

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic John A. Lanning House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number E side SR 3128, 0.2 miles south junction with SR 3127 not for publication

city, town Fairview vicinity of congressional district Eleventh

state North Carolina code 37 county Buncombe code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Boyd C. Owenby

street & number Route 1, Box 324

city, town Fletcher vicinity of state North Carolina 28732

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Buncombe County Courthouse

street & number City-County Plaza

city, town Asheville state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John A. Lanning House, built in 1839, and its outbuildings stand close to a state secondary road in the rural Fairview section of Buncombe County, North Carolina. The Fairview section is one of the earliest settled areas in western North Carolina being a popular route between the highlands and both the North and South Carolina piedmonts. The house survives as perhaps the best preserved exposed example of early nineteenth century domestic log construction in Buncombe County.

The house faces north and is a rectangular saddlebag type consisting of two main sections joined by a central fieldstone chimney, with full-length shed porches on the north and south elevations. It is a one-and-one-half story gable roof structure with a loft and it rests on fieldstone piers. The hewn yellow pine logs are joined with full-dovetail notches which are a rare type of cornering in Buncombe County, the half-dovetail being the norm. The upper half-story logs are continuous across the saddlebag and so are very long; this is unusual. The gable ends overhang on extended plates and protect the end walls. Weatherboarding covers the gables and porch ends. Most of the original mud daubing was replaced with cement in the 1930s. An original roof of oak shakes was replaced with tin during some 1930 renovations. Underneath the eastern end of the house is a stone-lined root cellar with a covered entrance.

The porch that shelters the principal (north) elevation is supported by chamfered posts to which a simple wooden railing, balusters and a sitting bench are attached. Two swinging gates have been removed from the porch. The west end of porch has long been enclosed to form a small room. Entrance is from the porch through a batten door. A similar batten door on the porch gives access to a small enclosure formed by the fieldstone chimney and the two main sections of the house. Twentieth-century double-hung windows replace the original miniscule windows: a single window in the western end of each bedroom, and in the living room a double window on the north end and a single window on the south.

The interior of the house is not a typical saddlebag plan. It consists of two main pens divided by the central chimney, with a fireplace opening into each section. The house is approximately forty-four feet long with the eastern pen being sixteen feet and the western pen twenty-four feet, these being separated by the four foot chimney.

Batten partitions divide the western section into two small bedrooms and a larger living room. The original arched fireplace is no longer used. It is fitted with a late-nineteenth century millwork mantel of simple design and a cover containing a flue opening for a wood heater, which provides the only heat for this part of the house.

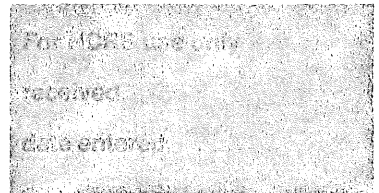
The kitchen occupies all of the eastern section. This room contains the only original window in the house, a small casement window on the eastern end. A twentieth century sash window replaces the original double window in the north wall. The arched mantel-less fireplace is fitted with the original pothooks and provides a vivid reminder of the era during which the house was built.

All interior walls have been covered with sheetrock, and ceilings are plastered. Floors throughout are the original wide-sawn pine boards.

The living room and kitchen have vertical batten doors opening onto each porch and these provide the only access from one section of the house to the other.

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The doors are secured by strap hinges and thumb latches made by John A. Lanning, who was a blacksmith and who, according to tradition, fashioned all of the hardware used in the house and outbuildings.

In addition to his blacksmithing talents, Lanning was an innovative folk designer. He devised a wooden latch (still in use) for the root cellar door, and an unusual sliding bar lock for the barrel house. This lock was operated by a large wooden key. The lock is still workable, but is no longer used because the key has been lost.

The back (south) porch has been recently enclosed and a bath added to the eastern end. An original weatherboarded room on the western end of this porch is identical in size to the one on the front porch. The interior walls have been recently finished with sheetrock and a twentieth century sash window installed in the south end.

The loft is reached from the south porch by a split-run stairway, each run originally met at a landing, then continued to the loft in the space between the log pens; however, the eastern run has been removed. A small pot room and cellar is located under the stairs. The loft consists of two rooms, each lighted by two small windows on the northern and southern sides. All but one of the original unglazed, shuttered windows have been glazed or boarded up.

