

D. S. Tavern
U. S. Rt. 250 West
Charlottesville vicinity
Albemarle County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1019

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Historic American Buildings Survey
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

D. S. TAVERN

HABS No. VA-1019

Location: U.S. Rt. 250 West, Charlottesville Vicinity,
Albemarle County, Virginia.

Present Owner: Clarence J. and Mary Ann Elder.

Present Status: Residence and antique shop.

Present Condition: Excellent-restored.

Significance: The building is located where the D. S. Tree and zero milepost stood along the Three-Notched Road which was a major thoroughfare from Richmond to the Valley. The building is believed to have been built originally as a claims house which then evolved to an 'ordinary' and finally a farmhouse. It was a landmark due to its location at the crossroads of the Three-Notched Road and the Dick Woods Road which were very early and well-used roads in that area. 'Ordinaries' were often owned by 'men of Consequence' and there is a deed which shows that the D. S. Tavern was at one time owned by Chief Justice John Marshall.

OWNERSHIP AND PHYSICAL HISTORY

According to Edgar Woods' Albemarle County in Virginia, there were several people who had large land holdings or grants in the area surrounding the D.S. Tavern site. In 1734 Joell Terrell and David Lewis held a grant of 2300 acres with an addition of 700 acres on both sides of the Three Notched Road from Lewis Mountain to the 'D.S.' In 1735 Michael Holland held 4753 acres on both sides of Ivy Creek including the area around Farmington. By 1741 there were road orders for clearing and maintaining roads in the area; the older story-and-a-half log section of the D.S. Tavern may have been built about this time to serve as a claims house.

The following road orders list surveyors and a group of local landholders responsible for clearing and maintaining roads near their properties. These road orders probably include the name of the original landowner of the D.S. site since they refer to the D.S. tree and the 'D.S.'

15 Sept. 1741 O.S. p. 3, Goochland County Order Book #5
Road to be Cleared

On the petition of David Lewis, George Taylor, William Hargis Samuel Stiles, James ffidler, Hugh ffrazier, Howard Cash, James Treland, David Lewis, Jun^r., Chas. Caffry David Rees, William Lewis, Abraham Slaten & William Williams, leave is granted them to Clear a road from the Secretarys fford to the D.S. tree. And that the petitioners be exempt from working on any other road.

On petition of Michael Woods, John Woods, William Woods, Archibald Woods, Michael Woods, Jun^r., William Wallace, Dennis Doyle, John Jemison, Samuel Jemison, Henry Bailly, Andrew Wallace, Andrew McWilliams, Robert McNeely, James Henderson & James Kinkead leave is given them to Clear a road from the D.S. tree to Michael Woods And that the Petitioners be exempt from working on any other road.

20 Sept. 1743 O.S., p. 274, Goochland County Order Book 5
Surveyor of Roads

David Lewis is Appointed Surveyor of the Road from the D.S. tree down to Moors Creek and into the Secretarys Road and that the Tithables near the said road do clear the same.

27 June 1745 O.S., p. 23, Albemarle County Order Book 1
Road

Andrew Wallace is Appointed Surveyor of the High Way from D.S. to Mitchams River and Archibald Woods, Jeremiah Marris William Shaw, Robert Mannely, John Dickey, William Wallace, Mirlock McDowell, Micah Woods. Jun^r., Micah McDowell, Anthony Osbrook, John Lawson, and John Cowan, William Little and Robert Anderson Are Ordered to Assist the said Wallace in clearing the same.

The D.S. tree served as the zero milepost or marker along the Three Notched Road, but the significance of the initials D.S. is a mystery. Some sources say that the D.S. stands for Davis Stockton who blazed a trail from Williamsburg to 'the wilds of Goochland' and carved his initials in a tree where he and his partner Michael Woods split up. Other references to the D.S. are in terms of a Presbyterian congregation of religious dissenters of the Anglican Church.

12 August 1772, Albemarle County Deed Book #6 p. 190
Joell Terrell to D.S. does "...freely give and grant
unto the said congregation, their heirs and administrators
the Land whereon the said D.S. Meeting house stands in
the Parish of Fredericksville."

