

LD-097

VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

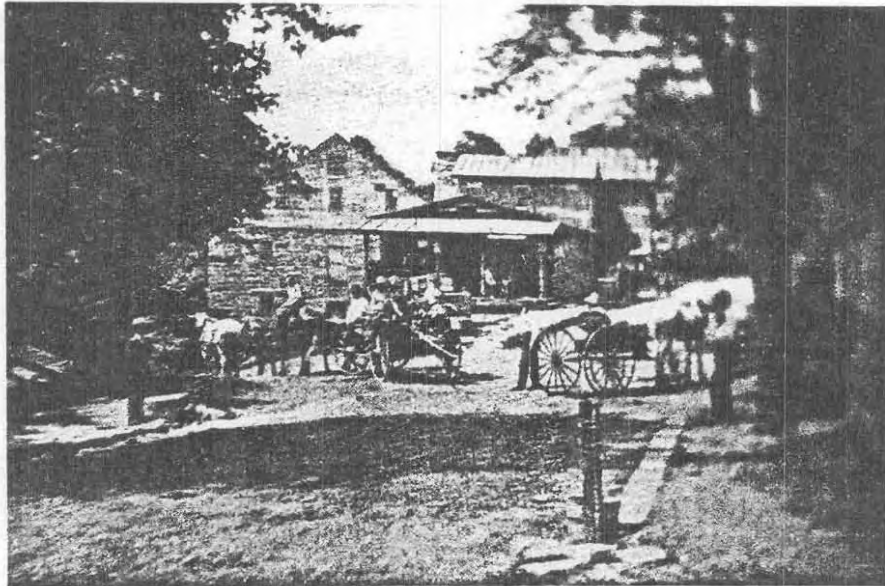
ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF THE OLDER AND
HISTORIC STRUCTURES IN THE TOWN
OF HILLSBORO, VIRGINIA

* BY *

John G. Lewis
Regional Representative
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Sponsored by the Landmarks Commission
in order to assist the citizens of the
Town with its Historic Preservation.

All photos by John G. Lewis
(taken 1974 with those on
Rt. 718 done in 1977)



The Gap Mills, from an early
photo.
On site of 236-20 3545

Special thanks and appreciation go
to the following for their kind
assistance in putting this Report
together.

Hon. Byron Farwell, Mayor
Members of the Town Council
Mrs. H. Randolph Barbee, Jr.

Mr. Joseph T. Martz, Clerk of the Circuit Court

The Loudoun Times-Mirror
The Piedmont Virginian

The Virginia State Library

- NOTES -

The comments made on the individual structures covered in this volume are based purely upon the Architectural features visible and the quality of the building as it now stands.

The use of "appears to be" - "early to mid" - "turn of the century" - etc., is due to not yet having had the opportunity to examine each individual structure on the interior.

HILLSBORO is listed in District Number 8, Paragraph 8-J, Short Hill Area, by the Division of State Planning and Community Affairs in their December 1972 "Critical Environmental Areas". In which among other things they state "unsuitable for intense development".

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Reference to WPA Forms is for identification on which go with what property. Information as to dates of construction in these is not accurate.

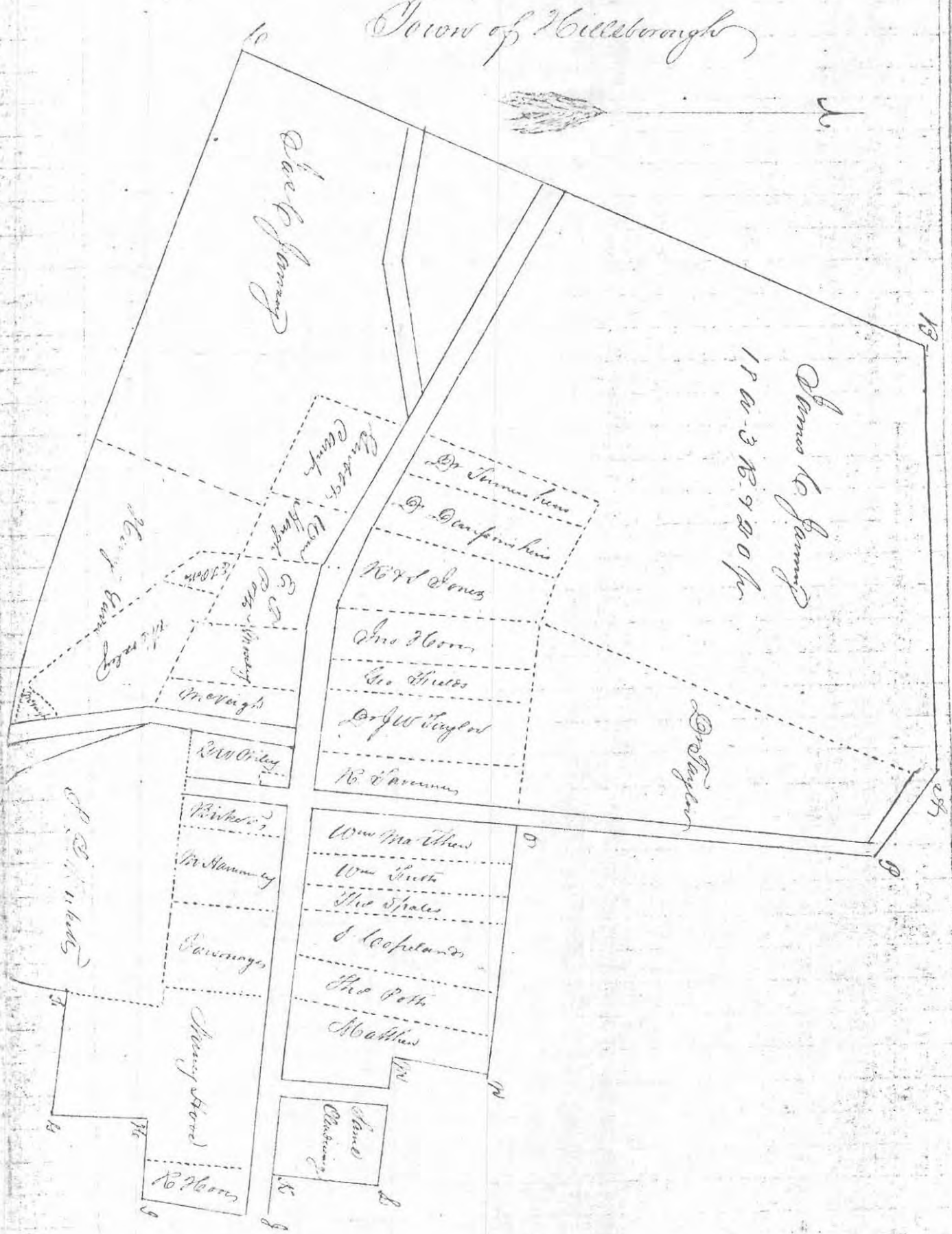
- RECOMMENDATIONS -

1. If the owners of these properties are interested, a program of Easements should be embarked upon, on properties not only in the Town, but on those on both the east and west end approaches to the Town. This is espically essential in order to preserve its present rural and uncluttered quality. Thus preventing the spreading of commercialization which has wrecked the approaches to so many Towns already. Quiet family run commercial operations could easily be accomodated in some of the existing structures, as has been done in the past. The Hill Tom Market and Filling Station to the west of it should be encouraged to remain.

2. Public Facilities, espically Water and Sewer Systems (or "Pollution Control Projects") should be limited like the village of Waterford, to serve only the existing structures and available lots which now exist within the incorporated area of the Town, and which are now legally recorded at this time.

3. All future exterior alterations or additions to the existing buildings, or construction of new buildings, should take into consideration their period, scale and that of the neighborhood. Such alterations, additions or new construction, should be of a compatable scale and material, with any new structures being either well designed period or contemporary in style, scale and proportion.

Town of Hillsborough



S 68° E 19⁵⁰/₁₀₀ poles to E, thence to 19° E 14 poles to F, thence S 72° E 12 poles to G, thence N 75° E 10 poles to H, thence S 75° E 8 poles to I, thence N 17° E 13 poles to J, thence N 76° W 11 poles to K, thence N 16° E 10⁵⁰/₁₀₀ poles to L, thence N 75° W 12⁵⁰/₁₀₀ poles to M, thence N 21° E 9⁵⁰/₁₀₀ poles to N, thence N 75° W 12⁵⁰/₁₀₀ poles to O, thence S 17° E 3⁵⁰/₁₀₀ poles to P, thence N 47° W 10⁵⁰/₁₀₀ poles to the beginning.

20th May 1873

Jack Kelly

The Town of Hillsboro is one of the most unique of Loudoun County's historic areas, not only for its numerous field stone dwellings, some of which date from the 18th century, but also for its picturesque setting in the gap of the Short Hill mountains. The steep slopes rising on both sides of the Town along with the North Fork of the Catoctin Creek on its southern boundry, not only provide great visual quality to the area but have protected it from growth and developement. Providing today an unspoiled quality of weathered stone, with a variety of white painted porches enhanced by a backdrop of ancient wooded hills.

See...
Sentinel fragment

Hillsboro is located on a portion of William Fairfax's Piedmont and Shennondale Manor grants from John Colvill in the 1740's, which was later conveyed to John Hough, one of Loudoun Countys famous mill owners, and lies within the boundries of the 150 acres which he conveyed to his son Mahlon Hough in 1788.

See...

As in the instance of many other Towns and Villages in the County, Hillsboro centered and expanded around the Mill of John Hough. About 1814 he sold this to Elisha Janney, who's sons James C. and Aquila Janney agreed to take down the log mill and erect a new stone one in 1837. Prior to his arrival, Elisha Janney had been a neighbor and close friend of George Washington and was appointed by him as Flour Inspector at the port of Alexandria, Virginia. According to a WPA Survey Form of the 1930's, the stone mill was seven stories high with a gable roof covered in slate, 60'X80'. It was a Wheat and Manufacturing mill which made fine flour, meal, and also ground Gypsum for use in plaster and to be sowed broadcast over the fields in the spring of each year as a fertilizer.

Art

The Hillsboro area still abounds with a large number of native families who have remained since the days of settlement, often on the original land grants to their ancestors. Names which appear on early deeds - Potts, Thompson, Grubb, Tribby, Hamerley, Copeland, Virts, Crim, Shoemaker, Everhart - can still be found all through the vicinity, and two 18th century houses, the Copeland Homestead and the James' "Possum's Rest", belong to direct decendants of the original builders.

Location?
out of district?

The first record of settlement in the Hillsboro area is a Fairfax County Deed showing that in 1746, David Potts leased 866 acres on the "Kittoctin Run" from Catesby Cocks for five Shillings paid in hand with the Right of Purchase and an annual Rental of one Ear of Indian Corn". The present home of Raymond and Lloyd Potts is near the original site of that of David Potts, and the old Potts Cemetery are still located on this land.

One of the first records of any activity in the area was the (twice) monthly meeting of the Gap Quakers, held in David Potts' house in 1755. In 1788 a substantial stone Meeting House was built near the western end of the Town (on the North side of Route 9) on two acres deeded to the Trustees of the Meeting by Mahlon Hough. By 1804 the Fairfax Meeting minutes noted that the Gap Meeting was a constant source of worry due to dissension, disorder and "the great deficiencies of the Gap Friends in several particulars", was small, and by 1805 it had been "laid down" (discontinued), by its parent organization, the Fairfax Meeting. The building was for sometime used as a school and then later taken down. Many graves nereby, marked only with a fieldstone, remain at the site, as well as the Grubb burial ground enclosed by an Iron Fence, and the massive stone steps which led up to the Meeting House.

No mention of the area would be complete without reference to the McIlhaney family. Although not Quakers, John and his wife Sarah, a Stuart, fled Scotland in 1745. Landing at Yorktown, they eventually settled in northwestern Fairfax, later to be known as Loudoun County, on a tract of land east of Hillsboro on which the farm of Roland T. Legard is now located. John became a large landholder, a respected citizen and was commissioned by the Governor as High Sheriff of Loudoun. His sons John and James were Officers in the Revolutionary War. At one time James owned nearly 9,000 acres extending from Hillsboro to Lovettsville and another 4,000 acres on the Goose Creek near Lincoln. At his death in 1804, the family fortunes were dissipated, and all decendants have since left the County. The old home was apparently torn down about 1870, but the McIlhaney graveyard where John McIlhaney is buried remains on the Legard farm, surrounded by a stone wall.

Edward Thompson, a Quaker who lived near the Gap of the Short Hill by 1754, kept a Tavern or Ordinary which was patronized frequently by none other than George Washington on his way from Mount Vernon to "Harewood", the home of his

brother Samuel Washington, in what is now Jefferson County, West Virginia. No doubt he was the Vestal Gap Road's most illustrious traveler.

It is known that this road, the present State Route 9, was in existence some fifty years before State Route 7. Running from Leesburg past William Mains "Dry Mill", through what is now Clarkes Gap, following the approximate way of Route 9 through Hillsboro and on west over Vestals Gap in the Blue Ridge mountains, crossing the Shenandoah River at Vestals, or Keys Ferry, and on to Charles Town, West Virginia.

Although there were mills and dwellings in The Gap in the last quarter of the 1700's, the Town of Hillsboro (spelled Hillsborough until its Incorporation in 1880) was not formally established until 31 December 1802, when it was given acknowledgment by Act of the General Assembly "on 25 acres already divided among a score of owners".

The first mill and millers house at The Gap was shown on a plat of "Tayloe's Kittoctin Lands", which is dated 1758. This is probably Butcher's mill referred to in early deeds at the site of the later Woolen mill, converted to this manufacture by Henry Gaver in the 1850's. It was located at the east end of the Town just west of where County Route 718 crosses the Catoctin Creek.

About this same time John Hough was building his log mill, already mentioned, upstream from Butcher's mill, which became known as "The Gap Mills". His son Mahlon Hough, one of the Trustees of the Town, sold many of the early lots there after he acquired the mill and 150 acres with it. By the early 1800's five mills were operating on the North Fork of the Catoctin Creek from Hillsboro west.

Joseph Martin in his "A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia", dated (1836), mentions "Hillsborough as being on the public road leading from Harpers Ferry to Leesburg...Four mails a week are received at Hillsborough. It contains 30 dwelling houses, 3 merchantile stores, 1 Methodist house of worship, 1 Academy, 2 flour manufacturing mills, 1 tavern and a temperance society. The merchants are a tanner, saddler, boot maker and shoe manufacturer, tailor, hatter, cabinet maker, two wagon makers and a blacksmith. The population is 172 persons; one of whom is a physician".

Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia of 1883 notes that the Town consists of "137 inhabitants with two churches, Methodist-Episcopal and Methodist-Episcopal South. Two free schools, one white and one colored. There are four general stores, one flour mill, one wollen mill, and numerous shops". The first church in the area was built at the east end of Town on land given by Michael Arnold in 1830. It is still known as Arnold Grove Methodist Church and has an active membership.

Had plans for the Alexandria, Loudoun and Hampshire Railroad not been changed after the Civil War, and the Loudoun Branch of the Manassas Gap Railroad gone into bankruptcy, Hillsboro might have been serviced by one or both of these. The former chose to go from Clarkes Gap through Hamilton, Purcellville and Round Hill to Snickersville, later known as Bluemont, and over the Blue Ridge to the coal fields in Hampshire County, West Virginia. Construction ended at Bluemont, thus providing it and the other Towns with access to the summer boarding trade and commercial expansion, but leaving Hillsboro by-passed and isolated. Although an advantage to the other Towns at the time, this has become a decidedly favorable factor now in the preservation of the Town.

A young man from Hillsboro who was a freshman student at Hampden-Sydney College some seventy years ago wrote in part; "The little Town of Hillsboro in which I live is situated in a Gap in one of the ranges of the great Blue Ridge mountains. On two sides rise steep heavily wooded mountains, while on each of the other two the Town looks out on a fertile valley, wherein nestle comfortable homes and productive farms. It consists of but one street over which great oaks and maples interlace their branches making a tunnel of foliage which is cool, shady and restful on hot summer days. Most of the houses are stone or brick, with here and there green yards, most of which are full of flowers. The water used in this Town is unsurpassed. High upon the mountain-side with no human habitation about, a great spring gushes out, and the water is conveyed through pipes to two public hydrants on the street and also to private homes. The surrounding country-side is the most beautiful one can amagine. It is very rolling, with rich fields containing either abundant crops or fat cattle, with here and there a stretch of woodland and the Blue Ridge mountains rising as a background for all. The people are good plain country people, good hearted and hospitable".

