

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse
other names/site number NE-605

2. Location

street & number 2985 Chaplin-Taylorsville Rd N/A not for publication
city or town Bloomfield vicinity
state Kentucky code KY county Nelson code 179 zip code 40008

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this 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 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 local

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark Dennen/SHPO Date _____
Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____
Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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:) _____
Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

Number of Resources within Property

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	4	buildings
		district
		site
	3	structure
		object
1	7	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Mid-19th Century/Greek Revival

Early Republic/Federal

Late Nineteenth Century/Other: Vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone/Limestone

walls: Wood/Weatherboard and Log

roof: Wood/shingle

other: Concrete Block

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Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse (No 8 on the site plan, Attachment Two) is located approximately five miles north of Bloomfield, in Nelson County, Kentucky, in the Commonwealth's Outer Bluegrass region. The property lies along State Route 458, also known as the Chaplin-Taylorsville Road. The Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse is situated on a 108.28 acre tract, with eight resources, all of which is proposed for listing. A gravel private drive enters the property, travelling west from SR 458 for four-tenths of a mile to reach the Farmhouse. The property is being interpreted for its architectural value, which results in one contributing building, four non-contributing buildings, and three non-contributing structures.

Property Setting and Character

Crankshaw et. al. surveyed the county in 2001 for the Nelson County Planning Commission, and said this about the area around Bloomfield: it contains "the highest quality soils, was settled early, and remains the county's major agricultural district."¹ That study found two potentially eligible rural historic districts surrounding the town of Bloomfield; the nominated property lies squarely within one of those, the Big Springs Rural Historic District, which the authors characterize as, "a landscape of antebellum agricultural prosperity...[which] clearly demonstrates the connections between settlement and sources of water."²

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse property sits on one parcel of three tracts owned by the Olde Bloomfield Holding Company. These three are referred to as Tracts 1, 2, and 3 of the Richard and Anna Morgan Farm Division, recorded in Plat Cabinet 10, Slot 110 at the Nelson County Clerk's Office. This division of a larger property into three parcels occurred in 1989 by the Stephens family.³ The nominated property is bounded by the waters of Jack's Creek and a rock fence boundary on its west, and agricultural lands on its eastern, northern, and southern boundary lines. The northern and southern borders are demarcated by distinct tree lines, composed of mature trees.

Originally, entry to the farmstead was accomplished along Big Springs Road, which no longer extends to Jacks Creek. In the nineteenth century, the road forded Jacks Creek to furnish access to the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmstead and connected with a spur of the Taylorsville-Chaplin Turnpike to the north.⁴ The 1906 property deed refers to this older arrangement when it notes, "an old stone planted in middle of the old Taylorsville and Chaplin dirt road (said dirt road not in use now)..." as a western property boundary.⁵ Today, access to the property comes from the gravel drive connected to SR 458.

The farmhouse is situated on a rise approximately twenty-to-thirty feet above Jack's Creek and faces southward. A twentieth century concrete sidewalk approaches the front porch from the gravel drive. This sidewalk also extends around the eastern side of the house to the rear enclosed porch addition. Several deciduous trees and a few conifers, of different varieties, shade the grounds surrounding the house. No apparent design aesthetic appears to have been followed in selecting their placement.

Several domestic and agricultural buildings and structures are situated on the property. A modern garage structure stands west of the house; a recently reconstructed meathouse to the immediate east; a modern pole barn is located across the gravel drive; a partially dismantled structure which was a tobacco barn also across the gravel drive; a chicken house/storage structure toward the rear of the eastern farmyard; and landscape features including a rock fence along the property's western border, as well as the gravel drive, are all within the proposed property's boundary. None of these buildings or structures are significant within the theme of architecture and only the chicken house and rock fence might be

¹ Ned Crankshaw, Julie Riesenweber, and Krista Schneider. "Nelson County, Kentucky: Rural Design Guidelines." Report prepared by the University of Kentucky for the Joint Planning Commission of Nelson County/Bardstown, Kentucky. Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, November 2001, 22.

² Ibid., 46.

³ Nelson County Clerk's Office, Nelson County Plat Cabinet 1, Slot 429.

⁴ Ned Crankshaw, Julie Riesenweber, and Krista Schneider, 46.

⁵ Nelson County Clerk's Office, Nelson County Deed Book 71, 243.

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considered contributing historic structures if examined under the theme of agriculture in Nelson County's Outer Bluegrass region from 1780 to 1960. A site plan is included as Attachment Two.

Feature 8-- The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse (contributing building)

Exterior Description

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse is a two-story Greek Revival frame building with a one-and-a-half story log and frame ell. It was built and enlarged in four different construction campaigns: a circa 1829 log portion; a Greek Revival I-House, circa 1855; a one-room frame addition built circa 1890 behind the log ell; and porches on the east and west sides of the log and frame ell which were framed and enclosed in the mid-twentieth century. Elements of the Italianate style can be seen on the Greek Revival phase of the house, not surprising, given its mid-1850s construction date. From the front, the house appears as a side-gable I-house.⁶

The log ell section of the house appears to have historically served as a rear addition for another antebellum house, which was probably demolished or otherwise destroyed in order to build the current two-story ca. 1855 I-house. Upon examination of the log ell, it becomes difficult to imagine how this structure may have served as a stand-alone dwelling. Rather, the log portion has the form, plan, and character common to a typical dining room ell in rural antebellum Kentucky.⁷ The hearth, which seems to be original to this portion of the house, is off-center and is too small to be utilized as a cooking fireplace, nor is there any evidence of alteration from a larger hearth area. Additionally, there is no physical support for a second hearth or a wall which would have divided the log pen into a hall-parlor plan, which would be a typical division in a log pen of this size and vintage. Therefore, it is possible that the log ell has always been an addition and that an earlier house stood on the approximate footprint of the current two-story front portion. It is equally plausible that the log house was always meant to serve as an ell and that a house was planned to front the ell as wealth increased. It was fairly common in rural Kentucky for antebellum houses to be conceived and constructed in phases, as fortunes improved.

Unless otherwise noted, the house has a stone foundation, wood shingled roof, double-hung wood windows, and is encased in wood siding. The building retains historic wood siding, wood windows, and decorative detailing to the period of significance, circa 1829, circa 1855, and circa 1890. It is possible that the porches enclosed in the twentieth century were open breezeways at some point in the house's evolution. The remaining exterior description will consist of four sections, each section devoted to what can be observed on a single side. Within each section, an effort will be made to differentiate which portion of the building is being described.

Front (South) Façade

The front façade consists entirely of the ca. 1855 house, and presents a symmetrical five-bay appearance. Two double-hung six-over-six wood windows are placed on either side of a central entry door. Windows to the furthest east and west of the front façade are characterized by a simple hooded crown which projects from the line of the house and is supported by small decorative wood brackets; windows closest to the entryway do not have this feature. The facade is framed by two simple wood pilasters, at the east and west corners of the house. The pilasters begin at the base of the wooden skirtboard and extend to the second-story cornice line. Additionally, the house's symmetry is furthered by two interior gable-end brick chimneys, visible from the front façade.

The single-leaf central entry door is surrounded by a simple Greek Revival style entablature with a broken transom light. This four-paneled recessed entry door, which is framed by square columns, has a sidelight band with three lights on the east and west sides of the square columns and a broken transom with two center lights and a single light on either side of the columns.

⁶ The term I-house commonly refers to a one-and-a-half to two-story house that is one-room deep and two rooms in width. The two rooms are typically separated by a central stair hall. This house type was extremely popular in rural central Kentucky in the mid-nineteenth century and was dressed in many fashionable styles throughout the late 1800s.

⁷ Rachel Kennedy and William Macintire, *Agricultural and Domestic Outbuildings in Central and Western Kentucky, 1800-1865* (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1999). This theory was developed through comparative field experience documenting antebellum houses in central Kentucky. Corroboration was provided through Bill Macintire, survey coordinator for the Kentucky Heritage Council, who visited the house with the author in December 2009. Bill Macintire, correspondence with the author via email, 7 January, 2010.

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The front façade is characterized by a one-story vernacular Greek Revival style front porch that encloses the central three bays. This porch's slightly-pitched wood shingle roof is supported by four simple evenly-spaced square columns; the shape of which is common in central Kentucky's vernacular Greek Revival architectural vocabulary. The porch's weight is carried by a stone foundation that was replaced with a molded block foundation in the early twentieth century. The stone base largely exists behind this concrete block veneer. A single concrete step provides access from the entry sidewalk to the porch floor. The porch floor is currently encased in plywood.

The second story has five symmetrically placed six-over-six double-hung wood windows. The house's eaves project slightly over the roof/wall juncture and provide space for decorative brackets. Following a symmetrical Greek Revival aesthetic, the brackets are placed at even intervals along the cornice line, framing the top-story windows. The brackets are paired at the house's corners. Due to the extremely basic window casings, the windows appear to merge into the frieze-like trim band provided for the brackets.

East Elevation

The east elevation displays the mid-nineteenth century house toward the front, a small portion of the log house, and the enclosed concrete block and frame porch addition toward the rear.

Circa 1855 Greek Revival House

The east gable-end of the Greek Revival portion of the house is evident at the southeast section of this elevation. The main stylistic features on this elevation are the Greek Revival style cornice returns and a single six-over-six double-hung wood window on the first-story. This window is situated at the far north corner of the house, nearly above a bulkhead entrance to the partial cellar. A brick interior-end chimney is visible at the house's ridgeline.

Circa 1829 Log Ell, Circa 1890 Frame Room, and Mid-Twentieth Century Enclosed Porch Addition

On the east elevation, the eave end of the log and frame ell can be seen rising above the roof line of the enclosed porch. A brick chimney flue is visible atop the log portion of the ell. Evidence of the log construction is visible along the boxed cornice here; the projecting gable top logs of the log portion (the wall plates), which support the plate/rafter assembly, are visible along the cornice line.

The enclosed porch addition presents a concrete block knee-wall, which sits on a poured concrete foundation slab, with eleven one-over-one wood windows, encased in aluminum storm coverings. If these openings can be described as fenestration bays, a storm door is located at the ninth opening from the southern corner of the house. A half-round aluminum gutter is situated at the eave of the porch roof to conduct water away from the addition. The wood-sided log and frame additions have been preserved within the enclosed porch addition. A small well-pump of twentieth century vintage is located at the northeast corner of this elevation.

North (Rear) Elevation

The rear elevation displays all four building periods. The enclosed porch additions and the gable end of the frame one-room addition are evident at the northernmost portion of the house, while the rear of the two-story Greek Revival style building can be seen further south.

Circa 1829 Log Ell, Circa 1890 Frame Room, and Mid-Twentieth Century Enclosed Porch Additions

The rear of the ell is covered in wood siding and has few stylistic details. The eastern section of the ell features the rear of the east elevation enclosed porch, which has a concrete block knee-wall and wood siding. The central section is the rear of the one-room frame addition, which has no openings and a continuous stone foundation. Finally, the western portion has a lower concrete block knee-wall, two six-over-six double-hung wood windows, and wood siding.

Circa 1855 Greek Revival House

The rear of the circa 1855 house retains the essential symmetry of the front façade. To the east of the log and frame ell, there is one six-over-six double-hung wood window on the second-story.

On the west of the log and frame ell, there are three six-over-six double-hung wood windows and two six-over-six double-hung wood windows on the first-floor. These windows align symmetrically with the windows on the front façade. Window

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trim and the cornice are devoid of decorative details on this elevation. A small pilaster-like cornerboard is located on the western corner of this elevation only, which echoes detailing on the front façade.

West Elevation

The west elevation presents three building periods: the Greek Revival house, the modern porch addition, and a portion of the log and frame ell.

Circa 1829 Log Ell, Circa 1890 Frame Room, and Mid-Twentieth Century Enclosed Porch Additions

The roofline between the enclosed porch addition and the log and frame ell is nearly seamless on the west elevation. The sole references to the earlier log building are the steeply pitched roof and brick chimney. The enclosed porch addition has a low concrete block knee-wall, which sits on a poured concrete foundation, and nine six-over-six wood windows. A single-leaf hollow-core wood door is situated at the third fenestration bay from the north corner of the addition. The door is surrounded by two small sidelights. Access to the entry door is furnished through a small three-pole porch. This porch has a poured concrete walk that leads north to a cistern, situated at the rear northwest corner of the building. Like the east elevation, the wood-sided log and frame additions have been preserved within the enclosed porch addition.

Circa 1855 Greek Revival House

The west gable-end of the Greek Revival portion of the house is evident at the southwest section of this elevation. There are no window openings on this portion of the elevation. The main stylistic features on the west elevation are Greek Revival style cornice returns and two simple wood pilasters, which are situated at the north and south corners of the house. The pilaster cornerboards begin at the base of the wooden skirtboard and extend to the cornice returns.

Exterior Alterations

Exterior changes to the building have been minimal. The building retains historic wood siding, wood windows, and decorative detailing to the period of significance, circa 1829, circa 1855, and circa 1890, as has been discussed above.

The most substantial visual alterations have occurred through enclosure of open porches on the east and west elevations. Though this has impacted the view of the house from both side elevations, mostly obscuring the log and frame ell, older portions of the building remain intact inside the porch additions. Historic wood siding, federal period six-over-six wood sash, and Greek Revival style doors, installed during the circa 1855 building campaign, are in situ.

