



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

30 North Market Street, Third Floor Frederick, Maryland 21701 (301) 600-1147



CASE NO. 23-05

NOMINATION TO COUNTY REGISTER

STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY

Property: Judge William J. Stoner Farmhouse
8118 Apples Church Rd. Thurmont, MD 21788

Applicant: Kathleen and Eric Lewis

Public Hearing for consideration of placing the property located at 8118 Apples Church Rd, Judge William Stoner Farmhouse, on the Frederick County Register of Historic Places. Submitted by Kathleen and Eric Lewis, property owner of record.

The public hearing for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places will be held at 6:30 p.m., or thereafter, on June 5, 2024.



Figure 1: Subject Property

DESIGNATION STATUS

The property has not been previously surveyed or nominated to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Places or the National Register of Historic Places. The property contains the historic house, a historic springhouse ruin, and six non-contributing outbuildings. The nominated property encompasses 25.28 acres of land.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The applicant submitted a completed County Register nomination form, written historical and architectural narratives for the house, a summary of property ownership, historic and modern maps, and digital photographs.

SITE VISITS

Staff scheduled site visits on May 31st and June 1st, 2024. Commissioners were notified of the pending nomination and encouraged to visit the site on these dates.

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

1) Analysis

The documentation submitted by the applicant regarding the history and significance of the property clearly establishes the historical and architectural significance of the Judge William J. Stoner House indicating that the property is eligible for listing under Criteria 6B(1C), 6B(1D), and 6B(2A). The period of significance for the property is from 1853, the purchase date for the property by J.R. Stoner, to 1951, when Gerturde Stoner sold the property following Judge William J. Stoner's death.

2) History Summary

The property is eligible under this category for meeting criterion 6B(1C) and 6B(1D) as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6 of Frederick County Code:

- 6B(1C) The property is identified with a person or group of persons who influenced society.
- 6B(1D) The property exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities.

The land is traceable back to 1744, when it was part of a nearly 1700-acre tract known as "Arnold's Delight," owned by Arnold Livers. Daniel Stoner purchased 132 acres of the tract on March 3rd, 1852, and sold the land to his son John R. Stoner just one year later on May 7th, 1853, for \$3,300. John R. Stoner was the property owner when the house was built.

John R. Stoner was a third-generation farmer in north Maryland. John's grandfather, David Stoner, and great uncles emigrated from Germany sometime in the 18th century, settling in the areas of Union Bridge of Carroll County and Antietam of Washington County. Folger McKinsey describes John as "probably the best-known agriculturist of Mechanicstown district." To further solidify his standing as a prominent member of the community, John also served as a director of the W. F. & G. Railroad Company and the Bank of Thurmont.

In 1876, John R. Stoner married Martha R. Stansbury, the daughter of Nicholas and Amelia Stanbury, prominent members of the Emmitsburg district community. The couple had two sons, John T. Stoner (born in 1878) and William J. Stoner (born in 1881). Both boys were raised on the Apples Church Road farmstead.

In 1898, at the age of seventeen, William graduated school in Thurmont and left Frederick County to attend a business course in Baltimore. He returned to his family farm sometime before 1903, when he married Mary Gertrude Rouzer, the daughter of a prominent dry goods merchant. As J.R. Stoner remained in charge of the Stoner family farm, William moved into the town of Thurmont and began working for his father-in-law, Daniel R. Rouzer, before entering politics in 1919. He quickly began engaging in local activities and civic affairs, becoming a well-known and respected member of the community. William served on the Thurmont Community Club Committee, the Farmer's Institution Flower Committee, as a past master of the Acacia Lodge Free Masons of Thurmont, and as the Thurmont Baseball Club team manager. In addition, he was the director of both the Bank of Thurmont and the Thurmont District Democratic Party for multiple years.

He excelled in civic activities and began engaging in local politics. William was first elected as the treasurer of the Thurmont Board of Commissioners in 1919 and retained the office until 1924 before becoming the president, a position equivalent to the town mayor. William served in this position until 1928 before taking a multi-year hiatus, having either voluntarily stepped down from office or refrained from running for re-election. He would return to office in either 1931 or 1935 and served as the president of the Thurmont Board of Commissioners consistently until 1945.

In addition to his mayorship role, William was also Thurmont's presiding Justice of the Peace and trial magistrate, a two-year term position that was appointed by the state governor. He was first appointed in 1932 and served 18 consecutive years until his death in 1950. The responsibilities of this position included presiding over Thurmont's civil and criminal courts, as well as regulating the sales of hunting, fishing, and dog licenses in the area. Local historical accounts remember William as a reasonable, fair, and committed adjudicator, with very little controversy or complaint from either police officers or defendants. William's approach to trial was a "homey" one, having held court out of the basement office of his Main Street home for the duration of his terms, a method that only solidified his local notoriety and charm.

William never slowed in his commitment to the community. In 1931, he began to lose his eyesight. His condition quickly deteriorated, despite attempts of operational treatment at Johns

Hopkins Hospital. By January of 1936, became completely blind, yet still excelled in his position as the president of the Thurmont Board of Commissioners and local magistrate.

On November 25th, 1950, while still serving as the Thurmont trial magistrate, William suffered a heart attack, passing away a few days later at his East Main Street home. He was an active and vigorous leader in Thurmont for nearly 50 years, setting an example of community stewardship and making significant contributions to the quality and balance of civic life in the Thurmont area.

3) Architectural and Design Significance Criteria

The property is also eligible under this category for meeting criterion 6B(2A) as outlined in Chapter 1-23-6 of Frederick County Code:

- 6B(2A): *The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or architecture.*

The Judge William Stoner Farmhouse is a stately brick building dating back to the mid-19th century. It's located on Apples Church Road about two miles northeast of Thurmont, Maryland. The location is defined by its expansive surroundings of rural farmland and dense woods.

The farmhouse is a two-and-a-half story, cross-gabled, frame and brick building with decorative mixed-European influences. There is a two-level stacked porch at its center. Each porch is slightly recessed and partially enclosed by a single bay on each side. The building sits on a rough-cut stone foundation with whitewashed brick elevations. The roof is a moderately-pitched standing seam metal with snowbirds. A pair of end chimneys extend above the roofline at the east and west ends of the roof. The east-end chimney includes a metal chimney pipe that extends upward. There is a slight eave overhang on the façade and rear-facing elevation, however there is no overhang on the side elevations. The façade faces south towards the circular dead-end of Fraley Road. From its end, Fraley Road extends west and parallel to the building before turning south where it intersects with an east-west running Apples Church Road. The south-facing property is largely flat and open, while the north-facing property slopes downward towards a wooded area. Northeast of the building are the stone ruins of a 19th-century springhouse.

The façade has several decorative features that make it unique from the other farmhouses in the area. A highly ornate, whitewashed cast iron railing runs from the flanking bays to enclose the upper porch. Decorative wooden bracket supports are in both the upper-left and right corners of upper porch supporting a wood vertical-siding cross gable dormer. The dormer's eave overhang is supported by five decorative wooden brackets. Centered in the dormer is a decorative flower-shaped wooden fixture. The second-story windows have a wooden lintel featuring raised decorative crosses at each end. The first-story windows have a wooden lintel featuring raised decorative butterflies at each end.

The Judge William J. Stoner house retains its architectural integrity and significance.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Judge William J. Stoner House for designation to the Frederick County Register of Historic Places pursuant to 6B(1C), 6B(1D), and 6B(2A) as described in Section 1-23-6 of the County Code.

If the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recommends the property for local designation, the HPC will submit a letter of recommendation to the County Council for final action.