



# VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

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## SURVEY FORM

Historic name <b>Russell House &amp; Store</b> County/Town/City <b>Prince William County</b> Street address or route number <b>13741 Minnieville Rd., Woodbridge, Va. 22193</b> USGS Quad <b>Occoquan</b> Original owner <b>unknown</b> Original use <b>Residence &amp; store</b> Present owner <b>Janna Lee Leepson &amp; Jerry /</b> Present owner address <b>c/o Janna Lee Leepson</b> <b>13741 Minnieville Rd., Woodbridge, Va. 22193</b> Present use <b>Residence (store not in use)</b> Acreage <b>c215 acres</b>	Common name Date or period <b>Late 19th, early &amp; mid 20th century,</b> Architect/builder/craftsmen <b>possibly mid-19th c. origin</b> Original owner <b>unknown</b> Source of name <b>previous owner</b> Source of date <b>architectural estimate, present owner</b> Stories <b>2 stories</b> Foundation and wall const'n <b>Stone foundation under house;</b> <b>frame wall constr. veneered with stone. Store is frame</b> Roof type <b>Metal-covered gable. on stone piers.</b>
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State condition of structure and environs **House, store and surrounding area in good condition.**

State potential threats to structure **Possible road construction, future development nearby.**  
 Note any archaeological interest

Should be investigated for possible register potential? **yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_**

Architectural description (Note significant features of plan, structural system and interior and exterior decoration, taking care to point out aspects not visible or clear from photographs. Explain nature and period of all alterations and additions. List any outbuildings and their approximate ages, cemeteries, etc.)

Russell's House and Store stand side-by-side facing approximately north on the south side of Minnieville Road near the intersection of Minnieville and Davis Ford roads in eastern Prince William County. The house and store are two-story, gable-roofed frame structures, though the exterior of the house has been covered with flagstone, applied in the early 1950s over plain, medium-width wooden siding. The store's exterior is covered with aluminum siding. A low stone wall encloses the house and store lot on the north and west sides and runs partly across the rear of the house lot. A stone well house sits in front of the house. Behind the house there are several small brick 20th century outbuildings. Further away are a dairy barn, granary, and other agricultural buildings once associated with the Russell farming operations but not included in this survey.

The Russell House consists of a two-story I-plan house and several two-story additions and porches. The present L-plan is the result of these additions. According to family tradition, contained within the gable-roofed front portion of the house is a pre-Civil War cabin, constructed as either a one or two-room original residence which was subsequently raised to two stories. Closer inspection of the house would reveal whether this is true, but because of remodeling and other changes made to the house, this initial survey found no evidence of a construction date earlier than the last quarter of the 19th century. A check into the County deed records, however, showed that in 1848, according to a recorded plat, there was a rectangular house located where the Russell house is now.

The brick central chimney which pierces the raised-seam tin-covered gable roof of the house's front section is a rebuilding of an earlier-existing chimney and serves a rebuilt fireplace in the east room, first floor. There is also a brick stove chimney in the rear addition. A glassed-in two-story porch spans the house front. Another two-story porch, partly enclosed, Interior inspected? **Yes**

(Continued)

Historical significance (Chain of title; individuals, families, events, etc., associated with the property.)

The Russell House and Store are significant local landmarks. The Russell House, with its additions and modifications, is representative of a type of local vernacular architecture that predominated in rural Northern Virginia from the middle of the 19th century to the 1960s when suburban residential and commercial developments began to change the whole character of eastern Prince William County. If the house, as is suspected, was standing in 1848, it becomes an even more important local landmark, because few houses in this area survived the destruction of the Civil War.

The simple two story frame store represents a type of rural general store building that was prevalent in Northern Virginia during the early part of the 20th century. Located as it is at the intersection of two important thoroughfares, Russell's Store was probably the hub of local commercial and social activity in a predominately rural region until just after World War II. A glance at the Prince William County map of 1901 shows how numerous these commercial crossroad general stores once were. A trip across the county proves how few there remain.

