

ODD STONE TAVERN, LITTLE CREEK, DEL.

The earliest tracts of land patented in Kent County, Del., were near the coast and on the navigable streams. In 1675, William Simpson took up 400 acres on the north side of "Ye Creekle Creeke, called Little Creake." This was patented to ^{And} him March 2, 1676, by Edmund ~~Anderson~~ ^{Anderson, esq.} "Lt. and Governor General under his Royal Highness James, Duke of York and Albany....of all his territories in America" and had an annual "Quitt rent of fore Bushells of good winter wheat." In the next fifteen years it changed hands often belonging to John Brinckloe, then to John Edmondson and John Richardson Sr., and then to John Richardson Jr., who sold part of it to Thomas Clifford in September of 1691, and part to Robert and Lawrence Porter, and part to Samuel Berry.

The old stone farm house was built before 1768. Mary Bell (Hunter)~~s~~ owned it in that year and was living in the house and apparently keeping a tavern there, for she mentions the "tavern house" in a deed to her son Henry Bell. The house is on one of the oldest roads in the hundred, a road mentioned as early as 1714, in old deeds. It was laid out on the western boundary of "Simpsons Choice." Dividing it from the adjoining tract belonging to John Stevens, called "London." It naturally ~~led~~ led from the Little Creek Landing " north to "Fast Landing" on Little Duck Creek, the present Leipsic. A road also led into the landing on St. Jones River, now Dover. The house was therefore built on an advantageous spot and very naturally was used as a tavern.

Mary and Robert Bell, of north Ireland, had come to Delaware from Elizabeth, New Jersey. Of their seven children, four sons and three daughters, at least two of the daughters married well-known colonial Delawareans--Mary, who became ^e the wife of James Sykes, ^{and} member of the Committee of Safty and of Congress ^e during the Revolution; and Lucy who married Rev. Samuel Magaw-- pastor of Christ Church, Dover, at the time of the Revolution, and later rector of St. Paul's Philadelphia, Pa.

^{Elizabeth}
Henry Bell and his wife ^{Mary Lewis}, were still living in the stone tavern-house in 1793. Perhaps they were there in April of 1813, when a boatload of men from the British schooner "Pilgrim" appeared in the creek. The warship "Poitiers" ^{as} blockading the Bay and had sent them for food. When the people refused to supply ⁿ them, the men spread terror through the neighborhood as they foraged for thirty-six hours.

The last Bell to own the homestead, John Bell, died insolvent and the estate was sold on judgement by the Farmers Bank about 1840. The Hayes family, friends of John Bell and apparently distant connections, had gone on John Bell's note, and they bought the property. Charles Hayes, brother of Manlove Hayes, ^{as} comfortably installed on the farm by his father. There he indulged in his great fondness of ^e plants and flowers, the best varieties of seed, ^{and} grain ^{and} stock, including Chinese Hogs and Shanghai geese. He grew tired of farming and it was ^{even} sold. In 1888, it ^{was} belonged to Capt. Abraham Nowell of Dover. In the old days the boats that tied up at the landing must have carried settlers, ⁱⁿ supplies, tobacco and pelts. More recently they have carried marsh grass, grain, oysters and the sports fisherman.

The house is a two story stone building with dormers. Its plainness is relieved by a ~~sepped~~ stepped-brick course ^{course} at the eaves. There is a big chinmey at each end. The windows are spacious and fortunately those in back still have most of their charming small panes. There are small lights above the deep-set paneled ~~from~~ front door. The old lock and key still exist. The most interesting aspects of the inside are the graceful old stair rail in the central hall, and the handsome carved ^{mantle} ~~mantle~~ ^{in the} ~~at the~~ ^{south} ~~south~~ room. There is some panelling. The house has been put quite good condition by its present owners.

This is one of the few early stone buildings in Kent County. Such stones are said to have come as ballast on the sailing ships. Over 200 years ago these stones must have been unloaded at the "Landing" and carried up the rough cart track through the marsh grass to the place where the house still stands beside the old road.

Bibliography:

Dike of York Records p 112
Paten--Deed B, 6 Recorder of Deeds Office Dover, Court House L676
Scharf History of Delaware P. 1119, 1120
Deed S, 251 & 252 Mary Bell (Hunter) to her children 1758
Manlove Hayes "Reminiscences" p. 10, 11, 40, 41, 43
Deed D2 p39 Deed Elizabeth Lewis to Jas Sykes 1793
Delaware Guide p 480

