

Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission

Landmarks Nomination Report: *William S. Kerney House*

Physical Description:

The William S. Kerney House is located on Persimmon Lane in northern Jefferson County, West Virginia. The property sits about two miles west of Shepherdstown, along Rocky Marsh Run. The property consists of agricultural land and historic buildings along that stream.

Historic Description:

The property was originally part of Joist Hite's 1735 Rocky Marsh Tract and a 1751 Fairfax Grant to Edward Mercer. In 1739, the Hite property sold to John Patton. The overlapping Mercer lands were divided at his death and the property became a subject of the decades long Hite v. Fairfax lawsuit. James Kerney purchased the property where the subject house now stands in 1803, after that lawsuit was settled. His son Anthony Kerney died in 1829 and divided his lands among his sons, William, Josiah, and Uriah. In 1837, William S. Kerney built the brick house. The following year the tax assessment noted "\$1,500 added for new brick house." In 1855, the assessment rose \$765 for a new barn. The property was portioned into 14 lots in 1879, following the death of William Kerney. These lots were distributed to members of the extended Kerney family. After the subject property left Kerney ownership in 1906, it was held during the 20th century by the Needy, Sperow, Shade, Staley and Dern families.

Historic Resources:

The main house, built in 1837, is a fine brick dwelling. The exterior has the distinctive characteristics of mid-19th century construction such as a Flemish bond front and 5:1 coursing on the sides. It is a well preserved example of the popular center-hall plan with refined millwork. The interiors include period mantels, symmetrical casings and a fine stair. In addition to the house, are a stone smokehouse and the 1855 barn foundation.

Nomination Criteria:

The JCHLC nominates this property under Criteria C for inclusion on the list of registered county landmarks. Criteria C states that a site may be nominated if, in the opinion of the JCHLC, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. Owners, Tom & Sandy D'Onofrio, have agreed to have the property listed as Jefferson County Historic Landmark.

Nomination Action:

The JCHLC voted unanimously to add the William S. Kerney House, under Criteria C, to the rolls of registered Jefferson County Historic Landmarks on October 15, 2007.