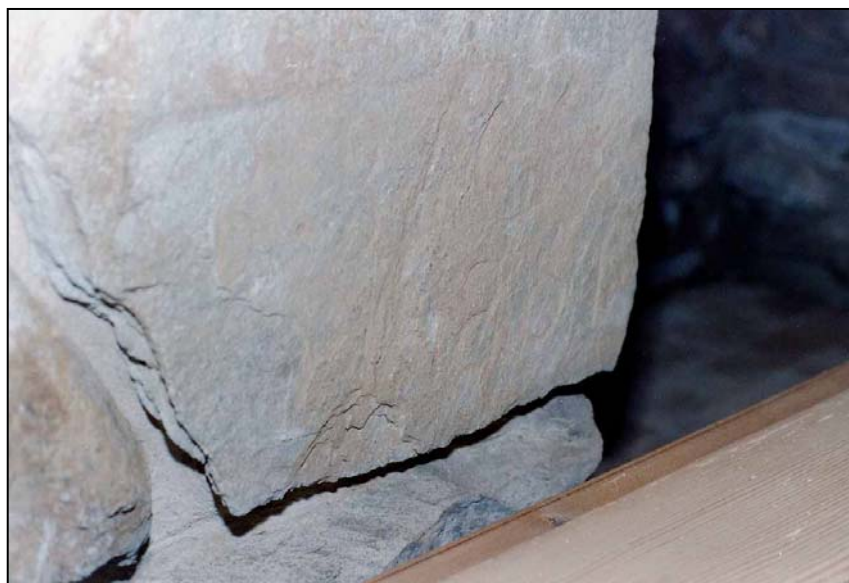
<sup>3</sup> Old House Online. (Oct. 27, 2009). *Newton Millham Blacksmith*. <https://www.oldhouseonline.com/old-house-directory/newton-millham-blacksmith>.

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American chestnut. The space under this stairwell is used as a kitchen pantry. The pantry door, as is the half-bath door next to it, is reclaimed American chestnut, board & batten.

The kitchen's stone fireplace is relatively large, measuring 4' x 4' and 2' deep. (Photo 12) The stones utilized for the fireplace are predominantly mylonite and phyllonite, chiseled square and flush. The hinges for what would have supported a cooking swing arm are still in place. Today, a wood stove used for supplemental heat sits on the hearth.



Found amongst the rubble of the fallen stones from the north-side chimney was one with engraving, "B.B.G. 1851." The stone was dressed and fitted into the kitchen fireplace's left bottom corner, next to the hearth. The engraving has since worn away leaving only older photos for reference. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Stone carving "B.B.G. 1851," photo circa, 1990

In the kitchen, cabinetry and countertops installed in 1985 are handmade Shaker style and built of reclaimed American chestnut. The ceiling joists are 20' long and spaced approximately 2' on center. The joists are exposed, oak logs measuring about 8" diameter; bark has been removed and each is flattened on top to support the main level's heart pine, beaded flooring, which is visible between the joists. An exception, the girder near the center of the house, is hand-hewn and measures 10" tall x 8" wide. (Photo 14) Another joist above the kitchen fireplace hearth is also hand-hewn, measuring 7" x 5" (somewhat visible in Photo 12). All members are square notched on the ends and set flat upon the 11" square sill plate hand-hewn logs.

The basement height from the dirt floor to the ceiling was originally approximately 6½' rendering the room otherwise barely usable by today's standards. During the reconstruction of the north wall and north-side chimney beginning in 1983, the basement floor was machine dug to lower the grade, plumbing was added to support the kitchen, half-bath and utility area, a concrete slab poured, and brick pavers laid. The pavers are handmade by the Old Virginia Brick Company, Salem, Virginia (established 1890).

### *Main Level*



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The main level has transitioned over time from originally being two cells divided by a log wall, to a two-room space partially divided by paneling, to one great living room area. (Photo 15) There are two front doors, one back door, 5 windows with wood double-hung sash, two

fireplaces and two center-placed stairwells leading up and down to other levels (Figure 4).

As with the original basement entrance door, the main level's two front doors were too short to comply with local codes for re-occupancy in 1983. They were rebuilt, emulating the original vertical-board doors exactly as was done for the basement door. Each was built utilizing the same source of Longleaf pine. With these doors the strap hinges, latches, and slide bolts were hand-forged by Ball and Ball, Exton, Pennsylvania (Photos 5, 16).

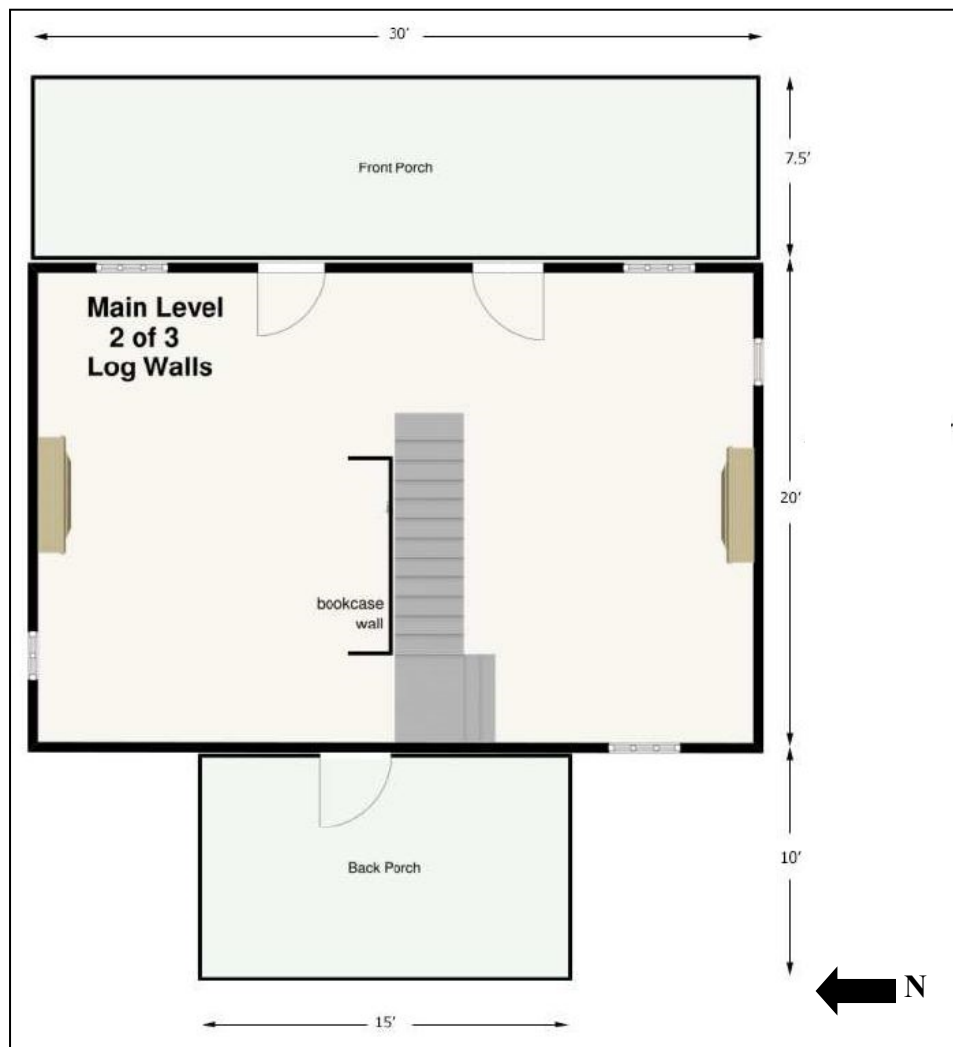


Figure 4. Main level floor plan

The back door at the center of the west (rear) wall on the main level leads to the back porch. The nine-light, two-panel door is built of Douglas fir, conventionally hung and standard size, 80" x 36".

There are two relatively large, 56" x 36", double-hung window sash adjacent to each of the two front doors and a same-sized window on the east side of the house's north end. Each sash has 6 panes. These windows replaced deteriorated sash in 1983. At that time, one 24" x 36" double hung window with insulated double-pane glass was added on the north wall west of the chimney.

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One original 24" x 36" 4/4 double-hung window sash on the south wall east of the chimney had an irreparably rotted frame but was salvaged to retain all 8 panes of older wavy glass.

Just under that window with the wavy glass is an unusual object and a bit of a conundrum. (Photo 30) There is a wooden swinging shelf-like support (with no shelf) where a space has been chiseled into the wall log to hold it when not needed. There is no evidence of a nail or screw hole on the top piece to have supported a shelf, nor is there evidence of where a hinge could have been installed. The piece is made of 3/4" x 2" wood, is 12" tall and extends 10". Those two pieces are connected with a 45-degree support brace. There is a wooden spindle on the bottom and iron horseshoe hinge supporting the top allowing for it to swivel. While its purpose is not fully understood, its age begs mentioning. One descendant (name unknown) who visited in the late 1980s said that she believed the late resident Charlie Morris (1907-1948) used to shave at that southeast-facing window.