G. C. Russell, grandfather of the present owners of Russell House and Store, purchased this property in two parcels, in 1917 and 1919. The first purchase of 100 acres, recorded in D.B. 70, p. 450, on Feb. 4, 1918, was made from Edward N. and Laura Frances Dewey and Thomas H. Lion, special commissioner. (See Appendix showing chain of ownership as traced to 1848.) This parcel, known as the "home place," contains the Russell House & Store, both of which were

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Russell House--Chain of Ownership

The present owners, Janna Lee Leepson and Jerry Murphy, are descendants of G. C. Russell who in 1917 bought 100 acres in the Occoquan Magisterial District of Prince William County from Edward N. and Laura Frances Dewey and Thomas H. Lion, special commissioner of Prince William County. The deed, Deed Book 70, page 450, was recorded Feb. 4, 1918. This chain of ownership traces only 100 acres of the present tract, which amounts to approximately 215 acres. We are assuming that this 100 acres contains the present Leepson residence. The property was described in the above transaction as having the following metes and bounds: "Beginning at a marked tree, red oak, on the north side of Occoquan Road, opposite the mouth of a ditch; thence S.  $37\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ E., 158 $\frac{1}{2}$  poles to a stake and stone, near a pine tree; thence S.  $50^{\circ}$ W., 92 poles to a set stone, near a double spanish oak, and corner to William Windsor; thence N.  $37\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ W., 196 poles to a stone, in the Occoquan Road, near a marked spanish oak, which stands on the south side of said road, and thence with the Occoquan road, N.  $72\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ E., 52 poles, N.  $68^{\circ}$ E., 48 poles to the beginning, and being the same property conveyed to said Laura F. Dewey by C. E. Nicol, executor, and E. N. Dewey by deed dated June 15, 1909, and recorded in D.B. 58 at folio 429 of the land records."

D.B. 58, p. 429 June 15, 1909

This deed records the sale of 100 acres made by William Metzger to Edward N. Dewey on Aug. 22, 1905. At Metzger's death, Dewey still owed Metzger \$500 on the property. This debt paid off, Dewey became full owner of the property by the time of the recording of the above deed on June 15, 1909. Laura Frances Dewey's name was added to the deed at Dewey's request. The deed describes the same tract as previously quoted from D.B. 70, p. 450, and states that William Metzger had acquired the land by deed from J. B. T. Thornton, special commissioner, on Jan. 2, 1903, D.B. 51, p. 210.

D.B. 51, p. 210 Jan. 2, 1903

This sale was the result of a chancery cause entitled Martha M. Shopbell v. Metzger et al., in which J. B. T. Thornton was ordered to sell at auction 100 acres (having the same metes and bounds as earlier quoted). Metzger acquired the property for \$750. In this deed a reference to an earlier recording of the same property was made, to D.B. 32, p. 234.

D.B. 32, p. 234 Dec. 9, 1879

This deed records the sale of the property in question from Thomas Gilchrist and his wife Marie to Ellen Doctor on Dec. 9, 1879 for \$400. The same statement of metes and bounds as earlier quoted appears in this recording; however, there is no "and being the same" clause.

A check of the index showed how Thomas Gilchrist acquired the property (the same 100 acres): On July 15, 1873 (D.B. 29, p. 530) it was recorded that Hannah Mero and Joseph Mero of Fort Edward, Washington County, New York, sold the property in question for \$1,000 to Thomas Gilchrist of the town of Hartford, Washington County, New York. This deed gives the same metes and bounds as earlier quoted in this report.

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Continuation Sheet

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exists on the rear of the main house, and a small, glazed two-story porch fills in the rear el. Most of the windows date to either the present day or are of the late 19th to early 20th century 2/2 sliding sash type, though there are also several older windows containing six panes over six. The exterior trim is of the plain, wide box type. The exterior doors are all from the present century. The cornice is plain and there is a plain soffit beneath the roof.

Inside, the house reflects the various remodelings and enlargements that have occurred. The interior trim is a mixture of plain, unadorned wide moulding, symmetrically moulded trim with bullseye lintels and architrave moulding with bullseye lintels, and modern-day milled trim. The floors are medium-to-wide tongue-in-groove pine. There are two staircases, an open, winding stair in the living room (first floor, east room) having a moulded rail, slender, turned newel and square balusters. An enclosed, straight stair rises from the kitchen. This stairway, according to present owner, formerly rose along the west wall of the front room.