Hopefully in the future Hillsboro will be spared the ravages and destruction of so called transportation "improvements", and can continue to maintain the pleasant unspoiled rural character for generations to come to enjoy, as it has been passed down to us. There is no question that the historic and highly sensitive environmental qualities of the area should be preserved and respected. Unfortunately it is the nature of certain people with limited ability, aided by reams of senseless regulations, to "improve" (?) such places that have existed without their interference for one hundred years or more! Thus the Gap shall face from now on constant threats to its obliteration without a continual vigil of all its concerned citizens.



236-1

(25A-2)

2613

Two story three bay stucco over stone, with original stucco over stone $1\frac{1}{2}$ wing. Original section circa 1800. Frame second floor over west wing 1882. Pleasing later three bay entrance porch with lattice screen and stone retaining walls. See WPA Form 107.



236-2

(25A-1)

2613

Two story five bay stucco over stone dwelling circa 1800, with $1\frac{1}{2}$ stucco over stone wing. Pleasing later three bay entrance porch. Good state of preservation. See Mutual R5-V45 and WPA Form # 160.

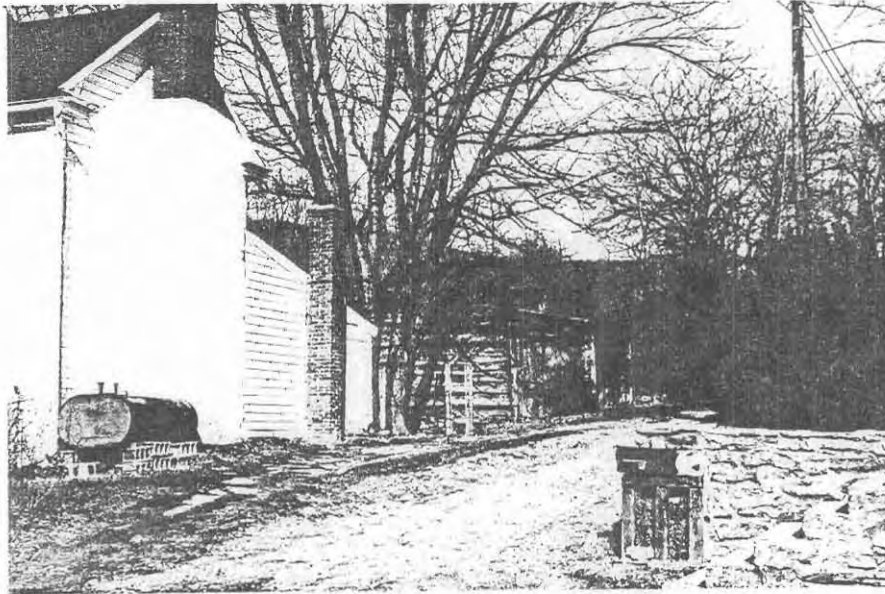


236-3

(25A-3)

2613

Two story frame dwelling covered in German Siding. Circa late 1800's. Last gable end exterior chimney indicates a possible earlier structure within the existing facade. Good porch with turned posts and railing.



Same as above.
Log Outbuilding with later garage addition in frame.



236-4

(25A-4)

2613

Two story frame, possibly log, three bay dwelling covered in sawn weatherboards. Circa last $\frac{1}{4}$ 1700's, with early to mid 1800's two story frame addition to the left. Early 1800's gable front entrance stoop with four square chamfered posts. First floor sash not original and east end gable sash is a later addition.



236-5

(25A-5)

2610

$1\frac{1}{2}$ storey three bay stone building on high basement with three bay frame (or log) addition to the right, of two storey on high stone basement. Stone section 1833. Recently remodeled. See WPA Form # 70.



236-6

(25A-6)

2613

Two story log dwelling circa last $\frac{1}{4}$ 1700's, covered in pebble-dash in 1912. Four bay later one story porch. Possibly one of the earliest structures in Town. See Mutual R18-V113 & WPA Form # 69.

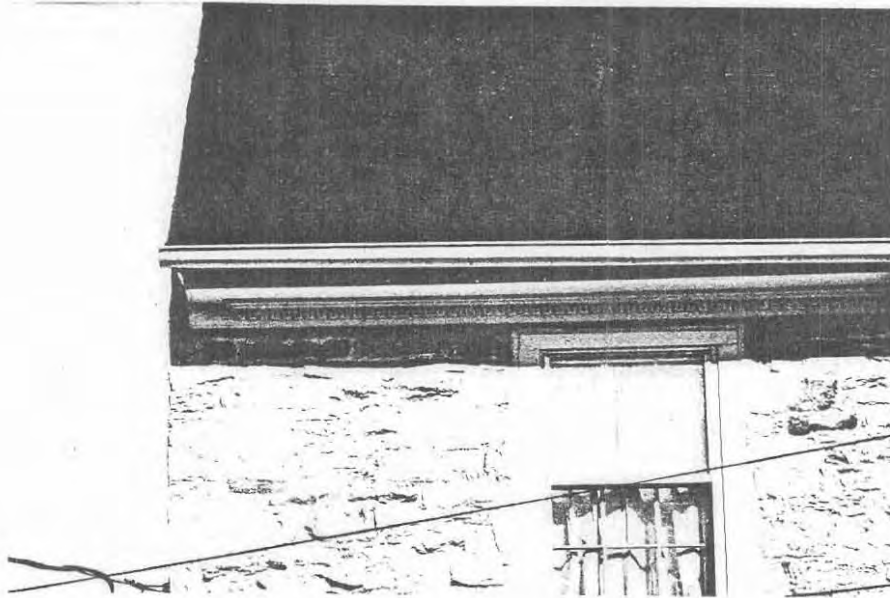


236-7

(25A-7)

2613

Two story three bay native rubble field stone town house on high basement. Built circa 1810 by Asa Brown, hotel keeper and well known saddler. Known for many years as Fitts Tavern. Wood box cornice with Wall of Troy detail. East end frame addition distracts from overall quality. See WPA Form # 33.



236-7

(25A-7)

2613

See preceding page. Detail of front wood box cornice.



236-8

(25A-8)

2613

Two story three bay Flemish Bond brick Town House with splayed flat arches over the openings, on native rubble field stone foundation. Circa 1840's. Wood box reeded cornice and small dentils on frieze. See WPA Form # 135.

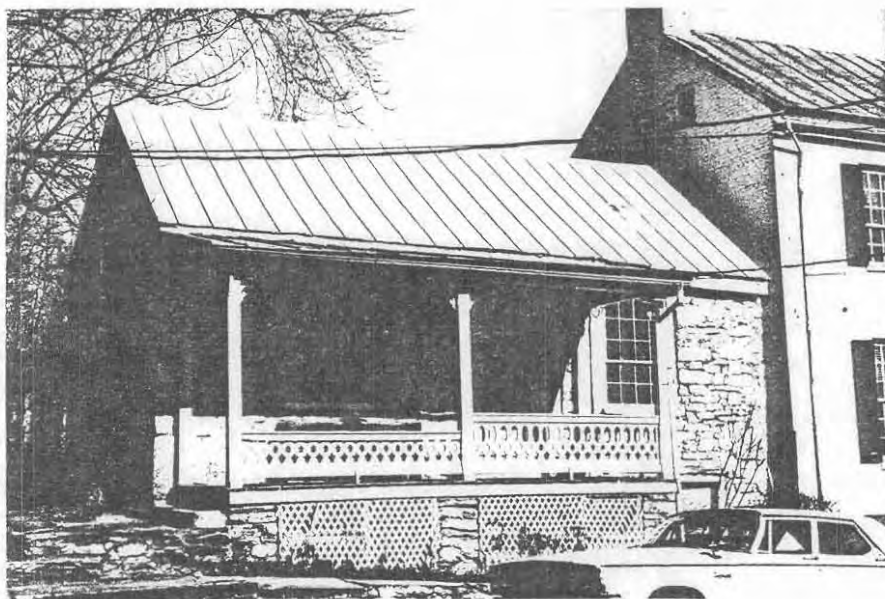


236-8

(25A-8)

2613

See preceding page. Detail of front wood box cornice.