Of the two fireplaces at each end of the main level, the fireplace on the south side is original and features a simply styled heart pine mantel. The fireplace measures approximately 3' x 3' and 18" deep at the center. As with the kitchen fireplace, this fireplace is also chiseled mylonite, but with sides that are tapered inward instead of square. The unadorned mantel is 5'6" tall x 7' wide, with wood trim pieces that are 15" wide (vertical boards) and 20" wide (horizontal board) and pegged. The mantel shelf has square molding and a narrow shelf. (Photo 17)

The north wall's fireplace was rebuilt and completed in 1985. The hearth is stone and the firebox fire-bricked. The opening measures 36" tall, 32" wide and 18" deep at the center back. The mantel is heart pine and not original but is believed to be a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century piece, constructed exclusively with cut nails. The fireplace surround measures approximately 5' tall by 6' wide.

The staircase at the center of the main level features a heart pine railing that surrounds the floor opening to the basement. Directly above those stairs are stairs leading to the dwelling's top floor; these are built of heart pine, and are original and well worn. The underside of the stairs is clad with flat paneling installed horizontally, with reclaimed heart pine. The boards are each five inches wide and three feet across (width of the stairwell) and beaded.

The heart pine floorboards on the north side of the house are 4" to 5" wide. They are predominantly 16' in length each (half the house width). The heart pine floorboards on the south side of the house were replaced in 1983. The original flooring there had warped and deteriorated significantly due to water ingress from the south side chimney and inadequate chinking. The replacement flooring was salvaged from a log cabin in disrepair in the nearby Boonesville, Albemarle County area. The flooring boards are 7" to 8" wide and of varying lengths. They are beaded underneath and exposed as seen from the basement level.

The 20' ceiling joists are 2" x 12" heart pine boards placed 26" on center in the north side of the house and 22 1/2" on center in the south side of the house. The main level was originally configured with the bisecting log wall placed 16' on center to the north, and 14' on center to the

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south (making one room 16' x 20, the other 14' x 20'). The ceiling joists are spaced equally in each side for uniformity and balance from those center coordinates. There are two beads at the bottom side of each ceiling joist. Placed on those joists is the upstairs heart pine flooring, exposed as part of the ceiling of the main level. All floorboards installed in the upper level are beaded underneath. (Photo 18) The ceiling joists in the south side have four hand-forged hooks hammered into them, forming a perfect rectangle, 93" x 112," that possibly served as a quilting frame. The two hooks on each joist are 93" apart and centered with the fireplace, which is not situated at the center of the wall.

#### *Main Level Front Porch*

There is objective evidence, such as peg remnants in the logs and log weathering, that the original front porch only extended to cover the two front doors, leaving more than half of the façade exposed to the elements, including the two windows and surrounding wood. The house's roof does not have eaves. At some point prior to 1964 (when the house was vacated), three saw-milled oak logs were replaced under the windows. New owners in 1983 found the front porch to be extensively deteriorated; e.g., rotted wood, rusted roof. In 1985 the porch was reconstructed in a sympathetic, unadorned style to cover the full 30' façade to protect the logs from water ingress. The porch posts, beams and beaded rails are reclaimed American chestnut, which is well known for its resistance to rot. The flooring and roof sheathing boards are locally sawn oak and the rafters are repurposed yellow poplar. The front porch is 7' deep. The roofing is standing-seam tin with a copper gutter running the full length to a downspout. There are five steps in the center of the porch leading from ground level up to it.

#### *Main Level Back Porch*

The log dwelling's rear elevation historically had a one-story enclosed porch. Vernell Morris (Personal communication, March 2019) recalls regularly walking through it out the back door from the main level and down two sets of stairs to the basement for dining during the 1950s. It is unclear when this rear extension was removed; there are no known photographs of that section of the house. When the log house was purchased in 1983 by the present occupants, while a back door was extant at the main level, no porch of any kind was present. Visible near the roof and today filled with chinking mortar are square-notched holes for the old porch's rafters. The current shed-roofed porch was constructed in 2013. (Photo 6) Its floor space measures 15' wide x 10' deep. The roof is covered with standing-seam metal and is 20' wide, covering the basement access stairs at the south end. The structure is handcrafted post-and-beam timber-frame construction from oak trees felled and milled onsite in 2012. The railings were similarly obtained and are red cedar, all beaded. Stairs lead down to ground level.

#### *Upper Level*

The upper level is presumed to have been utilized exclusively from origin as a sleeping area with two separate rooms on each side of the stairwell (Figure 5). That B.B. Gardner included a north side fireplace in that level during the 1851 construction is telling. Moreover, the number of family members residing in the house during the period of significance is numerous relative to available living space. First-generation occupant, B.B. Gardner, and his wife had nine children. Second-generation occupants Levi Givens Shifflett and Parthenia Gardner had eight children.

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Third-generation and final occupants, C.V. Morris and Maude (Gardner) Shifflett, had eight children. The south half of the upper level was divided in 1985 to add a full bathroom, but there remain only two separate sleeping areas.

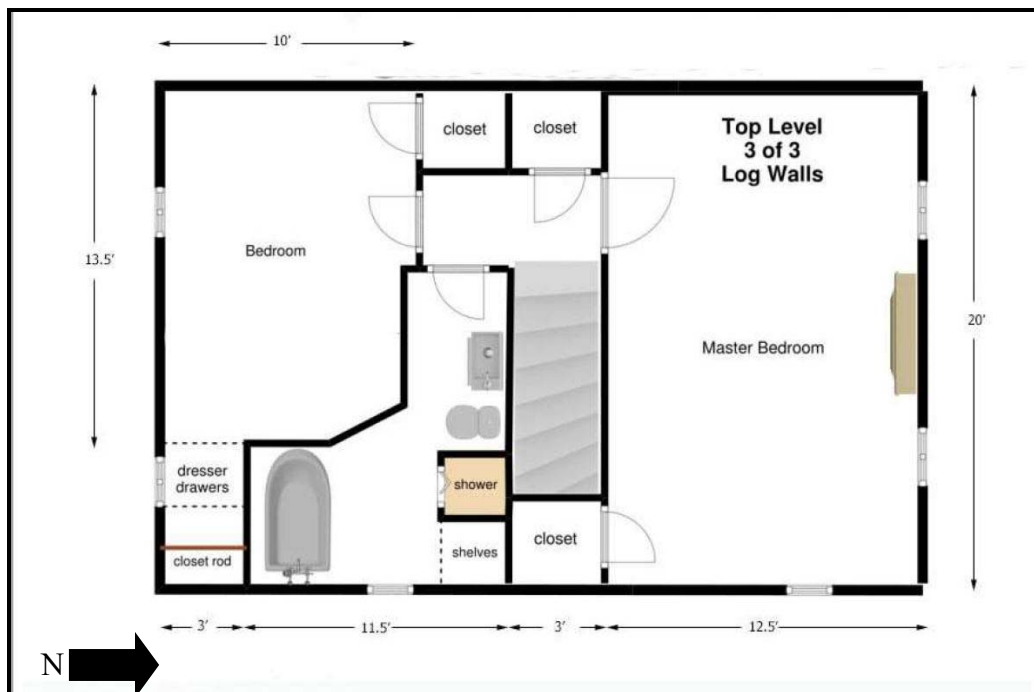


Figure 5: Upper level floor plan

Stairs to the upper level are heart pine and believed to be in use since 1893. The stairwell features a half-paneled heart pine wainscot and painted sheetrock upper wall. (Photo 19) A small closet is located at the top of the stairs and in each bedroom. The upper level's flooring is heart pine, 16' boards on the north side and 14' boards on the south side. Flooring widths vary from 3½" to 5". (Photo 20) The log knee-walls in the upper level are approximately 4' high on the north and south end walls and about 10" higher at the east and west walls, the difference being the height of top plate poplar log. (Photo 21) Along the east (rear) elevation, there are two 4-pane single-wood sash within the knee wall, each within a 22" x 26" opening created in 1983. The salvaged windows are heart pine, mortise and tenon, and pegged, with older glass. They open inwards on side hinges.

To the north at the top of the stairs is the entrance to the master bedroom. The room is rectangular and measures approximately 12' 6" x 19' 6". One of the knee-wall windows is on the east side of this room. (Photos 6, 23) The rafters begin and rise from the east and west sides at the top plate 9" for every 12" across (9/12 pitch which is about 37 degrees). Lower rafter ties were added to each original rafter in 1985 using 2" x 6" pine framing lumber and limiting the maximum ceiling height to 8', but more importantly strengthening the original rafters. Attached to the rafter framing is painted drywall. At the north side of this room is a fireplace with a stone hearth and fire-brick-lined box, constructed in 1985. There is no mantel at this time. The fireplace measures at the outside edges 48" wide and 42" tall. The fireplace opening is 36" x 32"

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and 18" deep at center. The gable end above the top log to the ceiling is beaded heart pine paneling. (Photo 22) The wall opposite by the stairwell is also beaded heart pine paneling. (Photo 23)

The bathroom is adjacent to the stairwell and is equipped with modern fixtures consisting of a pedestal sink, commode, stand-alone shower and claw-foot bathtub. The other knee-wall window is on the east side of this room. The walls are painted drywall above American chestnut boards, wainscoting style, for most of the bathroom. The wall behind the claw-foot bathtub is American chestnut, floor to ceiling. (Photo 24)

The remaining space in the south half of the upper level is a bedroom. The room measures 9'8" x 13'7". There is a 2' x 2' ceiling opening to provide access to the attic. The paneling at the gable end and opposite wall is all yellow poplar heartwood in varying shades of green with 8- to 12-inch board widths and beaded. (Photo 25)

#### *Attic*

Rolled insulation is set on the drywall ceiling between 2" x 6" rafter ties installed in 1985. The original mid-span rafters are 16" higher. The rafters are 3" x 4" heart pine, notched and pegged at the top, with pegged, mortise and tenon joinery at the mid-span rafter joints, and terminate at the end of the top plate log. (Photos 26, 27) The roof only extends about 2" with virtually no eaves. The roof sheathing (slats) to which the metal roof is attached is yellow poplar. Those boards are about 1" thick and were sawn only once to that thickness. The edges of the boards are not squared to a common board width.