The store building, beside the house to the east, was probably built in the early 1900s. It is a long, rectangular two-story frame structure having its gable end facing the road. It was perhaps constructed in two or three stages. The store appears to have been extended to the rear once. Running along the building's east side is a single-story shed addition which formerly contained feed storage. An exterior, enclosed stair, the only access to the second floor, rises along the rear of the building. Beneath the store's aluminum siding exterior is the original medium-width wooden siding. A one-story open porch spans the store front. Plain box trim surrounds the 2/2 and 6/6 sliding sash windows and the glass-paned front door. Wide box trim also runs along the roof's plain box cornice and under the gables, terminating in gable returns. Inside, the store remains as it was when it ceased operating about 1974. The first floor interior walls are sheathed in matchboard and lined with shelves. There is a small office at the rear. Upstairs are several bedrooms, formerly rented by store employees or local sawmill workers.

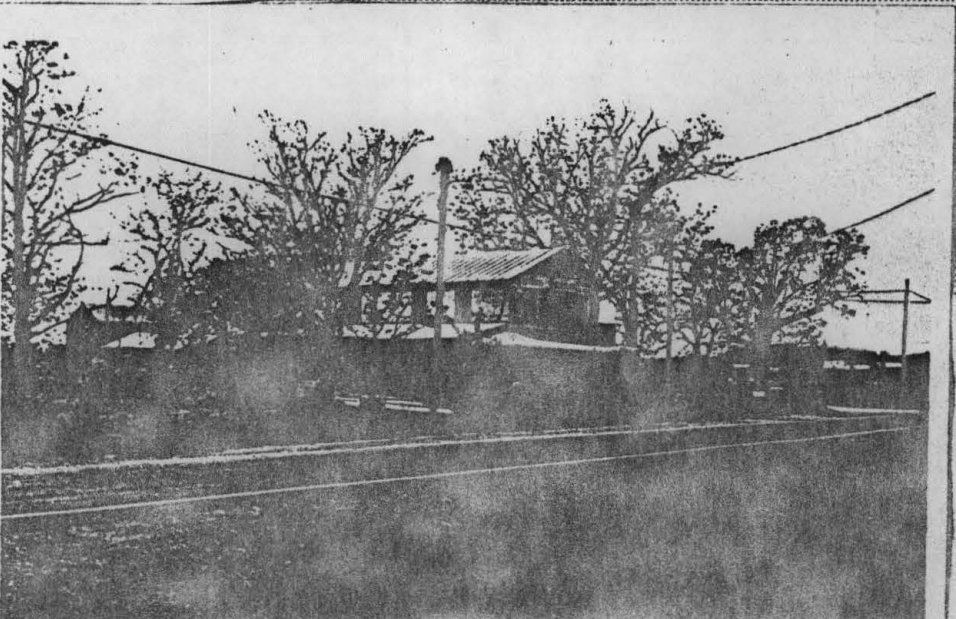
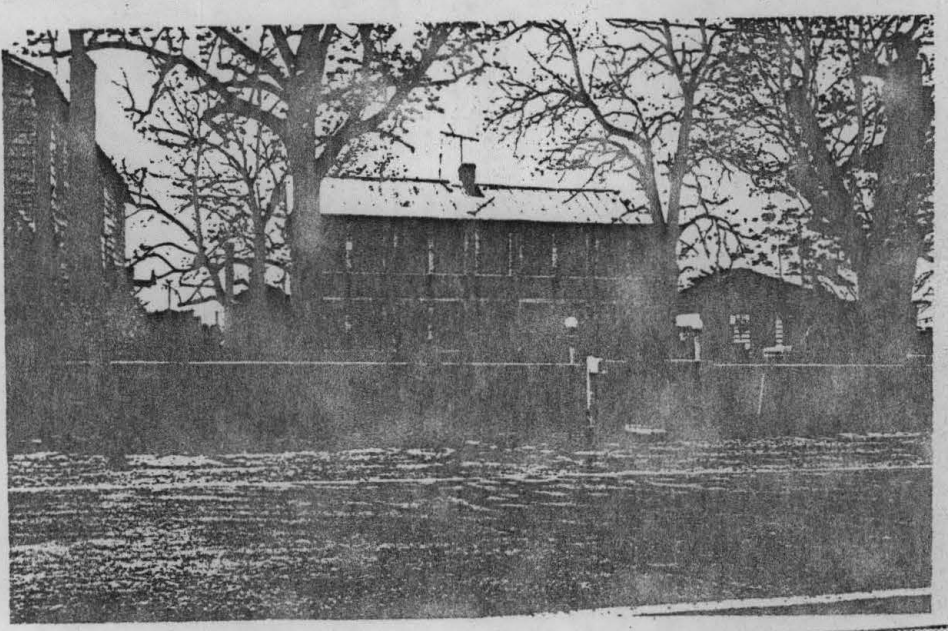
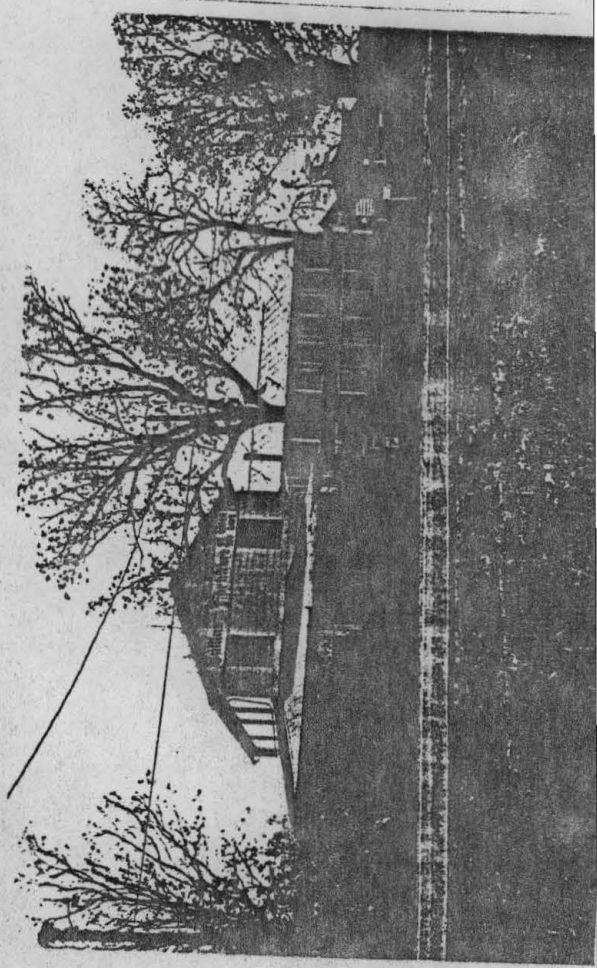
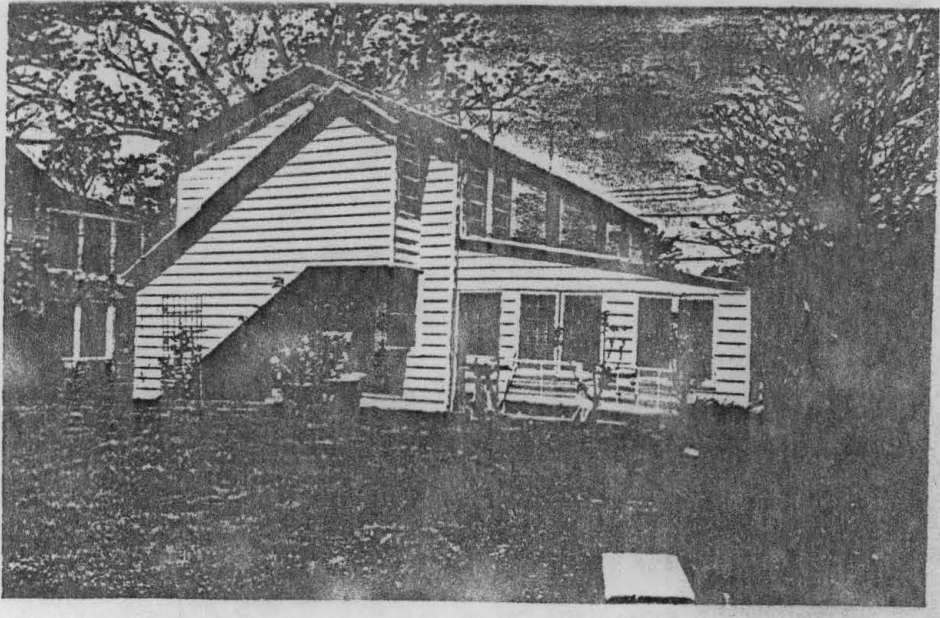
Hist. Significance