The land where the D.S. Tavern now stands was probably part of a parcel of 900 acres which George Divers sold to Peter Clarkson in 1782. There are no recorded deeds or wills in Albemarle County which explain how George Divers acquired this property. Peter Clarkson sold off the 900 acres in 1785, conveying 697 acres to James Kerr (Carr) for the sum of \$1246 and 203 acres to Claudius Buster for \$304. Although the first Virginia census lists the tavern in 1785, ownership is unclear. The recent restoration of the tavern in 1976 uncovered the signature of C. Buster dated 1786 in the wall of the tap bar, yet the deeds from James Kerr to David Kerr (appendix iv), from David Kerr to William Woods, and from William Woods to William Buster are for the same parcel of 326 acres and are described as..."known by the name of the D.S." The tract of 203 acres from Clarkson to Claudius Buster seems to be off conveyance from the property where the tavern is. The tract of 170 acres from James Kerr to Claudius Buster 14 Sept. 1786 in WB 9-250 also seemed to be some other parcel of land.

There may have been several taverns or ordinaries in the vicinity of the D.S. Tavern. Elise Lathrop in her book Early American Inns and Taverns, quotes an early English traveler by the name of Mrs. Wakefield, "we can scarcely pass ten or twenty miles without seeing an ordinary. They all resemble each other, having a porch in front, the length of the house, almost covered with handbills. They have no sign. These Virginia taverns take their name from the person who keeps the house, who is often a man of consequence." William Woods mentions Richard Woods Tavern in the Albemarle County Deed Book #12, p. 408,9. The Albemarle County Order Book of 1791-93 shows Richard Woods granted an ordinary license on page 16. Claudius Buster is also granted an ordinary license for the years 1783, 1792, 1793, 1796, 1798 in the order books. Although Claudius Buster may not have owned the property where the D.S. Tavern stands, he may have operated the ordinary for another.

From 1799 to 1804 Henry Williams purchased land from Thomas Buster, Claudius Buster, Claudius Buster, Jr., and the Trustees of Claudius Buster's Deed, amounting to 451 3/4 acres. In 1809 Henry Williams sold 450 acres to John Marshall of Richmond. The deed is recorded in Richmond.

There is a deed from John Marshall to Micajah Woods of 479 1/2 acres dated 1 May 1813 in the Albemarle County Deed Book #18 p. 388. (appendix iii)

From 1818 to 1850 the land where the D.S. Tavern stands was owned by the Gooch family. The plat in Deed Book 36 page 476 (appendix ii) shows lots owned by Dr. William F. Gooch, Dabney C. Gooch and Thomas W. Gooch. The latter landowner's lot is marked by a stake on the Wood's Road. This is the earliest plat of the area recorded in the Albemarle County records which I examined. The next plat is found in Deed Book 101 page 359 (appendix i) and is the first to show the tavern in its present location. This plat was drawn by Simms in 1894. From 1850 to 1945 the land was in the Stephens family. Land transfers are somewhat confusing since there were many members of the family some of whom died intestate and one who filed bankruptcy. The tavern, though still operating under the Gooch ownership, probably became a residence or farmhouse by the time the Stephens family purchased it in October of 1850. During the Civil War the area was evidently called Stephens Crossing due to the large land holdings of that family and to the fact that it was the only major structure in the area according to the Dick Woods Road Survey. The survey also suggests that the old Woods Road adjacent to the building was still in use at the turn of the century so the location remained a landmark until 1900 at least.

The property left the Stephens family when Mary Spears, the daughter of George B. Stephens, sold it to Edward McCue in 1945. The acreage was reduced to twelve from the 691 acres held by George B. Stephens a century earlier. McCue sold 1.1 acres including the site of the tavern to James S. McClure in the same year he purchased it. The following year on the 9th of July 1946 McClure sold the property to the Makielski family. They held the property for nine years and then sold it to Helen G. Bull. Seven years later Bull sold the land to the King's Court of Virginia, Inc. which operated a restaurant. Several alterations were made to the building at this time to convert it to a commercial property from a residential one.

Paneling from the dining room ceiling was removed at this time and placed on the wall surrounding the fireplace. The remainder was cut and used as wainscot elsewhere. It is difficult to say when door openings were widened and the tap bar lattice cut or when the stairs were moved or the detached kitchen was attached to the main house or even when the log structure was added to by the two story frame structure. Building materials such as the type of nails or lath used suggest general time periods.

The property was sold by the King's Court of Virginia, Inc. to Clair M. Burke in 1968 and was used for the next seven years as an office and warehouse for her retail business call "Pot Pourri". In 1976 Clarence J. and Mary Ann Elder purchased the property including the 1.1 acres and began extensive restoration. They lifted up the new floor boards, removed old deteriorating plaster, moved the stairs and discovered the log walls, the tap bar 'cage', the old floor boards and hearth and original frames for windows on the upper floor facade and frames for doors on the front facade. They photographed the exposed structure and only replaced what

was structurally unsound. Fortunately many of the alterations to the building over the years were additive so many of the materials were covered over or reused, but seldom replaced or destroyed. One particularly interesting find was a roof board and old wooden shakes or shingles which were in the attic space under the eaves. They are charred and seem to indicate a roof fire at one time.

The D.S. Tavern is presently called the 1740's House referring to the approximate time that the original log claims house was supposedly constructed although at this time no recorded evidence has been found. The property functions as a combined residence and antique shop. The Elders have recaptured some of the local history by carving a D.S. and three notches in a large tree which stands in front on Route 250 West. It probably stands quite close to where the original D.S. tree stood which served as the zero milepost on the Mountain Road referred to in the Goochland County Road Order of 1741.

CHAIN OF TITLE

Location of records: Transfers reference Deed Books (DB) or Will Books (WB) or Order Books (OB), by book number and page. Records are located in the Records Room of the Clerk of the Court, Albemarle County Courthouse, Charlottesville, Virginia.

26 July 1976 DB 601 p. 276
To: Clarence J. Elder and Mary Ann (ux)
From: Clair M. Burke
1.1 acres

6 May 1975 DB 572 p. 600
To: Clair M. Burke
From: Clair M. Burke, Inc.
1.1 acres

27 March 1968 DB 445 p. 606
To: Clair M. Burke
From: King's Court of Virginia, Inc.
1.1 acres

30 July 1962 DB 380 p. 413
To: King's Court of Virginia
From: Helen G. Bull
1.1 acres

4 May 1955 DB 316 p. 167
To: Helen G. Bull
From: Bronislaw A. Makielski and Katherine E. (ux)
1.1 acres

9 July 1946 DB 269 p. 111
To: Bronislaw A. Makielski and Katherine K. (ux)
From: James S. McClure and Josephine M. (ux)
1.1 acres

17 May 1945 DB 263 p. 230
To: James S. McClure and Josephine M. (ux)
From: Edward O. McCue and Isabel C. (ux)
1.1 acres

5 April 1945 DB 262 p. 411
To: Edward O. McCue, Jr.
From : Mary S. Spears, executrix
 J. F. Spears (vir)
 Joseph B. Stephens, Executor
 Clara M. Stephens (widow)
12 acres

4 August 1942 (probated 16 September 1944) WB 37 p. 257

To: Mary S. Spears

From: George B. Stephens

"My interest in my old home property on the Ivy Road known as "The D.S."

22 June 1941 (prob. 15 October 1944) WB 36 p. 514

To: Geo. B. Stephens

Joseph B. Stephens

From: Emma J. Stephens

one half interest each in part of the D.S. Estate.

Wm. H. Stephens died intestate in 1938.

1 March 1934 & August 1936 (prob. 1 January 1937) WB 36 p. 14

To: Joseph B. Stephens

From: Miss Florine Stephens

"I would like my part in the D.S. Property, when Emma and Willie have no more use for it to go to Joseph B. Stephens."

Lucy M. Stephens and Sallie A. Stephens died intestate in 1934.

23 May 1932 DB 216 p. 440

To: Emma J. Stephens

M. Florine Stephens

Sallie A. Stephens

Wm. H. Stephens

From: Geo. B. Stephens and Clara M. (ux)

Their one sixth interest in "The old Dr. George B. Stephens homeplace and being part of Lot #1 ..." (see plat in DB 101 p. 359) "It is the intention of this deed for said parties...to convey all of their interest in all of the land which R.C. Stephens died seized and possessed..."