#### **Secondary Resources**

##### *Cemetery, 19<sup>th</sup> century, contributing site*

A family graveyard is located about sixty yards north of the log house with burials marked by plain headstones and footstones. If any of the markers ever bore inscriptions, those have worn away. The graveyard measures approximately 50' x 50'. There are 13 known burials with several other burials suspected but not yet confirmed. The cemetery is classified as a contributing resource due to its direct association with the Gardener House's property owners during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

##### *Hay shed, 1983, noncontributing building*

The 8' x 12' storage shed was constructed from repurposed lumber and set on a dry stone foundation in 1983. The shed has a metal roof. Presently that area stores hay. This resource is classified as noncontributing because it postdates the Gardner House's period of significance.

##### *Garage, 1992, noncontributing building*

The garage was erected in 1992, is 24' x 48', and two stories. Standing-seam metal covers the gambrel roof, cedar weatherboards clad the walls, and the foundation has a stone veneer over

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concrete blocks. Standard 2" x 6" framing is used throughout, the floor is concrete, and there is no electrical or plumbing service. The area is used for parking vehicles, general storage, and a working area. This resource is classified as noncontributing because it postdates the property's period of significance.

*Woodshed, 2000, noncontributing structure*

In 2000, a 10' x 15' woodshed was built into a hillside a few hundred feet northeast of the log house. The open-sided woodshed is pole-barn constructed and has a metal roof. This resource postdates the property's period of significance and therefore is noncontributing.

*Horse barn, 2005, noncontributing building*

The horse pole-barn has two 12' x 12' stalls, one 4' x 12' tack room, a standing seam metal roof and is sided with poplar weatherboards. The barn was built in 2005. Like other recently-built outbuildings, this resource is noncontributing.

### **Integrity Analysis**

The Gardner House is an evolved vernacular building that remains in its original location and within a rural setting that is evocative of its mid-19<sup>th</sup> century origins. Although development from the City of Charlottesville is beginning to reach into Albemarle County, the northwestern part of the county remains well removed from such pressure. The picturesque Blue Ridge Mountains, visible 5 to 6 miles west and northwest of the property, are integral to the property's integrity of setting.

From the dwelling's initial construction period of 1851 to present, there have been two major campaigns to adapt the building to the living standards of later eras. Each has influenced the building's integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Levi Givens Shifflett remodeled the house in 1893. The remodeling was executed to improve the functionality. In 1893, the cabin was over forty years old and it is possible that through that period of use a general upgrading was needed due to wear on materials. All the heart pine flooring on both the main level and upper level were replaced. The original wood shake roof was replaced by a standing-seam metal roof. It is possible that some of the 1850s window sash were replaced at this time. The most noteworthy alteration of interior room plan was the removal of the 20'-long log wall that divided the dwelling's interior on the main level (first floor). Large notches in the logs are notable between the doors from the sill to the top plate where 8" wide cross beams once were laid, defining that interior wall (Photo 16). The opening up of that space represented a significant change in use of the dwelling by removing the original hall-parlor plan and transforming "public" and "private" spaces as used by the Shifflett family. Various transitions in living spaces and functionality were under way by the early 1890s, including those driven by technological changes and by social and cultural norms. Although a formal sitting area, or parlor, remained an important element, the rigid separation of public and family spaces that characterized the antebellum era was becoming outmoded. New building materials also were being deployed at a rapid pace as mass-produced elements for everything from nails and metal roofing to wood flooring, fireplace mantels, and sawn ornamentation. Mail-order catalogs and railroad

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transportation brought such materials within reach of rural areas, although a homeowner still had to find a way to transport materials from the depot to their property. Yet conservative tastes and construction methods remained as well. For example, all of the Gardner House's 1890s floorboards and joists were beaded, a treatment more commonly seen prior to the Civil War. Vernacular materials continued to be a popular choice as well, as they were still readily available in rural areas. The stairs installed in 1893 rising to the upper floor were cut from the same board, which suggests the usage of large old-growth timber.

The Gardner House functioned relatively unchanged for the next 80 years and was left vacant in the 1960s. The current owner undertook rehabilitation of the house starting in 1983, by which time the northern stone chimney had fallen down. Between 1983-1985, rehabilitation addressed the building's overall deterioration after more than 20 years of vacancy and weathering. The extent of repairs necessitated some design modifications, such as door heights, and replacement of materials, notably window sash and doors on the exterior and some interior finish materials such as water-damaged flooring. Thus, the northern stone chimney was rebuilt and the foundation was repaired using like materials. A staircase on the interior was created to access the basement. The basement was excavated and remodeled into useable space that now includes a kitchen, a half-bath, and utility room, all equipped with modern fixtures. A full bathroom was added to the upper floor between the two bedrooms and next to the interior staircase. On the log walls, the chinking was updated and repaired. Many of the doors and window openings either were no longer extant or were too deteriorated to salvage. The latter materials provided guidance for fabricating new doors and sash using matching fabric where the material was known. The heights of the door openings at the basement level and at the main floor entrances were altered to meet modern building code standards. The rear porch for the house had fallen away over time and was rebuilt based on existing ghost marks still visible on the exterior log walls. A small shed-roofed, centered porch had replaced the original front porch at an unknown date; it was replaced with the current full-façade porch. Care was taken by the current owner to leave the porch work as plain as possible without stylistic flourishes, in keeping with the dwelling's overall unpretentious design. Today, the 1850s fabric still includes the foundation, log walls, substantial southern end chimney, pegged roof framing, and overall form. The 1890s updating includes the reworking of the interior framing, wood flooring, open plan on the main floor and update of the metal roof. Meanwhile, the 1980s work introduced modern utilities, plumbing and electrical systems, bathrooms, modern kitchen, reconstruction of the southern chimney, and re-installation or replacement of doors and windows in kind where historic fabric had lost structural integrity. The extent of extant 1850s and 1890s design and materials contribute to the dwelling's integrity of workmanship, as traditional methods are still readily apparent in the building's interior and exterior. The log construction is a character-defining feature, as is the quality of the stone workmanship on the chimneys and fireplaces. When missing or damaged features, such as the south chimney, window sash, doors, and wood flooring, care was taken to maintain high standards of workmanship through consultation with a local expert on log dwellings.

The Gardner House has integrity of feeling due to the holistic quality of the property's integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, and materials, all of which evoke characteristics of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century rural log dwelling in Albemarle County. The property's integrity of association with

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two families, the Gardners and Shifletts, is established through ample historic documentation that includes information about the property's historic use as a farm, the 1893 remodeling undertaken by the Shifletts, and the property's relationship to log and stone building traditions of the area.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### 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 grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

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

**Period of Significance**

1851-1893

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

**Significant Dates**

1893 (major renovation)

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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

**Architect/Builder**

Gardner, Brightberry Brown (1851)

Burrus, Joseph G. (1893)

Shifflett, L. G. (1893)

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Gardner House is a rare example of a surviving mid-19th century log I-house in Albemarle County, notable as well for its size. While log buildings were once moderately common in western Virginia, most were modest in size and more often only a single story. The Gardner House has an I-house form and was constructed using 30' white oak logs and stones to achieve three floors of livable space, making it a commodious dwelling in antebellum Virginia. Other character-defining features of the dwelling's vernacular craftsmanship include the external and internal stonework in the original chimney on the south wall, the fieldstone basement walls, log walls with half-dovetail joints, beaded flooring and ceiling joists, and mortise and tenon joinery with wood pegs. The construction materials were locally sourced, likely from stone and timber from the farm itself. The house therefore is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a rare surviving example of an antebellum log dwelling with significant vernacular construction methods, materials, and craftsmanship. The period of significance begins with the dwelling's date of construction, 1851, and ends in 1893, when a major renovation was undertaken to the house, bringing it to its current form.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### Historical Overview

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1807, Brightberry Brown (B.B.) Gardner was born and named after a relative and neighbor, Brightberry Brown<sup>4</sup> (1762-1846), who was a son of Benjamin Brown, Sr., (1690-1762). B.B. Gardner's parents were John Gardner (1777-1862) and Anna Epperson (1773-1850). John Gardner was the son of James Gardner (abt. 1735-1830) and Judith Epperson (1750-1826). The Gardner lineage in Blackwell's Hollow along Buck Mountain Creek in Albemarle County spanned five generations from the 1770s to the 1960s. James Gardner's origin remains unknown despite much research.<sup>5</sup>

The first known Gardner deed in Albemarle County along Buck Mountain Creek names James Gardner, who purchased land in 1772 from John and Susannah [Thompson] Stratham.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, in 1784 James Gardner was granted by Benjamin Harrison, Governor of the

<sup>4</sup> Coons, F.H. Boyd, (1984). *Benjamin Brown, Sr. of Brown's Cove, Albemarle Co., Va.: A Brief Survey of some of His Descendants and Their Buildings*. School of Architecture, Univ. of VA, Charlottesville, VA; Brown, B., R1282, *Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters*. <http://revwarapps.org/r1282.pdf>.