standing at the time of the sale. Russell and his wife Daisy cleared the land and established a hog farm at their place near Agnewville on Minnieville Road, at that time known as the Occoquan Road. Russell built the hay barn, granary and other agricultural buildings. The farm switched to dairying in the 1950s. From 1917, Mrs. Russell operated the general store, which had earlier been run by the previous owners, Edward and Laura Dewey, the store's probable builders. The Deweys purchased the 100-acre parcel in 1905 from William Metzger. In 1901, according to a PWC map, the general store was situated across the road. At that time, the Russell House was occupied by E. Doctor. Ellen Doctor acquired the property in Dec 1879 from Thomas and Marie Gilchrist. The Gilchrists had acquired the 100-acre parcel in July 1873 from Hannah Mero and Joseph Mero of New York State. Hannah Mero owned the property for 3 years, having acquired it from Charles Safford, another New Yorker, in May 1870. Safford had purchased the property in 1855 from Samuel Stoddard. In 1848, when Stoddard purchased the property from Bertram, or Bertrand, Windsor, it totaled over 175 acres and, according to a survey made at the time of the sale, there was a house located approximately where the Russell House is now.

From the index of deeds it appears that Hannah Mero acquired the property from Charles Safford, D.B. 27, p. 574, recorded May 18, 1870. Both the parties gave Fort Edward, Washington County, New York, as their residence. Mero paid \$600 for the 100 acres, identified by the same metes and bounds as quoted earlier.

The deed index for 1799-1887 contains two pertinent references, one indicating that Charles Safford purchased the 100 acres in question from Samuel Stoddard, recorded in D.B. 23, p. 211 on Feb. 13, 1855. The purchase price was \$1,450, and the same metes and bounds earlier quoted are mentioned in the deed. The other, more important reference from the 1799-1887 index, if it actually applies to the Russell property, is a recording in D.B. 20, p. 186 in which Bertram [or Bertrand] Windsor and his wife Elizabeth sell to Samuel Stoddard 175 acres, 2 roods, and 30 perches for \$1,000. The metes and bounds seem to include the property in question. The accompanying survey plat drawn by Thomas [N.?] Carter on Sept. 22, 1848 shows the property, with a house, located on the south side of the "Occoquan Road." The 175-acre tract is labeled "A.R.P." Opposite the 175-acre tract across the road to the north is a parcel labeled "Wilbooks land," and to the east of the tract in question are "Davis' land" and "Nelson's tenement." This deed was recorded Oct. 4, 1848.

This deed search ended with the above reference. It may be possible to trace the deeds further back, using the same method of checking appropriate indexes for various owners' names, or by using the microfilmed State land tax records available at the Prince William Library.



Sources and bibliography

Published sources (Books, articles, etc., with bibliographic data.)

Primary sources (Manuscript documentary or graphic materials; give location.)