236-9

(24A-9)

2613

One story rubble native field stone building. Possibly late 1700's although mid to late 1800 door and window openings disguise this. Good two bay one story entrance porch with sawn brackets and railing in the Italianate style. At one time operated as a Tavern. Lattice work should be preserved.



236-10

(25A-10)

2613

Late 1700's to early 1800's two story four bay rubble stone Town House on high basement. A portion of the core may be earlier. Excellent state of preservation. See Mutual R3-V26 and WPA Form # 57.



236-11

(25A-11)

2613

Late 19th century two story frame dwelling with three part projecting bay window unit. Three bay entrance porch with turned posts and sawn brackets. Concrete block retaining wall with finials adds visual interest.

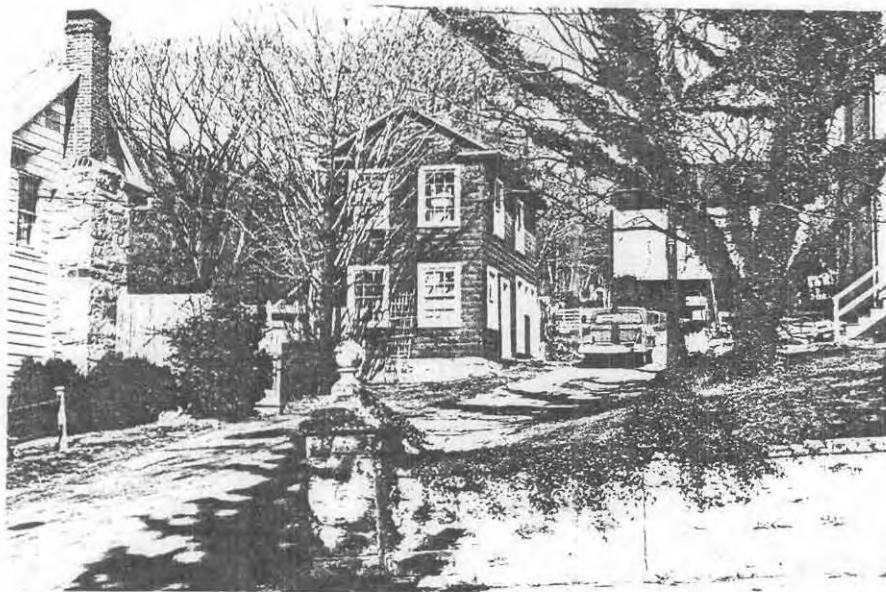


236-12

(25A-12)

2613

Two story three bay painted stucco over stone dwelling on high basement. Circa 1860's. Bracketed cornice. Three bay two story porch with sawn brackets and elaborate ornamental iron railing.



236-12

(25A-12)

2613

Two story outbuilding covered in painted pressed tin siding, to resemble texture of concrete block retaining wall in front. Frame barn in the background may survive from period of an earlier dwelling on this lot.



236-13

(25A-13)

2613

Two story three bay frame dwelling. Cross gable has round window with ornamental sawn wood screen. Bracketed cornice. Three bay one story entrance porch with turned posts and sawn brackets. Circa 1890 on the site of an earlier log dwelling.



236-14

(25A-14)

2613

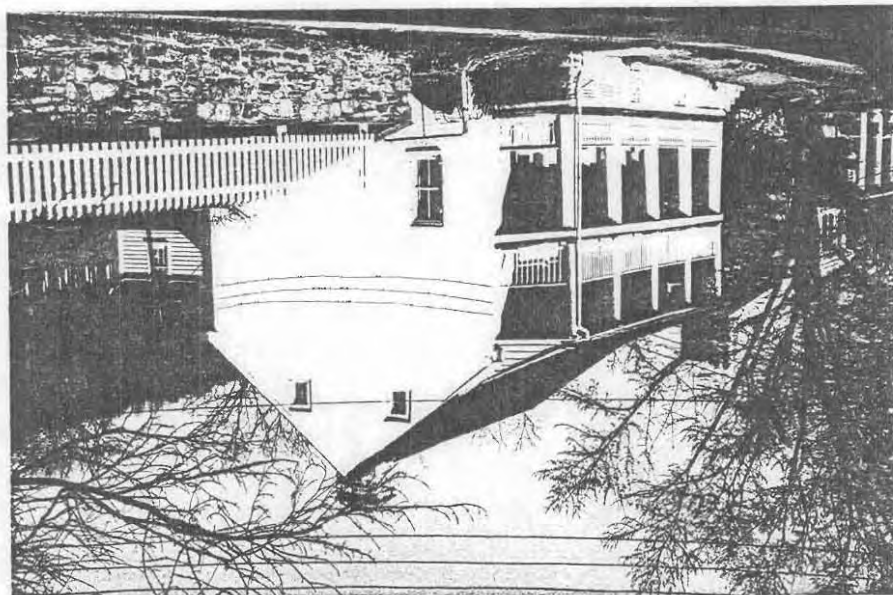
Two story log dwelling covered in weatherboard, with elaborate pedimented one story entrance porch supported by pairs of Roman Doric Columns. Circa 1806 with 1871 additions. Stone retaining wall and pickett fence add greatly to the overall quality. See WPA Form # 78.

Two story four bay painted stucco over stone town house with two story four bay front porch. Top level of the porch has Roman Doric columns, while the first floor level columns are tapered with sawn railing, and good lattice screen below. Sash is not original. See WPA Form # 112. Circa 1800.

2614

(25A16)

236-15



See preceding page for the house on this site. The lot adjacent to it was at one time the site of one of the largest department stores in the county, which was owned by Charles C. Bell in the early 1900's, and burned to the ground in 1914. The stone walls enclosing the boxwood garden were once the foundations for this building.

No Photo

(25A-14)

236-14

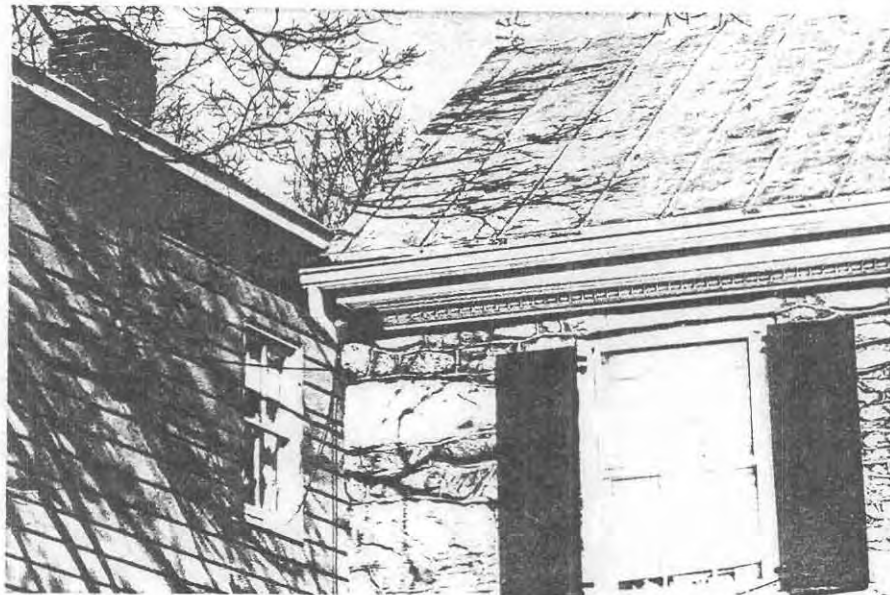


236-16

(25A-17)

2614

Two story three bay native rubble field stone dwelling, circa early 1800's. First floor sash not original, as used for many years as a store. Three bay one story entrance porch with square chamfered posts. See WPA Form # 83.



236-16

(25A-17)

2614

Detail of cornice of above dwelling. Moulded cornice with "H" fret.