Interior Description

The following interior description has been organized to correspond with the four building campaigns. The author will begin with description of the front portion of the house, continue through the ell, and close with depiction of the enclosed porch additions. A floor plan is included as Attachment One.

Circa 1855 Greek Revival House

Entrance through the Greek Revival style front door leads to a central stair hall. The hall has plaster walls/ceilings and wood flooring. The passage contains three Greek Revival style interior doors that open into rooms on the east and west of the stair hall, and exit onto the enclosed porch space. The latter door probably originally furnished access to an open porch. This single-leaf four-paneled wooden door has a Greek Ear surround. The doors that open from the passage into east and west rooms of equal size have entablatures with dentiled cornices. Baseboards in the stair passage follow characteristic Greek Revival design, in that they are tall and capped with a simple architrave.

The stair features a dog-leg run of eleven steps to a small landing which then turns to continue up two steps to another landing. The remaining straight run of four steps leads to the second-story hall. Decoratively, the stair features Greek Revival details, such as the tapered square newel post with a pulvinated cap. Beneath the stair, there is a small storage closet accessed through a simple Greek Revival style four-paneled wood door.

To the east of the passage is a single square-shaped room. Given the quality of woodwork, this room was likely used as public entertaining space. The room has plaster walls/ceilings, a solid Greek Revival style baseboard, and wood flooring. The eastern wall, which is most visible upon entry, contains a centrally-placed hearth and mantel and a double-door wood

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press. The mantel is a solid Greek Revival style piece with the shelf supported on Doric pilasters. The press has a pair of two-paneled wood doors with Greek ear surrounds that open to a storage cupboard. An interesting feature on the north hearth wall is an approximately ten-inch square wooden storage cubby that has a hinged privacy door.

Three windows light this space. Two of them are situated on the front wall, while the third is placed to the north of the hearth. All windows have Greek ear surrounds and are elongated with simple wood panels beneath the sash. Perhaps the most unique feature in this room is a small boxed straight-run stair located on the north wall that accesses the second floor through thirteen wooden steps. Entry to this stair is provided through a four-paneled wood door on the east side of the boxed stair.

In addition to the stair passage, there are two more Greek Revival style four-paneled wood doors in this room. One door furnishes admittance to the log and frame ell, while the other door connects to the enclosed porch addition. The latter door probably originally led to exterior porch space. The door to the log ell has a smaller opening and does not have Greek ear surrounds; the door to the east of the stair, however, is a taller opening and has Greek ears.

To the west of the passage is a single square-shaped room. As with the east room, this space also has decorative features suggestive of a semi-public entertainment space. This room has plaster walls/ceilings, a solid Greek Revival style baseboard, and wood flooring. Upon entry into the west room, focus is on the centrally-placed Greek Revival style mantel and hearth. Like the east room mantel, the shelf is supported by Doric pilasters. There is no press or stair in this space.

Four windows light the west room; two are situated on the north (rear) wall and two are placed on the south (front) wall. Each window has Greek ear surrounds; is elongated with simple wood panels beneath the sash; and has an entablature at the crown. The door surround in this room has Greek ears and an entablature at the doorcap.

Second Story

The second-story stair hall provides access to the upper-story east and west rooms. The hall has plaster walls/ceilings and wood flooring. There are two six-over-six wood windows lighting this space. One window is situated above the second stair landing on the north wall; the other is centered on the south (front) wall. The window above the stair has a Greek Revival-style entablature with a dentiled cornice. The other window has a simple Greek Revival profile. Two single leaf doors open onto symmetrical upper-story rooms on the east and west side of the hall. These doors are four-paneled with Greek Revival style surrounds.

Detailing on the second floor is not as elaborate as that on the first-story. Mantels and baseboards are smaller, and door trim has far more sober detailing. This hierarchy of decorative detail is fairly common in central Kentucky. In general, the more private upper-floor spaces receive less stylish finish, which reduces overall building costs.

The east second-floor room is nearly a mirror image of the room below. The room has plaster walls/ceilings and wood flooring. A Greek Revival style mantel, albeit much smaller than the first-floor mantels, is a central focus in the room. To the south of the hearth is a double-door press with a simple classical profile. Doors on the press have a two-panel design. On the north wall is the stair, which features a simple balustrade with newel posts, similar in style and shape to those on the main stair. There are three windows in this room. One is situated on the north (rear) wall directly east of the stair; the other two are symmetrically placed on the south (front) wall. These windows have a simple Greek Revival profile. The single-leaf door that accesses the stair hall has a four-panel design and a surround with a simple Greek Revival profile. A portion of the wood flooring in this room appears to have been reused from an earlier building. This flooring has a beaded edge.

The west second-story room is symmetrical with the room below and with the east second-floor room. The hall has plaster walls/ceilings and wood flooring. A Greek Revival style mantel, albeit much smaller than the first-floor mantels, is a central focus in the room. To the north of the hearth is a double-door press with a simple classical profile. Doors on the press have a two-panel design. Four windows light the west room; two are on the north wall and two are on the south wall. These windows have a simple Greek Revival profile.

Circa 1829 Log Ell

The log ell portion of the building is a single room with half-story storage space. The half-story is unfinished and was probably never meant for permanent habitation. Rather, this half-story could have been used as sleeping space for servants/slaves and for storing agricultural produce. Little evidence exists of permanent habitation, such as windows or a

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heating source. There is some whitewash remaining on the log walls, however, which indicates that it may well have served as living space at some point. The rafter system is open and has no ridgeboard, which suggests a construction date prior to 1830.⁸

The log ell has modern plywood flooring and fairly early vertical wood paneling covering the walls and ceilings. As far as can be determined, the log ell is joined using hewn logs notched with a V-notch.⁹ A boxed winder stair is situated in the southeast corner of the ell. Entry to the stair can be had through a board-and-batten federal-period door. Ten steps lead to the half-story space. Beneath the stair is a small storage space, accessed through a wooden federal-period door. A hearth is located off-center on the ell's north wall. The mantel is an excellent example of Carpenter's federal style in central Kentucky with its delicate fluting and elegant lines.¹⁰ Directly to the west of the mantel is a wooden late-federal period cupboard. Details on the cupboard and mantel, along with window details, tend to suggest a construction date in the late-federal period for this ell, circa 1829. The presence of a federal period cupboard suggests that this space served as a dining room fairly early.

Four door openings provide ingress and egress. Two Greek-Revival style two-panel single-leaf wood doors furnish access to the east and west enclosed porch additions. An opening on the north wall, directly east of the hearth, serves as a route to the rear room addition. An opening on the south wall provides passage into the front portion of the house. There is no door on the north wall, though there is evidence of hinges where a door would have been historically. The surround on the north wall has a simple federal period profile, while the surround on the south wall retains a Greek Revival flavor.

Three windows light the log ell space. Two are placed on either side of the door on the west wall; one is directly north of the box stair. All three have federal period molding profiles.

Circa 1890 Rear Room

This room appears to have been appended to the log ell at some point in the late-nineteenth century. It served as a kitchen, perhaps until the side porches were enclosed in the mid-twentieth century. The room has horizontal wood paneling, quarter-sawn oak floors, and a wood paneled ceiling. There is little decorative detail in this space. In addition to the opening from the log ell, two openings access the enclosed porch additions to the east and west. The opening on the east wall has a single-leaf wood four-paneled door. The other opening does not currently have a door. All of the door surrounds have a more utilitarian character. Two six-over-six wood windows light this space. Both are located adjacent to the door openings.

Mid-Twentieth Century Enclosed Porches

The original exterior to the log and frame portion of the house can be viewed on both the east and west enclosed porch additions.

East Enclosed Porch

The east enclosed porch addition has the exterior of the log ell and frame addition as its west wall and a bank of exterior windows as its east wall. There is a vinyl tile surface on the north wall of the addition and a Greek Revival style door that opens into the east first-floor room of the circa 1855 house. This addition has a concrete and vinyl sheet floor and is ceiled with wood. It appears that the north portion of this addition was used as a bathroom at some point in the recent past.

The windows and wood siding on the east wall date from the federal period on the log ell and from the late-nineteenth century on the frame room addition. Both sets of windows are six-over-six wood double-hung sash. The door from the log ell was replaced in the Greek Revival building campaign. The door from the frame addition is a four-paneled wood door.

West Enclosed Porch

⁸ Bill Macintire, correspondence with the author via email, 7 January, 2010.

⁹ Inspection of the entire notching system was not possible, as the logs are covered in wood paneling. The northwest corner of the log building is accessible, through a split in the siding through which V-notches were observed. It is unclear if the entire building is notched using the V-notch.

¹⁰ Bill Macintire, correspondence with the author via email, 7 January, 2010.

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The west enclosed porch addition has the exterior of the log ell and frame addition as its east wall and a band of windows on its west wall. Two exterior windows are situated on the north wall, and access to the circa 1855 house is provided through a Greek Revival door on the addition's south wall.

The windows and wood siding on the east wall appear to date from the federal period on the log ell and from the late-nineteenth century on the frame room addition. Both sets of windows are six-over-six wood double-hung sash. Weatherboard on the frame room is wider and has a more solid profile than on the log ell; however, it is clear that effort was made to match the log ell's weatherboard. The door from the log ell was replaced in the Greek Revival building campaign. There is an opening without a door currently from the frame addition to the ell. A twentieth century brick chimney flue is located on the east wall, at the juncture between the log and frame portions of the ell.

The addition's floor surface is covered with vinyl sheet flooring and the space is ceiled with wood. Access to the west porch can be found through a door on the south wall to the Greek Revival central passage; a door to the log ell on the east wall; an opening to the frame room on the east wall; and a door to the exterior on the west wall.

Interior Alterations

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse remains remarkably intact to the nineteenth century period of significance. Unlike many farmhouses of this size and vintage in rural Kentucky, there are very few interior alterations to this farmhouse. Historic detailing, such as baseboards, window and door surrounds, and historic materials, such as wood flooring and plaster, are all in situ from their time of construction. Also remarkable, the house was never updated to correspond to one period or style, as is often the case. The federal period log ell has mostly federal period detailing and finish, while the rear frame room retains its late-nineteenth century fabric. The Greek Revival house retains all of its important historic design features and materials as well.

The main changes were made when the east and west porches were enclosed to provide additional living space. As has been noted, this alteration did not destroy historic character of the log or frame portions of the house. Early siding, original windows, and historic doors exist within the footprint of the porch addition.

The current property owner, Olde Bloomfield Holding Company, has rehabilitated many houses in the Bloomfield area, including Walnut Groves, NE-64 (NR listed in 1980/boundary expansion in 1999) and several buildings in the Bloomfield Historic District, NR listed in 1991. Plans for the current property include rehabilitation following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The owner plans to apply for a Kentucky Historic Preservation Tax Credit for work completed in 2010-11.

Other Buildings within proposed National Register boundary

The following building/structures are located within the 108.28 acres tract nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The majority of these structures are not eligible within an architectural context, but several may be important under an agricultural context. In particular, the chicken house and the rock fence may be eligible as important elements to a nomination utilizing the theme of agriculture.

1-Meathouse (nc building)

This single-story one-room meathouse is constructed of frame, has a standing seam metal roof, and sits on a stone foundation wall. Entry on the gable end is sheltered by an overhanging gable. The building uses typical design features and materials common to central Kentucky meathouses. This outbuilding was reconstructed circa 2006 from ruins of an older meathouse on the site.

2-Chicken House/Storage Shed (nc building)

This two-room shed-roofed frame structure served as a chicken house for the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century farming operation. The structure has a standing seam metal roof and sits on a stone foundation wall. The building is situated at the edge of the farm yard, as is typical for central Kentucky poultry houses.

The building was electrified by the mid-twentieth century and may have been converted to use as a shed or workshop at this time.

3-Garage (nc building)

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This frame garage structure was built or modernized circa 1990 to accommodate automobiles. The structure sits on an early-twentieth century poured concrete foundation wall; has an asphalt shingle roof; and a central roll-top metal garage door. The roof's open eaves overhang the building wall with the rafter tails exposed as a result. The roof type and foundation wall give the appearance of an early-twentieth century building date. However, the structure was probably heavily altered in the late-twentieth century and does not retain integrity to its original construction date.

4-Pole Barn (nc building)

This pole barn was constructed using some salvage materials in the late-twentieth century. This barn is wood frame with corrugated metal sheathing on the north wall and portions of the south and west walls. The remainder of the vertical wood siding was removed in order to provide better access for equipment and/or cattle. A grouping of small metal windows exists on the front (north) elevation. If a pole barn can be described in terms of bents and bays, the structure is a four-bay, nine-pole building. The structure has a standing seam panelized roof and no foundation wall. On the interior, there are several older hewn framing members that appear to have been reused from an earlier structure. The barn has served as shelter for cattle in recent times.

5-Rock Fence (nc structure)

This rock fence is a dry-laid flat course fence with coping cap. This fence is referred to beginning in a 1906 deed as, "the stone fence erected by Amos Skinner many years ago."¹¹ Given that the fence is not referred to in the 1857 deed transferring the property to Coleman Brown from Scarlett Duncan and that the property does not transfer again until 1906 when it is called the old stone fence, it is assumed that the fence was built in the middle nineteenth century.

