

The David Miller House  
Middle Valley, Washington Township  
Morris County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-519

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.H.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS  
N.J.  
14 MIDVA.  
1-

The David Miller House  
Middle Valley, Washington Township  
Morris County, New Jersey

Owners: Ida M. and Meta H. Neighbor

Date of Erection: About 1830

Architect: Unknown

Builder: David W. Miller (1799-1866)\*

Present Condition: Original, with modern porches

Number of Stories: Two, garret and part cellar

Materials of Construction:

Foundation - stone masonry

Exterior walls - same, stucco finished

Interior walls - lath and plaster on wood  
studding, and stone party wall

Chimneys - brick above roof

Roof - gambrel on front unit, gable on rear  
unit, slate roofing with tin top deck  
to gambrel

Historical Data:

In order to identify this house and its builder, search of a title through succeeding owners to a date contemporary with its erection has been made in the County records with the following results:

By deed of 27 March 1841, David<sup>3</sup> W. Miller, Esq., and wife Phebe S., of Washington Township, conveyed to Jacob W. Neighbor of the same place, for \$6,043.50 the property here considered. Evidence of

\*A grandson, William Swackhammer, informs me that David W. Miller built this house about 1830, and incidentally that a log cabin on the farm was razed some 50 years ago - J. P. Richards, Jr. This statement appears in agreement with search of title - L.D.C.

this grantor's title to the farm does not appear on the records searched. It is said(a) that in 1747 one Peter Mains leased this farm in the Budd tract for 100 years, and that in 1844 (sic) it was owned by David Miller.

His father, David<sup>2</sup> Miller(b) born 28 April 1769, died in January 1844 in Paterson, having married Elizabeth Welsch, born 10 December 1776 a daughter of William Welsch Jr., of the former place, and had issue: Jacob W. 1800-1862 (U.S. Senator 1841-53), William W., David W. of whom further; Henry, Eliza wife of the Rev. John C. Vandervoort, Dorothy wife of Thomas G. Talmadge, Mary wife of one Van Pelt, Catherine unmarried, and Lydia A., wife of Moses DeWitt of Paterson.

David<sup>3</sup> Welsch Miller the grantor first abovenamed, born in 1799 in German Valley, Washington Twoship, married Phebe Swan, built this house at Middle Valley and kept the store there until he removed to Brooklyn, New York, in 1848, where he was employed in private and in government business until retirement a few years before his death there on 12 February 1866, the last of nine brothers and sisters. "He was a man of ardent, enthusiastic spirit, gifted with good intellectual powers, and especially a vivid imagination, and on several occasions addressed public assemblies with marked effect. His leading characteristic was ardent devotion to the house of Christ", says the obituary notice.(c)

- (a) T. F. Chambers, Early Germans of New Jersey, publ. 1895, pp. 151 and 153. See also map between pp. 146 and 147.
- (b) David Miller, son of John Henry Miller (1728-1819) who arrived in Philadelphia on 12 Aug. 1750 from Germany as a "redemptioner" and settled in 1753 near New Germantown, Hunterdon County, N.J., and mar. in 1755 Maria Catherine Moelick. (T.F. Chambers, cited above, p. 448)
- (c) T. F. Chambers, cited above p. 155.

Jacob W. Neighbor(d), the grantee in the deed of 1841 above cited, with his wife Mary Ann, being still of Washington Township and supposedly occupying the house, gave their deed of 31 March 1848 conveying to (his brother) William Neighbor(e) of the same place, for \$6000 the 121 acre farm.

From the last named grantee and his wife Adeline, the property passed by deed of 14 December 1866 to his son Lemuel Neighbor, and subsequently to William R. Neighbor who with his wife Sarah, being of Washington Township and supposedly occupying this farm, conveyed it to Ida M. and Meta H. Neighbor, of the same place by deed of 31 October 1919. In this last conveyance, the boundary lines of the farm are described as "Beginning at a stake, a corner to a lot conveyed to John C. Welsh, and standing 15 links South 35 degrees west from the corner of the Store House and 55 links north 48--3/4 degrees west from the north corner of the Mansion House standing on the premises", etc., and containing 120.87 acres, a semi-rectangular tract averaging about 725 feet in width and extending a mile and a half in length in a southwest to northwest direction, traversed in its width by the Valley road, by the south branch of Raritan River and the railroad. Certain small parcels previously sold from this tract are excepted in this transfer to these owners who have allowed our survey of the house in 1939. For some time before June 1940 it has been occupied (the owners residing in a house across the highway), since which date it has been leased.

- (d) Jacob Wise Neighbor, b. 20 Oct. 1805 in Washington Twp., Morris Co.; d. aged 84 in Princeton, Ill., having mar. 1. Mary A. Trimmer and 2. Caroline Bodine. (T.F. Chambers, cited above, p. 452)
- (e) William Neighbor, b. 21 Jan. 1795, d. at German Valley, Washington Twp., Morris Co.; mar. Adaline Thorp and had issue viz., Mary wife of John Swackhamer, Jacob, Elizabeth wife of John Crater of Illinois, Louisa unm., Ann 2nd wife of John Crater, Adaline, unm., and Lemuel. (T.F. Chambers, p. 452)

Bibliography:

Report received 15 April, 1940, on search of title in Land and Probate records of Morris County by James P. Richards, H.A.B.S. abstractor

*Lewis D. Cook*  
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Supervising Historian

Approved:

*Seymour Williams*  
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SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer