

Jefferson County Landmarks Nomination Report

Rose Lawn



Figure 1. Rose Lawn House 2020

Legal Description:

Jefferson County 911 address:
365 Van Clevesville Road
Kearneysville, WV 25430
Parcel ID: 07 1000500000000

Physical Description:

The property now known as Rose Lawn is located on the west side of Van Clevesville Road, Jefferson County, West Virginia. The property measures 4.7 acres and consists of an historic house and surrounding lawn. Associated outbuildings visible from the public road were once part of the larger Rose Hill farmstead but are no longer included in the smaller tract subject of this nomination. The house is currently a private residence.

Historic Description:

(As documented by Edie Wallace of Paula Reed Associates):

Originally the land was part of property begins with the Fairfax grant of 570 acres to Nicholas Lemen in 1756. The tract began at “a Locust Standing in the Barrens on a Hill and on the North Side of the Waggon Road that Leads from Shennandoah to Opeckon a Comer to the Land Surveyed for Nicholas Mercer.” Also “crossing the Waggon Road that Leads from Potowmack to Winchester.”

When Nicholas Lemen died in 1761, he devised his land to be divided between his two oldest sons, John and Robert Lemen (FC WB 2/489). According to a later deed, Robert Lemen (spelled Lemmen) sold 164 acres to John Duke in April 1765 (as referenced in JC DB 12/386).

1787 BC Land Tax – John Duke assessed for 164 acres.

After John Duke’s death, the tract was sold to James Kearney by Robert Duke, executor for the estate (as referenced in JC DB 12/386).

John Duke was not listed in the 1791 BC tax record, but neither was James Kearney.

1798 BC Land Tax – James Kearney was assessed for 2 ½ lots (Shepherdstown), 268 acres, and 346 acres.

1798 BC House & Slave Tax – James “Kerny” was assessed for 3 houses in Shepherdstown, occupied by “Tally” (157.50), Capt. Bailey (367.50), and Christian Orendorf (630.00). Kerny himself occupied one of his country houses valued at 630.00, and the other valued at 210.00 was occupied by Thomas Tabb.

1798 BC Personal Property Tax- James Kearney assessed for 2 white males over 16

In April 1805, James Kearney sold 123 acres of the tract to his son Anthony Kearney for £1,000 (JC DB 2/429).

1815 Special House Tax:

James Kearny was assessed for a house valued at \$400 (over the \$500 minimum)

Anthony Kearney was not assessed for a house – his house may have been valued under \$500 (see below). He was, at least for the year 1815 in possession of an Ordinary License and may have been operating the nearby Walper’s Tavern.

1820 Land Tax – Anthony Kearney assessed for 150 acres with \$100 building value, \$4,200 total value.

Anthony Kearney sold 120 acres to his son William Kearney in 1816 for £1,000, the same price he bought it for from James, but William did not get the improvements and was not assessed for the tract until 1824 (JC DB 12/386).

1824 Land Tax:

Anthony Kearney assessed for 32 acres, \$100 building value, \$896 total value William Kearney assessed for 120 acres, \$0 building value, \$2,360 total value

By 1825, William Kearney had died, and his land partitioned among his heirs. Among them,

his daughter Elizabeth Glover, wife of Lewis Glover, received two tracts of about 81 and 15 acres (as described in a later deed).

1830 Land Tax – Lewis Glover (of Frederick Co.) was assessed for 94 acres with a building value of \$200, total value \$2,062.

1831 Land Tax – building assessment rose to \$280 without comment

In 1832, Lewis and Elizabeth Glover sold the two tracts of “about 100 acres” to Minor Hurst for \$3,395 (JC DB 18/103). Hurst sold the two tracts (81 and 15 acres) to Uriah B. Kerney in 1834 (JC DB 20/143).

1835 Land Tax – Uriah B. Kerney was assessed for 96 acres with a building value of \$280 and the comment “2 a. more on resurvey.”

Uriah B. Kerney was the youngest son of Anthony Kearney, and brother of William. This was U.B. Kerney’s only land for several years so presumably this is where he lived. About 1840, he improved his living condition with a new house.

1841 Land Tax – 90 ¼ acres, \$1,500 building value with the comment “\$1,200 added for new brick house”

In 1850, Uriah B. Kerney married Maria Hunsicker. It was a second marriage, so they recorded an agreement that she would forego her dower right in lieu of a \$200 annual payment, which “shall be a lien upon the tract or parcel of land in Jefferson County, Virginia upon which he now resides purchased from Minor Hurst and adjoining the lands of John Walper, William Butler’s heirs and containing about 100 acres” (JC DB 33/349). The 1850 census listed Uriah Kerney as 50 years old, a Farmer, with his wife Maria, age 34, her daughter Maria Hunsicker, age 9, and Uriah’s adult children John K. (20) and Sarah S. (18). Kerney’s real estate was valued at \$19,000 by the census-taker.

