

LISTED: 7/16/92

NPS Form 10-900  
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Lincoln, John J., House

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number: off highway 52

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Elkhorn

vicinity: n/a

state: West Virginia code: WV county: McDowell code: 047 zip code: 24831

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 \_\_\_\_\_ nationally ☒ statewide \_\_\_\_\_ locally.  
(\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet.)

William C. Linn  
Signature of Certifying Official

6/1/92  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

McDowell, WV  
county and state

I, hereby certify that this property is:

## 5. Classification

(check only one box)

```
x building(s)
_ district
_ site
_ structure
_ object
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(do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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buildings
sites
structures
objects
TOTAL
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(enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER. 0

John J. Lincoln House  
name of property

McDowell, WV  
county and state

=====

6. Function or Use

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HISTORIC FUNCTIONS

(enter categories from instructions)

domestic/single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CURRENT FUNCTIONS

(enter categories from instructions)

domestic/single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description

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ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

(enter categories from instructions)

late 19th and early 20th century  
American movements

\_\_\_\_\_

MATERIALS

(enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls wood/weatherboard

roof metal/copper

other

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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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.

John J. Lincoln House  
name of property

McDowell, WV  
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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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

(enter categories from instructions)

architecture

industry

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

1899-1942

SIGNIFICANT DATES

n/a

SIGNIFICANT PERSON

(complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Lincoln, John J.

CULTURAL AFFILIATION

n/a

ARCHITECT/BUILDER

unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

John J. Lincoln House  
name of property

McDowell, WV  
county and state

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): n/a

- \_ 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- \_ Other State agency
- \_ Federal agency
- \_ Local government
- \_ University
- ☒ other      Name of Repository: Eastern Regional Coal Archives,  
Bluefield, WV

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: 2.5

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing			Zone Easting Northing		
1	<u>17</u>	<u>463470</u>	<u>4137480</u>	2	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone    Easting    Northing
3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	D	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone    Easting    Northing See

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheets.)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheets.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Stacy Sone, surveyor

Organization: WV SHPO      Date: April 14, 1992

Street & Number: Cultural Center      Telephone: 304-558-0220

City or Town: Charleston      State: WV ZIP: 25305

John J. Lincoln House  
name of property

McDowell, WV  
county and state

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ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

CONTINUATION SHEETS

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.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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PROPERTY OWNER

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

Name: Robert R. Beasley

Street & Number: P.O. Box 136 Telephone: 304-862-2137

City or Town: Elkhorn State: WV ZIP: 24831