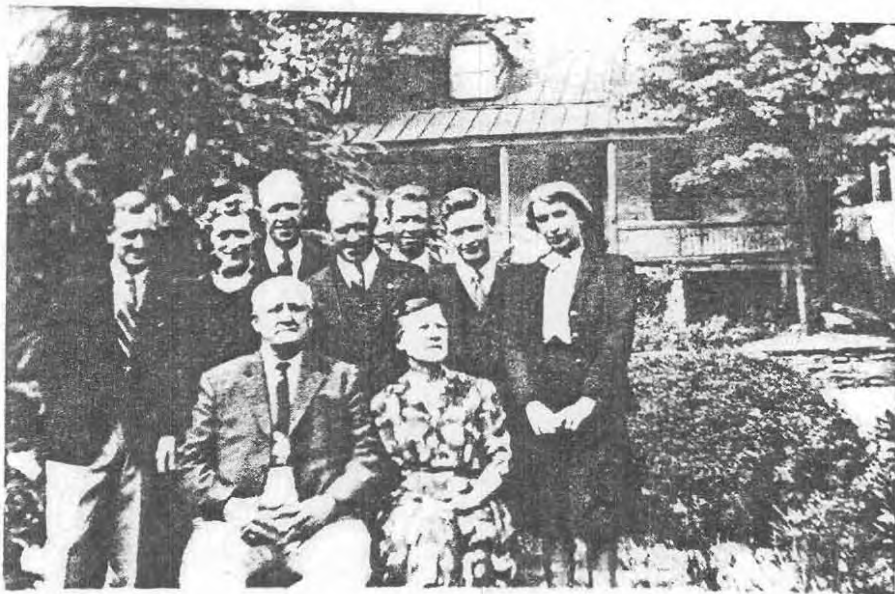


236-17

(25A-18)

3545

Two story three bay frame dwelling circa 1890. Three bay entrance porch, one story, with sawn brackets on square posts. Now covered in Aluminum siding. Second dwelling on this lot.



oldest house in Hillsboro (no longer standing) between Herr...

236-17

(25A-18)

3545

Site of $1\frac{1}{2}$ log dwelling, supposedly the earliest in Hillsboro. Used as the millers house for the log mill of John Hough. Destroyed in the 1940's. See WPA Form # 54. See above for newer dwelling built to the east of this on this lot.

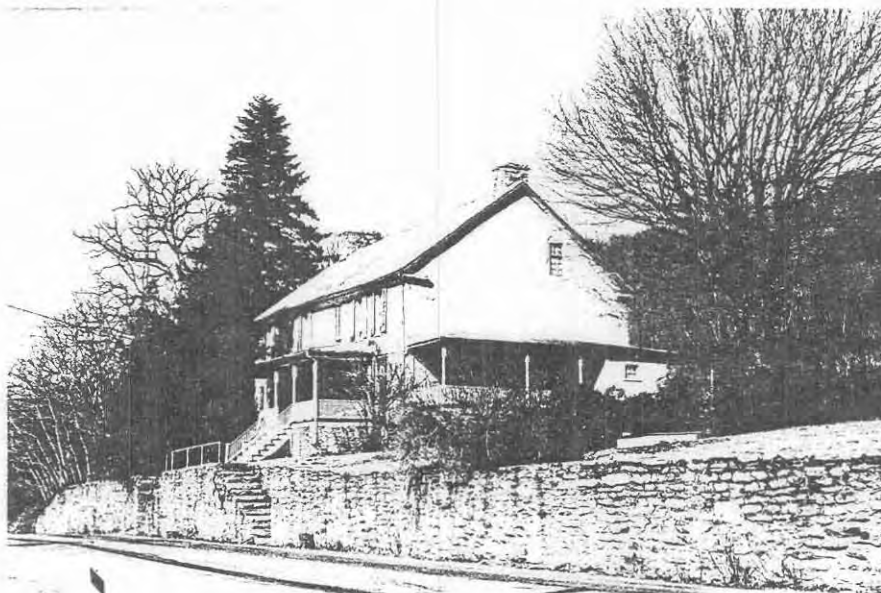


236-18

(25A-19)

2614

Two story three bay native rubble field stone dwelling, circa 1820. $1\frac{1}{2}$ rear wing may pre-date the front section. Three bay late 19th century one story entrance porch with sawn brackets and railing. See WPA Form # 106.

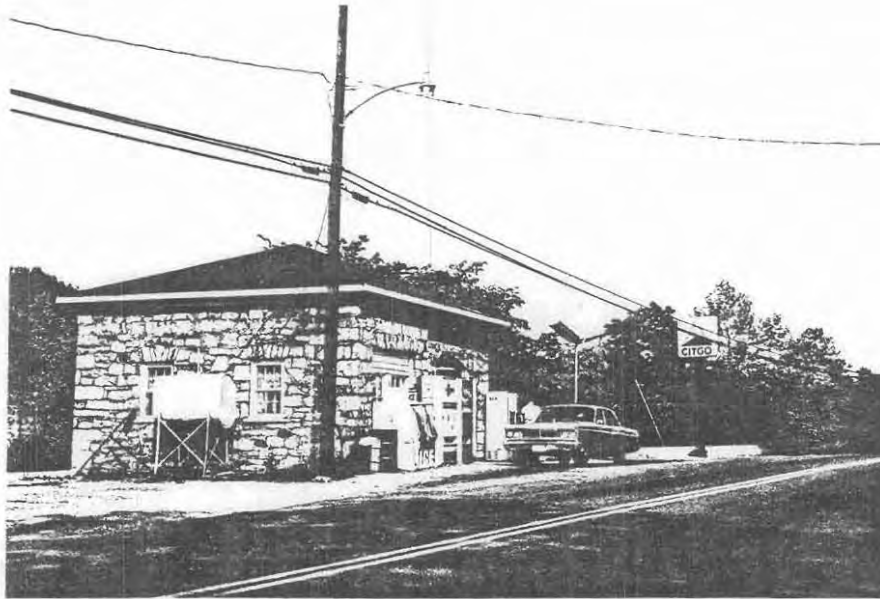


236-19

(25A-20)

2614

Two story stone dwelling circa last quarter of the 1700's, covered in pebble-dash in the early 1800's. Home of Elisha Janney who purchased the Gap Mills from Mahlon Hough and the boyhood home of John Janney, noted Virginia legislator and Loudoun delegate to the Secession convention in 1861. See WPA Form # 150.

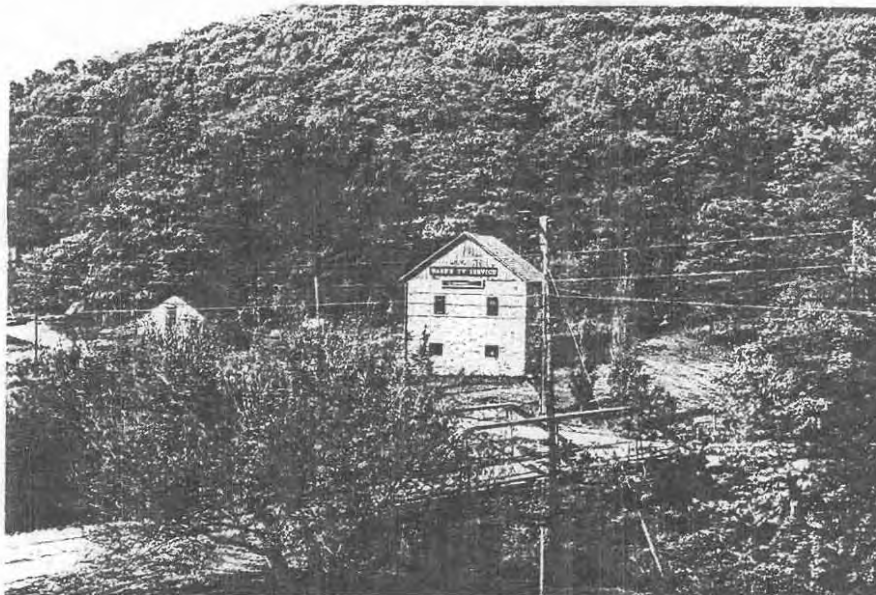


236-20

(25A-21)

1879

Early 20th century native rubble field stone Gasoline Station with hipped roof. Built just above the site of The Gap Mills. Compatable addition to the community.



236-21

(25A-23&47)

1879

19th century native rubble field stone barn converted by the present owner into adaptive use as a T.V. Repair and Service facility. Excellent example of amaginative and practical use.

236-21

(25A-23&47)



236-22&23

(25A-22)

1879

1930's commercial structure of unfortunate design concepts in relation to the community. Houses the well known Hill Tom Market and Gasoline Station. House to left, two story native rubble field stone five bay dwelling circa 1800. Originally had stone wings on both ends. One torn down for the Market building. Site of Jonas Potts' Academy.