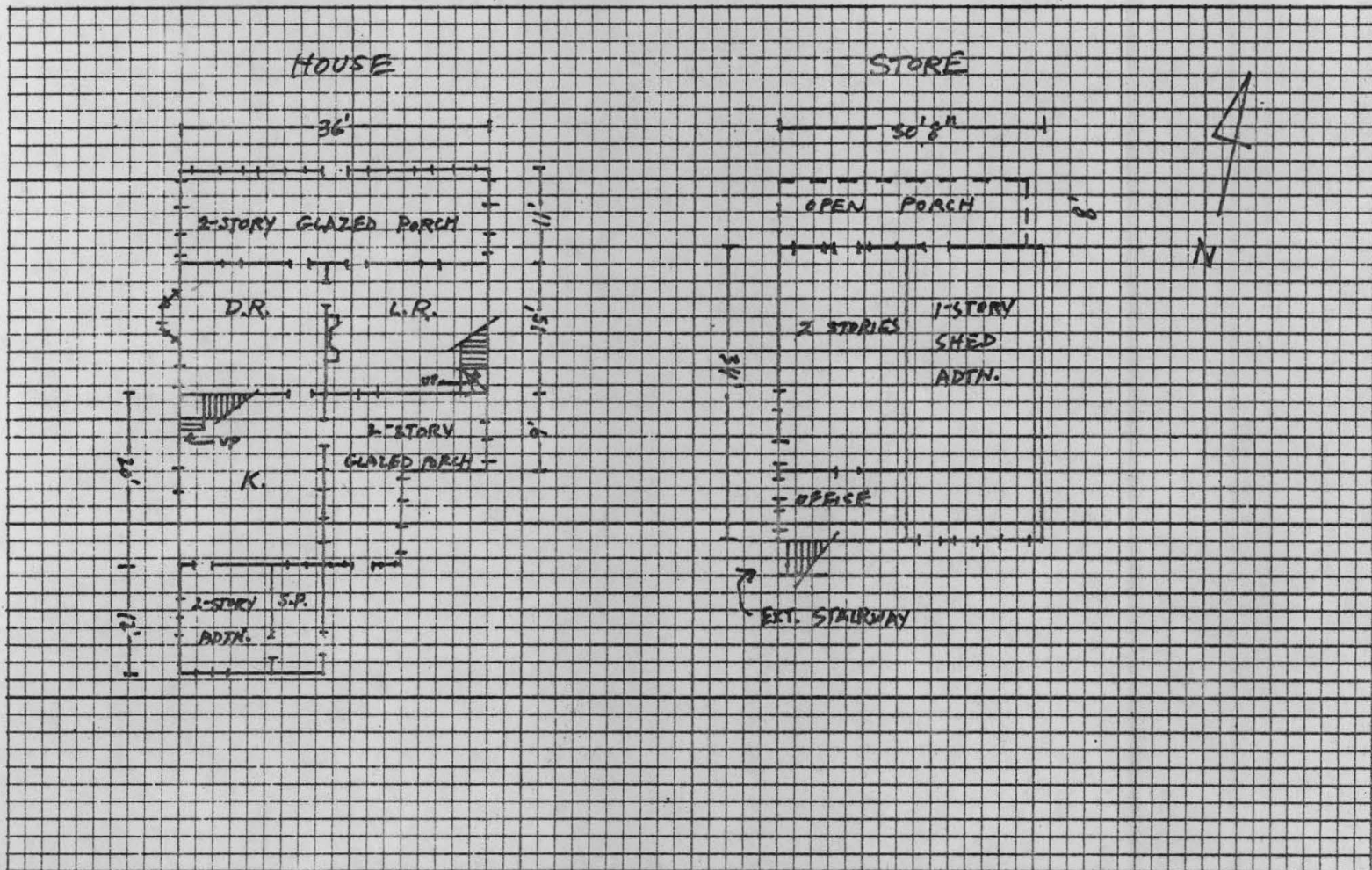
Prince William County land records, Courthouse, Manassas, Va.

Map of Prince William County, 1901, William H. Brown, compiler.