The fence may have been a boundary fence between Brown and Skinner's property. It may also have been intended to serve as a turnpike fence for a portion of the Taylorsville-Chapin Turnpike, which divided north of the Brown farm to unite with Big Springs Road in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹² Entry into the Brown property was originally from this road, and not from the current gravel drive off of Highway 458, which was the main route of the Taylorsville-Chaplin Turnpike in the nineteenth century.

6-Partially Dismantled Tobacco Barn (nc structure)

This structure appears to have been a three-bay five bent transverse frame tobacco barn of mid-twentieth century origin. There is no foundation wall and all of the exterior cladding has been removed. A standing seam roof remains on the structure.

7-Gravel Drive (nc structure)

This structure is a four-tenths of a mile long gravel drive constructed for access from State Route 458 to the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmstead during the twentieth century. This structure may have been constructed by the Stephens family who farmed the property from 1906 to the late 1980s.

¹¹ Nelson County Clerk's Office. Nelson County Deed Book 71, 243.

¹² D.J. Lake. An Atlas of Nelson and Spencer Cos, Kentucky, From Actual Surveys Under the Direction of B.N. Griffing (Philadelphia: D.J. Lake and Co., 1882), Precinct No. 3, Bloomfield.

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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.)

Property is:

- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

Ca. 1829, ca. 1855, ca. 1890

Significant Dates

Circa 1829

Circa 1855

Circa 1890

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The three periods of significance, circa 1829, circa 1855 and circa 1890, correspond to three important nineteenth century building campaigns that give the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse its present appearance. These building periods are significant within the context of *Middle-Class Farmhouse Architecture in Nelson County, Kentucky, 1800-1900*, as discussed in Section 8. The three significant dates demonstrate the importance of middle-class farm economy to the selection of common farmhouse architecture in the Outer Bluegrass Region of Central Kentucky. As such, these three

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building campaigns successfully embody the distinctive characteristics of typical farmhouse architecture in Nelson County, Kentucky during the course of the nineteenth century.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse (NE-605) meets the first term of National Register Criterion C. It embodies the distinctive qualities of a type, period, and method of construction. It is significant at the local level, and displays the typical qualities of vernacular farmhouse construction in the Outer Bluegrass Region of Kentucky.

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse is an important example of frame and log vernacular architecture constructed in nineteenth century Nelson County, Kentucky. The farmhouse displays design trends shared by houses erected by middle-class farmers whose economic lives were improving in the nineteenth century agricultural economy. The house contains a selection of fashionable architectural styles, such as Federal and Greek Revival, and a common dwelling type, the central passage I-house with ell, which reflects the families' growing socio-economic status. The vernacular building campaign, that extended from the mid-1820s to the late-nineteenth century, demonstrates the significance of farmhouse design and selection of fashionable architectural styles and plan types to central Kentucky farming families of middling income. As such, the house's meaning is interpreted within the context "**Middle-Class Farmhouse Architecture in Nelson County, Kentucky, 1800-1900.**"

Narrative Statement of Significance

**Historic Context: Middle-Class Farmhouse Architecture in Nelson County, Kentucky 1800-1900
Agriculture in Nelson County, 1800-1900**

To understand these common design traditions, some background in Nelson County agriculture and characteristics of middle-class farmers is necessary. The Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse is being interpreted as a design product, but it was built from agricultural economic gains and must be understood as a product of that effort.

The agricultural economy in Nelson County developed gradually over the course of the nineteenth century. Beginning with a largely subsistence agriculture, Nelson Countians, like other central Kentuckians, began producing for markets outside their immediate area in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, circa 1830.¹³ Before market-based agriculture could be inaugurated, though, there had to be good roads and a settled population.

Nelson County was settled in the late-eighteenth century by Europeans, Africans, and Americans relocated from further east. "In 1780, the year Nelson County settlers built the area's first fortified dwellings, or stations, Virginia's Kentucky County was divided into three smaller districts: Fayette, Lincoln, and Jefferson. The Virginia Legislature created Nelson County...on November 27, 1784."¹⁴ The county, which initially spanned one-fifth of the state, reached its current borders in 1818. It is considered part of the outer reaches of central Kentucky, known as the Outer Bluegrass region.

Settlers to the new region had to find suitable agricultural lands and begin the arduous process of clearing and fencing their holdings, as Nelson County was heavily forested and included many natural cane-breaks. Early settlers were attracted to the best agricultural lands and to water sources. Nelson County's most fertile lands were thought to be located in the vicinity of Fairfield and Bloomfield. This area is consistently noted as "[having] the highest quality soils, was settled early, and remains the county's main agricultural district."¹⁵

¹³Ned Crankshaw, Julie Riesenweber, and Krista Schneider, 23.

¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹⁵ Ibid., 22.

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Farming in this early period, from 1770 to 1815, focused largely on subsistence agriculture with main products such as corn, wheat, and cattle. Many landowners received their holdings through preemption; through land grants purchased through the treasury; or as a reward for military service. There are very few recognizable buildings remaining from the early settlement era, prior to about 1820.¹⁶ It is likely that this era's buildings were meant to be impermanent and were either demolished to construct better, more fashionable dwellings and farm buildings, or their exteriors were updated beyond recognition.

Nelson County's population remained fairly stable throughout the antebellum period, from 1815 to 1865, from approximately 16,273 free¹⁷ persons in 1820 to 15,799 in 1860.¹⁸ By contrast, the enslaved African American population did experience growth throughout the era, from 2,988 slaves in 1820 to 5,530 in 1860.¹⁹ Of the total free population in 1820, 4,160 persons were engaged in agricultural pursuits, or 25 percent of the population.²⁰

During this era, 1820-1860, Nelson Countians experienced development in the agricultural economy in spite of a lack of growth among the free population. In fact, "the Bluegrass Region emerged by 1830 as the most prosperous and had become one of the top agricultural areas in the west."²¹ In 1850, for example, Nelson County had 844 farms, worth approximately \$2,858,553, with 112,574 improved acres of land in agriculture.²² In 1860, there were 873 farms, with a cash value of \$5,047,877 and 118,211 improved acres devoted to the farm economy.²³

Agricultural growth came hand-in-hand with the development of a more modern road system. Turnpike companies were authorized to develop farm-to-market roads in the mid-nineteenth century throughout Kentucky. The first turnpike in Nelson County was "built in 1851-leaving Bloomfield to High Grove, Henry McKenna, a good and honest Irishman, had the contract for building it."²⁴

The 1860 census was the first to enumerate farming operations by categories of acreage. This documentation shows the development of a solid middle-class farming economy in Nelson County. While there were 22 owners who held between 500-999 acres and another two who had more than 1,000 acres, the majority of farmers, 443, owned between 100-499 acres.²⁵ On the lower end of the middle class scale, 124 farmers held between 20 and 49 acres, while 250 farmed between 50 and 99 acres. Three farmers were documented as having only three-to-nine acre holdings.²⁶ Slaveholdings mirror this economic diversity. As might be expected given the small-scale farming operations, there are no slaveholders that owned more than 70 persons in Nelson County.²⁷ Of Nelson County's 977 slaveholders, there were 274 who owned

¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷ This term refers to free blacks and free whites.

¹⁸ University of Virginia Library, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, 2004. 1820 and 1860 Population Census, Data columns for total free population and total slave population for Nelson County. Online at: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 1820 Population Census, Data column for persons in agriculture in Nelson County. Total free population count includes blacks and whites.

²¹ Ned Crankshaw, Julie Riesenweber, and Krista Schneider, 27.

²² University of Virginia Library, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, 2004. 1850 Population Census. Data columns for total farms, cash value of farms, acres of improved land in farms for Nelson County.

²³ Ibid., 1860 Population Census, Data columns for total farms, cash value of farms, and acres of improved land in farms for Nelson County.

²⁴ Robert P. Moore, *Bloomfield, Chaplin and Fairfield: A History and Genealogy of Northeastern Nelson County, Kentucky* (Bardstown, KY: Nelson County Genealogical Roundtable, 2003), 23.

²⁵ University of Virginia Library, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, 2004, 1860 Population Census, Data columns for farms of 3-9 acres, farms of 10-19 acres, farms of 20-49 acres, farms of 50-99 acres, farms of 100-499 acres, farms of 500-999 acres, farms of more than 1,000 acres for Nelson County.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 1860 Population Census, Data columns for slaveholders holding 1 slave, slaveholders holding 2 slaves, slaveholders holding 3 slaves, slaveholders holding 4 slaves, slaveholders holding 5 slaves, slaveholders holding 6 slaves, slaveholders holding 7 slaves, slaveholders holding 8 slaves, slaveholders holding 9 slaves, slaveholders holding 10-14 slaves, slaveholders holding 15-19 slaves,

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one slave, and 527 owners holding between two and ten enslaved African Americans.²⁸ On the upper end of the scale, approximately twelve wealthier Nelson Countians held between 30 and 69 enslaved people.²⁹ While all of these bondsmen and women did not necessarily labor in agriculture, if compared to farm holdings, these statistics do present a picture of socio-economic diversity in the farm economy.

In general, Nelson County agriculture focused on corn, wheat, hemp, cattle, sheep, hogs, mules, and horses before the Civil War. Unlike areas in the Deep South, central Kentucky's agricultural economy was primarily diversified, with farmers growing a variety of crops and livestock. A single mono-crop type of agriculture with large slaveholdings—a plantation system—was virtually unknown in Kentucky. The most labor-intensive crops grown in Nelson County were hemp and tobacco. Typically, wealthier farmers, who held large numbers of slaves, produced hemp for the rope market or tobacco for export out-of-state.³⁰ Middle-class farmers did not often have the means—money, labor force, or land—to grow such labor-intensive crops as tobacco or hemp. Evidence suggests, though, that if wealthier farmers grew hemp or tobacco, they still maintained a diverse mix of crops and livestock. Typically, their holdings and production levels were greater than the middling farmer's holdings and output, though there may be little difference in crops or stock produced.

A result of the growing farm economy was an enhanced built environment. Solid brick and frame farmhouses were constructed in the antebellum period. New scientific methods, promoted by agricultural societies and farming journals, led to a reconception of the farmyard.³¹ Domestic outbuildings, such as detached kitchens, meathouses, spring houses, and slave houses, as well as agricultural outbuildings, such as multi-purpose stock and crop barns, granaries, and stables became a common site on nineteenth century antebellum farms.³² Stone fences replaced earlier wooden enclosures in the farmyard during this era as well. This is not to suggest that all farms had this array of buildings and structures, only that these were typical choices farmers had if they possessed the wherewithal to achieve goals set out by the scientific agriculture movement.

The post-Civil War period was a period of adjustment in agriculture. White Kentuckians lost their enslaved holdings, and thus some of their wealth, to the Emancipation Proclamation in December 1865. The African American persons who served without pay as an agricultural, domestic, and industrial workforce were freed, forcing white Kentuckians to find other ways to continue their farm economies. In any case, wage or share laborers—both black and white—became a more common sight on central Kentucky farms in the late-nineteenth century.

While Nelson County's population remained remarkably stable throughout the late-nineteenth century, hovering around 16,000 persons, the number and size of farming operations changed. Large antebellum holdings of wealthier farmers were gradually divided after the Civil War into smaller holdings.³³ For example, in 1880, Nelson County had 1,088 farms and improved acreage of 126,556.³⁴ By 1900, however, there were 1,716 farms in Nelson County with 153,862 improved acres.³⁵ Additionally, farm size fell from an average of 185 acres in 1880 to 130.90 acres in 1900.³⁶ These statistics indicate that more land was being improved for farming; farm sizes were smaller; and more farmers were purchasing land for agriculture without a substantial population increase.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, Nelson County farmers focused on producing wheat, Indian corn, rye, oats, buckwheat, barley, horses, mules, cattle, sheep, and hogs. Formerly a western agricultural powerhouse, Kentucky

slaveholders holding 20-29 slaves, slaveholders holding 30-39 slaves, slaveholders holding 40-49 slaves, slaveholders holding 50-69 slaves, slaveholders holding 70-99 slaves, slaveholders holding 100-199 slaves, slaveholders holding 200-299 slaves, slaveholders holding 300-499 slaves, slaveholders holding 500-999 slaves, slaveholders holding more than 1,000 slaves.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ned Crankshaw, Julie Riesenweber, and Krista Schneider, 27.

³¹ Ibid., 27.

³² Rachel Kennedy and William Macintire, *Agricultural and Domestic Outbuildings in Central and Western Kentucky, 1800-1865* (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1999).

³³ Ned Crankshaw, Julie Riesenweber, and Krista Schneider, 31.

³⁴ University of Virginia Library, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, 2004, 1870 Population Census, data columns for total farms and improved acreage for Nelson County, Kentucky.

³⁵ Ibid., 1900 Population Census, data columns for total farms and improved acreage for Nelson County, Kentucky.

³⁶ Ibid., 1880 and 1900 Population Census, data column for average farm size for Nelson County, Kentucky.