Whether U.B. Kerney called the house “Rose Lawn” is unknown. On the 1852 Brown map it is simply labeled “Uriah B. Kerney.” Kerney also owned the farm known as “Big Spring” or “Southwood,” but it appears that was an investment or plan for his children’s inheritance. Kerney wrote his will in 1859 and died in 1860. He devised the Southwood farm to his son John and daughter Elizabeth. He devised his “remaining land...including my home farm” to his son James Wm. Kerney, who was under the age of 21 at the time, along with all the household goods and furniture. James W. Kerney allowed his daughter, Elizabeth, to stay “in the room in the mansion house she now occupies” as long as she stayed unmarried (JC WB 16/168). James and Elizabeth were probably children of his second marriage.

Kerney also emancipated his eight slaves: John Comegys, Ann Mason & son, George Washington, Isabella Washington and her infant daughter Sally, Helen Washington, and Julia Washington, providing \$200 to “remove to a free state...preferably to Perryville, Indiana” (JC WB 16/168). On the 1860 census, Isabella, Helen, and Sally (age 2), were still living in the household of John K. Kerney.

In 1873, Rose Lawn passed out of the Kerney family when James W. Kerney sold it to George L. Hoffman (JC DB A/124). The Hoffman family owned the farm for nearly 100 years, increasing its size to 166 acres, and calling it “Rose Lawn Farm” in their 1960 conveyance to Homer and Georgia McKee (JC DB 240/348). In 2001, their daughter, Sandra McKee, sold a

4.7-acre tract including the house but no outbuildings, to Ioanna E. Ramsay (DB 947/687).

Neal Randell and Amanda Reed acquired the 4.7-acre tract in 2016 and are its current owners (JC DB 1179/137).

Historic Resource:

(as described by architectural historian John Allen):

The main house, built in 1840, is a three bay, center-entry structure with paired, end-chimneys. This large, 2-story brick house is laid in 5:1 bond. Both central bays on the front elevation have sidelights. Detailing such as the wooden end-block window lentils place the construction date in the mid-19th century.

In addition to the house, the 4.7-acre tract adjoins property containing numerous historic structures, once part of the larger farmstead. Such structures as the frame meathouse/icehouse, frame bank bam, and chicken house make up a fine visual agricultural landscape, though these supporting structures are longer part the 4.7-acre tract of this nomination.

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 that possess high artistic values. The property owners, Neal Randell and Amanda Reed, have agreed to have their property listed as Jefferson County Historic Landmark.

Nomination Action:

The JCHLC voted unanimously to add Rose Lawn, under Criteria C, to the rolls of registered Jefferson County Historic Landmarks on April 8, 2020.