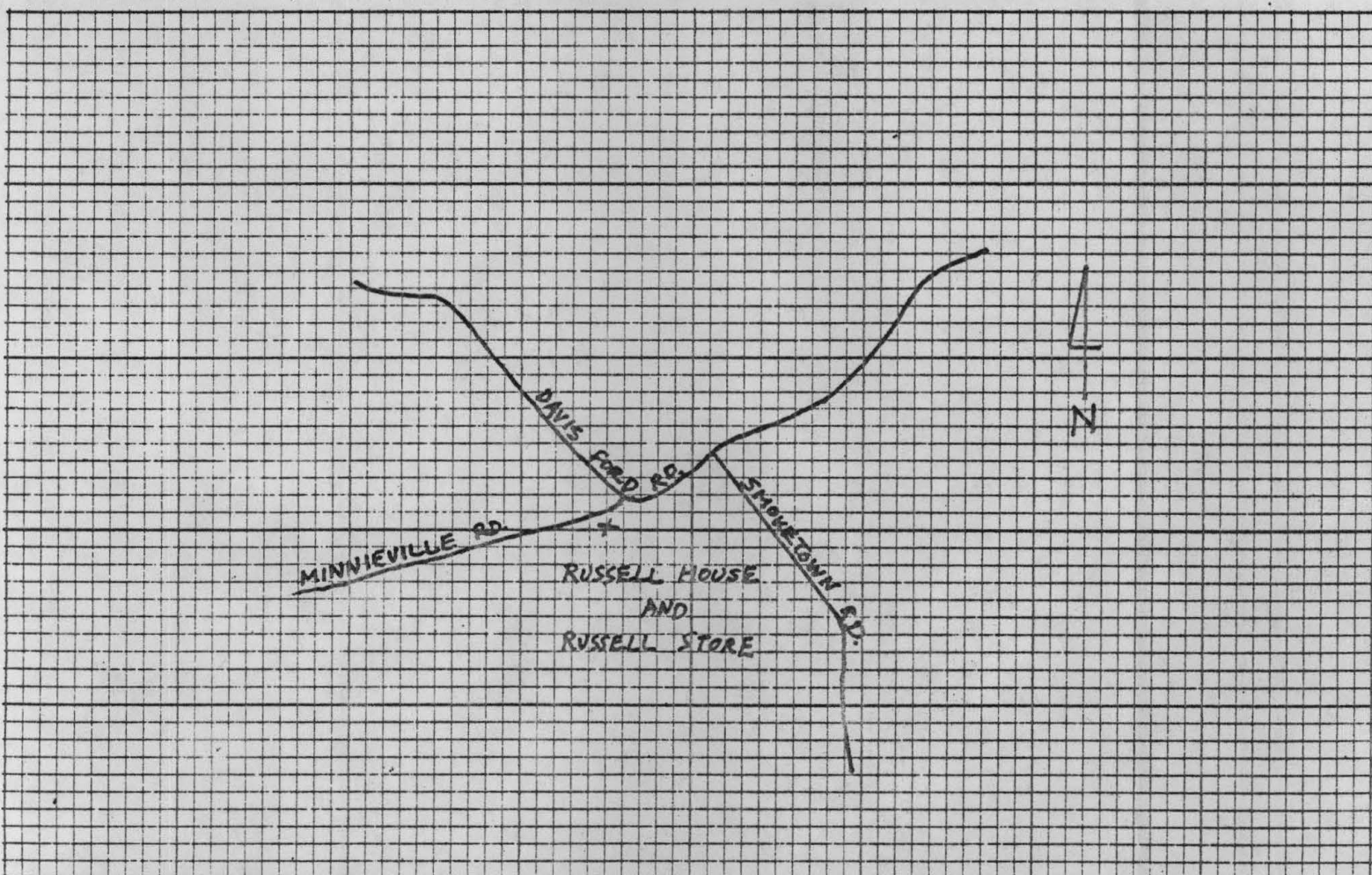
Names and addresses of persons interviewed Janna Lee Leepson, 13741 Minnieville Rd., Woodbr., Va. 22193

Jerry Murphy, Minnieville Rd., Woodbridge, Va. 22193.

Plan (Indicate locations of rooms, doorways, windows, alterations, etc.)



Site plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies and significant topographical features.)



Name, address and title of recorder

Date

Frances Jones, surveyor PWC 1978-81. Home: 6301 Owen Pl., Bethesda, Md. 20817 Sep. 1, 1982.