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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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

section number 7 Page 1

John J. Lincoln house

The John J. Lincoln house sits in a spacious yard on the western end of the once-bustling community of Elkhorn. The prominent coal operator's house is typical, in many ways of other large houses built in the United States at the turn of the century. Its style shows the transition between the Victorian period and the simpler, functional houses built during the early twentieth century. The house's outstanding characteristics are its stone foundation, multigabled roofline, and half-timber decoration. It has undergone few changes and retains the qualities that associate it with its original owner and the coal mining industry.

The house sits on a coursed, rough stone foundation that was carefully laid by a skilled mason. All of the exterior fabric is clapboard except for the end of one gable on the west side that is covered with wooden shingles. The copper roof is the original that Lincoln had installed for an astronomical \$1500 in 1899. The plan is roughly an L and its roof is made up of gables that intersect one another. Four of the gables hold a half-timbered design that is different in each one.

The main entrance stands in the center of the north facade behind a hipped roof wrap-around porch. The porch extends across the entire facade and part of the east side. Its supports are spaced evenly with a decorative, flat-arched span and a balustrade between each. The porch terminates on the house's east side where it meets a two-story gabled extension. A glass-enclosed room with the same roof and characteristics as the porch sits near the rear on the house's east side. This may have been an open porch at one time but was enclosed while Lincoln occupied the house. A narrow, gabled-roof elevator shaft is located on the rear corner.

A hipped roof sleeping porch is located on the second story of the house's rear. The space beneath it is open and holds a rear entrance and an enclosed stairway that leads directly to the sleeping porch. The west side of the house has two gables of unequal size that intersect with the front gable. Both display a straight-lined half-timbered design. On the first floor of the west side is a segmental bay window. The foundation is high enough on this side of the house to hold a three-part, multipaned window. A band of smooth stone voussoirs and a keystone stand over the window and smooth stone sills below.

The house's interior remains intact and includes some of its original furniture. Fireplaces with decorative mantels stand in perfect condition in the formal rooms. A large craftsman-style stone fireplace is located in a smaller room near the base of the stairway.

The surrounding two and a half acres provide a magnificent setting for the Lincoln house. The yard is spacious and slopes gently downward towards

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John J. Lincoln house

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the Elkhorn Creek. Poplar and maple trees that Lincoln planted dot the landscape. A second house, a contributing building, stands in the rear of the lot behind Lincoln's house. It is a two-story, clapboard I house with two front bays, one side bay, a shed porch, and a rear shed room. Another building, standing east of the main house, served as a school for Lincoln's children and is also a contributing building. The clapboard school has a side gabled roof, five front and three side bays, and a panelled door. The single door stands in the center in a steeply gabled, projecting bay. A hipped roof, clapboard-sided dairy house stands on the west side of the caretakers' house and is a contributing structure. A small swimming pool located on the east side of the main house is another contributing structure.

The house and grounds remain substantially unaltered from their original condition. The current owners have made no changes and have kept the property in flawless condition.



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John J. Lincoln house