The use of pine in log house construction is rare in Buncombe County; however, Lanning took advantage of the abundance of pine trees in the construction of his house and outbuildings on Pine Ridge. The construction of the house is exceptional and that is perhaps the reason it remains in good condition despite recent renovations to insure the comfort of the present owner and occupant, Lois Owenby, a third generation Lanning.

The early outbuildings include a log double corn crib, a double-pen log barn and a barrel house where Lanning operated a government licensed still. Of a later date are a well, an outhouse, and a weather-boarded garage. No traces remain of Lanning's blacksmith shop or a grist mill built beside Gap Creek.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1839

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John A. Lanning House is the best preserved example of exposed early nineteenth century log construction in Buncombe County, North Carolina. John Lanning was a prosperous yeoman farmer owning 1,200 acres by 1860. He is also said to have been a blacksmith and cobbler, and to have operated a government licensed still. His home on Gap Creek in the Fairview community is of the saddlebag type and displays several features which cause it to stand out from standard log construction: yellow pine logs, full-dovetail cornering, upper half-story logs running the full length of the structure (forty-four feet), and projecting gables on extended plates. Original hardware made by Lanning in his blacksmith shop survives in the house. Recent alterations have not significantly compromised the integrity of the structure. Several early outbuildings continue to serve the farmhouse including an exceptional double-pen log barn and a log double corn crib.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The John A. Lanning House and outbuildings is a well preserved farming environment that represents the typical yeoman agricultural unit that civilized much of western North Carolina during the first half of the nineteenth century.

- C. The John A. Lanning log house is an exceptional example of early nineteenth century domestic log construction surviving intact with several of its original outbuildings.

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SIGNIFICANCE

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Page one

John A. Lanning, who built the log house on Gap Creek, is believed to be descended from one of three Lanning brothers who immigrated in the seventeenth century from Wales to Long Island, New York, later moving to New Jersey.¹ John A. Lanning's father, pioneer John,² was the son of Joseph Lanning who moved from Bordentown, New Jersey, to Rowan County, North Carolina prior to the Revolutionary War. Joseph was a good carpenter and built a two story brick house. Joseph and Mary Lanning had four daughters and two sons.

Pioneer John Lanning was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, serving as a substitute for his father, Joseph. He also fought against the Cherokee Indians. In 1783 he married Sarah Whitaker of Rowan County.³ Soon after 1790 the young couple moved to Buncombe County where they raised a family of fourteen children.⁴ Twelve of these children married and raised large families of their own. John and Sarah Lanning owned several farms⁵ and according to tradition they moved back and forth every two or three seasons.⁶

John Lanning, pioneer, died in 1839; his wife died in 1848.⁷ A sale of John's possessions in the autumn of 1848 brought \$1,285.55.⁸ John A. Lanning acted as administrator for his father's estate which included several slaves. One of his brothers, James, refused the slave assigned to him. It is believed that his wife, Polly Vaughn, influenced his decision as she declared before their marriage that she would never own a slave under any circumstances.⁹

John A. Lanning was born in 1794. He married Susanna Gallimore (b. 1802), the younger sister of his brother Amos' wife, Mary.¹⁰ In 1839 they built the log house on Gap Creek where they raised six children. John A. Lanning was, according to tradition, a cobbler (his bench and tools still exist) and a blacksmith. It is believed that he fashioned all of the hardware in his house. He also is reported to have operated a government licensed still. His ledgers indicate that he did a brisk trade.^{11, 12}

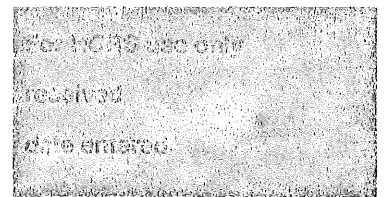
According to family tradition John A. Lanning had his house built by a local craftsman who is said to have constructed other log houses in the Fairview community. The excellent construction seen in his house and also in Elliott Riley Lanning's house (John's third son) nearby is rare in Buncombe County. John A. Lanning's house was built on a 160 acre tract of land which he divided among his children in his will.¹³ The house stands on a nineteen acre tract that was included in the 160 acre deed.¹⁴

Lanning progressed from a farmer owning 300 acres (30 of which were improved) in 1850 with livestock valued at \$400 to a landholder of 1,135 unimproved acres and 70 improved acres in 1860. In that year his real estate was valued at \$1,350 (\$850 above the 1850 value of \$1,000) and his personal estate, \$1,000. His livestock was valued at \$300, his orchard products at \$400. He owned no slaves.¹⁵