Copied by Gladys A. Paradee April 14, 1970

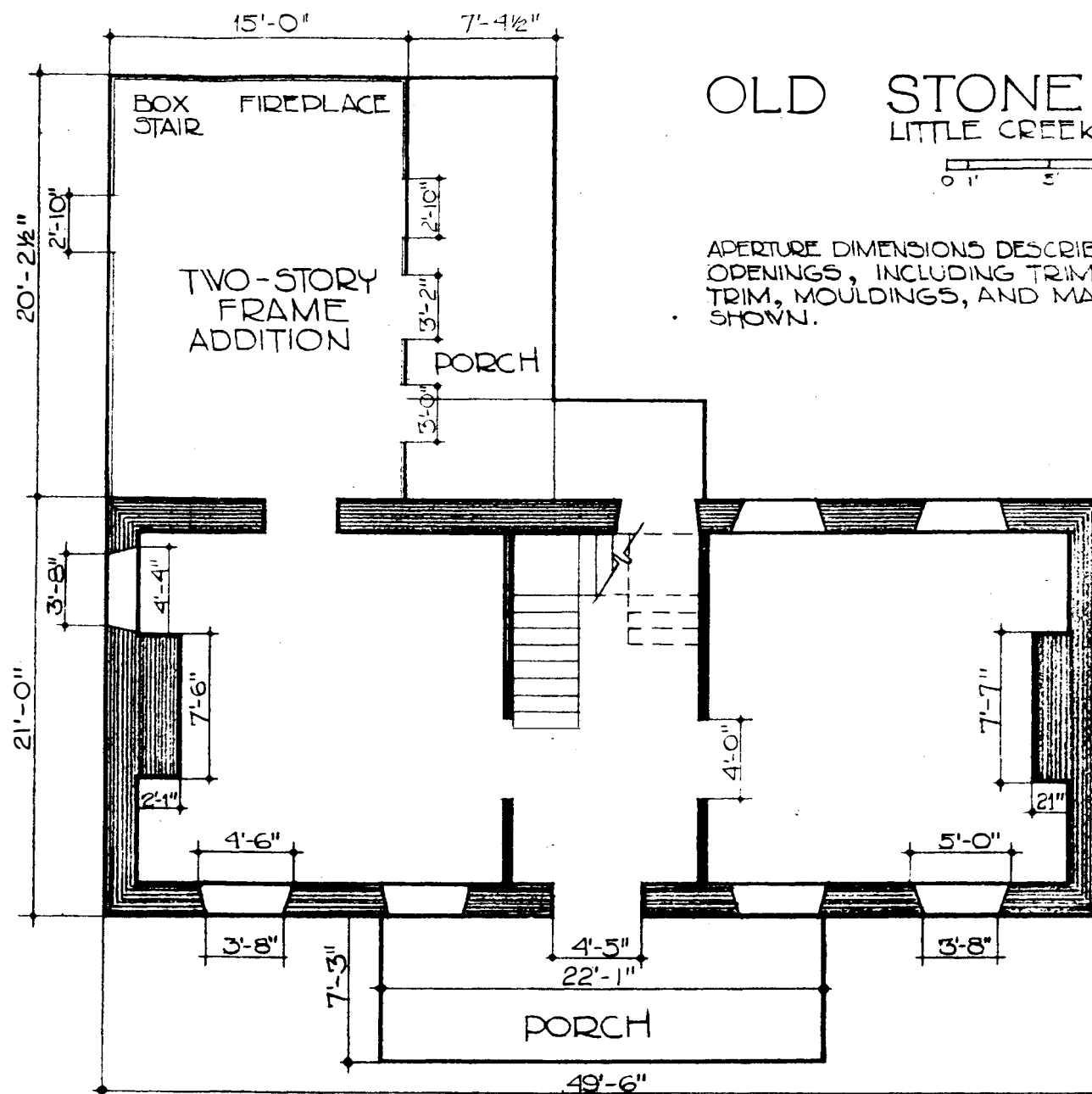
Mary and Robert Bell, of North Ireland, had come to Delaware from Elizabeth, New Jersey. Of their seven children, four sons and three daughters, at least two of the daughters married well-known colonial Delawareans--Mary, who became the wife of James Sykes, and member of the Committee of Safety and of Congress during the Revolution; and Lucy who married Rev. Samuel Magaw, pastor of Christ Church, Dover, at the time of the Revolution, and later rector of St. Paul's Philadelphia, Pa.

Henry Bell and his wife Mary, were still living in the stone tavern-house in 1793. Perhaps they were there in April of 1815, when a boatload of men from the British schooner "Pittman" appeared in the creek. The warship "Pittman" was blocking the bay and had sent them for food. When the people refused to supply them, the men spread terror through the neighborhood as they foraged for thirty-six hours.