The John J. Lincoln house is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its historical association with southern West Virginia's coal mining industry; under criterion B for its association with John J. Lincoln, one of the industry's most influential leaders; and under criterion C for its architectural significance. Well before the turn of the twentieth century, northern capitalists began to develop the southern West Virginia wilderness as the nation's industries demanded vast quantities of the high quality coal hidden beneath its rugged terrain. After the construction of railroads, McDowell County quickly transformed into an industrial center known world wide for its highest quality coal. John J. Lincoln, who reluctantly came to West Virginia from Pennsylvania, became one of the county's most progressive business leaders in the newly opened Pocahontas Coalfield. Lincoln was a respected businessman who used his influence in many positions to set the course for McDowell County's rapid development. The house he constructed for his family at Elkhorn is evidence of his success and prominence in the community. Its period of significance ranges from its 1899 construction date to 1942, the arbitrary fifty-year limit. A coal operator resided in most every mining community but few of their houses in McDowell County survived intact after the coal industry declined. The Lincoln house, is outstanding architecturally for its size, multigable roofline, wrap porch, and its applied half-timber decoration. The house has been well maintained and stands as impressively as it did when Lincoln resided there.

Before northern businessmen discovered the value of southern West Virginia's coal, the area was sparsely settled and contained only a few scattered farms. Natives used the coal but because of its inaccessibility, the resource remained largely untapped. As the nation became more industrial-minded, however, capitalists from Pennsylvania began to explore ways to access the coal. Ambitious and farsighted businessmen began to acquire huge tracts of valuable land in the great Pocahontas field, organized land holding companies, and constructed railroads into the isolated mountains. After the completion of a rail tunnel through Flat Top Mountain from Mercer County, large scale development of McDowell County forged ahead. Mines quickly sprang up all along the N & W line in the narrow valleys.

The tiny native population quickly proved inadequate for such a labor intensive industry. In order to satisfy the labor requirements, operators recruited workers from the older coalfields of Pennsylvania and then from Europe and the American South. The population grew phenomenally at the

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turn of the century as blacks and immigrants from Eastern Europe poured into the remote county.

To accommodate these new arrivals, coal companies built entire self-sufficient communities. The construction of company towns was absolutely necessary in southern West Virginia. Unlike the northern coalfields where mining operations began in regions that were already settled, southern operations opened in sparsely settled areas with few organized communities. Good roads in southern West Virginia were scarce and the rugged terrain made the daily transportation of miners impossible. In response to these obstacles, companies established their own communities to house their workers. The company town was the most logical solution because it provided efficient and inexpensive housing for a large labor force. Because of the lack of usable space in the narrow valleys, communities had to be carefully planned in order to accommodate all of the industry's necessary facilities.

The coal operator was a key figure in planning and establishing the mine complex and the residential community. Most of the early operators who came to the Pocahontas Coalfield were from out of state and had worked in coal mines in their home territory. Their familiarity with the operation gave the most ambitious and courageous workers the confidence to develop the southern West Virginia wilderness. On land leased from large northern-based land holding companies, the operator established mines and constructed company towns. They were important figures in the mining industry because of their active role in every aspect of the industry and community. Realizing the importance of the employees' satisfaction, operators built ideal communities for their workers complete with a store to supply all of their needs, churches, schools, recreational and health facilities, and often a clubhouse. Operators sometimes sponsored events and cultural activities to please their residents. Although some chose to distance themselves from the bustling activity and noisy mine operation, they still generally lived in the community which created a camaraderie between the miners and the operator.