John and his wife, Susanna, both died in 1871, he survived her by two months. In his will made in March, 1871, John wished his wife:

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"to hav her suport off the place with the product of hit whear I know
live sevitt the chirdrens land...to nether be rented leasd nor sold--
without my leave and a full settlement made on my estate..."¹⁶

John lived in the house until his death August 29, 1871 when his oldest child, Rebeckah,¹⁷
occupied the house with her sister, Sarah C. Harper, her husband and their two children.
Rebeckah died in 1886.¹⁸ She willed the house to her sister, Sarah Harper,¹⁹ who lived
there until her death in 1913. Sarah's will provided for her husband, Foster Harper
(who died in 1921) "to have hold and controll said land" until his death at which time²⁰
the house passed to Sarah's nephew, Cornelius U. Owenby and at his death to his children.
Cornelius Owenby and his wife Delia had five children. Only one survives, Mr. Lois
Owenby, who is the present owner and occupant of the house. He has willed it to Boyd C.
Owenby, a first cousin, who is interested in restoring the house to its original condition.²

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FOOTNOTES

¹Lanning Family History (Asheville: The Secretary, 1973), p. 17. The Family History cites Cooley's Genealogy of Early Settlers in Trenton and Ewing, New Jersey (1883) as its source of information.

²John Lanning is referred to as "pioneer" in the Lanning Family History. He is the father of John A. Lanning who built the Fairview log house. To avoid confusing the two Lannings, the father will be referred to as "John Lanning, pioneer," and the son, "John A. Lanning."

³Lanning Family History, p. 18-19. This data was obtained from the Veterans Administration in Washington, D. C., by A. D. Miller, Executive Assistant to the Administrator. The papers are on file in Pension Claim W4711. This information states that Lanning was granted a pension of \$31.33 per annum beginning March 4, 1831. His widow was allowed the same pension (act of March 3, 1843).

⁴John Lanning, pioneer, is listed in the 1800 U. S. census (p. 177) for Buncombe County. His family included three males under ten years, three males under sixteen, one male under twenty-six, three females under ten years and one female under forty-five (presumably his wife). No slaves.

⁵Buncombe County Deed Books SI, page 348 and Book 7, page 431 show that Lanning owned property on Gap Creek and also Hoopers Creek.

⁶Lanning Family History, p. 54.

⁷Ibid., p. 142.

⁸Inventory of the estate of John and Sarah Lanning, N. C. Archives, Raleigh.

⁹Lanning Family History, p. 20. "The widow Lanning owned a slave woman named Fender. She became so unruly her mistress sold her. When leaving, Fender said to her old mistress: 'Be good to my baby.' Her old mistress replied: 'I have been good to you. That's why you are leaving here.'"

¹⁰Ibid., p. 59.

¹¹Letter written November 12, 1980, by Boyd C. Owenby to Mr. Larry E. Tise of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources.

¹²There appears to be a tradition of mechanical ability in the Lanning family. It is interesting to note in the Lanning Family History (p. 270-271) that one of John A. Lanning's elder brothers, James, is also described as "a mechanical genius. He had his own blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, and shoe shop...He also owned his own distillery..." "he built his own house of logs." James' son Jasper followed the tradition. W. B. West, a relative said that "had Jasper Lanning lived (he died at age 20), he would have been one of the finest workmen this country every produced."

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¹³ Conversation with Boyd C. Owenby, January 17, 1981. Mr. Owenby says in his letter of November 12, 1980, to Mr. Larry Tise that the family had an old broadax which is believed to have been used in the hewing of the logs in the John A. Lanning buildings.

¹⁴ Buncombe County Deed Book 22, page 31, states that John A. Lanning purchased 160 acres on Gap Creek from N. Blackstock, agent of Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and representative of the heirs of Rick Stockton, deceased.

¹⁵ U. S. Census, 1830, 1850 and 1860, Pack Library, Asheville, and N. C. Archives, Raleigh, N. C.

¹⁶ Buncombe County Clerk of Court, Book B, page 46.

¹⁷ Conversation with Boyd C. Owenby, January 17, 1981.

¹⁸ Lanning Family History, p. 142.

¹⁹ Buncombe County Clerk of Court, Book B, page 391.

²⁰ Buncombe County Clerk of Court, Book H, page 354.