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farmers were forced to compete with newly-created Plains states, such as Nebraska, for continuing markets in beef cattle and cereal crops. Further, Kentucky's southern trade partners no longer had a great need for hemp cordage for cotton bags, nor for Kentucky-bred mules. In sum, agricultural markets were changing. Nelson County was somewhat immune to the negative impacts of change. Nelson County farmers produced much corn, wheat, and rye for the bourbon whiskey industry, which kept the local agricultural economy afloat. Additionally, burley tobacco formed an increasing share of market crops throughout the late-nineteenth century. The Bloomfield area was among the most important tobacco producers in central Kentucky. Nelson County's first loose leaf tobacco market was founded in Bloomfield, in fact, in 1909.³⁷

Railroads became the most efficient form of transport for farm goods during this era. Recognizing the great agricultural economy of the Bloomfield area, the L&N established its Bloomfield line in 1882 and purchased the old C&O Shelbyville-Bloomfield line in 1901.³⁸

Farmhouses and outbuildings were established in response to the new agricultural economy as well. Modern farmhouses were built on new holdings created with tobacco or distilling-crop wealth in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Outbuildings, such as tobacco barns, made an appearance on the landscape as well. Older farmhouses sometimes received additions or updates during this era. Most often, an older federal-era farmhouse might acquire fashionable Victorian detailing, or perhaps an addition to include modern conveniences, such as an attached modern kitchen space or water closets. These types of amenities were available to the wealthiest rural residences. Electricity and modern plumbing may not appear in rural area across Kentucky until the first half of the twentieth century.

Middle-Class Farmers, 1800-1900

Secondary sources, such as National Register nominations³⁹, and the context developed above provide sufficient evidence to identify the middle-class farmer in Kentucky's Outer Bluegrass region. Because this nomination is concerned with the nineteenth century, only agricultural information from that century will be employed in this analysis. Moreover, it is believed that within this class of farmers and farming operations, there were further divisions between upper and lower middle-class, as preliminary research seems to indicate. A more substantive agricultural study, which would examine primary source data⁴⁰ over time, will be needed to fully develop the Nelson County agricultural context. However, satisfactory data exists from which to assemble a functional outline of the subject.

Several characteristics are listed below that generally define middle-class farmers and their farming operations.

- 1) The middle-class farmer has agriculture as his/her primary occupation. He/she does not work outside the farm, unlike a gentleman farmer.⁴¹
- 2) Middle-class farmers owned few slaves in the antebellum period. The average slaveholding for middling farmers in Nelson County appears to be under five enslaved persons.
- 3) Middle-class agriculturalists cultivated an average number of acres. For Nelson County, statistics indicate that middling farmers held and worked between 100-499 acres, with the majority holding approximately 100-200 acres. This amount of acreage decreased as the nineteenth century waned.
- 4) Middle-class agriculturalists maintained diversified farms, which might include corn, wheat, cattle, pigs, or sheep. Typically, there was a mixture of crops and stock chosen for production; rarely was a single labor-intensive market crop, such as hemp, included in the mix. Wealthier agriculturalists also maintained diversified farm production, which might include hemp or tobacco, though they were likely to have far greater output.

³⁷ Ned Crankshaw, Julie Riesenweber, and Krista Schneider, 30.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁹ Julie Riesenweber, "Hamilton Farm/Parker's Landing," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Listed 1993. This nomination furnishes among the most substantive information regarding middling farmers in the Outer Bluegrass region.

⁴⁰ This would include buildings, farmsteads, tax records, agricultural census records, population census records, maps, etc.

⁴¹ Daniel Carey and Mark Thames, "Agriculture in Louisville and Jefferson County, 1800-1930," Multiple Property Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 1989-1990, approved in May 1990. This nomination further defines the term gentlemen farmer.

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- 5) Middle-class agriculturalists were neither the wealthiest farmers, nor were they the poorest. They were squarely in the middle in terms of production, holdings (land and slaves), and land value.
- 6) As agricultural fortunes increased, middle-class farm families built affordable versions of more fashionable architecture, following the lead of wealthier farmers.

Middle-Class Farmhouse Architecture in Nelson County, 1800-1900

The characteristics of middle-class farmhouse architecture as a construction type were derived from examination of survey and National Register data for Nelson County, the author's own field work, and other secondary sources regarding Outer Bluegrass architecture related to farming in the nineteenth century.⁴²

In 1978, the Kentucky Heritage Council undertook a survey of Nelson County, which resulted in the recordation of four hundred sites. The surveyors documented a group of stylistically important houses in the Bloomfield area. Given the biases of the time, this survey work focused heavily on domestic architecture related to wealthy farmers. The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse was coded as potentially important during field work, but never recorded on a Kentucky Historic Resource Inventory Form. Though it has excellent integrity to its period of significance, this vernacular farmhouse was perceived as less-important architecturally than the larger brick dwelling houses of what might be termed gentlemen farmers. No doubt, the architectural qualities of farmhouses constructed by wealthier farmers did furnish important information and great source material for narrative descriptions, but focus solely on farmhouse architecture of the economic elite has left out the important architectural contributions of the middling farmer.

In the Bloomfield area, for example, most National Register listings represent the upper-class of farmers, referred to as gentleman farmers. The Samuel Merrifield house (NE-64), also known as Walnut Groves, was the farm of a wealthy doctor. The Merrifield farmhouse is a very large, fully-realized Greek Revival brick masonry dwelling. Merrifield's farm holdings were valued at approximately \$30,000 in 1860; only eleven Nelson County farms held greater cash value that year.⁴³ Merrifield held 16 enslaved persons in the 1850 slave census schedule.⁴⁴ Also, the Newell McClaskey house (NE-90, NR 2000), which is in near proximity to the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse, is a double-pile two-story brick house in the Greek Revival style. The McClaskey family had a distilling business and owned over 700 acres of land in the antebellum period.⁴⁵ According to slave census schedules, McClaskey held eight enslaved individuals in 1850.⁴⁶ Given this information, the McClaskey family might be classified as upper-middle class. Nonetheless, this architecture and holdings are unlike that of the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse and its various inhabitants, as will be discussed later.

More recent listings in the Bloomfield area recognize architectural contributions of families of more modest means.⁴⁷ The 1991 Bloomfield Historic District, for example, recognizes the contributions of vernacular architecture in the town from 1817 through 1940. Perhaps more illuminating to the current context is the Henry Duncan House, NR listed in 1990. The house is a one-to-two story brick and frame dwelling built in three main building campaigns. The house might best

⁴²Among the many sources consulted for this context, as referenced in the Section 9, the following survey forms were essential in defining this property type. Kentucky Historic Resource Inventory Forms, Nelson County. NE-19, David and Catherine Cox house; NE-475, James Forman house; NE-470, Dr William Forman house, NE-220, Elizabeth Cox house; NE-31 Hardscrabble; NE-90, Newell McClaskey house; NE-223, Alex Samuels Homestead; NE-6 Higdon Heady House; NE-8 Joseph Forman house; NE-7 G.W. Forman house; NE-64, Walnut Grove; NE-104, Duncan Hall; and NE-59, SpringRest.

⁴³ Karen Hudson, "Walnut Groves, Boundary Increase to Samuel B. Merrifield house," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Listed 1999.

⁴⁴ Ancestry.com. 1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls. District 2, Nelson County, 253.

⁴⁵ Randell Jacobs and L. Martin Perry, "Newell B. McClaskey House," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Listed 2000, Section 8, 3.

⁴⁶ Ancestry.com. 1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules [database on-line].

⁴⁷ Chris Amos, "Bloomfield Historic District," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Listed 1991; Chris Amos, "Henry Duncan House," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, Copy on file at the Kentucky Heritage Council, Listed 1990.

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be described as a vernacular dwelling with some attention to popular style, such as the Greek Revival. The Duncan house was acknowledged as, "a significant local example of the evolution of vernacular house types of enlarging and rebuilding patterns, and of tradition and change in rural domestic architecture..."⁴⁸ Though its agricultural context has been lost, the author believes the Duncan house may represent of middle-class farmhouse architecture, given its size, vernacular detailing, and extended building period. More research would need to be done to develop this thesis.

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse is quite similar to the Hamilton farmhouse.⁴⁹ The Hamilton farmhouse is also located in Kentucky's Outer Bluegrass region, in Washington County, approximately twenty miles southeast of the currently nominated property. The Hamilton property sits directly adjacent to Cartwright Creek, with the house at a higher elevation to prevent flood damage, yet close enough for everyday use. The site was selected, in fact, due to its proximity to a water course. The Hamilton farmhouse was the dwelling of a successful nineteenth century middle-class farming family, as established in the National Register nomination. It began as a hall-parlor log house in the early nineteenth century and was altered circa 1820-45 into a central passage frame I-house in the Greek Revival style, as agricultural fortunes improved. The log portion was converted at this time into a single room and passage. The house also received updates in the 1880s, such as new window sash, millwork porches, and firebox conversions from wood to coal, which were again related to an improved agricultural economy. The end result was a single-pile, central passage I-house with ell. According to architectural historian Julie Riesenweber, "The antebellum alterations to the main house at Hamilton Farm typify central Kentucky's mid-nineteenth century architectural trends."⁵⁰ Further Riesenweber states, "The same dwelling type---single-pile, central passage with ell---remained a popular dwelling in the rural Bluegrass until early in the twentieth century.

Building on Riesenweber's work and given the information garnered from other sources, middle-class farmhouse architecture can be described as a type of construction. Nineteenth century middle-class farmhouse architecture as a property type can best be classified with the following characteristics:

- 1) Modest architectural detailing, which may include reference to style especially on the house's principal façade and public entertaining spaces.
- 2) Construction method and materials most likely in frame or log, rarely in more expensive stone or brick
- 3) Small size in comparison to wealthier agriculturalists
- 4) Popular plan types selected include the single-pile, central passage I-house with integral ell in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century and the hall-parlor plan in the early nineteenth century
- 5) Late-nineteenth century additions to a previously existing farmhouse were commonly less elaborate. Most often, middle-class farmers updated their house with addition of Victorian-era ornament on the exterior or they might add a single room at the rear of the ell for modern conveniences. Also typical was the enclosure of rear or side porches for extra living space or the addition of a new millwork front porch.
- 6) Farmhouse is likely to be erected in several construction campaigns that span the nineteenth-to-early-twentieth centuries, as the particular farmer's fortunes improved

George Batcheldor and Family

Many Bloomfield area farmhouses are attributed to George Batcheldor, noted in the 1850 census as a house carpenter.⁵¹ George Batcheldor is credited with construction of several masonry houses in the Bloomfield area, such as the Samuel Merrifield house (NE-64) and the Newell McClaskey house (NE-90). Though local histories have attributed several masonry houses to Batcheldor, the author believes he worked in concert with an unknown mason on these projects.

Batcheldor and his family of carpenter sons lived in the area and built many houses throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century.⁵² Local historian Robert Moore notes that George Batcheldor settled in Bloomfield in the mid-nineteenth century because, "prosperous farmers were building fine homes in the neighborhood."⁵³

⁴⁸ Amos, "Henry Duncan House," Section 8, 2.

⁴⁹ Riesenweber, "Hamilton Farm/Parker's Landing, Listed 1993.

⁵⁰ Riesenweber, "Hamilton Farm/Parker's Landing," Section 8, 25.

⁵¹ Ancestry.com. 1850 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Census Place: District 2, Nelson, Kentucky; Roll M432_215; Page: 382B; Image: 222.

⁵² Amos, "Bloomfield Historic District," Section 8, 5; Moore, 193.

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Reading the farmhouse architecture attributed to George Batchelder, it appears that he had great affinity with and was quite proficient in executing Greek Revival design and detailing for his clients. No examples of his work have been identified that would relate to middle-class farmers to date, though as has been discussed, survey and National Register work concerning middle-class farmhouse architecture has only recently become of interest. However, it is likely that the Greek Revival portion of the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse was built by George Batchelder. The Duncan family, who were responsible for the circa 1855 section of the house, were acquainted with Batchelder and may have retained him to build this house. Additionally, the quality of Greek Revival finish on the house suggests the work of a master craftsman, such as Batchelder. More detailed information on this association will be given in the property history section of this nomination.

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse Property History

Early history

The 111-acres of land historically associated with the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse was originally part of a 500-acre land grant to William Wren of Fluvanna County, Virginia, dated July 5, 1784.⁵⁴ Several later deeds refer to this status, such as the 1852 transfer from Townsend and Sarah Ann Jones to Scarlett Duncan, which states the land is, "(being part of a Patent of 500 acre survey patented in the name of William Wren)."⁵⁵ Wren apparently never moved from Virginia to claim these lands, and instead his son, William Wren of Scott County, appears to have managed the property.⁵⁶

In September 1813, the younger Wren began selling off his father's Nelson County lands. In Deed Book 11, Wren transfers 238 acres on the waters of Ashes Creek to Edmund Guthrie of Christian County, Kentucky for the consideration of \$50.00.⁵⁷ In the same year, Guthrie transferred a portion of this land on Jacks Creek to his relative Adam Guthrie of Nelson County for a one dollar consideration.⁵⁸ Adam Guthrie turned around within a few days and sells 111-acres of this land to John Comes of Nelson County for 50 cents.⁵⁹ It can be assumed there were no buildings or improvements on this site, given the low consideration.