R.C. Stephens died intestate in 1921.

8 July 1894 DB 101 p. 352

To: R.C. Stephens

From: Miss Emma J. Stephens

Miss Sallie A. Stephens

George B. Stephens

Miss Helen S. Stephens

Miss Lucy M. Stephens

Miss Florine Stephens

William H. Stephens

48 1/2 acres Lot #1 (see plat in DB 101 p. 359)

George B. Stephens has no will on record in Albemarle County.

20 September 1875 (recorded 20 April 1885) DB 85 p. 45

To: George B. Stephens

From: James D. Jones, assignee in bankruptcy of George B. Stephens

944 acres

17 March 1875 DB 68 p. 637 (Assignment of Bankruptcy effects)
To: James D. Jones and Oscar Reiersen, Assignees
From: George B. Stephens
"To have and to hold in trust..."

24 October 1850 DB 49 p. 150
To: George B. Stephens
From: Edwin H. Gooch and Henrietta M. (ux)
"...a certain tract or parcel of land known as the D.S."
691 acres

25 September 1849 DB 48 p. 40
To: Edwin H. Gooch
From: William M. Gooch
his entire interest (it being one moiety) in and to a certain tract or
parcel of land known as the "D.S."

15 April 1844 DB 41 p. 471
To: Edwin H. Gooch
From: George W. Gooch
"...all his right, title and interest to and in that tract or parcel of
land commonly called the "D.S."
695 acres

1 December 1843 DB 41 p. 470
To: George W. Gooch
Wm Gooch
From: Alonzo Gooch, Executor of Thomas W. Gooch
"...a part of the tract of land called the "D.S.""

14 June 1838 (prob. 6 August 1838) WB 13 p. 125
From: Thomas W. Gooch
This will is executed by the appointed: William F. Gooch (nephew)
(see plat in DB 36 p. 474) Alonzo Gooch (son)
John Fray (son-in-law)

28 August 1816 DB 21 p. 331
To: Thomas W. Gooch
From Micajah Woods and Sara (ux)
491 3/4 acres

23 November 1815 DB 19 p. 507
To: Micajah Woods
From: Rice Garland
"...lying in the forks of Woods and Three Chop'd Road...beginning
at the forks of the roads at the D.S. ..." (property is across
Woods Road from the D.S.)
11 acres

1 May 1813 DB 18 p. 388

To: Micajah Woods

From: John Marshall and Marry Willis (ux) "of the city of Richmond"

"...which said tract of land was sold and conveyed to the said John Marshall by Henry Williams and Susannah his wife..."

479 1/2 acres

No deed in Albemarle County is recorded for the sale by Henry Williams to John Marshall mentioned above.

7 August 1804 DB 1 p. 260

To: Henry Williams

From: Claudius Buster, Jr. and Ann (ux)

107 1/2 acres

1 February 1808 DB 16 p. 278

To: Henry Williams

From: David Anderson and Benjamin Brown

(Trustees of Claudius Buster's deed)

270 acres

3 August 1804 DB 15 p. 10

To: Henry Williams

From: Claudius Buster, Sr.

82 1/2 acres

4 February 1799 DB 13 p. 35

To: Henry Williams

From: Thomas S. Buster

91 3/4 acres "...known by the name of the D.S."

5 December 1796 DB 12 p. 161

To: Thomas S. Buster

From: William Buster and Mary (ux)

150 acres "...known by the name of the D.S."

13 February 1794 DB 11 p. 192

To: William Buster

From: William Woods and Joanna (ux)

326 acres "...known by the name of the D.S."

13 September 1792 DB 10 p. 443

To: William Woods

From: David Kerr and Dolly (ux)

14 July 1791 DB 10 p. 261

To: David Kerr

From: James Kerr

326 acres "...it is part of that tract known and distinguished by the name D.S."

