

MOORE HOMESTEAD
.1 miles south of the intersection of State
Route 16 and Stewart's Run Road
Harrisville
Ritchie County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-295

HABS
WVA
43-HARVL,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

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Location: .1 mile south of the intersection of State Route 16 and Stewart's Run Road. Harrisville, Ritchie County, West Virginia

USGS: Harrisville, West Virginia Quadrangle
UTM: 17.496880.4342700

Present Owner: Little Kanawha Soil Conservation District
Route 5 Box 1000
Parkersburg, West Virginia

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: The Moore Homestead consists of three structures, principal among them is a two-story frame residence, ca. 1905. Also on the property is a wash house and a barn. Together, these buildings represent the nature and development of agriculture in the early twentieth century in Ritchie County. In addition, the residence represents a modest form of early twentieth century vernacular Victorian architecture.

Historical Background

The history of the Ohio River drainage area is linked to its fertile valleys, abundant game, and vast natural resources. Early inhabitants used agriculture and the natural trade routes of the rivers and streams to develop their cultures and later native groups used the drainage for hunting grounds. European settlers first entered the area to obtain furs, but soon found the fertile ground and open spaces suitable for settlement. Modern residents have taken advantage of the vast natural gas and oil reserves. With such valuable resources, the struggle for control has created a unique, mysterious, colorful, and interesting history.

The earliest known inhabitants in the Ohio River drainage area of West Virginia lived during the Paleo-Indian Period (12,000-8,000 B.C.), which terminated at the end of the Pleistocene and the beginning of a more stable, warmer modern environment. This period is divided into the Early, Middle, and Late Archaic (81 000-1, 000 B.C.). Early Archaic peoples continued the basic subsistence practices of the previous period, although evidence indicates more specialized technology and trade. The Middle Archaic witnessed a continued moderation of the climate and increasingly sophisticated technology among its people, and the Late Archaic people began the pattern of seasonal activities, increased the gathering and processing of foods, and introduced steatite bowls as containers (Gray & Pape Vol. I 1995, 26-28).

Next came the Woodland Period of habitation (1,000 B.C.-A.D. 1650), which is characterized by the introduction of ceramic technology. It represents a greater tendency toward territorial permanence, elaborate ceremonial exchange and mortuary rituals, and a hunting and gathering subsistence with seasonal relocation. During the Early Woodland the principal inhabitants lived in the Adena Tradition, a culture best known for its conical burial mounds. The Adena people were an agricultural group, but they also developed products from woven cloth, clay, and copper. Archaeological studies reveal that the Adena engaged in primitive commerce. Excavations have found teeth, volcanic glass, sea shells, and copper, all items that could only be found in the Rocky Mountain, Great Lakes, and Eastern Shore regions (Gray & Pape Vol. I, 29-30).

While burial mounds provide a great deal of information, they do not tell what happened to the Adena people. Like other prehistoric cultures the Adena disappeared, leaving scholars to speculate on the cause. It is generally assumed that at some point in the distant past the Adena groups moved from the area, but there is little evidence to indicate exactly when or where they went. Two major Adena centers are recognized: one near Charleston, West Virginia, in the Kanawha Valley, and the other in Ohio on the Scioto River. Smaller centers were located in northern Kentucky, eastern Indiana, western Ohio, and northeastern West Virginia (Ambler and Summers 1958, 13-18).

Life in the Middle Woodland period is generally regarded as a time of complex societal integration through trade. To this culture has been ascribed the name of Hopewell, which denotes a particular archaeological assemblage that appears from western New York to Kansas City and

from the Gulf of Mexico to Lake Huron. Hopewellian culture is characterized by elaborate geometric earthworks, enclosures, and mounds. Ceremonial centers were abandoned and burial ceremonialism became less important during the Late Woodland Period, a time when subsistence agriculture was supplemented by hunting and gathering activities. Inhabitants of the Kanawha Basin during the late prehistoric period are referred to as the Fort Ancient culture (Gray & Pape Vol. I, 30-31).

Initial contact between indigenous cultures and Europeans occurred along the coast of North America after A.D. 1600, but no Europeans ventured into present-day West Virginia at this early date. Explorations of the western country were eventually spurred on by an expanding fur trade. Abraham Wood became the first European into the Virginia mountains in 1650, followed by the Batts and Fallam expedition which reached the New River near the Virginia-West Virginia border in 1671. A third expedition traveled into the Kanawha Valley in 1673 (Rice 1972).