236-24

(25A-24)

1879

Methodist Episcopal Church South built 1858.
Native rubble field stone structure with
bracketed cornice and open belfry. Good state
of preservation. Presently used as an Antique
Shop. See WPA Forms 66 & 73.



236-25

(25A-25&26)

1879

Two story three bay native rubble field stone town house circa 1805. Bracketed cornice and projecting eaves, three part two story bay and entrance porches added at the turn of the century. Porches have turned posts, ornamental brackets and sawn railings. See WPA Form # 145.

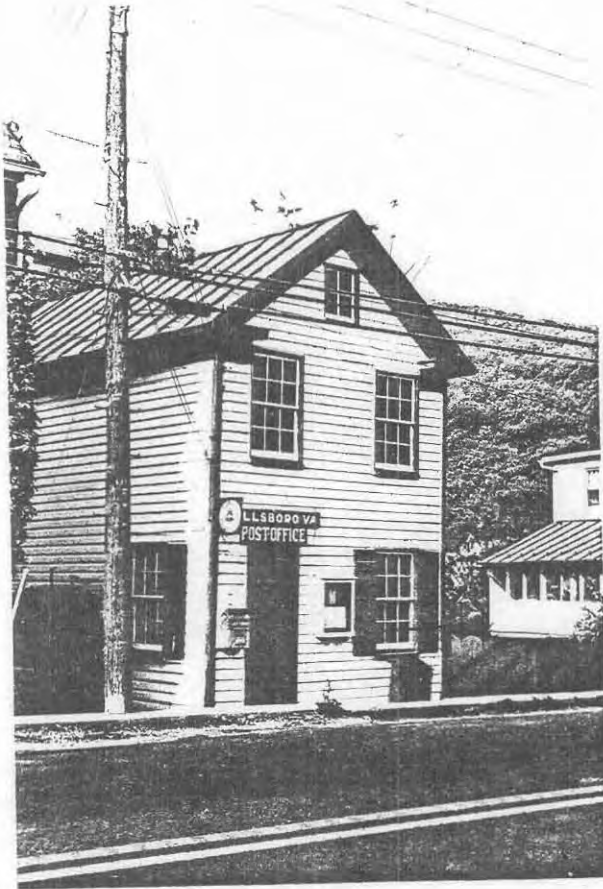


236-25

(25A-25&26)

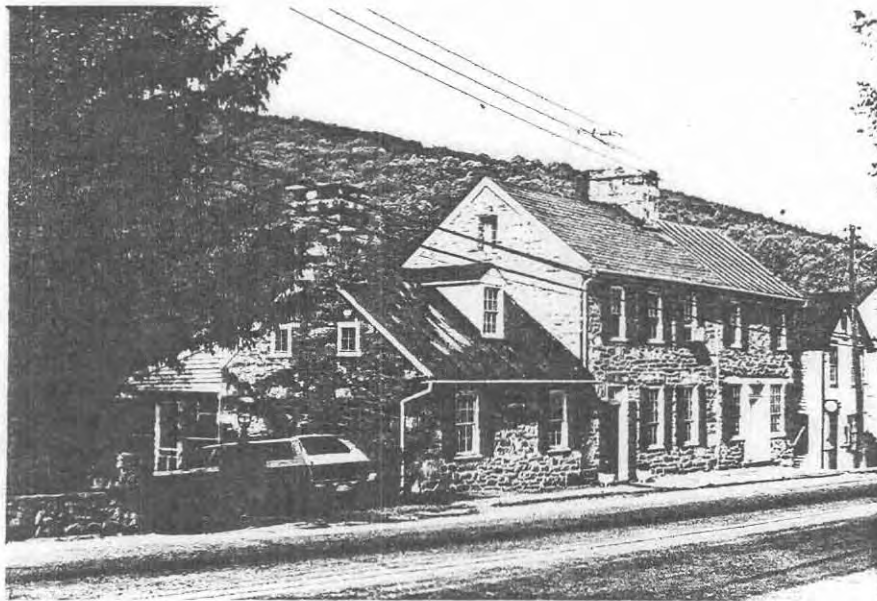
1879

Detail projecting eaves and elaborate gable ornament.



236-26 (25A-27) 1879

Two story gable end front frame commercial structure, built in 1897.

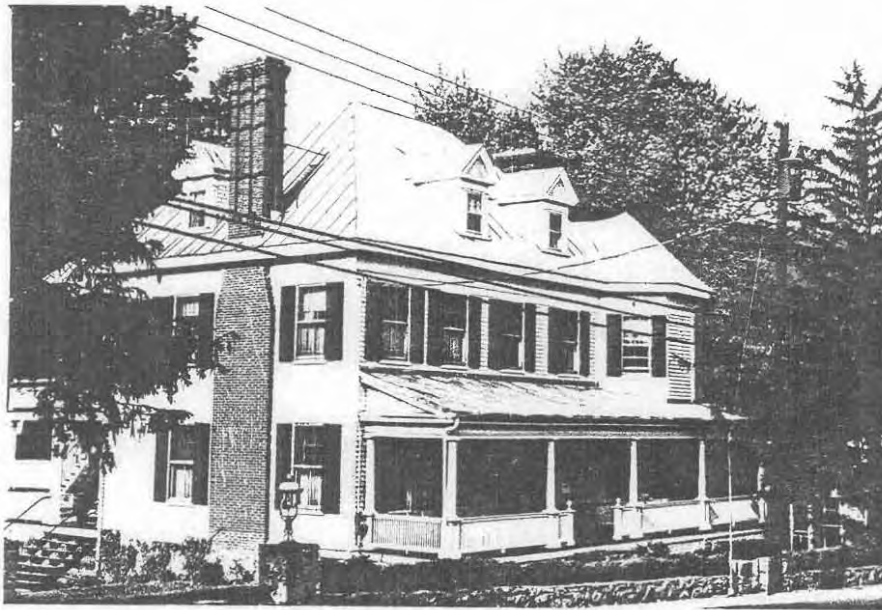


236-27

25A-28&29)

1877

Two story native rubble stone town house. East wing circa 1780. Two story center section built in 1825 with the west addition added in 1840 and operated as a store and later as a Doctors office.



236-28

(25A-30)

1877

Two and one half story frame dwelling built in 1890 on the site of the old Tanyard and Cooper shop. Ranks among Loudoun Countys most imposing Victorian structures.



236- 28

(25A-30)

1877

East side of the dwelling and its outbuildings.

236-29

(25A-31)

No Photo

Site of a now destroyed Two Story native field stone dwelling built circa 1800, on the corner of the old road from Hillsboro to Purcellville. See WPA Form # 72 and Mutual R3-V33. This lot is now the walled boxgarden for 236-28.

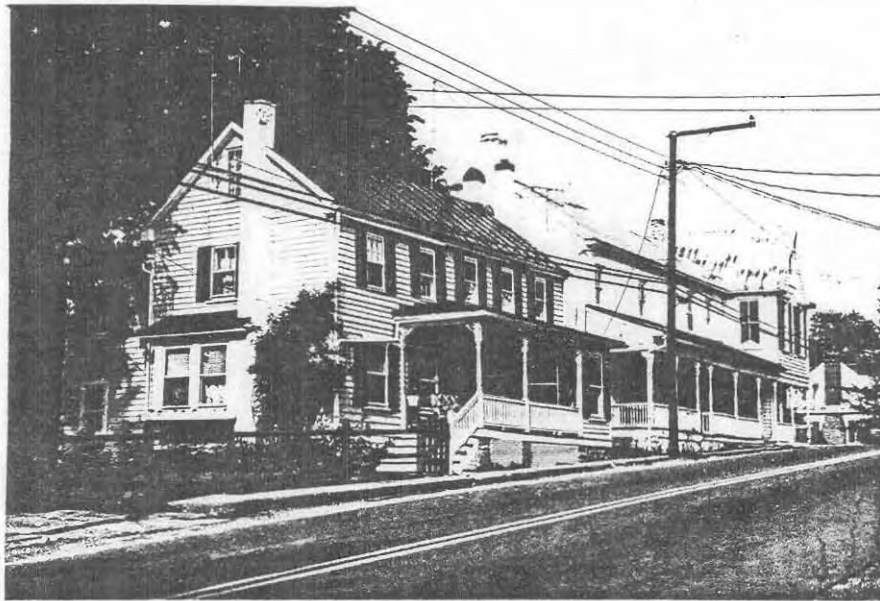


236-30

(25A-32&33)

1877

1½ stone and log dwelling. West section possibly pre-revolutionary. The east wing shows a datestone of 1827. Log infill portion supposedly built between these two periods. Used as a wheelwright shop and later by an expert shoemaker. See WPA Form #144.