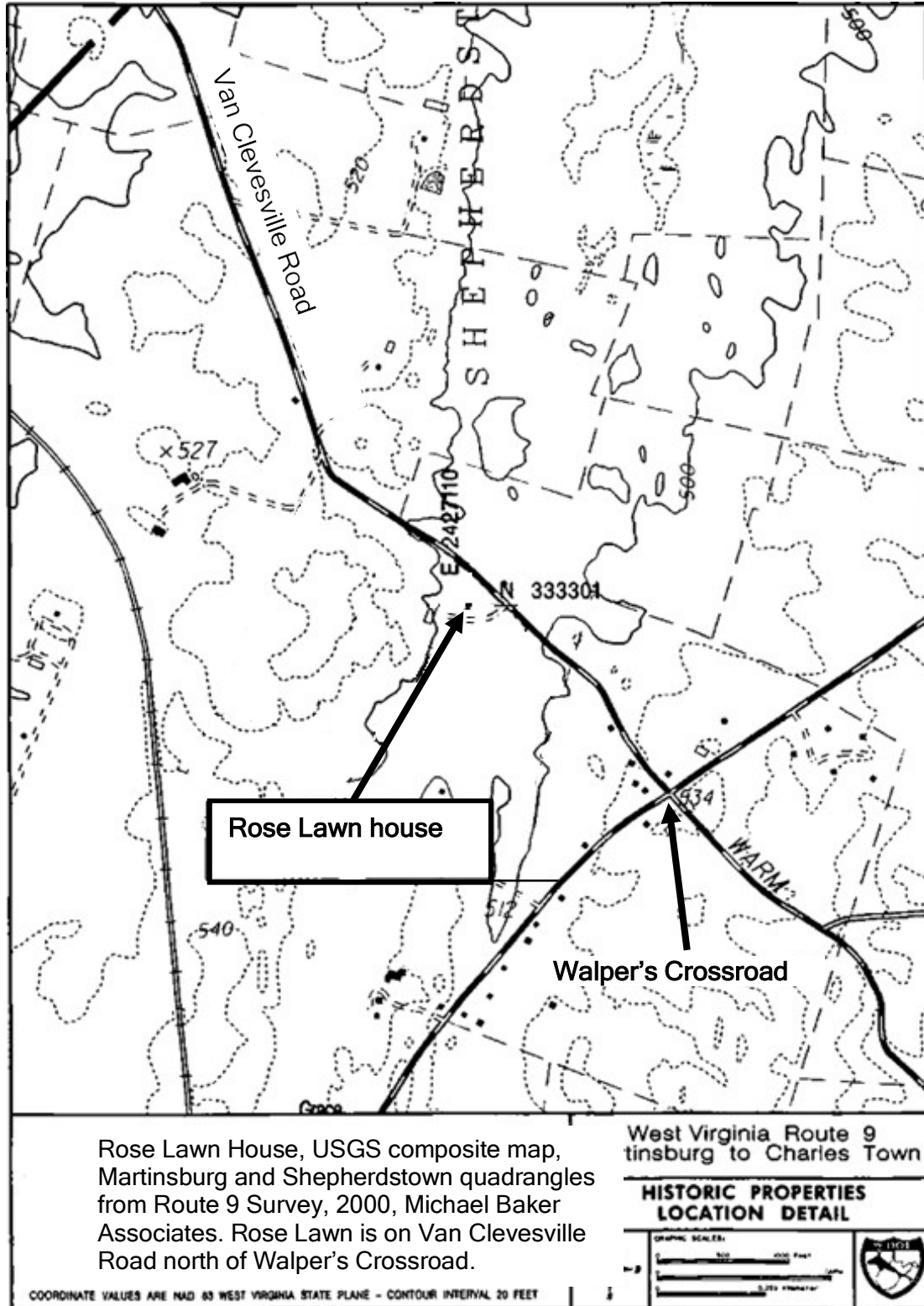


Figure 2. Rose Lawn House, USGS composite map, Martinsburg and Shepherdstown quadrangles from Route 9 Survey, 2000, Michael Baker Associates.