14 September 1786 DB 9 p. 250
To: Claudius Buster
From: James Kerr
170 acres ± 200

5 February 1785 DB 9 p. 89
To: James Kerr
From: Peter Clarkson and Anna (ux)
697 acres ± 1246

12 May 1785 DB 9 p. 90
To: Claudius Buster
From: Peter Clarkson and Anna (ux)
203 acres ± 304

11 April 1782 DB 8 p. 26
To: Peter Clarkson
From: George Divers and Martha (ux)
900 acres ± 1350
(No wills or deeds recorded of property conveyed to George Divers)

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

General Statement and Description

The D.S. Tavern is a vernacular Virginia two story, single pile structure with a double parlor and central passage flanked by two end chimneys, one interior and one exterior. A double porch on the front was typical of taverns of the area and this building has a boarded up door on the upper story and a cut tenon from its original porch. During restoration in 1976 a tap bar 'cage' was uncovered and old newspapers and handbills attached to an interior log wall were found.

Three sides of the building are covered with original beaded weatherboards and the front facade is punctuated by an asymmetrical arrangement of windows. Nine over nine lights on the first story and six over nine lights on the second story. Typical eighteenth century details include the fixed louvered shutters, transom lights over the front door and raised panel doors which bear the outline of absent HL hinges.

Exterior Description

Overall Dimensions: The basic structure measures 42' 6" by 18' 4". From the sill to the roof peak or ridge measures approximately 25' 10". The detached kitchen serving the house measures 16' 3" by 14' 4". It is now connected to the main house.

Foundations: Foundation walls are of coarse rubble or field stone, Wall height from exterior ground level to bottom of sill ranges from 6" to 1' 6".

Exterior wall sheathing: Walls are covered with beaded weatherboards on all four sides. The southwest side was replaced, but the other three sides are original. The corner boards measure 4" and are beaded. A cut tenon in one corner board and a cut outline of a door in the weatherboards on the second floor indicate a double porch existed at one time.

Structural System: The building was originally a story-and-a-half log structure which was subsequently added to with post and stud framing. The dining room is enclosed by log walls. The logs are squared stained blue and have 4" battens over the seams. The corners are dovetailed by the front door. The logs are hand hewn pine and measure approximately 12" by 6". The logs as floor joists are rough hewn and not squared off which can be seen from the basement. The roof members are lapjointed and pegged at the apex. The rafters rest on a false plate at the front of the house. Cuts in the rafters indicate a steeper pitch when they covered the story-and-a-half log structure. The rest of the structure including the detached kitchen is post and stud framing with corner bracing. Members are marked by Roman numerals and the upper floor over the log section is framed with a 4" overhang. The sills measure 10" deep and the hewn joists are 24" to 26" O.C. The posts measure 4" by 8" and the studs are approximately 18" O.C.

Porches/Stoops: None of the original porches remain. Two uncovered 4' by 6' stoops provide access to the front door and the door to the old kitchen.

Chimneys: Three chimneys stand, one interior chimney in the old kitchen has stepped shoulders inside and a corbeled cap. Two chimneys serve the main house. One is interior with fireplace in the parlor and the small bedroom and one is exterior serving the dining room and large bedroom. The latter chimney is stepped asymmetrically and both have corbeled caps. Most of the visible brickwork is American bond.

Doors and Doorways: The front door is original and is a double, raised six-panel type which opens into the entry or what was the tap bar. This door was probably located to the right where a window now exists since the framed opening is of the same dimension. A simple architrave moulding surrounds the door and recessed transom light. The transom light consists of four panes in a single row. One pane appears to have been replaced.

Windows/Shutters: Windows are nine over nine lights, sliding sash. The panes measure 8" by 10" and the surrounds are simple architrave mouldings. The upper windows are similar, but are six over nine lights. The three upper windows on the back recently replaced large pane Victorian windows. The new windows fit the original framed openings as six over nine lights. The shutters on the front and lower rear window are fixed louvered and are held back with iron catches. Much of the old glass is still intact in the windows.

Roof: The roof is a medium pitch gable which is covered with standing seam metal and pinned. Some old scorched wooden shakes or shingles were found in the attic space under the eaves suggesting that the roof was once covered with rounded shingles which may have burned. The cornice is stopped with shaped end boards which are original. The fascia board on the rear was replaced (the old board was attached with hand wrought T nails). A large quarter round is attached under the soffit.