Brightberry Brown Gardner's great-grandmother, Hanna Thompson, was sister to Benjamin Brown, Sr.'s wife, Sarah Thompson. Brightberry Brown was the son of Benjamin and Sarah. Hanna married David Epperson, Sr., and their daughter Judith married James Gardner. The Browns resided in Brown's Cove, which is adjacent to Blackwell's Hollow.

<sup>5</sup> Hensley, Jan (2007). *Sallies Story: An exploration into the lives of the Hensley, Maiden, Meadows, Gardner and Smith Families of Rockingham, Page and Albemarle Counties Virginia* (unpublished) p. 277.

<sup>6</sup> Albemarle County Clerk's Office, Charlottesville, VA, DB 8, PG 32. Susannah [Thompson] Statham was Sarah Thompson's other sister.

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Commonwealth of Virginia, "145 acres on Buck Mountain Creek and its southern branches as assignee of the heirs of Benjamin Brown, Sr."<sup>7</sup> This granted land was directly adjacent to the land purchased twelve years earlier as shown in Figure 6.

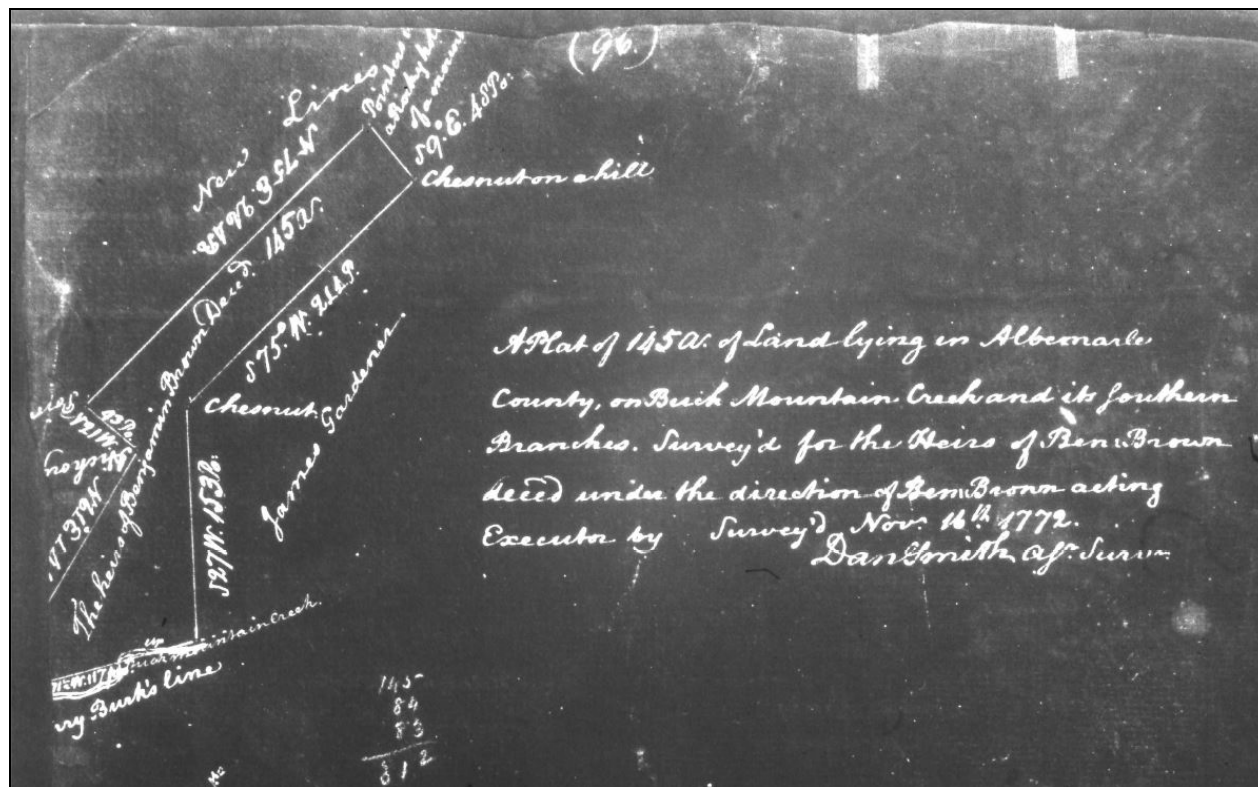


Figure 6: Depicts Gardner-owned land + 145 acres subsequently granted

The Gardner House sits on land located "...on Buck Mountain Creek and its southern branches."

Per Moore's book documenting the history of Albemarle County, "...for the first Virginians who settled in Albemarle...land was wealth."<sup>8</sup> Twenty-three land transactions are recorded in Albemarle County deeds referencing James Gardner, his son John Gardner, and John's son B.B. Gardner, as grantee, buyer and seller of land along Buck Mountain Creek between 1772 and 1876.<sup>9</sup> Moore also wrote of early Albemarle settlers that, "...everyone depended directly or indirectly upon agriculture for his livelihood...land owners great or small, everyone in the final analysis drew his income from the soil." Census records during this period note every ten years next to the Gardner surname whether it be James, John and/or B.B., occupation "Farmer."

<sup>7</sup> James Gardner, Land Office Grants L, 1784, p. 735, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

<sup>8</sup> Moore, John Hammond (1976) *Albemarle, Jefferson's County, 1727 - 1976*, (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 16, 31.

<sup>9</sup> Albemarle County Clerk's Office, Charlottesville, VA, DB/PG: 8/32, 15/184, 15/185, 21/196, 28/128, 29/314, 31/121, 33/64, 38/497, 50/84, 51/532, 58/65, 58/452, 59/548, 60/21, 60/327, 62/136, 67/192, 70/284, 70/316, 70/318. James Gardner, Land Office Grants L, 1784, p. 735, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Brightberry Brown Gardner, Land Office Grants No. 113, 1856-1857, p. 698, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

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According to Moore, the primary crop first grown in this area during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was tobacco. Timber was also abundant and the Gardners had access to hundreds of acres. Whether through land transactions, farming, and/or timber, by 1851, B.B. Gardner, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Gardner, had the means to erect his grand stone and log I-house. Fred Kniffen, who is credited for naming the "I-House" form in the 1930s, suggests what was becoming common by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the I-house was that it "became symbolic of economic attainment by agriculturists and remained so associated throughout the Upland South."<sup>10</sup>

Post-Civil War excise tax records from 1865 and 1866 suggest that cereal grains (wheat, rye, sorghum, corn) and apples were grown and processed here into distilled spirits and apple brandy.



Figure 7: Brightberry Brown Gardner<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps turpentine was distilled too from pine resin as the Gardners certainly had the resources to do so. Peyton's 1875 map of Albemarle County depicts eight distilleries in the Boonesville area along the local waterways (Doyle's, Buck Mountain Creek, Muddy Run) with Shifflett's [grist] Mill on Buck Mountain Creek being less than ½ mile from the Gardner House and Distillery.<sup>11</sup> There is a stoned-terraced site (10 tiers +/-) at the Gardner House that could have been utilized for growing fruit trees and is nonetheless a surviving historical example of mountainside farm management that minimizes soil erosion and surface runoff. Gallons of apple brandy and distilled spirits are documented (and taxed) to named, "B.B. Gardner" and his neighbors in the excise tax records.<sup>12</sup> One might suspect that, with the temperance movement post-Civil War to 1900, this business activity may have waned. There is no known evidence from the next owner in 1883, Levi Givens Shifflett, that income from distilled spirits was sustained.

<sup>10</sup> Kniffen, F. (December 1965). *Folk Housing; Key to Diffusion*. Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Volume 55, No. 4, 555.

<sup>11</sup> G. Peyton, C.E. 1875. "A Map of Albemarle County." Philadelphia, PA: Worley & Bracher. -Distilleries depicted near Boonville, VA: Powell's, Blackwell's x 2, Marshall's, Walton's, Gentry's, Johnson's, Gardner's.

<sup>12</sup> Ancestry.com (2008). *U.S. IRS Tax Assessment Lists 1862-1918*, Ancestry Operations Inc., Provo, UT, 1865, Page 23. 1866, Pages 17, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Photo, date of origin unknown (B.B. Gardner died age 74 in 1880), courtesy of Jan Hensley (Gardner descendant), Elkton, VA.