²¹ Letter from Boyd C. Owenby to Mr. Larry Tise.

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 19

Quadrangle name Oteen

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Description and Historical Significance prepared by Alice Curtis, research consultant

organization N. C. Department of Cultural Resources Archives and History date

street & number 13 Veterans Drive telephone 704-298-5024

city or town Asheville state North Carolina

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

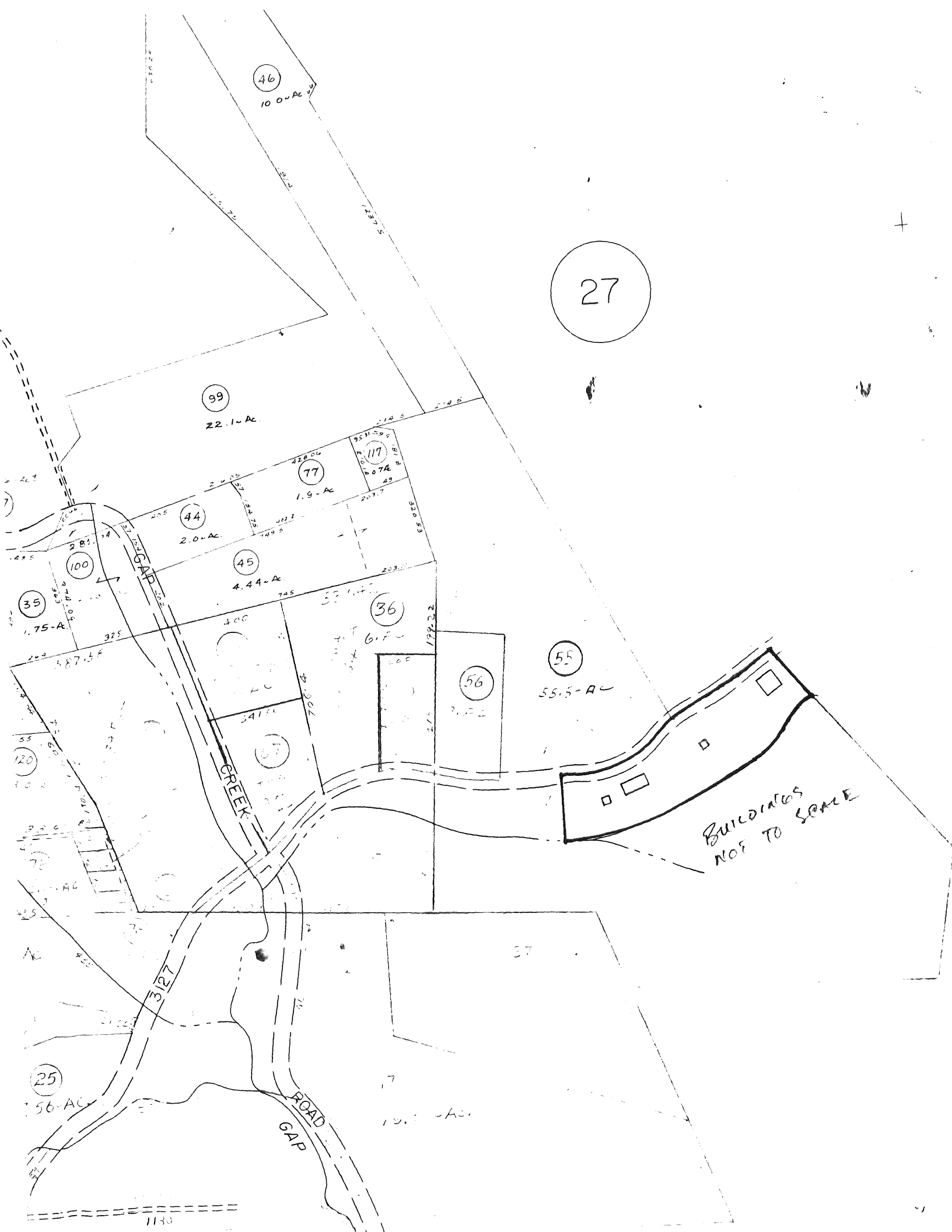
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title	date
For NCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
Keeper of the National Register	date
Agent:	date
Chief of Registration	