Interior Description

Floor Plans: The basement was originally a crawl space, but eventually the southeast end under the older log section was dug deeper with an access from the connection between the main house and what was the detached kitchen. The first floor has two rooms with a central entry hall. The dining room is 17'0" x 16'6" and the parlor is 17'2" x 19'6". The second floor has two bedrooms and a bathroom, one being 17'4" x 17'8" and the other 17'4" x 13'6" with the bathroom 5'8" x 6'0". The rest of the second floor is a central hall with an open stair well.

Stairway: The present stair descends centrally from midsection to the back of the original house. It pierces through the back wall to a newer addition. This stair was reversed by the present owners during restoration since it allows private access to the second floor bedrooms from the back part of the house. Previously the stair ascended from the front entry in a direct line. At some time the stair descended from the second floor where it is now located and turned into the parlor. Framing and floor boards indicate this earlier condition.

Flooring: The flooring is tongue and groove pine ranging from 4" to 8" in width. Much of the flooring was relocated and some was replaced recently. When the floor boards were raised from the dining room the floor joists showed evidence of very wide floor boards having been pegged at an earlier time due to widely spaced peg holes. The present floor boards had to be reconditioned by being taken up and sanded and filled where nailing from modern floor boards on top had damaged them. Since the house was uninsulated for the most part until recently, the double flooring served as a form of insulation.

Wall and Ceiling Finish: Wall and ceilings are plaster and lath. The horsehair plaster ceiling in the parlor was recently replaced and the larger bedroom upstairs was reconditioned. Some of the exposed lathing was handsplint with rosehead nails with no other nail holes. The paneling on the fireplace wall in the dining room was on the ceiling and moved to its present location by the owners of the King's Court of Virginia. The panelling over the tap bar area or front entry hall was removed by the present owners when they opened up the tap bar wall. The larger or southeast bedroom and the parlor both have paneled dado with a bolection molded dado cap. These panels indicate cuts where door openings once were: including one upstairs and two on either side of the present front door on the first floor.

Doors and Doorways: The doorways are similar throughout with a molded architrave. The doors are wood raised six-panel with box locks and although no HL hinges remain their outlines can be seen on the door stiles.

Interior Trim: The parlor and the large bedroom have panelled dado with a bolection molded dado cap which becomes the sill for the windows. The second bedroom and dining room have chair rails which also serve as sills and beaded baseboards. The windows and doorways are similar throughout with simple molded architraves. The mantel in the dining room was originally painted black and is a simple raised panel type. The mantel in the parlor has a simple cornice, with a bolection molding and a row of circular holes above a row of dentils. The mantel in the bedroom above the parlor also has a punched design. The mantel in the larger bedroom has a ovolo supporting the shelf which looks like the piece running below the soffit of the house. The doorway from the tap bar or entry to the parlor has a blue stained molding which is the same stain as that on the panelling of the wall in the smaller bedroom. This same blue stain was also found behind the medicine cabinet in the upstairs bathroom.

Site and Surroundings

The D.S. Tavern is located on Route 250 West near Ivy. It faces northeast and fronts Route 250 which was known as the Three Notched Road or Mountain Road. Traces of the old D.S. Road or Dick Woods Road run along the northwest boundary and used to connect with the Batesville Community. This road was replaced by Route 677 about the turn of the century. Early Road Orders of Goochland and Albemarle Counties refer to a D.S. tree at this location, and evidently it was considered the zero milepost or marker for surveying the turnpike. The original D.S. tree is gone, but two out buildings remain which were probably built at about the same time as the main structure. The detached single story one room kitchen was connected during the twentieth century, and a small smokehouse or utility building stands behind the kitchen.

PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was produced by the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia under the direction of K. Edward Lay, Associate Professor of Architecture, during the Fall Semester, 1979. The material was prepared by Jane E. Kimball, Graduate Student of Architecture, and was donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey. It was not produced under HABS supervision, nor edited by members of the HABS staff.