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When Brightberry Brown Gardner (Figure 7) passed away in 1880, his heirs were entitled to two parcels along Buck Mountain Creek: 1) 132 ½ acres that included the log house, and 2) 100 acres adjacent. These were sold at auction in 1883.

Levi Givens (L.G.) Shifflett (1844-1908) married Brightberry Brown Gardner's daughter, Parthenia Gardner (1842-1885) in 1867. Just prior, L.G. Shifflett had served in the Civil War; enlisting in 1864 in the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Albemarle) Virginia Light Artillery, Sturdivant's Company.<sup>14</sup> Following B.B. Gardner's death in 1880, L.G. and Parthenia Shifflett became the Gardner House's 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of owners after purchasing at auction by Chancery Cause decree in 1883, "the homeplace and 132 acres" from B.B. Gardner's heirs (1/7<sup>th</sup> being Parthenia's share).<sup>15</sup> In 1893, the Shiffletts commissioned a major house remodeling (described in more detail below). L.G. and Parthenia Shifflett had eight children. One of those children, Louella "Maude" Shifflett (1885-1964), would eventually become the Gardner House's 3<sup>rd</sup> generation resident.

Charles Vest Morris married Louella Maude Shifflett in 1901 (Figure 8). Six years later, in



December 1907, L.G. Shifflett sold the Gardner House and 132½ acres to the Morrises. The terms were, per deed, "...on conditions that the said C.V. Morris is to cultivate said land [and] pay rent as follows, one fourth of all crop grain and forage made on said land and one third of the apple crop and one third of stock taken in and pastured."<sup>16</sup> L.G. Shifflett died two months later in February 1908. The deed is telling as to the land's use and continued source of family income through farming.

Figure 8: Charles and Maude (Shifflett) Morris's wedding photo

Charlie Morris died in 1948. After a viewing in the Gardner House's master bedroom (main level south side), he was laid to rest on the property in the family graveyard.<sup>17</sup> Maude passed away in 1964. Unlike her husband, who was buried here at the family graveyard, Maude was buried at nearby Prize Hill Cemetery in Boonesville, Virginia.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Shifflett, Levi G., National Park Service, The Civil War, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar>, M383, Roll 50.

<sup>15</sup> Albemarle County, VA. DB 84, PG 449.

<sup>16</sup> Albemarle County, VA. DB. 138, PG. 340.

<sup>17</sup> Vernell Morris (Mar 2019) interview, who recalls the viewing and attended the internment.

<sup>18</sup> Daily Progress obituaries: Morris, Charles, Nov. 6, 1948, Morris, Louella Maude, Mar. 2, 1964, Charlottesville, VA.

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Following Maude's death in 1964, the Gardner House remained vacant until the present owners acquired such. During 1971 in the Chancery Cause of Clara (Morris) Shifflett vs. Edith (Morris) Garrison, ET ALS (all other heirs of Charlie & Maude Morris), 132½ acres and the house were sold at auction. Following that sale between 1971 and 1983, the 132½ acres were divided into six parcels<sup>19</sup> during which period, the Gardner House's ownership changed twice, yet it remained unoccupied.

The log house was sold to the present owners along with 15 acres in 1983 and an adjacent 24.179-acre parcel was purchased in 1987. From 1983 to 1985, efforts by the present owners were undertaken to preserve (e.g., re-chinking) and make livable the Gardner House, guided by Albemarle County building codes (e.g., external door heights) and by today's general housing standards (e.g., plumbing, septic). By the fall of 1985, the Gardner House was once again occupied and has remained occupied to date.

### **Architectural Significance / Criterion C**

Kniffen states, "Of all folk types, the I-house is most notably a rural dwelling. While I-house floor plans were known to vary as were construction materials, brick and stone, frame and logs, they have in common: gables to the side, at least two rooms in length, single-pile (one room deep), two stories in height."<sup>20</sup> The Gardner house, erected in 1851 and remodeled in 1893, is a rare, intact regional example of an I-house that incorporated exceptionally large logs and fine stonework in its construction.

#### *Rarity of Large Log I-Houses*

From K. Edward Lay's book on architecture in Albemarle County, "Typical log houses measured 16 x 16 feet or 16 x 20 feet. Logs more than 20 feet in length were not only unwieldy, but their significant taper also caused a marked increase in the width of the chinking from one end to the other."<sup>21</sup> Should the builder later desire a larger dwelling he would erect a second log building next to (or abutting) the first and join the two. Lay noted, "While milled wood had become widely available and affordable, some owners continued to build log houses during the antebellum period." The Gardner House measures atypically at 20' x 30' and when initially constructed contained twelve 30' hand-hewn logs. This is uncommonly large for a log house in Albemarle County. Evidence in the immediate area of other log buildings provide a good comparison of building practices and the relative rarity of the large Gardner House.

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<sup>19</sup> Albemarle County Property Tax Map 7, Parcel Id.'s; Present owners 9B, 9B1 Adjacent owners 9, 9A, 9B2, 9C

<sup>20</sup> Kniffen, F., p.555.

<sup>21</sup> Lay, K. Edward (2000). *The Architecture of Jefferson Country; Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville and London, 31, 180. Lay is Cary D. Langhorne Professor Emeritus of Architecture at the University of Virginia. One such example of the log taper may be seen in Photo 21, where at the end of a 30' log, the gap requiring chinking is 9" and abnormally wide relative to other gaps.

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The nearest and most obvious example is an adjacent neighbor's log cabin that stands to the west along Buck Mountain Creek and measures a more typical 16 x 16 feet.<sup>22</sup> (Figure 9)



Figure 9: Neighbor's log dwelling west of the Gardner House

One other log building example along Shiffletts Mill Road and bordering the Gardner property stands to the east. The Davis House has one log room measuring 16' x 16'. Its log walls have been sided on the exterior and covered on the interior, and larger standard-framed additions have been appended to the original block.

Both of the neighboring log buildings were constructed using early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular materials and methods associated with this region of Virginia, and their sizes are typical of Lay's findings. Although built of similar materials and using similar construction methods, the Gardner House is atypical for its commodious size.

The historic relationship among these three properties is evidenced by Peyton's 1875 Map of Albemarle County. Moving west to east/southeast along the headwaters of Buck Mountain Creek, the map shows the log building west of the Gardner House as Marshall's Distillery. Next to it is Gardner's Distillery, and to the east is the Davis property. (Figure 10)

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<sup>22</sup> Photo 2016, courtesy Larry Lamb, Charlottesville, VA.



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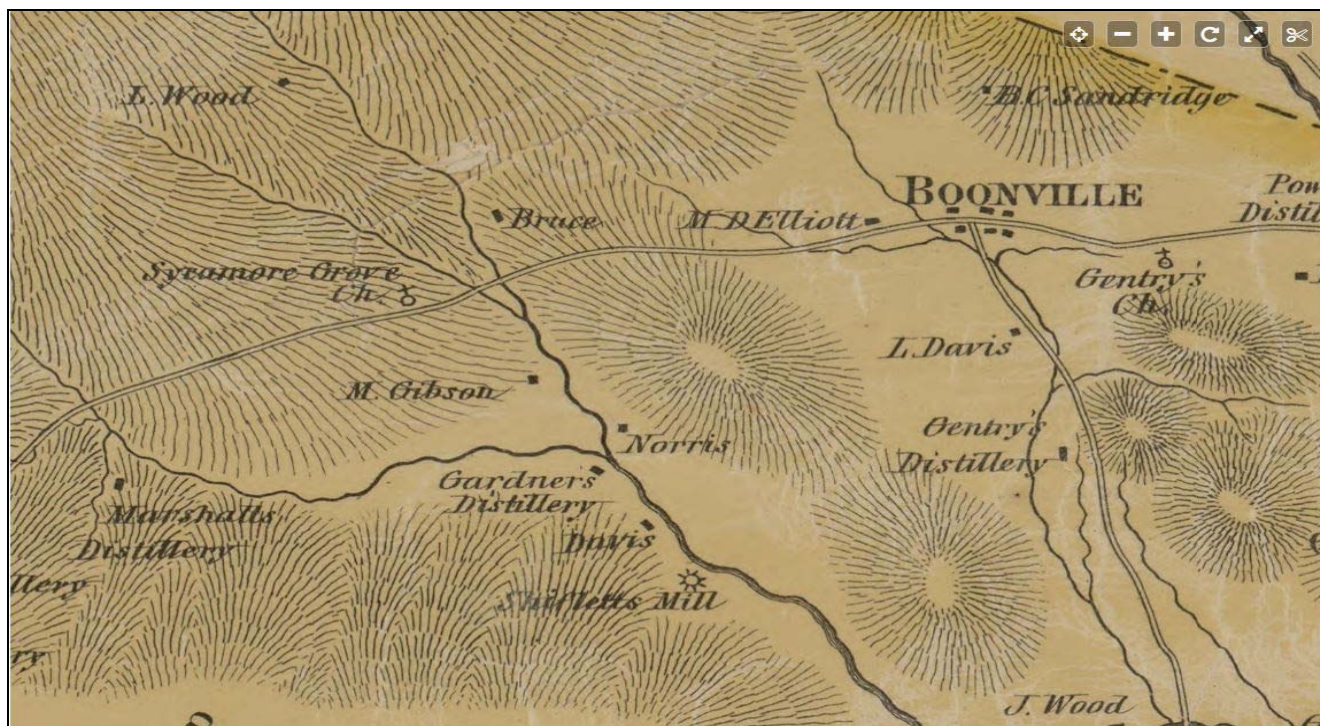