Few native people remained in West Virginia by the time the earliest European settlers arrived in the 1730s. Settlement expanded up the Greenbrier Valley after the end of King George's War, but the start of the French and Indian War in 1754 discouraged further settlement along the frontier in West Virginia. By the end of hostilities in 1763 only a few Shawnee tribes could be found living near the mouth of the Kanawha River. One theory suggests that the indigenous people were decimated by diseases transferred from European settlers to America, while a more plausible one asserts that they moved west of the Ohio River as a result of raiding Iroquois who gained control of most of the Northeastern tribes in the 1640s. As a result, the Shawnee, Mingo, and other tribes abandoned the area and moved west to avoid war parties from the north. However, the dislocated tribes could not completely abandon the area because of the abundant game, so the region that became West Virginia was used as a hunting ground (Rice 1972, 14).

While the native tribes shared the region as a hunting ground, the French and English were less willing to share the vast natural resources of the Ohio River drainage. Both crowns claimed the Ohio River and disputed any rival claims for the area. The French based their claim on the exploration of LaSalle and their long-standing fur trade in the Ohio Valley. Conversely, the English based their claim under the Virginia Charter of 1609 and the activities of their traders west of the Allegheny Mountains. To push their claim to the Ohio Valley, the English parliament chartered the Ohio Company in 1747 to develop settlements. To counter the British claims, the French placed lead plates along the Ohio River in 1749 to solidify their claim to the abundant natural resources of the area. Both sides demanded loyalty to their cause, which forced native tribes to support one or the other as the European powers waged war for control. Tensions rose as the European powers rushed to establish their claim to the Ohio Valley. The French began to build a series of forts south of Canada. In response, Virginia governor Dinwiddie sent a young George Washington to request that the French stop encroaching on land owned by the English crown. In 1754, hostilities eventually triggered the start of the French and Indian War on the continent (Ambler and Summers 1958, 40-46).

After their defeat in 1763 the French signed a treaty relinquishing all claims to Canada and lands east of the Mississippi River. During this peaceful interlude on the frontier, William Lowther, Jesse Hughes, and Elias Hughes made their way from Clarksburg through the wilds that would become Ritchie County. The exploration of the area began in 1772 when the group traveled up the west fork of the Monongahela River to its source. After crossing over a ridge, the companions traveled down Sandy Creek until it emptied into the Little Kanawha River. They floated down the Little Kanawha, naming the streams along the way. When the group reached a rapid current emptying into the river, Jesse Hughes claimed the streams as his namesake, dubbing it the Hughes River. The hearty band traveled up the newly named river until the stream split, and they named the divergent streams the North Fork and South Fork of Hughes River. After returning to the Little Kanawha, the explorers floated downstream until they reached the Ohio River, where they ended their journey and returned to Clarksburg. (Hardesty's West Virginia 1974, 37).

Other early settlers in the region included: Joseph Sims, a Philadelphia merchant who owned around 20,000 acres; William Worth, who owned 15,000 acres; Thomas Proctor, with 20,000 acres; James McGuire, who held 15,000 acres; John Phillips, who claimed 39,000 acres; and Henry Banks, a Richmond merchant who owned 44,400 acres by 1784. It would not be until the middle to late 1800s before these large parcels were broken up and sold to area residents (Cox 1979, 158).

The relative calm that had settled over the region after 1763 abruptly ended in 1774 when settlers perpetrated several atrocities against the Indians. In retaliation for the brutal murders of the family of the peaceful Chief Logan, native war parties swept through the western settlements killing or capturing any Europeans that they found. This campaign became known as Lord Dunmore's War, with the major battle occurring at the mouth of the Kanawha River at Point Pleasant, West Virginia, where General Andrew Lewis defeated a Shawnee force led by Cornstalk. As a result of this battle, the Shawnee relinquished all rights to hunt south of the Ohio River (Ambler and Summers, 61).

Less than two years after Dunmore's War, the American colonies began their War of Independence against British rule. While the British crown relinquished its control of the colonies when the war ended in 1782, their native allies continued to wage war on the encroaching tide of settlers in West Virginia. Ritchie County was on the edge of the western frontier, and like other parts of West Virginia it became a battleground during the border wars that continued throughout the 1780s and early 1790s. Settlement was curtailed as Indian raiding parties moved through the region on search and destroy missions in the futile attempt to turn back European settlers. In order to end the bloodshed in the west, the first President of the United States George Washington sent expeditions to meet the natives. After several failed attempts, General "Mad Anthony" Wayne defeat the natives at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Ohio, on August 20, 1794, resulting in the Treaty of Greenville and the restoration of peace on the West Virginia frontier (Rice 1972).