Many coal operators in McDowell County won the praise of their employees by being outstanding and personal community leaders. Residents throughout the county regarded John J. Lincoln as an exceptional operator whose interest extended beyond his own company and community. Like many pioneer coal operators, Lincoln journeyed from Pennsylvania for the opportunity to develop the vast coalfield. He was inexperienced at the time, just having completed his engineering degree at Lehigh University. A classmate from Pennsylvania invited Lincoln to southern West Virginia to join him in establishing mines in the rich land. Lincoln came to the area reluctantly

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John J. Lincoln house

but soon realized its potential. He became chief engineer and superintendent for the Crozer Land Association which was based in Elkhorn and ended up living the rest of his life in that community.

By the time Lincoln had arrived in McDowell County, work was already underway to construct mine operations in Elkhorn. For several years the community had been the end of the N & W line but shortly before Lincoln's arrival, the track had been laid a few miles further to Northfork. Elkhorn consisted of a cluster of houses and a few other buildings that the Crozer Land Company had quickly constructed to house their workers. Under Lincoln's management, Elkhorn soon became a thriving community that boasted three successful coal companies.

Lincoln became one of the county's most respected business leaders and held a variety of important positions. In addition to climbing to the vice president's office of the Crozer Land Association, Lincoln also became the general manager of the Crozer, Upland, and Page Coal and Coke Companies. Other positions he held included director of the McDowell County National Bank in Welch, president of the Northfork Realty and Land Companies, and chairman of the executive committee of the Pocahontas Operator's Association. For over thirty years, Lincoln served as an executive of the Bluefield Telephone Company which he helped organize to serve residents in McDowell and Mercer Counties.

Although Lincoln was a successful coal operator and a leader in the industry's development, he is also known for his involvement in public services. As president of the Board of Education of the Elkhorn district, he supervised many improvements in the school program and facilities. Lincoln also served as the president of the McDowell County Court, a member of the West Virginia Tax Commission, and the WWII Selective Service Board.

John J. Lincoln's business affairs extended throughout much of the county but Elkhorn was his home and he went to great lengths to make it a pleasant place for all of its employees and their families. Elkhorn residents recall Lincoln as a kind and generous operator who made it a point to know his employees and to provide for their various needs. He offered comfortable houses for miners, left trees intact throughout the community, and built different churches to accommodate the residents' diverse religious affiliations. The churches he constructed included one for Quakers of which he was a member, and a gold-domed Orthodox church for the community's east European immigrants. Lincoln sponsored cultural

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events too such as Elkhorn Orchestra concerts on his lawn. An article written shortly after his death described Lincoln as a brilliant executive, a kind and understanding employer, and a generous friend. Although coal mining ceased early in the 1950's, Elkhorn remains one of the most intact and picturesque coal communities in southern West Virginia.