Figure 10: 1875 Map depicting “Gardner’s Distillery”

### *Vernacular Stonework and Craftsmanship*

The original stonework on the south side of the house, including the external stone chimney, is exceptional for its quality and endurance. (Photos 3, 28) The chimney is predominantly constructed of predominately phyllonite as well as some mylonite and granite, with surfaces chiseled flush, square, and at angles near the top where it tapers. Chisel marks are present on the majority (hundreds) of stones from the ground level up to the top log plate. Most notable are the large quoins laid vertically lengthwise at the corners of the chimney. Quoins exist in some cases to provide actual strength for a wall made with inferior stone (mylonite is inferior stone) and in other cases to make a feature of a corner, giving an impression of permanence and strength, and reinforcing the onlooker’s sense of a structure’s presence.<sup>23</sup> Such extensive use of stonework on a log dwelling during the 19<sup>th</sup> century is somewhat atypical for the region and especially in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountain. Charles McRaven recently recalled (personal correspondence, 2019) while restoring the Gardner House in 1983, “I was impressed with the [Gardner House’s] chimney. I’ve seen the big flat ones used throughout, but not in this way anywhere else.” McRaven has built and restored hundreds of log, stone and post and beam structures all over the United States.<sup>24</sup> His recollection is telling as to the relative rarity of this stonework.

Internally, the stonework in the original kitchen fireplace and surrounding stone wall is also significant for its craftsmanship. The entire 4’ x 4’ firebox is hand-chiseled square and flush

<sup>23</sup> Wikipedia, Architectural Techniques, *Quoins*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quoin>.

<sup>24</sup> Meet Charles McRaven, (2019). <http://www.charlesmcraven.com/frames2.html>.

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stones. The swing-arm hinges for cooking are still in place and evidence the practice of cooking over a fire in a stone hearth. Several hand-forged S-hooks for cooking have been found around the dwelling's grounds. Just above the fireplace, two long stones are carefully aligned and placed to meet directly in the center of the fireplace. Set above these two stones is one remarkably placed 6' long stone with an unusual bluish hue, chiseled flush, 4" thick at the center and blended in perfectly with the three stones below it. (Photo 12 and Figure 11)



Figure 11: Kitchen fireplace stonework

As with the exterior stonework and the use of quoins, this interior stonework conveys consciousness of aesthetics in addition to creating a structurally sound wall. The stonework, both inside and out, exemplifies a concurrent theme that this log house was carefully constructed using fine vernacular craftsmanship and methods.

The original fireplace in the house's main level on the south side is similarly constructed but with a tapered firebox, not squared. Most notable here is the original mantel framing the fireplace and contributing to its splendor. (Photo 17)

### *Structural Members*

The choice of logs, white oak, and the foundation the logs are set upon is appreciably important to the dwelling's continued survival. Oak is not as easy to work with as are other native Virginia woods such as yellow poplar, pine and chestnut.<sup>25</sup> Oak is a relatively strong and durable wood but more challenging to hew square and heavier to lift than other available choices. But if the long term goal is permanence, white oak is an excellent choice, not only in strength, but for its closed grain, which makes for better moisture seal; e.g., white oak is the preferred choice of wood for coopers. Two stories of white oak logs, up to 14" wide, 5" thick and 30' long (at 60% moisture content weighing approximately 875 pounds),<sup>26</sup> were not erected quickly or easily; speed and ease were often the principal drivers for log building in Virginia, again making the

<sup>25</sup> McRaven, C. (2005). *The Classic Hewn-Log House* (3rd ed.). Adams Hill, MA: Storey Publishing, 89.

<sup>26</sup> Woodweb, [http://www.woodweb.com/cgi-in/calculators/calc.pl?calculator=weight\\_bd\\_ft](http://www.woodweb.com/cgi-in/calculators/calc.pl?calculator=weight_bd_ft), White Oak, input 60% moisture.

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Gardner House an exception.<sup>27</sup> The foundation was designed for building permanence. The sill plate logs are placed considerably above the ground. The more common technique of placing the sill plate directly on the ground proved to be less stable over the long term due to moisture and insect damage. Such issues have not affected the Gardner House's sill plates.

The rafters are also significant structural members. (Photos 26, 27) They are illustrative of European construction techniques adapted for use on log buildings here in Virginia.<sup>28</sup> The rafters are 3" x 4" heart pine and sawn by a reciprocating saw (indicated by the still-visible vertical blade marks). The rafters are notched and pegged at the top and have pegged mortise and tenon joinery at the mid-span rafter joints. Retention of the rafter dimensions, wood-saw cut-type and joinery, are important to understanding the house's construction methods and vernacular building traditions of central Virginia in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, due to their high quality, these building materials and architectural choices for structural members have contributed to the house's survival and are historically significant to its existence today.

#### *Architectural Evolution*

Evidence of the Gardner's House's architectural evolution supports two significant dates: 1) 1851, the date of origin, and 2) 1893, the date of major interior remodeling.



First, concerning the 1851 construction date, this is known because during the 1983 rehabilitation effort, a stone was found in the rubble where the north side chimney had fallen. The stone was engraved, "B.B.G. 1851." (Figure 12)

Figure 12: Stone engraved, "B.B.G. 1851"

<sup>27</sup> Bealer, Alex W., 1979. *The Log Cabin*, New York, NY: Clarkson N. Potter, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Jordan-Bychkov, Terry G. 1980. *Log Cabin Village: A History and Guide*. Austin, TX: Texas State Historical Association.

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Brightberry Brown Gardner owned this land in 1851 as evidenced by deed records. Further supporting the 1853 construction date are land tax records that indicate no dwelling in 1849, presence of at least a modest dwelling in 1850 appraised at \$150, no change in 1851 records, but in 1852 the appraisal was increased to \$250 for “improvements.”<sup>29</sup> The gradual increase in valuation is somewhat suggestive that the dwelling took some time to complete. The building incorporates hundreds of hand-chiseled stones in the foundation and two chimneys, along with hundreds more uncut fieldstones that were placed “as is” after first being hauled from the fields. The walls are composed of well over one thousand linear feet of logs from oak trees that were felled, dragged away, hand-hewn on at least two sides (sometimes four) and then raised. The volume, careful handcrafting, and sheer weight of those materials are factors in the likely slow rate of construction. Nonetheless, the tax record data closely coincides with the stone engraving.

The dwelling was modified in 1893 during the ownership of L.G. and Parthenia Shifflett, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of owners. Penciled on the back of a cabinet door is “*Joseph g Burrus Free Union, Va Dec 16th, 1893.*” (Photo 29) The objective evidence also suggests all the heart pine flooring on both the main level and upper level, the heart pine stairs to the upper level, and the heart pine 2” x 12” ceiling joists were all installed in 1893. The boards utilized were planed to nominal lumber dimensions, although not nominal by today’s standards<sup>30</sup>; e.g., the 2’ x 12’ joists are 1 5/8” x 11”. There is evidence the original roofing was wooden shakes (or boards) as numerous small cut nails protrude from the sheathing boards but have no useful purpose in securing the standing-seam metal roofing. Metal roofs were not commonly used in ordinary residential construction until after the Civil War.<sup>31</sup>

The architecture and craftsmanship of the 1893 remodeling event is noteworthy. The 20’-long log wall that divided the dwelling’s interior was removed, representing a significant change in use of the dwelling as the “public” and “private” spaces were no longer as strictly defined as they were during the antebellum era. Large notches in the logs are notable between the doors from the sill to the top plate where 8” wide cross beams once were laid. (Photo 16) Paneling and some built-in cabinetry replaced those logs. The stairs installed in 1893 rising to the upper floor were cut from the same board, as the grains would line up perfectly if the steps were dismantled and placed side by side into one long piece. Whether cut for practicality or appearance, they are nonetheless visually striking. The metal roof added in 1893 is also important for its association with technological changes in building materials as well as improved resistance to moisture penetration compared to wood shingles.

The owner in 1893, Levi Givens Shifflett, having the means to afford such a major remodeling event is noteworthy, as he was a relatively small farmer in rural Virginia, especially when considering the economic conditions at that time and the “Panic of 1893.” The remodeling was carefully planned and executed, and demonstrated a genuine desire to improve the functionality, quality, and attractiveness of the dwelling and preserve it for future generations. The Gardner

<sup>29</sup> Library of Virginia, (1845 – 1854) *Land Tax Records for Albemarle County*. Microfilm reels 11, 377.

<sup>30</sup> Smith, L.W., Wood, L.W., (1964). *History of Yard Lumber Sizes*, Forest Products Laboratory, Forest Service, Dept. of Agriculture.