Westward expansion exploded as European settlers moved up the Little Kanawha and Hughes River watersheds in ever-increasing numbers. Many of the early settlers were Virginians that came out of the east through Clarksburg, but they also included Pennsylvanians and slaveholders from Eastern Virginia, as well as a few immigrants from Ireland and England who traveled up the Ohio and Little Kanawha rivers in search of land. (Hardesty's 1974, 40). Settlement on the headwaters of the North Fork Hughes River was led by Jacob Collins, John Garner, and James Marsh. By 1800, present-day Ritchie County remained a wilderness and did not attract many settlers until construction of a state road from Clarksburg to Marietta. This road was one of the principal east-west routes through the region and became a conduit for settlers moving westward across north central West Virginia. A string of small towns grew up along the road and feeder routes spread out from it into the sparsely-populated countryside.

Passage of an act by the Virginia General Assembly in 1832 providing for the satisfactory adjustment of land titles and the sale of delinquent and forfeited lands spurred settlement; the state ultimately sold thousands of acres in Ritchie County at a discounted rate when they became available after being declared delinquent for taxes. Construction of the Northwestern Turnpike in the 1830s from Winchester to Parkersburg also brought an influx of settlers to Ritchie County. The original act incorporating the turnpike, which was Virginia's bid for the lucrative Ohio Valley trade, passed in 1827 and authorized subscriptions from towns along the proposed route laid out by principal engineer Claudius Crozet (Rice 1972). In the 1840s, the Staunton to Parkersburg Turnpike helped to open up southern Ritchie County.

In 1822, Thomas Harris planned to lay out a town with the prospect of becoming the seat of government for a new county. It took over two decades to become a reality, but the formation of Ritchie County eventually occurred in 1843. Although the newly formed village of Harrisville had but two stores, two churches, and 15 houses, it became the county seat. Harrisville eventually incorporated in 1869 with Smith C. Hall as the first mayor (Hardesty's 1974).

Railroads have impacted the region's history in a major way. One of the most important events was the completion of the Northwestern Virginia Railroad in 1858. This important line, which ran from Grafton to Parkersburg and passed through Ritchie County, later became the Parkersburg Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Unfortunately for the county seat of Harrisville, the railroad came within five miles of town but did not enter it. This led to stagnation and gave rise to a number of newer railroad communities, including Pennsboro, Cornwallis, and Cairo. Harrisville finally got its first railroad in the 1880s with construction of the Pennsboro and Harrisville Railway. The P&H Railway was a "dinky" or narrow gauge line incorporated in 1873 to operate between Pennsboro and Harrisville. Aided by the railroad, Harrisville grew to become a bustling county seat by 1883. It supported five mercantile establishments, three churches, three hotels, a post office, drug store, artist's gallery, furniture store, flour mill, two blacksmiths, one printing shop, four doctors, and seven attorneys (Hardesty's 1974).

Despite the presence of two railroads, Ritchie County essentially remained a rural county throughout the nineteenth century, with its residents relying mainly on subsistence agriculture for their food supply. Early settlers kept a few cattle before 1840, and the region came to support increasingly larger numbers after that time. Sheep farming developed into an economic mainstay by the early twentieth century; corn provided the principal agricultural crop as production steadily increased from 1840 to 1900. Other agricultural products produced in the county included wheat and oats, hay and rye, tobacco, and fruit (Grimsley 1910).

Area residents maintained a rural agricultural economy until the nation's demand for natural resources grew in the late 1800s. The first major exploitation of Ritchie County's natural resources occurred at Ritchie Mines, where a naturally-occurring asphalt was harvested and sold from 1858 until 1877, when operations ceased after a series of explosions. Native inhabitants knew of petroleum seepage along the Hughes and Little Kanawha Rivers long before Europeans arrived in the area. Petroleum had limited use as a lubricant, as lamp oil, and medicinal purposes, but little use was found for the oil before George S. Lemon arrived in 1835 and began the first commercial business of collecting and selling oil from seeps along the stream banks. He dug pits where the "mud oil" collected, enabling him to gather it with cloth and other devices for sale at Parkersburg, Marietta, and Cincinnati. Lemon perfected a method of separating the oil and water, and sold his "sand oil" at a higher price than the less refined mud oil. In 1844, he struck oil and gas while drilling a brine well along the Hughes River and developed a siphon arrangement that produced a "sand oil" that he sold for medicinal purposes and commanded a higher price than the less-refined mud oil. He eventually lost a land dispute with Bushrod W. Creel, who became associated with a petroleum firm from Marietta and purchased oil from Hughes River from 1847 until 1860 (Harris 1916, 505-07).