Property transfer records were thoroughly examined in Nelson County to determine how Asa Coombs took possession of this tract. The author could find no recordation of this transaction. It is possible that Asa Coombs was the brother of John Comes, who may both have been sons of the late John Coombs.⁶⁰ Alternately, he could have been the son or nephew. If that is true, then perhaps the property transferred through familial connection and was never officially recorded at the county court house. In any case, the property boundary description in Guthrie's transfer to John Comes precisely matches the description in Coombs' sale to Townsend and Sarah Ann Jones in 1848 and subsequent nineteenth century transactions.

Asa and Nancy Coombs, 1829(?) - 1848

Asa Coombs married Nancy Stewart, a widow, on November 2, 1829.⁶¹ At that point, Coombs was probably living on the 111-acre tract on Jacks Creek. Coombs is assessed in county tax books for 140-acres on Jacks Creek and four horses/mules/jennies in 1828 with a total value of \$2,060.⁶²

⁵³ Moore, 193.

⁵⁴ Joan E. Brookes-Smith, compiler, *Master Index Virginia Surveys and Grants, 1774-1791*, First Edition, No 1814, (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1976).

⁵⁵ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 27, 496.

⁵⁶ Moore, 346. Deed book 10, 68 names William Wren, Jr as the agent for land sales from this patent.

⁵⁷ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 11, 62.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Nelson County Deed Book, 11, 64.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Nelson County Deed Book 11, 66.

⁶⁰ Moore, 236. Spelling of the name Coombs is a bit erratic and there are two distinct family lines with similar surnames. John Comes could in fact be John Coombs of the Loudoun County, VA family, rather than a member of the Comes family from Maryland. If so, John Comes may be the brother of Asa Coombs.

⁶¹ Lillian Ockerman, compiler, *Marriage, Bond and Consent Book of Nelson County, 1817-1832* (Bardstown, KY: Nelson County Genealogical Roundtable, n.d.), 35.

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Shortly before his wedding, in August 1829, Coombs purchased 189-acres of land in the area from heirs of Joseph Pitman.⁶³ He eventually transferred this land to Newell B. McClaskey (NE-90) in October 1838 for a \$2,100 purchase price, a profit of \$1,200.⁶⁴ It does not appear that Coombs ever lived on the 189-acre site, but the property was directly east of his Jacks Creek home on the water of the Ashes Creek.

Given architectural and primary source evidence, it appears that Asa Coombs built the log building circa 1829, shortly before his marriage to Nancy Stewart. As discussed in Section 7, the log house may have served as an ell for a house that sat on the approximate footprint of the current two-story I-house. Alternately, the log house was built in anticipation of greater agricultural fortune which could result in a front addition. Whatever the case, Asa Coombs seems to be the builder of the log portion of this building. Siting of the log house followed settlement and early antebellum precedents; the dwelling was built on high ground directly adjacent to a waterway---Jacks Creek. In this era, roads were yet to be wholly passable and improved, and waterways provided for some transit needs.

Asa and Nancy Coombs had a household with one child, aged five-to-ten, in 1830 and an older female aged 60-to-70 years old.⁶⁵ The child may have been Nancy's son from her previous union. They held two slaves as of 1830; one was a black male 24-36 years in age and the other was a black female 10-24 years old. In 1840, the Coombs are documented with a family of six children and an older white female.⁶⁶ There are also two male and one female slaves in residence that year. Three persons are documented as being employed in agriculture in the family.⁶⁷ It is not clear if slaves are counted in the agricultural enumeration. By 1845, Coombs had no slaves in residence, according to county tax assessor's records. In that year, his property was valued at \$2,972.00.⁶⁸

Townsend D. and Sarah Ann Jones, 1848-1852

Asa and Nancy Coombs sold the 111-acre Jacks Creek property in December 1848, after at least nineteen years tenure, to Townsend D. Jones of Spencer County for consideration of \$2,527.25---a fairly substantial sum in the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁹ The Jones family is enumerated in the 1850 census as farmers with a property value of \$2,600.⁷⁰ The Jones' household consisted of four teenage/young adult children and five slaves ranging in age from 2-28 years of age in 1850.

The Jones were documented in the Agriculture Schedule of 1850 holding 116-acres of land with a cash value of \$2,800.⁷¹ The family had \$500 worth of livestock, which included six horses, five milch cows, 30 head of sheep, and 60 swine. They produced 800 bushels of Indian corn, 100 bushels of oats, 66 pounds of wool, 60 bushels of Irish potatoes, 10 bushels of sweet potatoes, 400 pounds of butter, one ton of hay, and six bushels of flaxseed.

By contrast, in the same year, wealthy agriculturalist Dr. Samuel Merrifield of Walnut Groves (NE-64) had 400 acres of land with a cash value of \$8,000.⁷² The Merrifields had \$250 worth of livestock that included 13 horses, six milch cows,

⁶² Nelson County Tax Assessor's Books, 1827-1831, on microfilm at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Roll 008180. Coombs may have been taxed for additional land he held in the vicinity, which would explain the 140-acre assessment, or as is commonly the case, the assessor could have had incorrect information.

⁶³ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 18, 119.

⁶⁴ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 22, 149.

⁶⁵ Ancestry.com. 1830 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Original data: Fifth Census of the United States, 1830, Eastern District, Nelson, Kentucky, NARA Roll M19-40, 123.

⁶⁶ Ancestry.com. 1840 United States Federal Census [database on-line], Roll 121, 46.

⁶⁷ No agricultural census records are available for Coombs' tenure on the property. The 1850 census was the first enumeration to include a schedule for agriculture and by this time, the Coombs were no longer in residence.

⁶⁸ Nelson County Tax Assessor's Books, 1845, on microfilm at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Roll 008180

⁶⁹ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 26, 203.

⁷⁰ Ancestry.com. 1850 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Original data: Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; Census Place: District 2, Nelson, Kentucky; Roll M432_215; Page: 384B; Image: 226.

⁷¹ 1850 United States Federal Census, Schedule 4, Production of Agriculture in District 2, Nelson County, 671, line 5. On microfilm at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Drawer 502, Roll 5.

⁷² Ibid., 671, line 16.

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two oxen, 30 other cattle, 80 head of sheep, 150 swine. They produced 100 bushels of rye, 3,000 bushels of Indian corn, 500 bushels of oats, 200 pounds of wool, 80 bushels of Irish potatoes, 15 bushels of sweet potatoes, 250 pounds of butter, eight tons of hay, and 100 pounds of beeswax and honey.

Clearly, the scale of Merrifield's holdings and production were far more sizeable than the Jones family's production at the 111-acre site on Jacks Creek. While the Jones were certainly not among the wealthiest agriculturalists, they were doing well enough to be in the middle-group of Nelson County farming families, as described previously.

Scarlett and Mary Duncan, 1852-1857

After only four short years, Townsend and Sarah Ann Jones sold the 111-acre property to Scarlett and Mary Duncan for \$2,600.⁷³ The Joneses appear to have returned to Spencer County, Kentucky, as they are noted as residing there in the 1860 census.⁷⁴ Unlike the Joneses, the Duncans were from the Bloomfield area of Nelson County.⁷⁵ Scarlett Duncan was part of the Duncan family who migrated from Culpeper County, Virginia in the late-eighteenth century and built such important local houses as Duncan Hall (NE-104) and the Henry Duncan House (NE-65).⁷⁶

Given this legacy, it is hardly surprising that Scarlett and Mary Duncan built the Greek Revival style, single-pile, central-passage frame I-house on the Jacks Creek land, between 1852 and 1857. The date on this portion of the house is firm. Duncan purchased the property for \$2,600 and sold it only five years later for \$4,450. The increased property value, along with the style and details of the house, provide sufficient evidence that the I-house was built circa 1855 for the Duncans.

Rather than demolishing or totally modernizing the log portion of the house, the Duncans used it as a dining room ell. It is unclear why this choice was made, but perhaps it was done to economize. It certainly was not unusual for a middling farmer to build a house through accretion.

Like past owners, the Duncans were agriculturalists. Though not yet in residence in 1850, the census records Scarlett Duncan as a farmer.⁷⁷ Also, the 1860 census enumerates Scarlett Duncan as a farmer.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is probable that the Duncans were farmers in the interim as well. The Duncan family consisted of three children in 1850 and six children in 1860. The Duncans held two enslaved people in bondage in 1850; one female and one male. By 1860, the Duncans had six slaves. No agricultural census records could be uncovered for the Duncans at the Jacks Creek site, as they lived at the property between the 1850 and 1860 agricultural enumerations.

The portion of the house built by the Duncans appears to have an affinity with other houses designed by George Batchelder, local house carpenter. The quality of details and finish certainly suggests a master craftsman such as Batchelder. Further, the Duncans must have been familiar with Batchelder, as he designed and built the Green Duncan's house in the early 1860s and many other local houses prior to the Coombs-Duncan-Brown house. The author is wary of attributing the house to Batchelder without further research into his work that would clear up past misconceptions.⁷⁹

It is unclear why the Duncans built the Greek Revival style house and moved so quickly to another house. Perhaps the rapidly expanding family felt a larger house was necessary.

⁷³ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 27, 496.

⁷⁴ Ancestry.com. 1860 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Original data: 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. Census Place: District 1, Spencer, Kentucky; Roll M653_395; Page: 47; Image: 455; Family History Library Film: 803395.

⁷⁵ Moore, 246.

⁷⁶ Amos, "Henry Duncan House," Listed 1990.

⁷⁷ Ancestry.com. 1850 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Census Place: District 2, Nelson, Kentucky; Roll M432_215; Page: 390A Image: 237.

⁷⁸ ⁷⁸ Ancestry.com. 1860 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Census Place: District 1, Spencer, Kentucky; Roll M653_389; Page: 245; Image: 245; Family History Library Film: 803395.

⁷⁹ Regrettably, many houses have been credited to Batchelder without much substantiative research to back up these claims. In some instances, he is credited for work he could not have done because he was much too young, while in other cases, he is given acknowledgment for masonry houses, of which he may have partnered with other craftsmen. Too little is known about the body of his work to make a positive attribution in this case.

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Coleman and Zerelda Brown, 1857-1896

On July 8, 1857, Scarlett and Mary Duncan transferred the 111-acre Jacks Creek property with what is recognizable today as the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse, for consideration of \$4,450.⁸⁰ The sum was paid in a series of installments beginning in October 1857 and continuing to October 1859. Like the Duncans, the Brown family was also native to the Bloomfield area for generations. The family migrated from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania in the late-eighteenth century.⁸¹

Coleman Brown married Zerelda Porter May 13, 1838 in the Presbyterian church.⁸² The family is recorded in the 1860 census as farmers with \$11,000 in real estate and \$7,700 in personal property.⁸³ The eldest son, Burr Brown, was enumerated as a farmer, along with this father Coleman, who was 49 years in age. Three additional children also resided in the household. Slave schedules in 1860 indicate that the Browns held six enslaved persons, ranging in age from 35 to seven years old.

By 1880, the family has six members in the household.⁸⁴ Coleman Brown is documented as a farmer, at the age of 69. His farm hand was Noel Young, an African American man, who lived with his family in the household. Young's wife Alice is the family cook. It is possible that the Youngs had ties to the Brown family in slavery. Also in 1880, Zerelda Brown is recorded as suffering from dropsy, while Coleman's 80-year old brother Cotton, a house carpenter, was paralyzed. Burr Brown, the son, is enumerated as a horse trainer.

The 1880 Agricultural Census Schedules document the Browns' postbellum farming production. In that year, Brown was documented working 110-acres with a total value of \$7,000.⁸⁵ The Browns had \$900 in livestock and poultry, which included five horses, four milch cows, 16 other cattle, 50 poultry, and 30 swine. They produced 400 pounds of butter, 750 dozen eggs, 1,200 bushels of Indian corn, 600 bushels of wheat, 30 bushels of Irish potatoes, 50 pounds of tobacco, 600 bushels of apples, and 40 cords of wood. The Browns paid African American farm workers \$340 for help throughout the year.

By contrast, wealthy farmer/distiller Newell B. McClaskey (NE-90) was documented holding 340-acres, valued at \$14,280.⁸⁶ The McClaskeys had \$2,500 in livestock, which included nine horses, three milch cows, 12 mules, and 80 swine. They produced 150 dozen eggs, 2,400 bushels of Indian corn, 160 bushels of oats, 30 bushels of rye, 700 bushels of wheat, 15 bushels of Irish potatoes, 50 bushels of apples, and 40 cords of wood. Like the Browns, the McClaskey family paid African American farm laborers \$400 for assistance through the course of the year. As with Samuel Merrifield in the mid-nineteenth century, McClaskey's holdings, land value, and production were far greater when compared with the Brown family's agricultural endeavors.

The single room appended to the gable-end of the log ell may have been built by the Brown family. Perhaps Cotton Brown, the carpenter brother, constructed the rear single-room addition. Also possible is that the single room was added fairly early in the nineteenth century and was covered in later nineteenth century fabric. It is difficult to know without better access to the framing system which should be furnished upon rehabilitation.

⁸⁰ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 31, 99.

⁸¹ Moore, 231.

⁸² Lillian Ockerman, compiler, *Marriage, Bond and Consent Book of Nelson County, 1833-1848* (Bardstown, KY: Nelson County Genealogical Roundtable, n.d.).

⁸³ Ancestry.com. 1860 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Original data: 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. Census Place: District 1, Spencer, Kentucky; Roll M653_395; Page: 47; Image: 455; Family History Library Film: 803395.