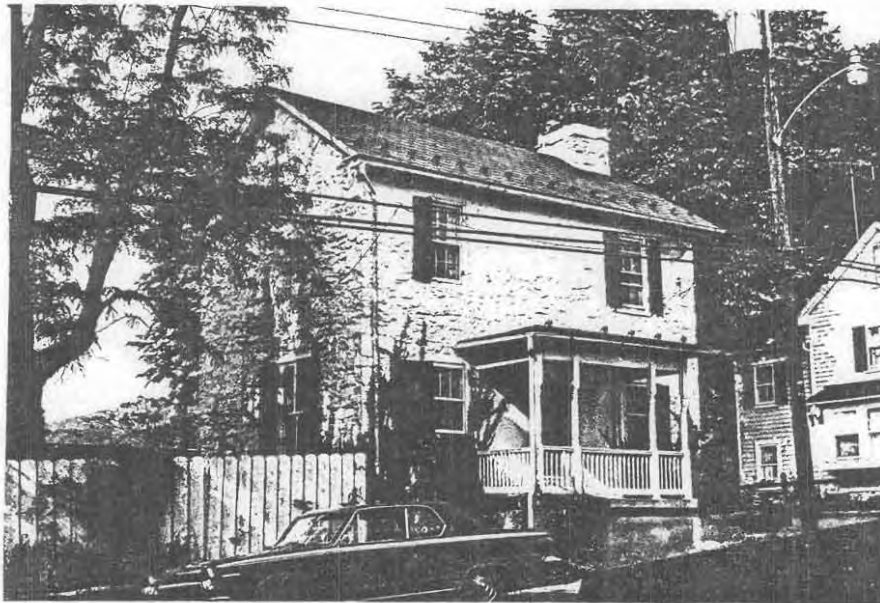
236-31&32

(25A-35&36)

1877

31- Two story painted stucco over stone in the center circa 1800, with two story painted stucco over brick to the left and two story frame addition to the right built about 1900. Owned in the 1820's by John Birkitt, Sr., and known for many years as Birkitt's Tavern.

32- Two story five bay town house of frame construction over log. Covered in weatherboards on the front and German Siding on the left gable end. Most of the sash has been replaced. Three bay one story entrance porch with one filled in with a three part projecting bay. Turned posts with elaborate brackets and good lattice screen below. See WPA Form # 81 and Mutual R3-V26. Lot 34 is included with this property.

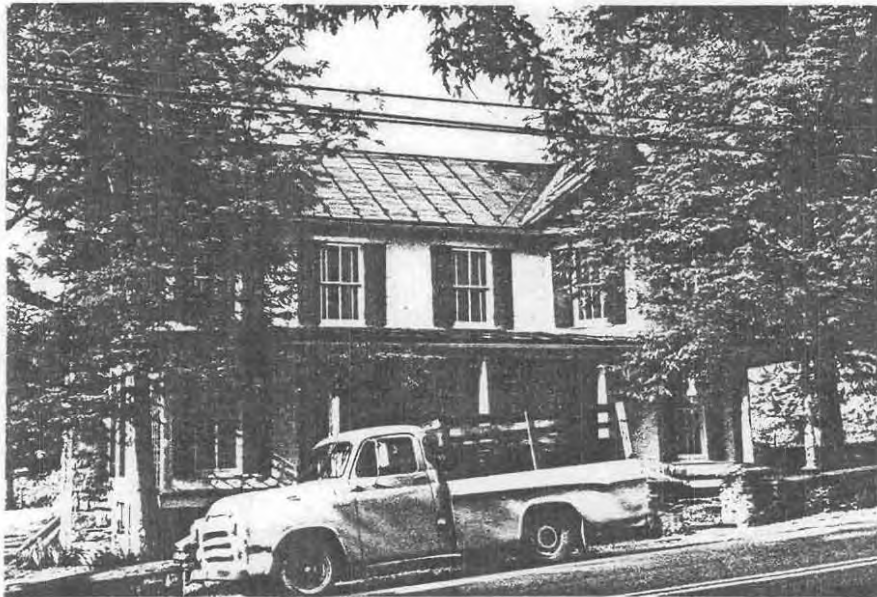


236-33

(25A-37)

1877

Two story native rubble field stone dwelling circa late 1700's. Originally $1\frac{1}{2}$ story and used for many years as an office and shop. Three bay one story entrance stoop with turned posts on concrete base.

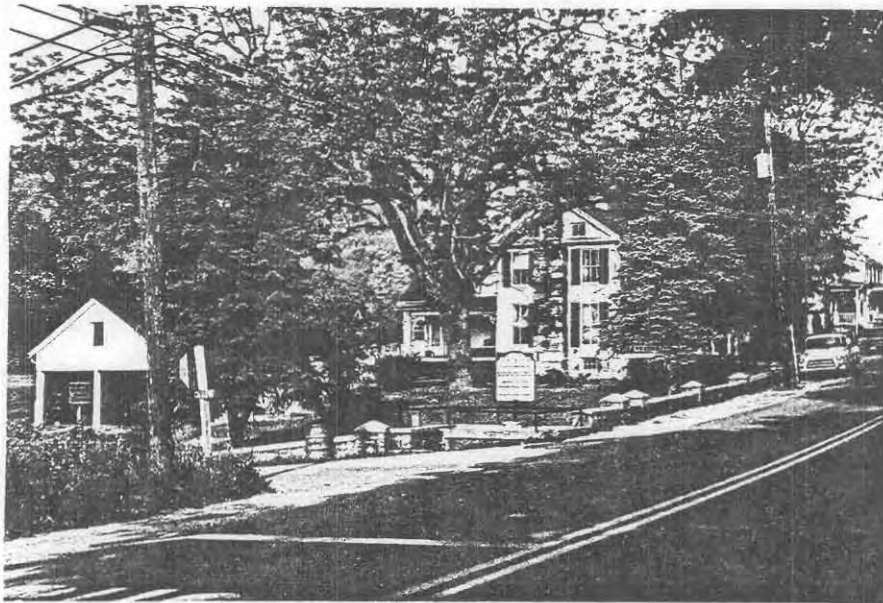


236- 34

(25A-38)

1877

Two story three bay painted stucco over stone including circa 1900's addition to the right with three part two story projecting bay window unit. Used for many years as the residence of ministers for the Methodist Episcopal Church South and Salem Church on the Harpers Ferry Road.



236-34

(25A-38)

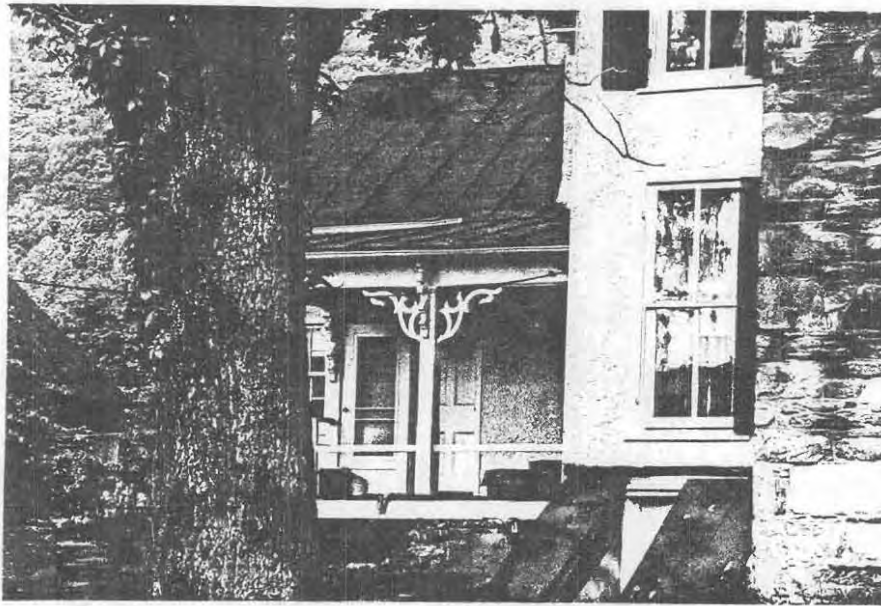
1877

View of east gable end of the stone portion, the rear wing to the south, frame garage and stone retaining walls enclosing pleasing grounds on the corner of Virginia Route 9 and the "new road to Purcellville" (Route 718).

Historical Marker states: "Hillsboro, Loudoun County Virginia. This is the birthplace of Susan Koerner Wright April 30, 1831-July 4, 1889. Mother of Wilbur and Orville Wright inventors of the airplane. A notable woman largely guided and wisely inspired her sons to their immortal discovery. She was the mother also of Katharine Wright Haskell August 19, 1874-March 3, 1929 whose sisterly devotion aided in giving mankind access to the unlimited Aerial Highway". Erected by the Rivanna Garden Club of Charlottesville, Virginia December 17, 1929.

A State Historical Marker of Virginia T-5 at Purcellville, Virginia titled Mother of the Wright Brothers states "Six miles north at Hillsboro was born in 1831 Susan Koerner, mother of Wilbur and Orville Wright, inventors of the airplane". This is located at the junction of Virginia Route 7 and Route 287.

To date your recorder knows of only one property owned in the County by the parents of Susan Koerner Wright, and that is 53-384 now the home of Mr and Mrs Jean K. Weston, on the east side of Route 287 between Purcellville and Wheatland.



236-34

(25A-38)

1877

Detail of the elaborate scroll bracket on the porch of the rear wing, facing east.

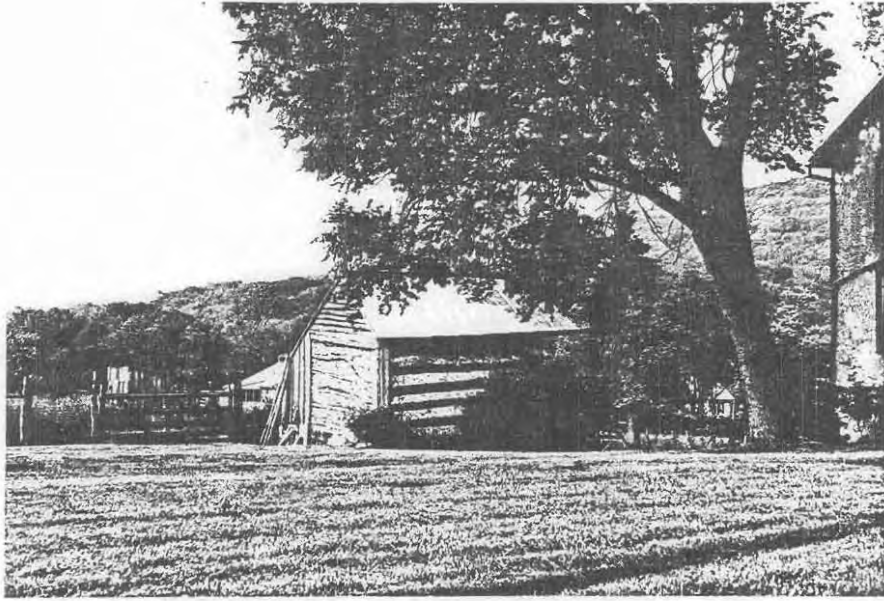


236-35

(25A-39)

1877

Two story three bay frame dwelling covered in painted stucco. Front section on west end originally two story log house. Added on to circa 1910. Out-buildings consist of a log meat house, used at one time as a shop, and a stone spring house.



236-35

(25A-39)

1877

Log outbuilding used as a meat house and later
as a shop.



236-36

(25A-40)

3545

Two story three bay frame dwelling on native
rubble field stone foundation, with cross gable.
One story entrance porch with turned posts.
Circa 1886. On "the new road to Purcellville".



236-37

(25A-40A&40B)

3545

One story three bay frame commercial building. Exchange office for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company. They should be commended for their sensativity to the area.

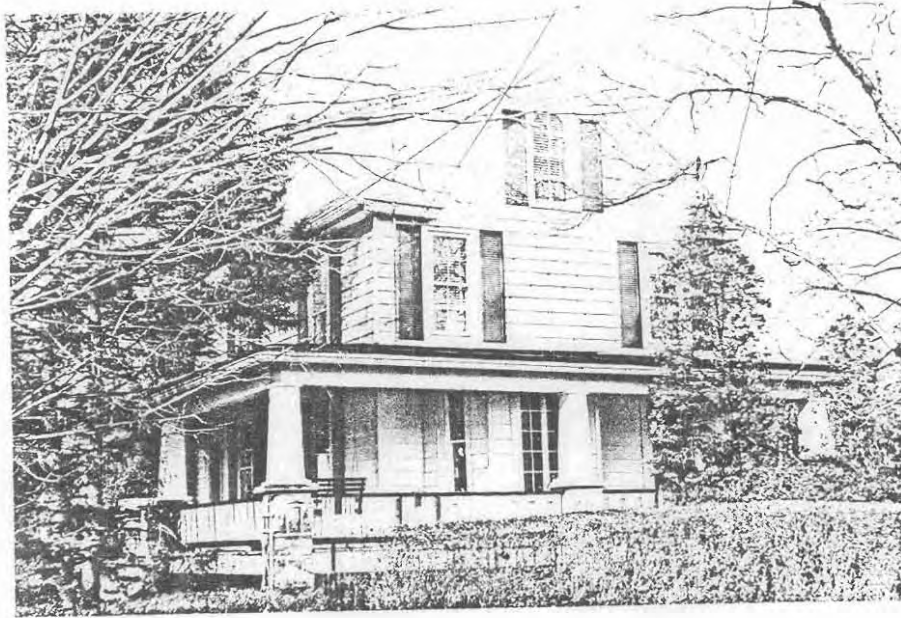


236-38

(25A-41)

3545

Two story painted pebble-dash over frame country Victorian dwelling with three bay one story entrance porch. Roman Doric columns. Cross gable with Palladian style window unit. Circa 1915.

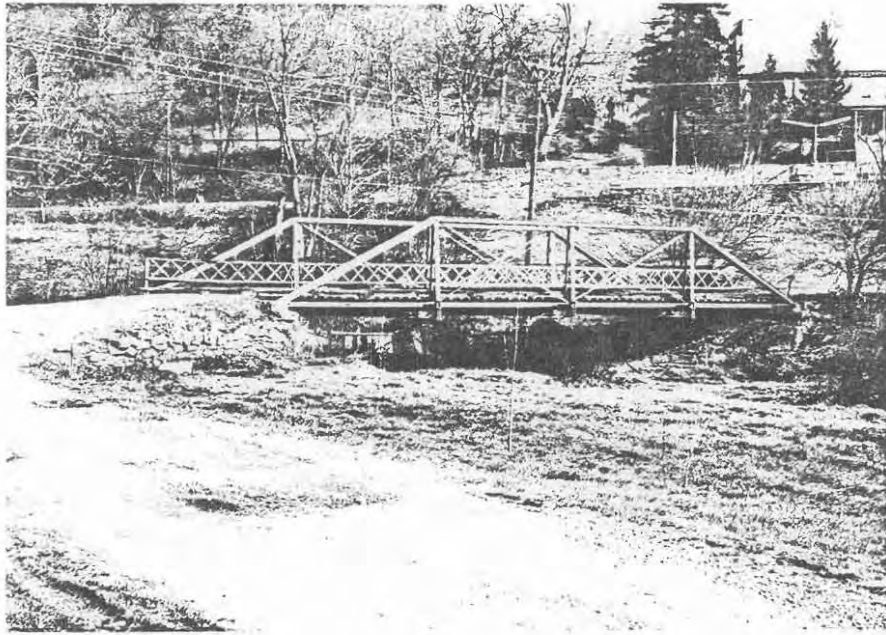


236-39

(25A-42&43)

3545

Two story frame cottage built in the 1890's.
One story three part projecting bay centered
on facade, under the entrance porch. Aluminum
siding distracts from overall quality.



53-236

1900

Single span Steel Truss Bridge on Route 719
over the north fork of the Catoclin Creek,
by the Hill Tom Market. 14'X60'.



53-234

1900

Single span Steel Truss Bridge built by the
West Virginia Bridge Works, Charles Town,
West Virginia circa 1890. Destroyed by the
VHD&T in 1976 in spite of earlier agreement
to preserve it. 14'X66'.

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