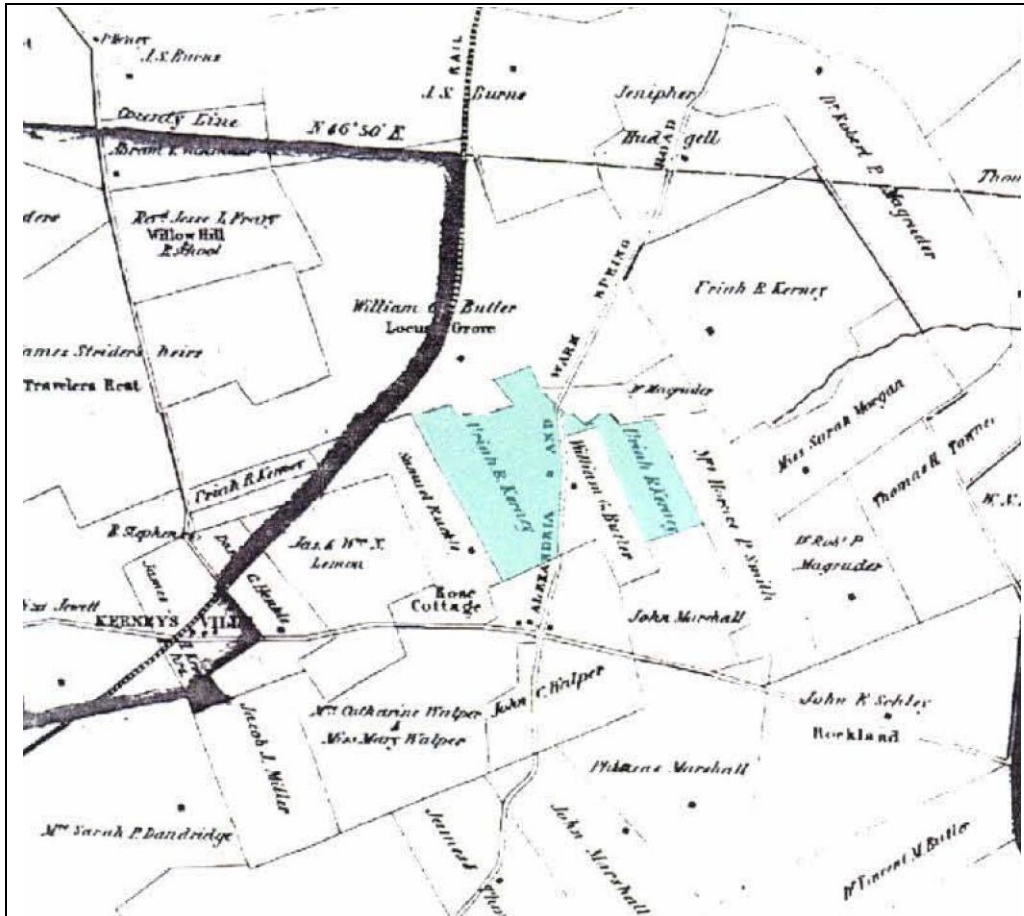


Figure 3. Portion of Samuel Howell Brown’s 1852 map of Jefferson County showing the land area comprising the Rose Lawn Farm of Uriah B. Kerney. (Image and caption from KellyLinn Rudolph, West Virginia Historic Property Inventory Form, JF-0082, 2000, n.p.).

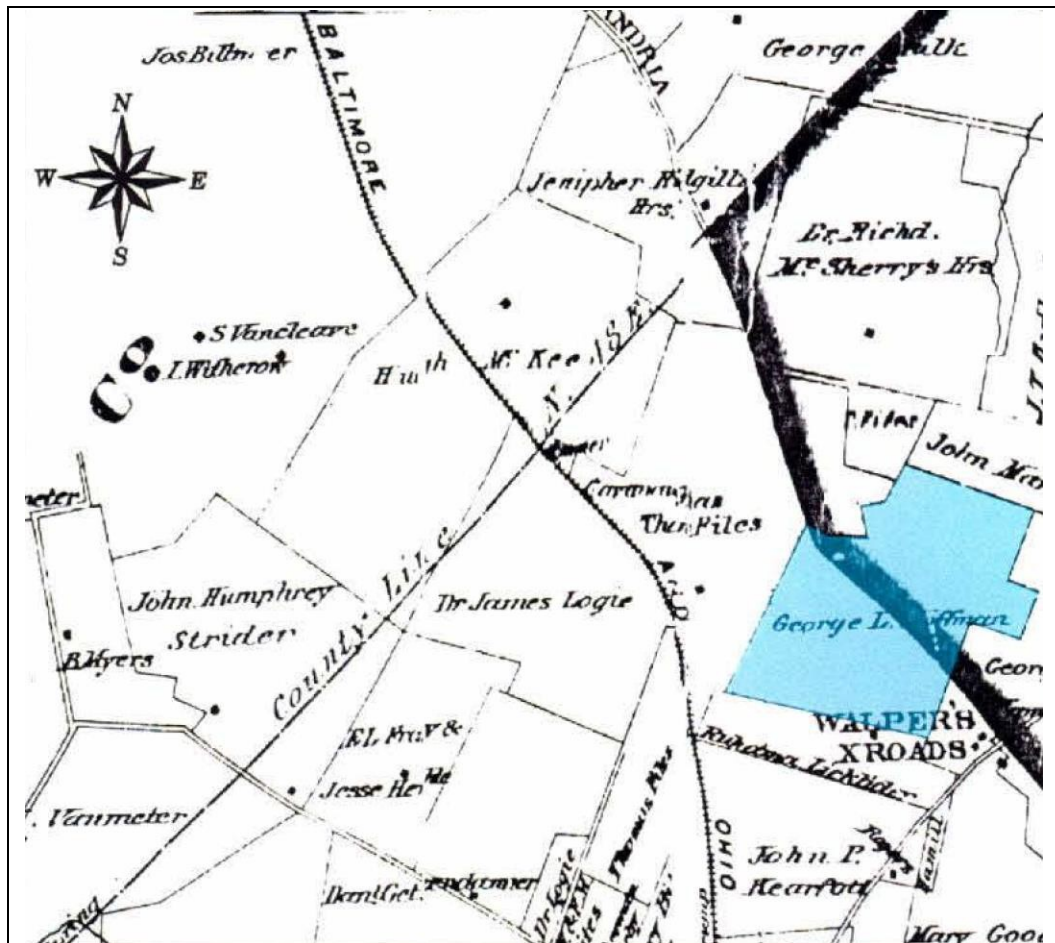


Figure 4. Portion of Samuel Howell Brown's 1883 map of Jefferson County showing the land area comprising the Rose Lawn Farm of George L. Hoffman. (Image and caption from KellyLinn Rudolph, West Virginia Historic Property Inventory Form, JF-0082, 2000, n.p.).