27

46

10.0-Ac

99

22.1-Ac

77

1.9-Ac

44

2.0-Ac

45

4.44-Ac

56

6.8-Ac

55

55.5-Ac

56

3.8-Ac

57

2.1-Ac

100

1.75-Ac

35

1.75-Ac

120

3.0-Ac

78

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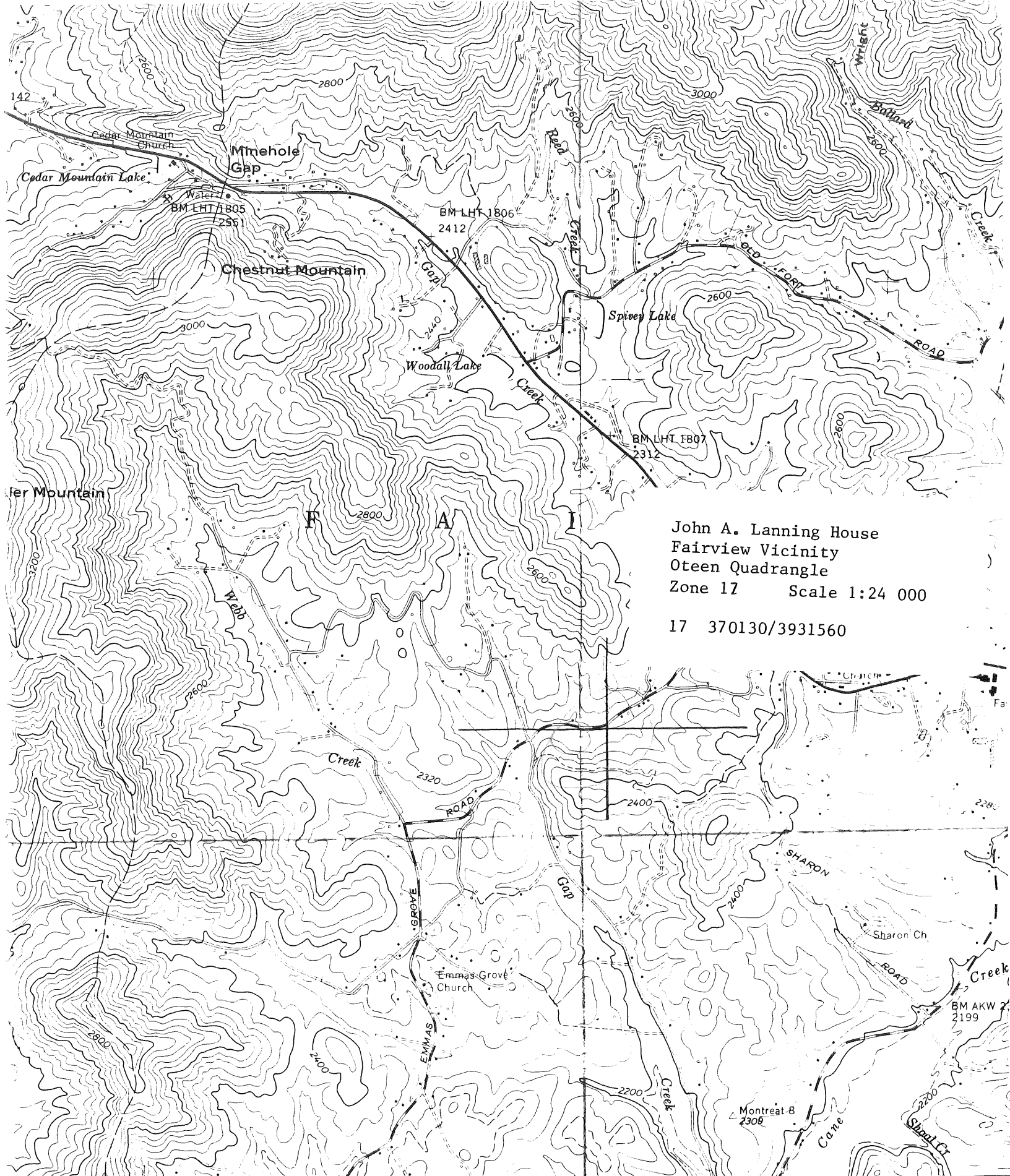
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1130

BUILDINGS NOT TO SCALE



John A. Lanning House
 Fairview Vicinity
 Oteen Quadrangle
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
 17 370130/3931560

67 27' 30" 368 (FRUITLAND 202-NW) 370 FLETCHER 6.8 MI. 371 25' 372

SCALE 1:24 000