⁸⁴ Ancestry.com and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 1880 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005. 1880 U.S. Census Index provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints © Copyright 1999 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. All use is subject to the limited use license and other terms and conditions applicable to this site. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. Census Place: Nelson, Kentucky; Roll T9_435; Family History Film: 1254435; Page: 234.3000; Enumeration District: 207

⁸⁵ 1880 United States Census, Schedule 2-Production of Agriculture in Nelson County, 5, line 7. On microfilm at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Drawer 502, Roll 29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 4, line 7.

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The nominated property shows up on a local atlas in 1882 under Coleman Brown's name.⁸⁷ This map documents what was probably original entry to the property from Big Springs Road on the west bank of Jacks Creek, rather than the current entry from Highway 458. A drive is shown fording Jacks Creek and extending to the front of the house.

Coleman Brown died in 1895 and his estate was auctioned off in early 1896.⁸⁸ Due to an inter-family lawsuit the property was not transferred until May 1898.⁸⁹ In any case, Brown's estate inventory is somewhat illuminating, as to the type of farming in which he was engaged in the very late-nineteenth century. Included in his sale was a corn sheller, 494 bushels of corn, a mule, three horses, sheep shears, and various tools, such as a double plow, a crosscut saw, and scythes.⁹⁰ It can be surmised from this document that the Browns (or former owners) had been sheep farmers, at some point, and that they still grew corn (or purchased it for feed) on the Jacks Creek property as late as 1895. Also of interest in this estate sale that netted \$236.30 was stock in the Bloomfield and Taylorsville Turnpike.

Later Owners

The Brown property was transferred in May 1898 to John S. Haughlin, whose family owned adjacent property in the late-nineteenth century.⁹¹ This settlement deed notes that the Browns owned 200 acres, however, the next transfer only officially records 125.5 acres. It is certainly possible that the 1906 resurvey corrected the older deeds which always referred to the land as 111-acres "more or less." The author could find no recordation of the Browns purchasing additional land, so the 111-acre tract on Jacks Creek was probably always 125.5 acres. Haughlin added to this holding 27.5 acres of land he inherited adjoining the farm on its north border.⁹²

In 1906, Haughlin transferred both tracts of land to the Stephens family, who lived on the property for the next seventy-seven years.⁹³ This conveyance refers to the "stone fence erected by Amos Skinner many years ago..." Skinner was a neighbor to the west in the mid-nineteenth century. As he owned five slaves in the 1860 slave schedule, it is possible that they constructed the fence.⁹⁴

The Stephens added the east and west porch enclosures, the chicken house, the tobacco barn (currently partially dismantled), the current gravel access drive, the pole barn, and the garage to the property. The latter structure appears to have been altered in the late-twentieth century, perhaps by the Morgan family.

The Stephens farmed the property on the Chaplin Taylorsville turnpike until the 1980s. In 1989, Virgel and Clevie Stephens, who inherited the farm from J.L. and Emma Stephens, developed a plan to divide the farm into three tracts.⁹⁵ The current farm road was officially established at this time.⁹⁶ The Stephens sold some of the land to various neighbors. No housing development moved forward on the site and the land remained agricultural. Eventually, Richard and Anna Morgan, of Jefferson County, purchased the main historic core of the property---108.28 acres and lived there until November 2005. At that time, the current owner, Olde Bloomfield Holding Company, bought the 108.28 acres property and have begun plans to rehabilitate the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse.

Evaluating the significance of the Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse within the context "Middle-Class Farmhouse Architecture in Nelson County, Kentucky 1800-1900"

⁸⁷ D.J. Lake. An Atlas of Nelson and Spencer Cos, Kentucky.

⁸⁸ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Inventory, Appraisals and Sale Bill Book 3, 594.

⁸⁹ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 60, 251.

⁹⁰ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Inventory, Appraisals and Sale Bill Book 3, 594-597.

⁹¹ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 60, 251.

⁹² Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 59, 467.

⁹³ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 71, 243.

⁹⁴ Ancestry.com. 1860 United States Federal Census [database on-line], Slave Schedules, Census Place: District 2, Nelson, Kentucky, 37.

⁹⁵ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Plat Cabinet 1, Slot 429.

⁹⁶ Nelson County Clerk, Nelson County Deed Book 276, 701.

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The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse developed into the present house over the course of the nineteenth century. The house is an important example of vernacular farmhouse architecture as it developed in Nelson County's Outer Bluegrass region, which is directly related to an improving agricultural economy for middle-class farmers.

The Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse represents domestic architecture built by middle-class farming families. As has been demonstrated, the various owners and builders of the house had characteristics central to the definition of middle-class farmer. In particular, these families:

- 1) Owned an average of four slaves through the antebellum period
- 2) Farmed a small tract of land, approximately 120-acres throughout the nineteenth century
- 3) Had farming as their only occupation
- 4) Cultivated a diverse mix of crops and livestock, such as horses, dairy cows, sheep, swine, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, oats, wheat, and rye. Later nineteenth century agricultural production included the addition of burley tobacco and apples. None of the Coombs-Duncan-Brown owners grew hemp or tobacco in the antebellum period, as far as can be determined.
- 5) Maintained middling levels of production, when compared to wealthier neighbors, such as Merrifield or McClaskey. The families that built and lived in the nominated farmhouse were neither the poorest farmers in Nelson County, nor were they the wealthiest.
- 6) Built stylish and/or typical domestic architecture as their fortunes increased

The farmhouse itself meets the criteria established above for middle-class farmhouses in the nineteenth century:

- 1) Contains modest architectural detailing; the Greek Revival and Federal styles are referenced on the house's principal façade, public entertaining spaces, and in select private spaces
- 2) Construction method and materials are frame and log
- 3) The house is a single-pile, central passage I-house of small size in comparison to the adjacent double-pile Newell McClaskey house (NE-90)
- 4) The popular nineteenth century vernacular I-house type with ell was selected, following regional trends
- 5) A one-room frame addition was appended to the rear of the log ell in the Victorian-era, also following regional trends. The addition was situated as part of a continuation of the I-house with ell floor plan, rather than a departure with this established form, e.g. an addition to the side of the front of the house.
- 6) The farmhouse was constructed in several nineteenth-/early-twentieth century building campaigns, as fortunes improved

In sum, the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse is an extremely intact example of this property type. The house's integrity is excellent with several significant building campaigns represented, as discussed below.

Integrity Considerations

As detailed in Section 7, the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse has excellent integrity to the periods of significance, (ca.1829, ca. 1855, and ca.1890) and clearly represents typical middle-class farmhouse architecture in central Kentucky. The farmhouse has retained its integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association. This degree of integrity is remarkable in rural central Kentucky. Most farmhouses from this era have at least received substantial design or detailing changes in the early twentieth century, as tobacco became an extremely profitable crop. This farmhouse did experience alteration upon enclosure of the east and west porch additions, but as will be discussed design and materials were preserved as part of this fourth non-contributing building campaign.

The farmhouse is in its original *location* atop a gently rolling hill in direct proximity to Jack's Creek. The location adjacent to Jacks Creek was selected by Asa Coombs due to agricultural potential and success in moving goods to market before good roads were established. Asa Coombs was following antebellum precedent, as well as common sense, to site their farmhouse at this location.

There is a moderate integrity of *setting*. While agricultural lands provide a rural setting, there are no nineteenth century farm buildings remaining on the property, and the farm entry drive, which previously extended from Big Springs Road

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across Jacks Creek, is no longer extant. In spite of these changes, the property retains its historic acreage from the nineteenth century which can be seen in field patterns, treelines, and the rock fence boundary. These features provide sufficient evidence of the farming traditions that occurred on the property. Though the property was subdivided on paper in anticipation of suburban housing developments, no additional housing was ever built and the property continued to be farmed in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first century. All three tracts of land, discussed in Section 7, were part of the original holdings of the Coombs, Duncan, and Brown families. Further, a few buildings were added in the twentieth century to the property; these buildings are all agricultural in function, with the exception of the garage, and do not detract from the farmhouse's integrity of setting. They are building/structure types that relate to agriculture and are sympathetic additions to the farm property.

The farmhouse retains its integrity of *design, workmanship, and materials*. There have been very few alterations to the building's form, shape, floor plan or original materials since the late-nineteenth century. The floor plan, which reflects a central-passage I-house with ell; interior woodwork and detailing; exterior siding, windows, and decorative details; and interior wall, ceiling, and floor finishes are remarkably in situ. Greek Revival detailing/materials, federal period details/materials, and late-nineteenth century materials remain with the farmhouse and tell the story of the extended building campaign which created the present house.

The main design change, enclosure of two porches on the east and west elevations, has merely encased original features and will be removed in the upcoming rehabilitation work. Federal, Greek Revival, and late-nineteenth century details and materials exist in these spaces, such as windows, doors, and weatherboard. As these enclosed porches do not contribute to the significance of the farmhouse's nineteenth century evolution, they are not considered important to understanding the house's design evolution. Upon removal of the east and west enclosed porches, the nineteenth century materials can again be displayed as they were before the mid-twentieth century.

Feeling and Association remain with the farmhouse as a result of such a high level of integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. The building presents as an extremely intact middle-class farmhouse in the highly productive Bloomfield, Nelson County, agricultural district. Though the farm structures do not remain to tell the complete agricultural story, the farmhouse tells a separate tale of the importance of fashionable well-executed domestic architecture to middle-class farm families in Nelson County, and by extension, within central Kentucky's Outer Bluegrass region.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (see above)

Historic Context: **Middle-Class Farmhouse Architecture in Nelson County, Kentucky, 1800-1900**

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Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse

Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky

County and State

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Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse
Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky
County and State

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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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ **NE-605** _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 108.28 acres

(Does not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

Bloomfield Quadrangle

Calculated by GIS, based on 1927 NAD

<u>1</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>649 882</u>	<u>4200 494</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>650 879</u>	<u>4199 799</u>
Zone	Easting		Northing	Zone	Easting		Northing
<u>2</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>6590 437</u>	<u>4200 759</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>650 158</u>	<u>4199 467</u>

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse
Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky
County and State

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
5 16	650 289	4199 907			
Zone	Easting	Northing			

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

The 108.28 acre property is legally defined as the Richard and Anna Morgan Farm Division, located at the Nelson County Clerk's Office, Nelson County Plat Cabinet 10, Slot 110.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected National Register boundaries represent 108.28 acres historically associated with the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse from its time of construction ca 1829 through the end of the period of significance circa 1890. The nominated acreage is restricted to that confirmed as part of the original nineteenth century holdings and can currently be read as a farming complex, albeit with four twentieth century farm buildings. As discussed in the integrity section of this nomination (Section 8,22), there is sufficient integrity of *setting* on the property to permit listing the entire 108.28 acres. The farmhouse's location was informed by the setting along Jacks Creek in the heart of the Bloomfield agricultural district, as defined by increased wealth in the local nineteenth century agricultural economy. Additionally, farm boundaries are unchanged, such as original tree lines and the rock fence, and have furnished context for the farmhouse since the nineteenth century. As this nomination has attempted to demonstrate, understanding of the farmhouse as representative of distinctive characteristics of type, period, and method of construction requires understanding of the farm economy that created it. Divorcing the farmhouse from the surrounding historically-associated acreage would be denying the significance of the context and location along Jacks Creek in the Bloomfield area. The entire historic acreage was chosen, then, to furnish an appropriate setting for recognizing the architectural value of the Coombs-Duncan-Brown farmhouse as a farm house.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rachel M. Kennedy, Senior Architectural Historian
organization University of Kentucky date 10 January, 2010
street & number 1020A Export Street telephone 859.806.7265
city or town Lexington state KY zip code 40506
e-mail rmkenn2@uky.edu

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse
Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky
County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Photography sketch maps are included for the Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse as Attachment One A and Attachment Two A.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 1 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 9 September, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #1 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_001)
Façade (south elevation), camera facing north.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 2 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 8 December, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #2 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0002)
East and Rear (North) Elevations, camera facing southwest.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 3 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 9 September, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #3 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0003)

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse

Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky

County and State

Façade (south elevation), camera facing south.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse, 4 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County

State: KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 9 September, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #4 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0004)
West elevation, camera facing east.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 5 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County

State: KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 9 September, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #5 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0005)
Interior view, front east room, camera facing northeast.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 6 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County

State: KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 9 September 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #6 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0006)
Interior view, front west room windows. Camera facing south.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse, 7 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse

Nelson County, Kentucky

Name of Property

County and State

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: William Macintire

Date Photographed: 9 September, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #7 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0007)
Interior, front stair hall. Camera facing northeast.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 8 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: William Macintire

Date Photographed: 9 September 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #8 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0008)
View of log ell. Camera facing southeast.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 9 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 6 January, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #9 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0009)
View of circa 1890 Rear Room. Camera facing northeast.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse, 10 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: William Macintire

Date Photographed: 9 September 2009

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse

Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky

County and State

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #10 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0010)
Exterior of Log ell and circa 1890 rear room, located within the footprint of the west mid-twentieth century enclosed porch.
Camera facing northeast.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 11 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 8 December, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #11 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0011)
View of agricultural context surrounding the farmhouse. Camera facing west.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 12 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 8 December, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #12 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0012)
View of east domestic farmyard. Camera facing northwest.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 13 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 8 December, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #13 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0013)
View of noncontributing garage, camera facing northwest.