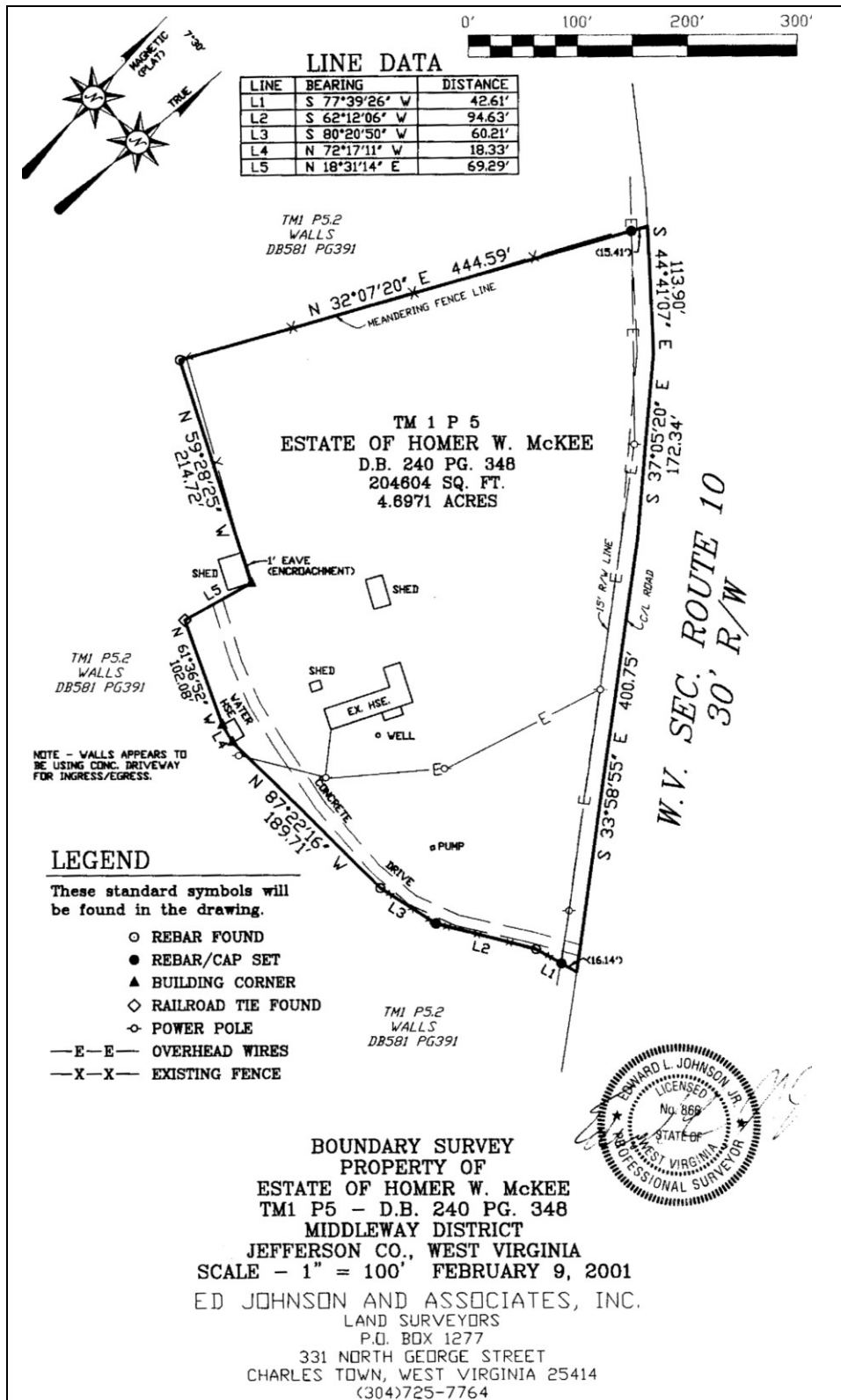


Figure 5. Current plat of 4.7-acre Rose Lawn property (JC DB 240/348). Plat depicts property of this nomination.