

## Landmarks Nomination Report Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission

### **Jacob Homar Barn**

10858 Leetown Road  
Kearneysville, WV 25430

#### **Physical Description:**

The Jacob Homar Barn is located at 10858 Leetown Road, just south of Leetown. The barn sits along the east side of County Route 1, or Leetown Road, near the intersection Sulphur Springs Road. The parcel includes a bank barn, stonewall, and fenced pasture. The historic house adjacent to the barn has been divided onto another parcel.

#### **Historic Description:**

The farm on which the Jacob Homar Barn sits was part of Jacob Hite's *Hopewell* plantation of over 2,600 acres. Of that, about 1,500 acres was sold to Maj. Gen. Charles Lee in 1775. Lee renamed the property *Prato Rio* before he died in 1782. This plantation was divided into four parcels by his will. Two of the parcels, including the *Hopewell* or *Prato Rio* house, for a total of approximately 1,100 were sold to Rich Willis around 1788. Willis sold off the 630-acre parcel with a frame house built by 1798, and retained the 550-acre *Prato Rio* tract with the stone house until 1811 when he sold it to Johannes Sharp (Sharff). Hailing from Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, Johannes Sharff was 65 years old when he purchased the *Prato Rio* property. He had eight grown children, three of them sons, and may have purchased the property with their inheritance in mind. When he died on December 26, 1815, his oldest son John's first child was just 3 months old. The tax assessment for the John Sharff [sic] heirs in 1816 was for 551 acres adjoining "A. Weaver," still at the rate of \$8.61 that their father was taxed. The 1820 assessment listed John, James, and Peter Sharff with 540 ½ acres with a building value of \$600 [*Prato Rio*]. Elizabeth Sharff was listed separately with 10 acres and a building value of \$100. John and Peter Sharpe [sic] were listed on the 1820 census in separate households immediately following Adam Weaver. Both were listed as farmers and neither were slave owners. Peter Sharff's tract did not appear separately taxed however until 1825 when Peter was listed with 180 acres with a building value of \$100. Elizabeth still had her 10 acres with a \$100 building, and "John & J Sharff" had 360 ½ acres with \$600 in buildings. Since the John and James Sharff building value did not change after Peter's acreage was removed from the valuation, it appears that Peter's log dwelling house (adjacent to the barn) was probably constructed in 1824-25. Peter Sharff sold his tract by the end of 1825 "by Bill & Sale" to Jacob Homar, who was listed on the 1826 land tax with the 180 acres and a \$100 building value. Jacob Homar's tax assessment and building value did not change until 1832 when the building value rose to \$1,000 with the notation, "\$900 added for brick barn." By 1852, when S. Howell Brown drew his map, Jacob Homar had passed away and the property was listed under "Jacob Homar's heirs." The land is currently owned by Lee and Katie Jones.

**Historic Resource:**

The Jacob Homar Barn is a rare bank barn example in Jefferson County. Constructed in 1832, this structure is one of only two brick bank barns remaining in Jefferson County. Measuring 75 feet long by 38 feet wide, the barn is similar in size to most of the county's bank barns. The structure rests on a limestone foundation with small quoins, atypical for the period of construction. The ashlar wall stone is also unusually squared and carefully constructed for an agricultural building. The barn has symmetrical brick gables, each inlaid with twelve diamond ventilators. The brick masonry walls are 16 inches thick and laid in a 5:1 common bond. The western wall has four vents flanking a pair of double doors hung on large pintels. These pairs of doors, each measuring 18 feet wide, open into an unusually large threshing floor. The eastern, or forebay, side of the barn has doors that open on the top floor. The interior framing of the barn is standard, except for the radius framing around the forebay doors. The roof has common rafters supported at the mid-point by purlins. Below the forebay on the ground floor are six man doors and a central wagon door, each topped by a barred transom. The man doors are 42" wide with the exception of the southern-most door, which is 50" across. This stall was used for horses and needed a wider opening. The stalls are divided with hay ricks and the floor above is supported by a very large summer beam. The forebay is cantilevered on hand-hewn floor joists that run six feet past the rear wall of the barn. The forebay is enclosed on each gable end by the foundation wall. A modern shed addition has been attached to the forebay side of the barn. Just beyond this shed is the historic stonewall that enclosed the barnyard.

**Nomination Criteria:**

The JCHLC nominates this property under Criteria C for inclusion on the list of registered county landmarks. Criteria C states that a site may be nominated if, in the opinion of the JCHLC, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that retains a high degree of integrity. The property owners, Lee & Katie Jones, have agreed to have the property listed as Jefferson County Historic Landmark.

**Nomination Action:**

The JCHLC voted unanimously to add the Jacob Homar Barn, under Criteria C, to the rolls of registered Jefferson County Historic Landmarks on May 21, 2014.