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse
Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky
County and State

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 14 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 8 December, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #14 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0014)
View of noncontributing pole barn facade, camera facing south.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 15 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 8 December, 2009

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #15 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0015)
View of noncontributing chicken house, camera facing northeast.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse, 16 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 6 January, 2010

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #16 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0016)
View of rock fence on Jack's Creek. Camera facing west.

-Name of Property: Coombs-Duncan Brown Farmhouse , 17 of _17__

City or Vicinity: Bloomfield

County: Nelson County **State:** KY

Photographer: Rachel Kennedy

Date Photographed: 6 January, 2010

Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse
Name of Property

Nelson County, Kentucky
County and State

Location of Original Digital Files: KY Heritage Council/SHPO

Description of Photograph(s) and number: #17 (KY_Nelson County_Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse_0017)
View of tree-lined property border on southern property boundary. Camera facing southwest.

Property Owner:

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

name Olde Bloomfield Holding Co
street & number PO Box 460 telephone 502.252.9642
city or town Bloomfield state KY zip code 40008

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 18 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.

List of Attachments

Attachment One: Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse Plan

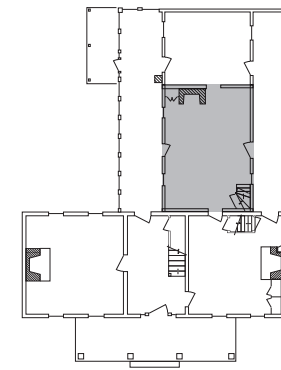
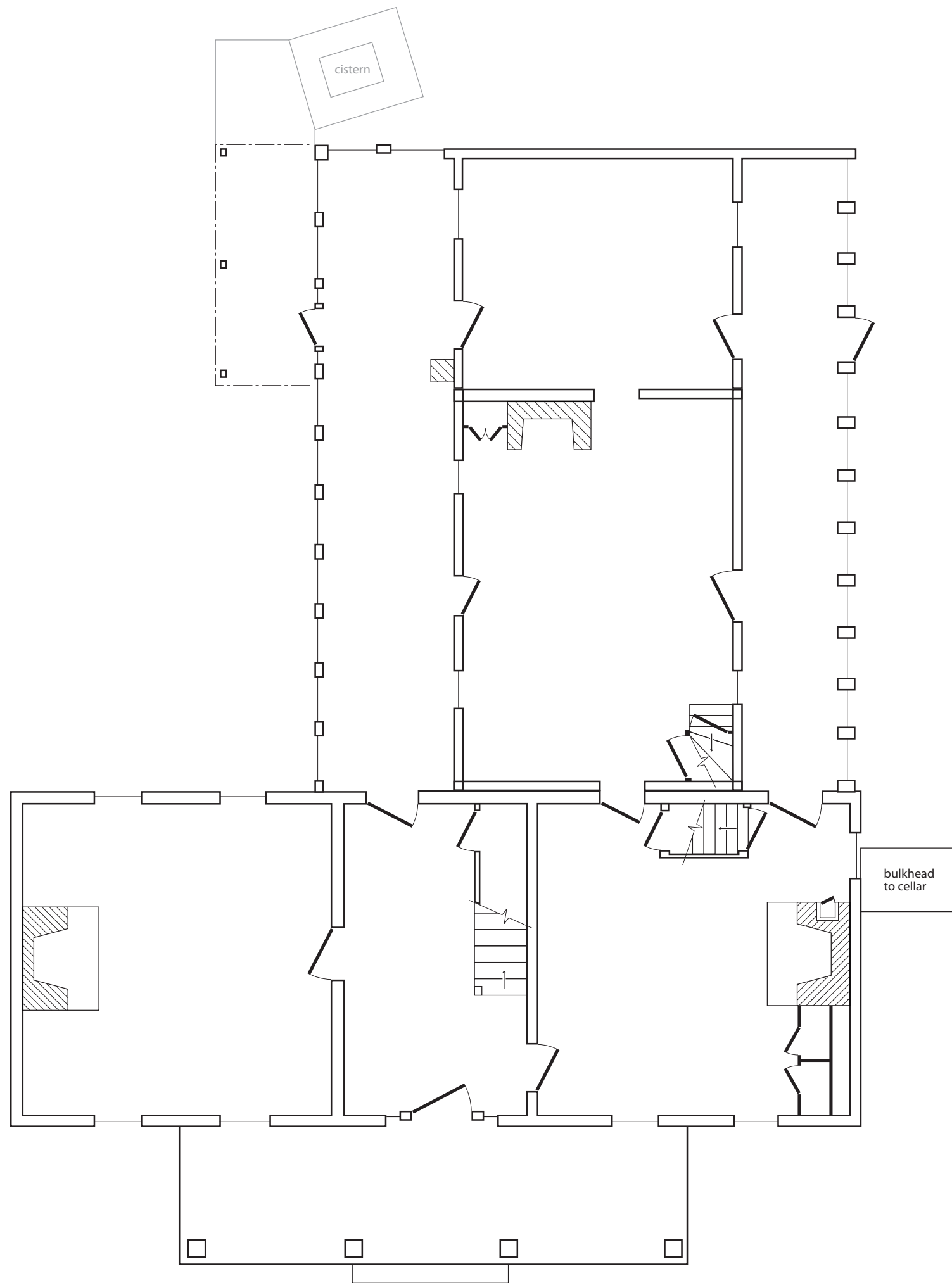
Attachment One A: Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse Plan, Photography Sketch Map

Attachment Two: Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse Site Plan

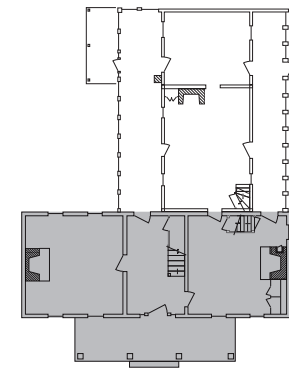
Attachment Two A: Coombs-Duncan-Brown Farmhouse Site Plan, Photography Sketch Map

Attachment Three: Lake's 1882 Atlas of Nelson County Atlas, Precinct 3. Coleman Brown property is circled

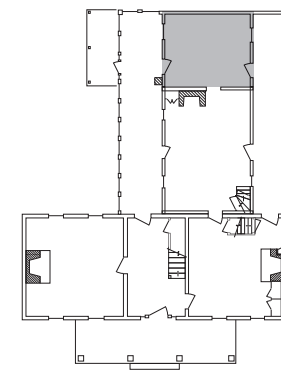
Attachment Four: 1783 Virginia Land Grant Survey Map for William Wren's Ashes Creek Property. The nominated property is within this acreage



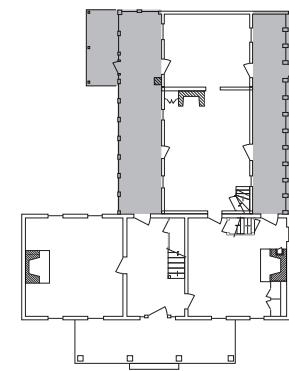
building period 1, ca. 1829



building period 2, ca. 1855



building period 3, ca. 1890



building period 4, mid-20th century



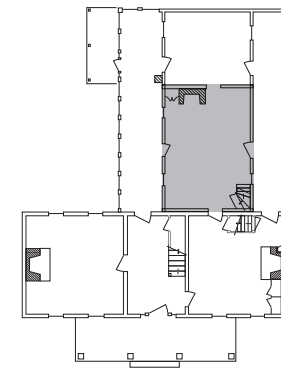
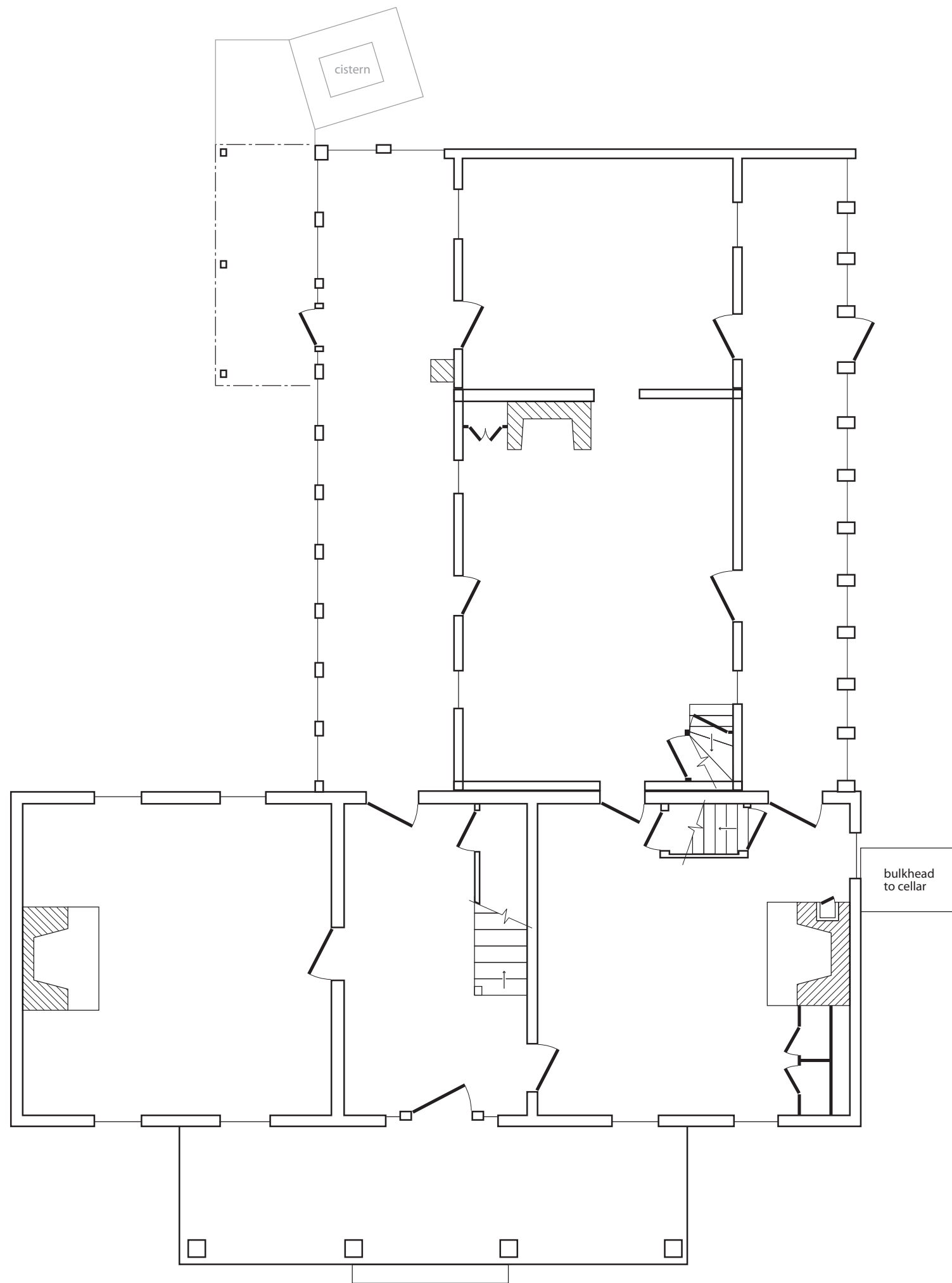
0 2
feet

Coombs - Duncan - Brown Farmhouse

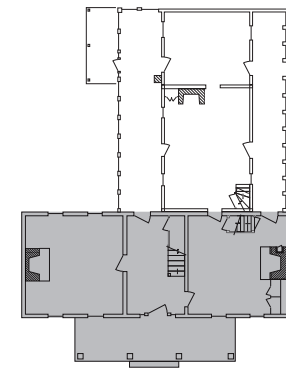
measured 12/8/2009 by Rachel Kennedy and Bill Macintire