After cleaning out an abandoned salt well near the mouth of Burning Springs Run in neighboring Wirt County in 1859, Samuel D. Kames drilled and struck oil. His well produced only seven barrels a day, but it attracted the attention of other developers who were inspired by his success. Shortly thereafter, entrepreneurs drilled a well that yielded 100 barrels a day (Harris 1916, 505-07). These developments occurred on the heels of Edwin Drake's strike in Titusville, Pennsylvania, and laid the basis for a burgeoning oil industry centered around Burning Springs Run.

Oil and gas are present in Ritchie County as a result of the great Burning Springs-Volcano Anticline that passes beneath the western end of the county. Oil fever struck Ritchie County in the 1860s with the first wildcat wells. Fortunately, the Hughes River oil region escaped serious damage from confederate raids that virtually destroyed the Burning Springs Run fields during the Civil War. When the Burning Springs area was slow to recover from the severe damage inflicted upon it, the center of oil production shifted to the Hughes River area. Production increased around Petroleum on the Northwestern Virginia Railroad, which dwarfed the output of the Burning Springs field and soon became the center of activity. By 1870, Ritchie County had become the state's second largest oil supplier with 2,810,500 gallons produced (Thoenen 1964,

29). Many boom towns sprang up during this period as county population increased between 1880 and 1900. Production in the 1890s shifted to the Cairo vicinity where deeper wells were drilled. Ritchie County continued producing West Virginia oil for a century, and many of its old wells still produce to this day.

In the earliest days, abandoned wells frequently remained uncapped so that natural gas bubbled to the surface. For years the gas vented into the air before it was eventually trapped and piped into the town of Burning Springs to fire a boiler that operated steam engines that powered individual wells. The first real use of natural gas as a fuel source came in the 1860s but it did not become a major industry until the 1870s (Thoenen 1964, 98). Eventually, residents and business owners in Ritchie County tapped the abundant fuel source that lay beneath the ground.

The Northwestern Virginia Railroad [which later became part of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad] and several short lines remained the major transportation routes through Ritchie County in the first half of the twentieth century. By 1920, population in the county topped the 16,000 mark and the county seat of Harrisville numbered 1,036 (1920 Census). Fortunes began to change after World War II as declining economic opportunities resulted in a net population loss. A major demographic shift came in the 1960s with the construction of new U.S. Route 50, a modern four-lane highway between Clarksburg and Parkersburg that allowed travelers to bypass Harrisville, Ellenboro, Cairo, and other Ritchie County towns. Another economic setback occurred in the 1980s when the old B & O [which later became the Chessie System] main line ceased operating between Clarksburg and Parkersburg. Ritchie County in the 1990s is experiencing a minor economic resurgence as the region emerges as a desirable tourist destination. Two featured attractions are North Bend State Park, located along the North Fork of Hughes River near the community of Cairo, and the 61-mile North Bend Rail Trail, which runs along the abandoned Northwestern Virginia rail line from Walker, near Parkersburg in Wood County, through Ritchie County, to Wolf Summit, near Clarksburg in Harrison County, West Virginia.

Site History

The Moore Homestead represents the historic development of agriculture in Ritchie County in the early twentieth century. Two separate parcels of land were combined to form the 16-1/2 acres that make up the Moore Homestead. The Keith family constructed a house and outbuilding on a 7-3/4 acre lot and an 8-3/4 acre tract was added by G. N. Wolf in 1911. From that date the homestead was held as a single unit.

The history of the homestead begins with the arrival of the Keith Family from Noble County, Ohio in the 1870s (Cochran 57). Polster Keith purchased property along Stewart Run in 1872. Upon his death, the property was spilt between his heirs. His son Adam purchased a 7-3/4 acre tract from his siblings on June 6, 1784 (Ritchie County Deed Book 42, 279). At the time of purchase the property was valued at \$11.06 per acre (Ritchie County Land Records 1899). In 1900, a

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structure was found on the property valued at \$20. From the 1900 census it is reported that Adam Keith with his wife and six children lived next to George Waggoner, who owned 8-3/4 acres adjacent to the homestead (Cochran 57).

In 1906, tax records show that the value of the buildings on the site increased by \$254 and the value of the land increased to \$26.57 per acre (Ritchie County Land Records 1906). It is safe to assume that the residence was built during the summer months of 1905. Even with the construction of the home, A. W. and Libbie Keith did not hold on to the property for very long. On 13 April 1907, the Keith's sold the property to Libbie's brother, James Alkire. James and Bidde V. Alkire owned the property for four years. During their period of ownership, the Alkires made no changes to the property that affected their assessment (Ritchie County Land Books). The Alkires sold the property to G. N. and L. E. Wolfe on April 17, 1911 (Ritchie County Deed Book 65, 26). In 1911, the Wolfes purchased an additional 8-3/4 acres to expand the homestead to 16-1/2 acres (Ritchie County Deed Book 79, 440).