<sup>31</sup> Kirchheimer, Sara. n.d. *The History of Tin Roofs*. [https://www.ehow.com/about\\_5208734\\_history-tin-roofs.html](https://www.ehow.com/about_5208734_history-tin-roofs.html).

Gardner House  
Name of Property

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House's physical materials and documentary evidence provide an unusually detailed understanding of the house's evolution from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Together with the vernacular craftsmanship embodied in the building, these aspects of the house make it architecturally significant in Albemarle County.

Rehabilitation efforts were initiated in 1983 and undertaken by Charles McRaven, author of *Building the Hewn Log House* (1978), *Building with Stone* (1989), *Country Blacksmithing* (1981), and others. McRaven has been consulting, building and restoring hand-hewn log buildings for over 60 years in and well beyond Virginia. His consultations have included the Ballard-Maupin House (NRHP 1999) and Mirador (NRHP 1983, boundary increase 2003), both in Albemarle County, and Woods Hill (NRHP 2013) in the City of Franklin, Virginia.

Gardner House  
Name of Property

Albemarle County, VA  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Gardner House  
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Woodweb, [http://www.woodweb.com/cgi-bin/calculators/calc.pl?calculator=weight\\_bd\\_ft](http://www.woodweb.com/cgi-bin/calculators/calc.pl?calculator=weight_bd_ft).

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** DHR No. 002-5310

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** approximately 39

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.224570 Longitude: -78.614780

2. Latitude: 38.224950 Longitude: -78.614020

Gardner House  
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- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 3. Latitude: 38.222520 | Longitude: -78.611880 |
| 4. Latitude: 38.217480 | Longitude: -78.612630 |
| 5. Latitude: 38.217440 | Longitude: -78.614970 |
| 6. Latitude: 38.223080 | Longitude: -78.615670 |

**Or**

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary is coterminous with the perimeter lines of tax parcels 7-9B1 and 7-9B as recorded by Albemarle County, Virginia, excluding an entrance drive that enters the property at its northeastern corner but is not associated with any historic resources. The true and correct historic boundary is shown on the attached Tax Parcel Map.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Today, the Gardner House sits on 39 acres in Blackwell's Hollow along Buck Mountain Creek. There are two tax parcels currently associated with the Gardner House. The log dwelling, family cemetery, and assorted outbuildings are located on the 15-acre parcel #7-9B1. The stone terraced area is on the adjacent 24-acre parcel #7-9B. The property's historic setting and all known historic resources are included within the historic boundary.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: David C. Smith, Owner  
organization: N/A  
street & number: 3137 Shiffletts Mill Rd.  
city or town: Crozet state: VA zip code: 22932  
e-mail: davecvis@aol.com



Gardner House  
Name of Property

Albemarle County, VA  
County and State

telephone: (434) 978-1390

date: November 2019

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Gardner House

City or Vicinity: Boonesville (Crozet P.O.)

County: Albemarle State: VA

Photographer: David C. Smith (all photos)

Date Photographed: JAN, FEB, MAR 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0001

View: House setting, camera facing north

Photo 2 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0002

View: House front, north side, camera facing southeast

Gardner House  
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- Photo 3 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0003  
View: House front, south side, original chimney, camera facing northeast
- Photo 4 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0004  
View: House, camera facing southwest
- Photo 5 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0005  
View: Front porch and entry doors, camera facing north/northeast
- Photo 6 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0006  
View: Back porch, camera facing southwest
- Photo 7 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0007  
View: Noncontributing wood shed, camera facing north
- Photo 8 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0008  
View: Noncontributing hay shed and garage, camera facing southwest
- Photo 9 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0009  
View: Noncontributing barn, camera facing northeast
- Photo 10 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0010  
View: Graveyard, contributing site
- Photo 11 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0011  
View: Stairwell from main level down to basement level, camera facing east
- Photo 12 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0012  
View: Kitchen fireplace, camera facing south
- Photo 13 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0013  
View: Kitchen joists, cabinetry, passageway, flooring, camera facing northwest
- Photo 14 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0014  
View: Hand-hewn center joist, kitchen ceiling
- Photo 15 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0015  
View: Main level great room, camera facing north
- Photo 16 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0016  
View: Interior front doors, center joints
- Photo 17 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0017  
View: Original mantel, camera facing south
- Photo 18 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0018  
View: Beaded joists and flooring/ceiling, camera facing up in Main level
- Photo 19 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0019  
View: Stairwell from upper level down to main level, camera facing east
- Photo 20 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0020  
View: Upper level closet, bathroom and master bedroom doors, flooring, passageway
- Photo 21 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0021  
View: Upper level knee-walls
- Photo 22 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0022  
View: North gable end heart pine paneling and fireplace
- Photo 23 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0023  
View: Knee-wall window, bedroom heart pine wall opposite north gable end
- Photo 24 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0024  
View: Bathtub, American chestnut paneling, camera facing southeast

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Photo 25 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0025  
View: South gable end yellow poplar heartwood paneling  
Photo 26 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0026  
View: Rafter, ridge pocket notched and pegged  
Photo 27 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0027  
View: Rafter, mid-span mortise and tenon and pegged  
Photo 28 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0028  
View: South chimney stonework, camera facing northwest  
Photo 29 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0029  
View: Cabinet door signature presumed to be remodeling carpenter, 1893  
Photo 30 of 30: VA\_Albemarle County\_Gardner House\_0030  
View: Unusual object under window, camera facing southeast

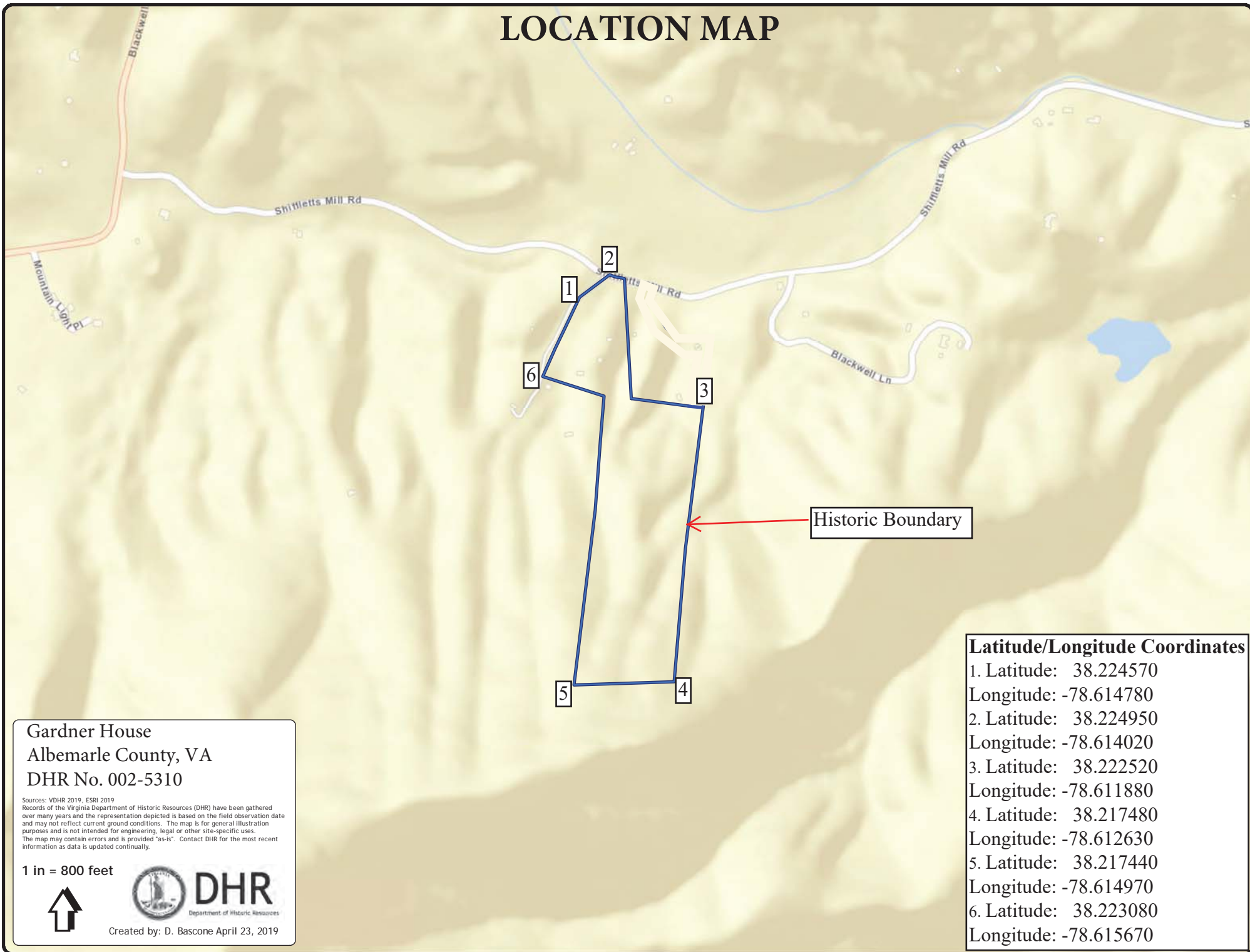
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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing 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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

# LOCATION MAP



Gardner House  
Albemarle County, VA  
DHR No. 002-5310

Sources: VDHR 2019, ESRI 2019  
Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. The map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". Contact DHR for the most recent information as data is updated continually.

