

## 'Fort Egypt' added to historic landmarks

Fort Egypt, a familiar and well-loved Page County landmark home, has been added to the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register, it was announced this week.

The register was established by the General Assembly in 1966 as a vehicle for identifying and calling attention to landmarks of Virginia history. All places

designated for the register are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the Department of the Interior.

The Virginia Landmarks Register includes over 800 buildings, districts and sites around the state having outstanding

architectural, historical or archeological significance.

A statement of significance with the announcement this week noted that Fort Egypt is "a large full-dovetailed log house near the Shenandoah River in the shadow of Massanutten Mountain" and "is one of the earliest and most complete of the small group of Continental farmhouses which recall the original settlement of the Massanutten region by Swiss settlers coming from Pennsylvania in the second quarter of the 18th century.

"Owned through most of its early existence by the Strickler and Stover families and still in the hands of Strickler descendants, Fort Egypt is important both as an outstanding example of a European house type rare in Virginia and as a familiar and well-loved local landmark.

"The tract on which Fort Egypt stands, a fertile piece of lowland nestled in a turn of the Shenandoah River long known as Egypt Bend, was part of a 1000-acre tract obtained by Abraham Strickler from Jacob Stover, the Pennsylvania land promoter responsible for the first settlement of this part of the Shenandoah Valley. Because of legal difficulties with Stover's title, the Strickler holdings had to be regranted and confirmed several times in the 30 years after settlement.

"Strickler died in 1746. His inventory, one of the few early ones for German-speaking settlers, reveals his ethnicity—it includes 6 Dutch sithes and three stove plates—and his apparent vocation (in addition to farming), for he owned a parcel of Turners Tools and the rest of the Tools belonging to the Turners lathe, possessions which suggest that he made furniture.

"Jacob Strickler, Abraham's son, inherited one-fifth (208 acres) of his father's tract. The younger Strickler, a

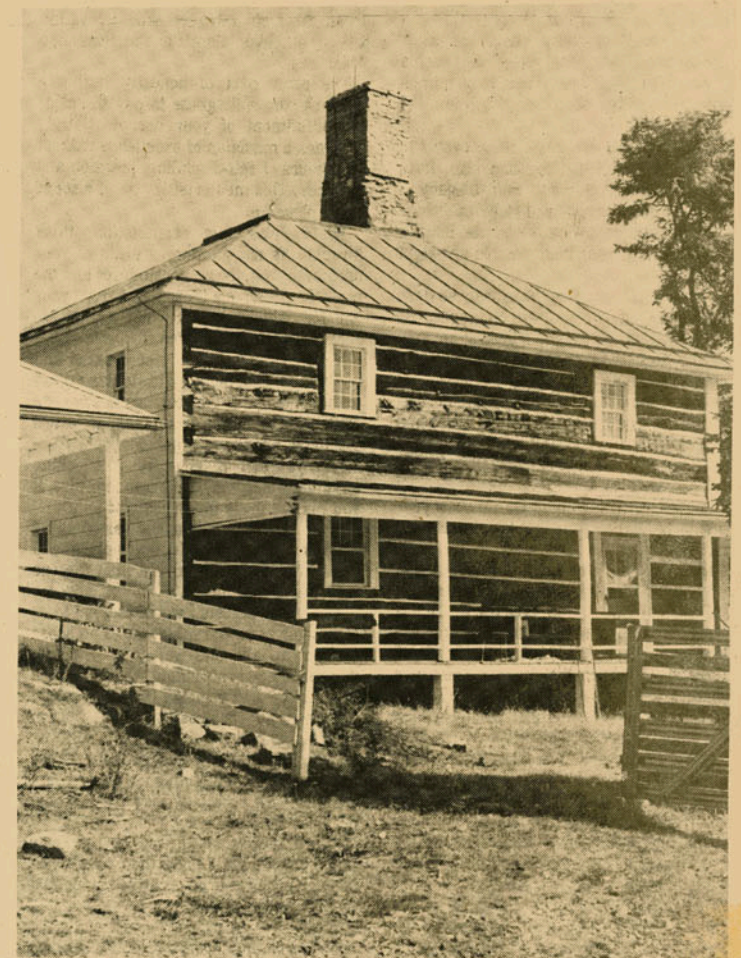
well-known Mennonite preacher, built Fort Egypt. He chose a house plan common to the Rhineland of Germany and Switzerland, a central-chimney building with a narrow kitchen to one side and a large formal parlor and smaller chamber on the other. Beneath it are two cellars, including a vaulted one which was used to keep perishable foods cool. Iron and wooden hooks survive to recall its original function.

"After Jacob Strickler's death, ca. 1784, his son John inherited the property. But, probably because of the family's Mennonite connections—the church teaches that its members should care for each other's well-being—John and his mother agreed that he would take an equal share of the farm with his siblings and that she would get the customary widow's thirds.

"After 1787, when his mother remarried (to Abraham Heiston, owner of the nearby Heiston-Strickler House, another of the Page County Continental houses), John Strickler occupied his father's tract. At his death in 1802, the property was divided among his siblings, who had been minors at the time of Jacob Strickler's death.

"Daniel Stover, a relative of the builder of Fort Stover, yet another of the nearby Page County Germanic houses, bought the 208-acre Fort Egypt tract in the ensuing years after John Strickler's estate was settled. The Stovers held the property until 1852, when it was sold to Jacob Shenk, who owned it until Jacob C. Bowers bought it in 1895.

"Bowers sold it a year later to Jacob C. Burner. After Burner's death in 1926, the Fort Egypt tract was sold to S. Berry Hoover, whose heirs still own it. It is worth mentioning that through all of these sales and changes in surname, the property has remained in the hands of the builder's descendants."



Fort Egypt west of Luray, a Historic Landmark

## Grant to employ youth, improve Lake Arrowhead

New funding for the Luray Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) program will produce further improvements to the town's recreation at Lake Arrowhead.

hour for a 40-hour work week, Johnson said.

The remaining \$21,932 will be used for operating costs of the improvements at

completed, a play area adjacent to the Lions' shelter," he added.

One nature trail at the 132-acre

Five young men have already been employed for the April 1-Sept. 30 program.

Five other young men or women will be hired through the Virginia Employment