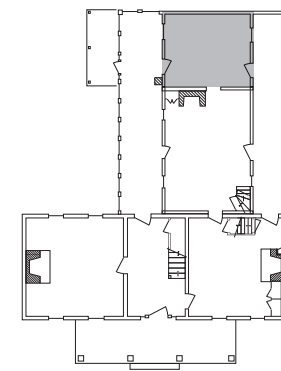
450



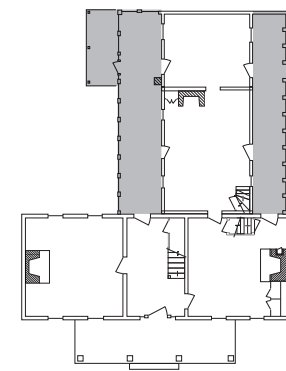
building period 1, ca. 1829



building period 2, ca. 1855



building period 3, ca. 1890



building period 4, mid-20th century



0 2
feet

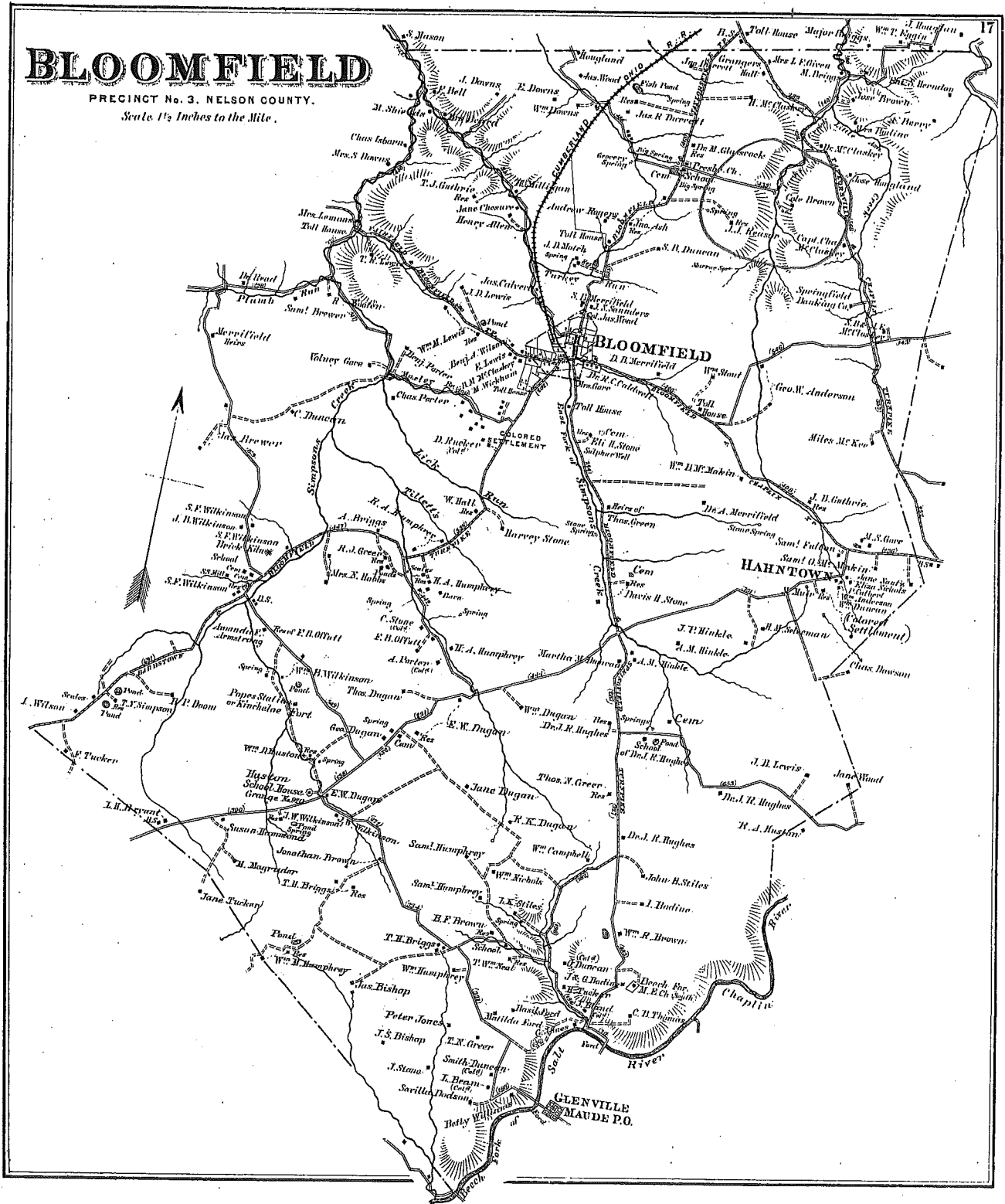
Coombs - Duncan - Brown Farmhouse

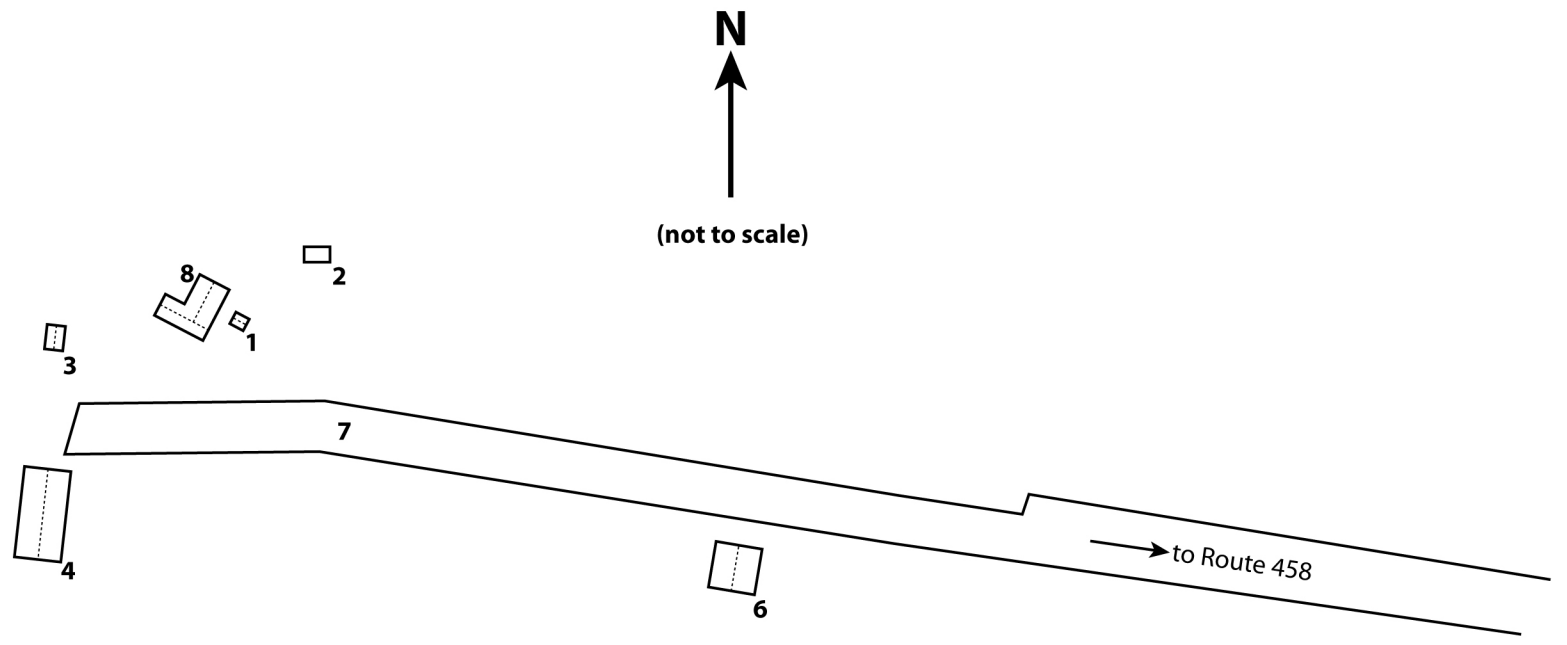
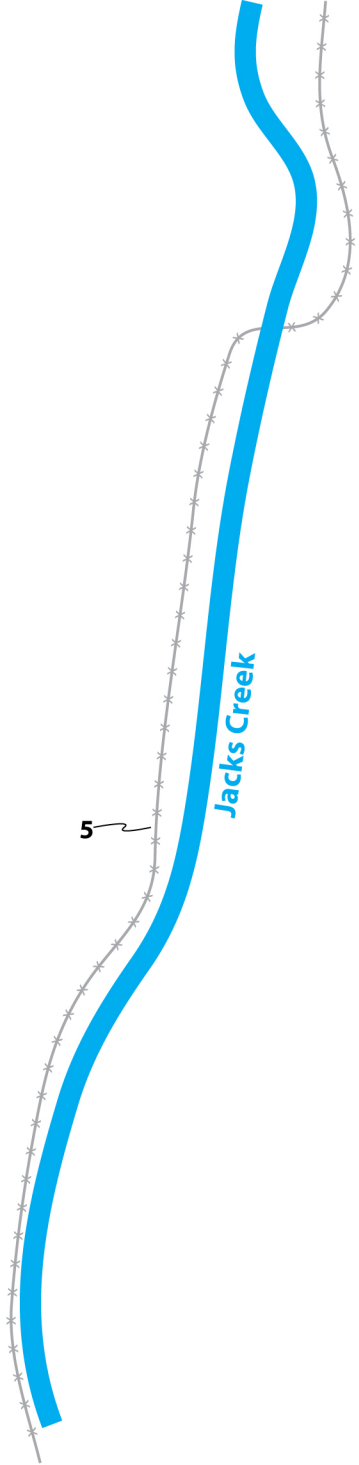
measured 12/8/2009 by Rachel Kennedy and Bill Macintire

BLOOMFIELD

PRECINCT No. 3, NELSON COUNTY.

Scale: 1 1/2 Inches to the Mile.

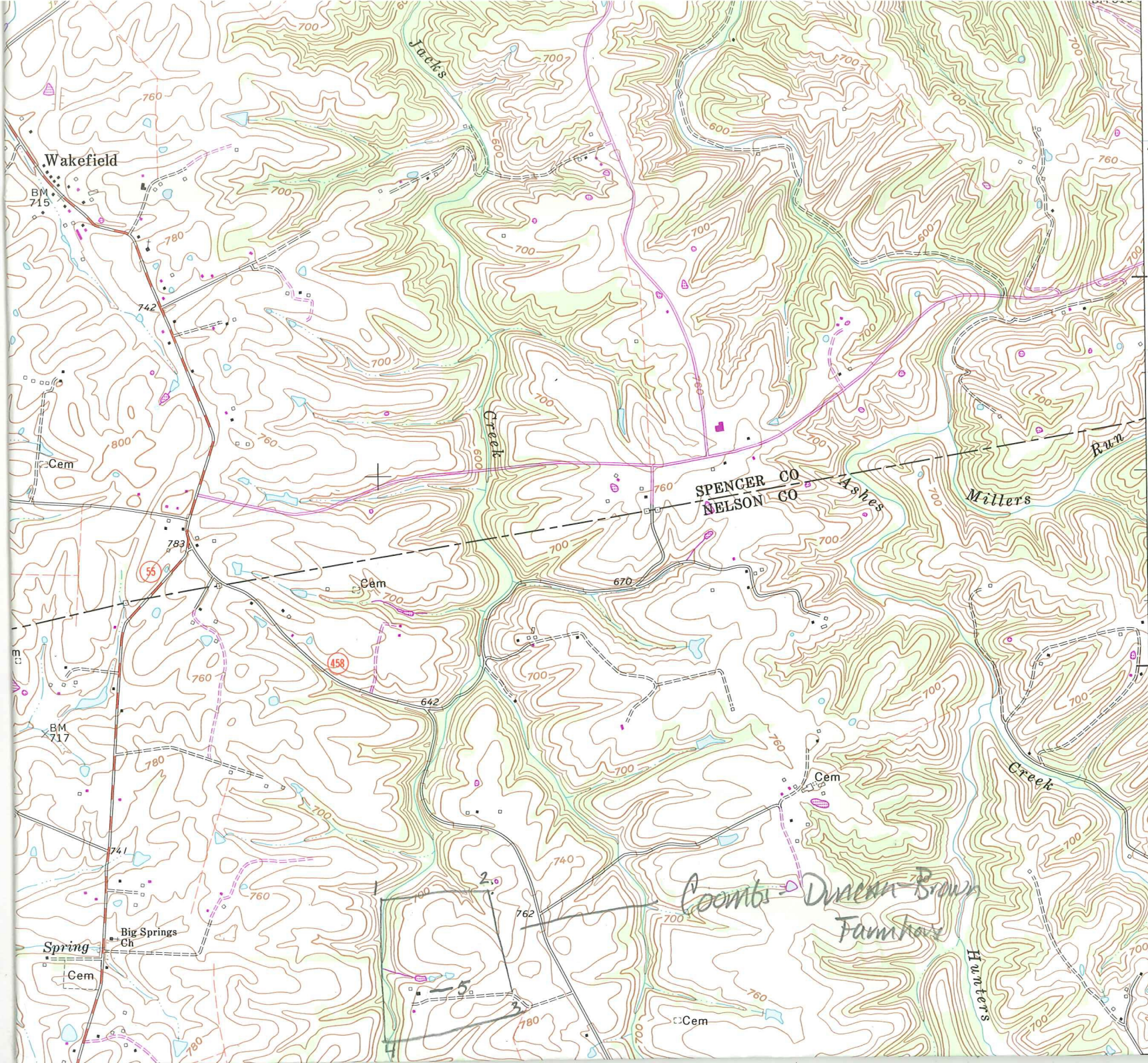




N
↑
(not to scale)

- 1 Meathouse
- 2 Chicken House/Storage Shed
- 3 Garage
- 4 Pole Barn
- 5 Rock Fence
- 6 Partially Dismantled Tobacco Barn
- 7 Gravel Drive
- 8 Coombs - Duncan - Brown Farmhouse

Coombs - Duncan - Brown Farmhouse Site Plan (NE-605)



4204
4203
57'30"
4202
4201
(CHAPLIN)
3959 1 NW

Coombs-Duncan-
Brown Farmhouse
Nelson Co, KY

UTM references:
Zone 16

- 1- 0650145
4200358
- 2- 0650588
4200309
- 3- 0650714
4199908
- 4- 0650347
4199557
- 5- 0650262
4200065