The history of the 8-3/4 acre tract begins in 1872 when Henry and Eliza Grogg purchased 40 acres along Stewart's Run from Enos H. McDougal (Ritchie County Deed Book 17, 25). The Groggs sold the tract to George and Mary Waggoner in 1877 (Ritchie County Deed Book 19:518), who sold the parcel to John Trainer in 1889 (Ritchie County Deed Book 33, 457). Mary Waggoner repurchased the property in 1891 (Deed Book 33, 458). By 1900, George [now 70] and Mary [age 67] lived with their daughter Ida on the parcel (Cochran 57, Ritchie County Land Book 1900). The Waggoners held the property until the executor of their estate, James Osberry, sold the property to G. N. and L. E. Wolfe in 1911 (Deed Book 65, 259). On April 17, 1919, G. N. Wolfe, "widower, et al." sold the homestead properties to Alvin Trainer for a \$2,200 consideration (Ritchie County Deed Book 87, 424). Trainer held on to the property less than a year and sold the two tracts to John and Mary Keith (Ritchie County Deed Book 81, 438) who sold the property three years later to George and Fannie Moore (Deed Book 87, 424). George Moore and John Keith shared the mineral rights to the property (Ritchie County Land Book 1924). George and Fannie Moore owned the property longer than any of the previous owners. Upon George's death in 1976, Fannie transferred the property to Ernest and Eleanor Moore who were the last persons to own it. The Moore Homestead is named for Ernest and Eleanor Moore.

Original and Subsequent Owners

The Moore Homestead was created from a 7-3/4 acre and an 8-3/4 acre tract. The Moore Homestead residence, wash house, and barn were located on the 7-3/4 acre parcel.

Ownership of the 7-3/4 acre tract:

1872 Polster Keith

1894 Polster Keith Heirs: Merryman and Margaret Keith, J.T. and Emily Welch, B.F. and Serena Keith, John and Deborah Keith, Joel and Phoebe Woods, B.M. and Reita Keith, W.S. and Tilla Keith, Franklin and Mariah Keith.

1894 Adam W. Keith

1907 James Alkire

1911 G. N. And L. E. Wolfe

Ownership of the 8-3/4 acre tract:

Prior to 1872 Enos H. McDougal

1872 Henry Grogg

1877 George Waggoner

1889 John Trainer

1891 Mary Waggoner

1911 John Osberry

Ownership of the combined 16-1/2 acre tract:

1911 G. N. And L. E. Wolfe

1919 Alvin Trainer

1920 John Keith

1923 George Moore

1976 Fannie J. Moore

1976 Ernest and Eleanor Moore

Site Description

The North Fork of Hughes River is a watershed that encompasses roughly 130,220 acres of rugged, mountainous topography characterized by narrow flood plains. It is located in Ritchie

County, West Virginia, within the Central Allegheny Plateau section of the Appalachian Plateau, and is a tributary of the Hughes River which drains into the Little Kanawha River. The Little Kanawha empties into the Ohio River at Parkersburg, West Virginia. Geographically, the region is deeply dissected by stream erosion and the resulting drainage pattern is mature and dendritic in nature. Topographically, the area is characterized by narrow ridgetops and deep, V-shaped valleys with steep or very steep side slopes.

The Moore Homestead consists of 3 structures, principal among them is a 2-story frame residence. On the property also is a wash house and barn. The property is situated along Stewart Run, which begins west of Ellenboro near U.S. Route 50 and proceeds in a southerly direction to its confluence with the North Fork Hughes River near Cairo, West Virginia. Steep hillsides surround the flat plain where the homestead is located.

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U.S. Geological Survey, Harrisville, W.Va., 15 Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map, 1907.

U.S. Geological Survey, Harrisville, W.Va., 15 Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map, 1924.

Project Information

This homestead is part of a larger mitigation study undertaken at the behest of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in connection with their projected reservoir scheme. Since these structures will be below the 100 year flood level and have been declared historically significant, site recording was a necessary mitigation. These structures are expected to be demolished.

Photo documentation - John Nicely Sketch

Site plan - Paul Boxely

Narrative history - Bryan Ward

Project supervisor - Emory L. Kemp, Past & Present

April 1998

Site Plan