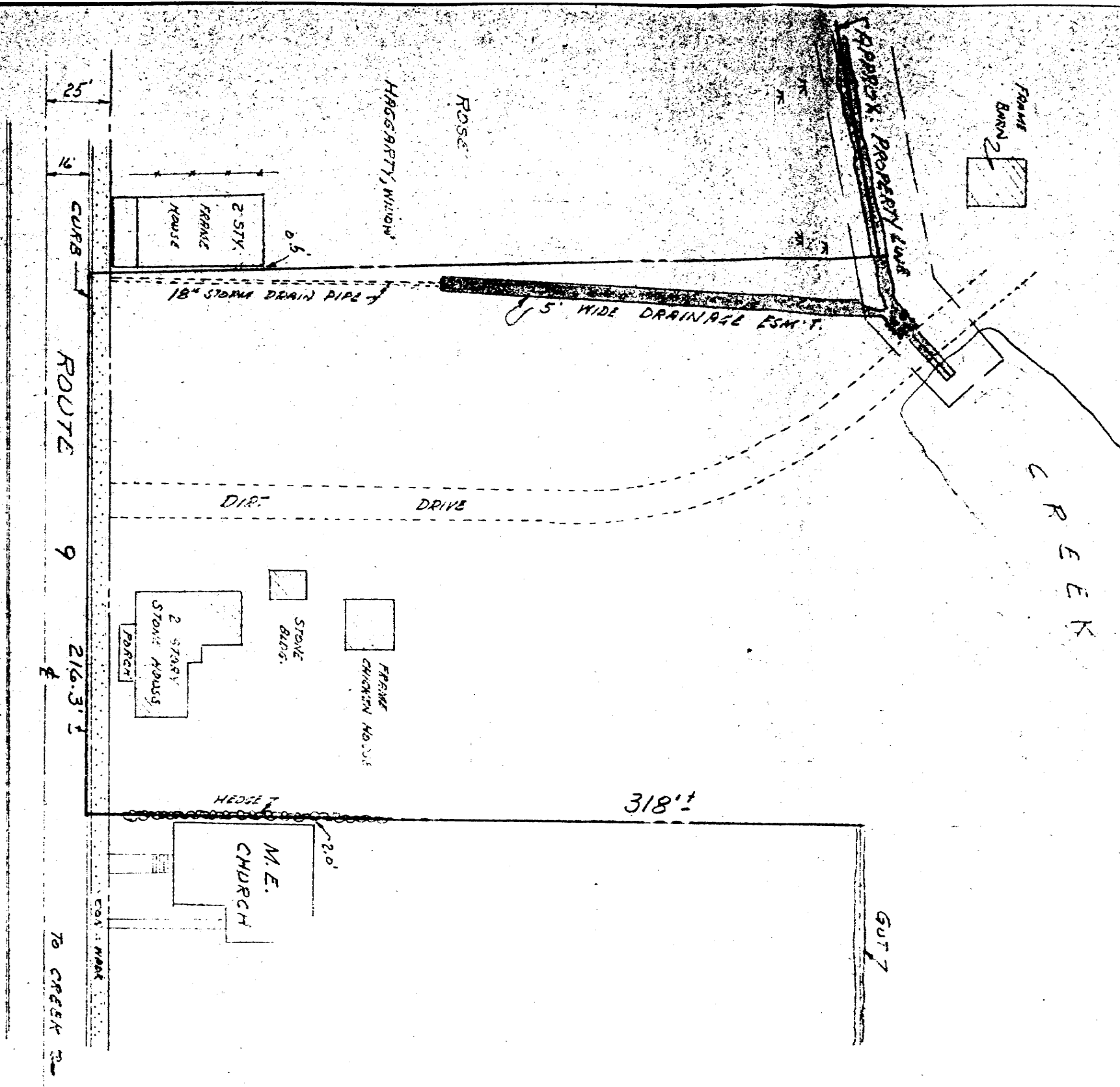
The last Bell to own the homestead, John Bell, died intestate and the estate was sold on judgment by the Farmers Bank about 1840. The Hayes family, friends of John Bell and apparently distant connections, had gone to John Bell's note, and they bought the property. Charles Hayes, brother of Manlove Hayes, as comfortably installed on the farm by his father. There he indulged in his great fondness of plants and flowers, the best varieties of seed and grain, including Chinese Hogs and Shanghai geese. He knew tired of farming and it was sold. In 1888, it was purchased by Capt. Abraham Howell of Dover. In the old days the boats that tied up at the landing must have carried westerners, as supplies, tobacco and galls. More recently they have carried marsh grass, grain, oysters and the sports fishermen.

The house is a two story stone building with dormers. Its plainness is relieved by a stepped brick cornice at the eaves. There is a big chimney at each end. The windows are spacious and fortunately those in back still have most of their charming small panes. There are small lights above the deep-set paneled front door. The old lock and key still exist. The most interesting aspects of the inside are the graceful old stair rail in the central hall, and the hand-some carved mantel in the parlor. There is some paneling. The house has been in quite good condition by its present owners.

D. Rogers



ANTHONY S. JACQUEVILLE, ET AL.



"TOWN OF LITTLE CREEK"

PORTION OF LAND OF H. A. WINSLOW, INC.		
LITTLE CREEK HUNDRED KENT COUNTY - DELAWARE	SCALE 1"=50'	DRAWN BY
		REVISED
SURVEYING MANN - TALLEY, INC. ENGINEERING		
DATE DEC. 9, 1968	APPROVED BY	DRAWING NUMBER 1882-5