1 in = 800 feet



**DHR**  
Department of Historic Resources

Created by: D. Bascone April 23, 2019



**SKETCH MAP/ PHOTO KEY**

(exterior views)

Gardner House  
Albemarle County, VA  
DHR No. 002-5310

List of Resources:

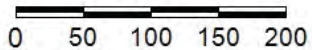
- A: Log dwelling (contributing building)
- B: Horse barn (noncontributing building)
- C: Cemetery (contributing site)
- D: Woodshed (noncontributing structure)
- E: Hay shed (noncontributing building)
- F: Garage (noncontributing building)
- G: Barn site (noncontributing site)



 **1** Photo Locations



Feet



1:2,257 / 1"=188 Feet

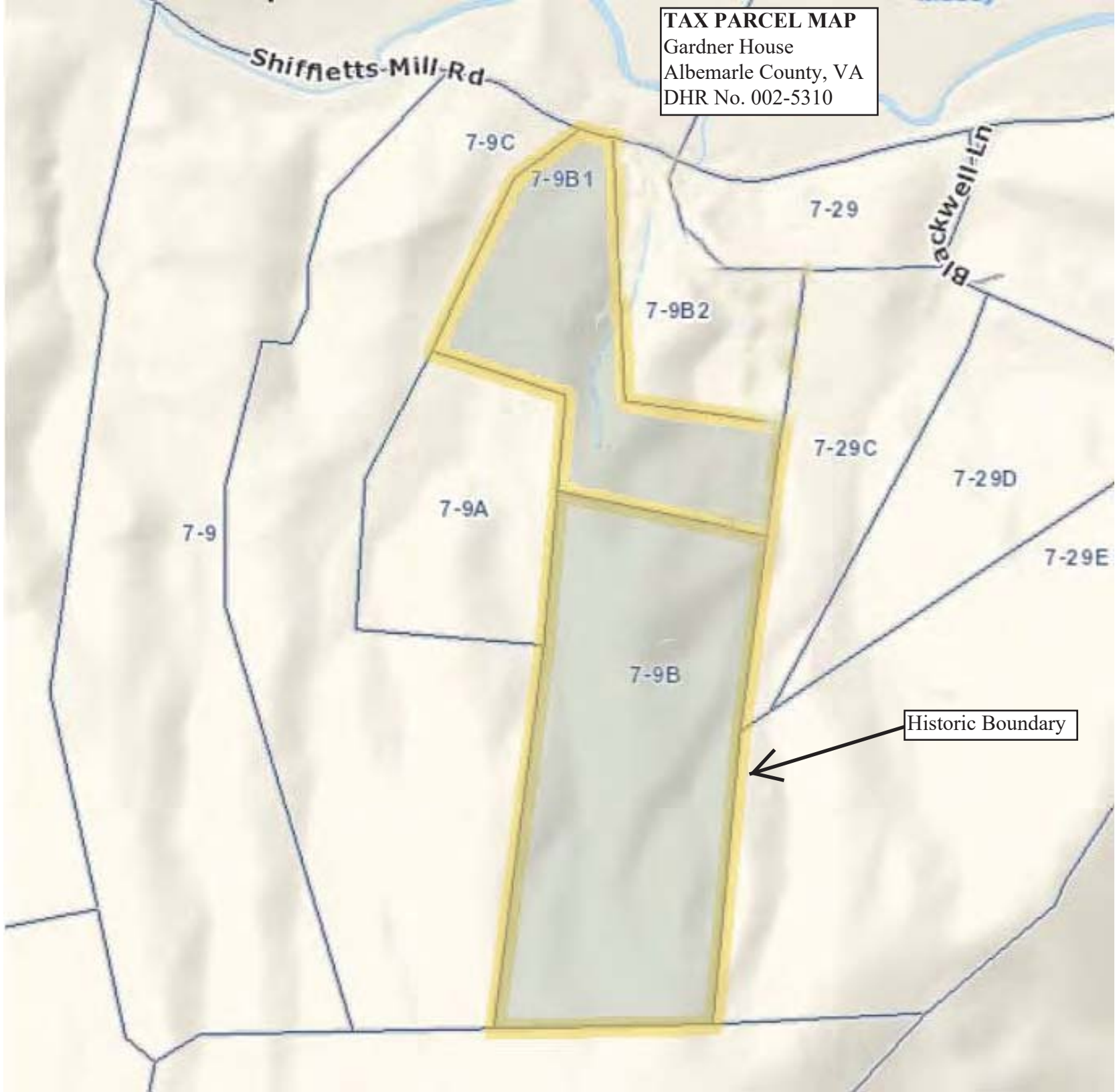
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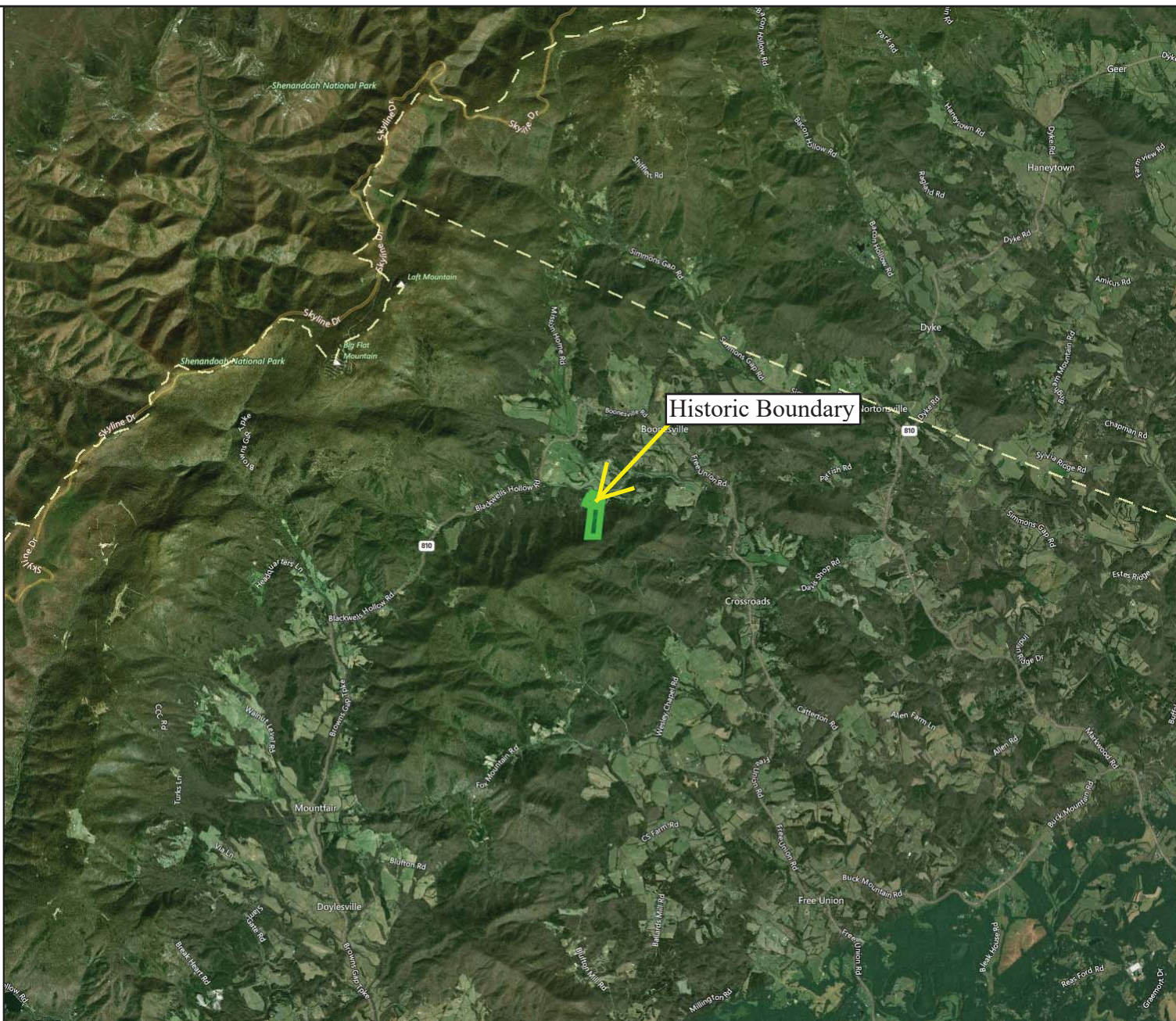
**Date: 11/18/2019**

*DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.*

*Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.*

**TAX PARCEL MAP**  
Gardner House  
Albemarle County, VA  
DHR No. 002-5310





Miles



1:144,448 / 1"=2 Miles

**Title:**

**Date: 11/18/2019**

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