Like other successful coal operators in southern West Virginia, Lincoln lived in a large distinguished house. He built the house in 1899 as a gift for his bride whom he married that year in Pennsylvania. He lived there with his wife, raising four children, until he died in 1948. The house is large and impressive with its multigabled roofline, stone foundation, wrap-around porch, and distinctive half-timber decoration. Its style represents a transition between the Victorian period and the simpler styles of the early twentieth century. Its irregular plan and roofline and its wrap porch relate somewhat to the late Victorian houses that were known for their sprawling plans, towered rooflines, and exuberant decoration. Before the turn of the century, house designs became increasingly functional and much less ostentatious. Lincoln's house represents an in-between phase common around 1900. Although its plan is irregular, it is basically a functional L and its roofline is made up of gables organized to follow the plan. The decoration is limited to four of the gables where there is a different half-timber design applied to each. These characteristics are scaled-down features of the Victorian period and show the trend toward simpler residential design.

The spacious yard provides a pristine setting for the house. It sits on a level space near the Elkhorn Creek and the yard gently slopes down from the house. Some of the trees that Lincoln planted still grace the yard. He built a two-story house behind his own for the maid and a chauffeur, a couple that the Lincoln's employed for many years. The gabled building east of the main house served as a school for Lincoln's children and other managers' children.

After Lincoln died, the Pocahontas Fuel Company bought control and used the house for board meetings and other business functions. In 1962, the company sold it to its present owners. The house has undergone few changes since the coal operator resided there. The interior remains intact and even contains some of the original furniture. Only a handful of McDowell County coal operators' houses remain in good condition. Others have fallen into disrepair and some have been altered so extensively that they have lost their association with the original owner and the mining industry. The property's current owners have carefully maintained the house and grounds so that it retains the qualities that associate it with the coal industry and the well-known operator who resided there.

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9.

bibliography

- Archer, William. "Coal Barons: A Forgotten Way". The Observer (March 9, 1988).
- Bailey, Mrs. J. Will. "John J. Lincoln". McDowell County Centennial, 1858-1958.
- Beasley, Mr. and Mrs. Robert R., property owners. site visits, April 2, 9, 22, 1992.
- "Coal". The West Virginia Review. 17(April, 1940).
- "Col. John J. Lincoln, 82, Dies at Elkhorn". The Welch Daily News, January 24, 1948.
- Elkhorn, file, Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Bluefield, WV.
- Eller, Ronald D. Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers. Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1982.
- "John J. Lincoln Dies at Elkhorn". Bluefield Daily Telegraph, January 24, 1948.
- McGehee, Stuart. "A Busy Time in McDowell History. Looking Back with John J. Lincoln". Goldenseal 15(Fall, 1989).

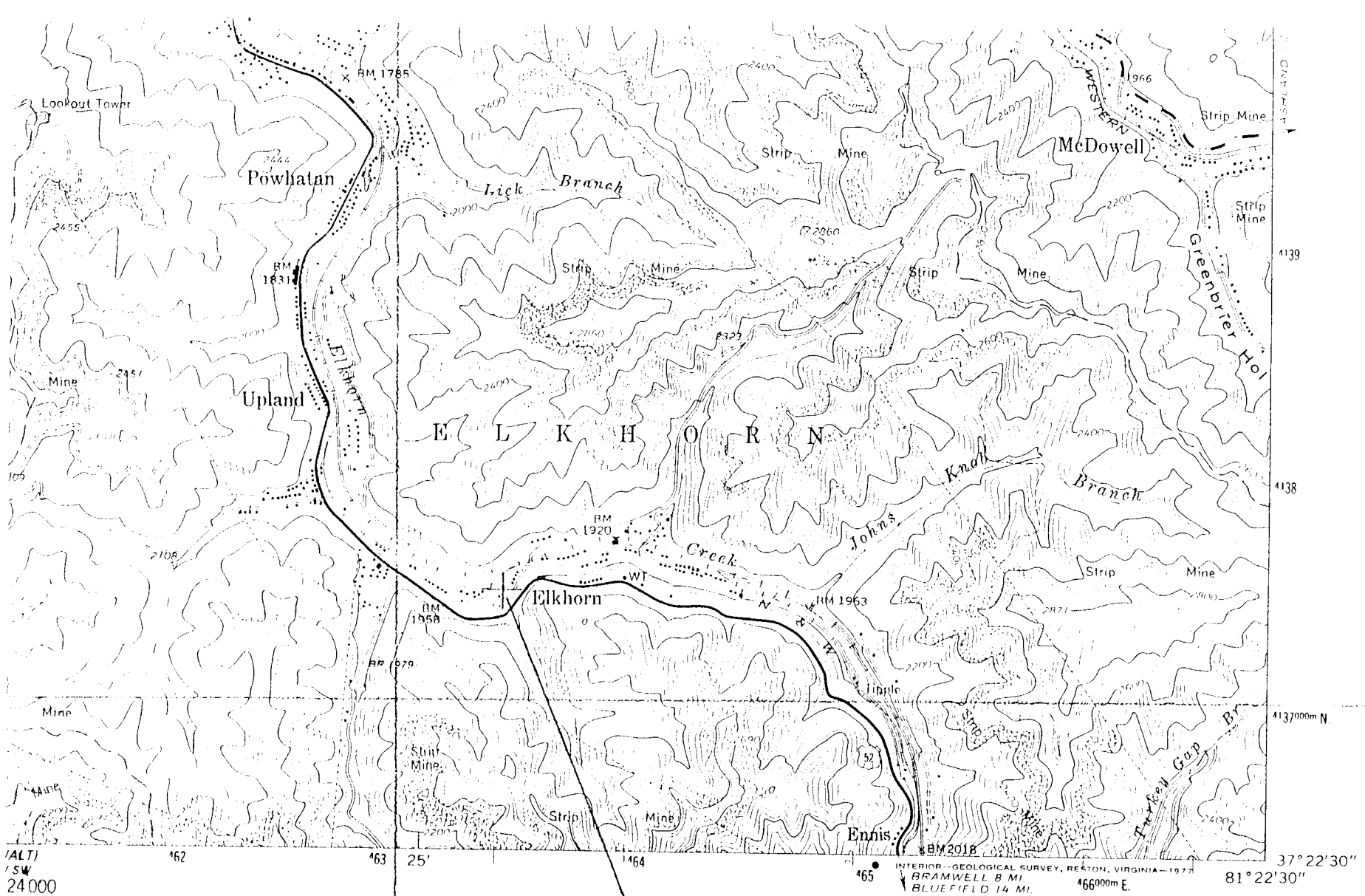
10.

verbal boundary description

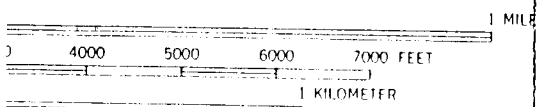
From the intersection of highway 52 and Elkhorn Creek road, proceed 250' to the west, 400' north, 250' east, and 400' to the south forming a rectangle around the property.

boundary justification

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the John J. Lincoln house.



1/4 (ALT)  
1/4 SW  
24000



VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
NAD 83, RESTON, VIRG. 22092  
AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



John J. Lincoln House  
off highway 52  
Elkhorn, McDowell Co., WV  
17/463470/4137480

### ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Primary highway, all weather, hard surface   | Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface |
| Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface | Unimproved road, fair or dry weather           |

KEYSTONE, W. VA.  
NW/4 BRAMWELL 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3722.5—W8122.5/7.5

1967  
PHOTOREVISED 1976  
AMS 4750 IV NW, SERIES 1000

(BRAMWELL)  
4638 N 5E



