

WHITE'S CREEK POST OFFICE
At west edge of Cyrus Road, 65 feet south of
3451 Cyrus Road
Cyrus
Wayne County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-270

HABS
WVA
50-CYRUS,
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WHITE'S CREEK POST OFFICE

HABS No. WV-270

HABS
WVA
90-CYRUS
6-

Location:

At west edge of Cyrus Road (about 65 feet south of 3451 Cyrus Road), Cyrus, Wayne County, West Virginia.

Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17. 362475. 4240965.
USGS Quadrangle: Burnaugh, West Virginia/ Kentucky

Significance:

This building served as the White's Creek Post Office between 1901 and 1923. It probably was built about 1865 and may have been moved to its present site by 1887. It may have served as the post office, too, on this or another site, from the date of its erection, but this cannot be established conclusively. It was rented briefly for feed storage by Harry and Dolly Dodson during their 1944-46 ownership of the commercial building [WV HABS No. 269] on the adjacent lot. At other times in the twentieth century, the building was used for general storage and as a residence. All other post offices in White's Creek after 1923 were housed inside the hamlet's various general stores.

The building is considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in terms of its associations with the history of the locale and hamlet of Whites Creek, particularly social and commercial life oriented toward the then more efficient river and rail transport. Moreover, its sequential adaptations -- to public, commercial, utilitarian, and residential purposes -- connect it, more than any other remaining building, with the precarious and checkered history of the village of Whites Creek.

Description:

The building is a gable-roofed, one-story, one-room frame structure with its single entry at the gable-end fronting eastward toward the road. In plan the one-room building is 22 feet 4 inches east-west, and 16 feet 3 inches north-south across its original front. Its roof is protected by raised-seam metal roofing painted silver. The rake of the roof is 31°. Its ridge-line is oriented at 305° magnetic. A small brick chimney formerly extended through the ridge line, but the hole for this has been patched over. Its sills are set atop occasional sandstone pier stones, which at the rear are long rough-pointed monolithic blocks set vertically under corners. A one-bay three-sided car-

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port, built ca. 1985, extends out from the south side, and is open toward the road. The carport is 10 feet 4 inches wide (north-south) across the front and extends 18 feet 5 inches back (east-west). The carport sits atop a platform of variegated fill. The main building was painted yellow for many years until 1977, when Marie Chadwick first painted it white, its present color.

The building is in fair condition though leans noticeably toward the west. The building has limited architectural integrity. Original elements removed include: all windows and door, cladding on the south and west sides, chimney and stove, and small porch or steps.

Exterior walls are clad in clapboards. Board ends abut neatly at single corner boards. Clapboards have been replaced by plywood on the west end, and by particle board on the south side against the carport. Rafters are enclosed, and narrow frieze or shadow boards occur beneath all eaves. An offset door and one window pierce the east, or front, end. Two windows pierce the north wall, and two formerly pierced the south. Interior evidence shows that neither windows nor doors ever pierced the west end. None of the 6-over-6 double-hung window sash are original.

Only square-cut nails fasten all its fascias, soffits, frieze boards, and door and window surrounds. The clapboards were fastened originally only using cut nails, but many were firmed up at a later date using wire nails. Below the door, wire nails attach a plank used to patch the rotting end-sill. The plank covers several mortises, cut into the front-end sill beam, which indicate the former presence of a small porch, later removed and replaced with several cement blocks.

Interior walls and ceiling are covered with flush, horizontal, 5-3/8-inch-wide tongue-and-groove softwood boards fastened to studs using cut nails only. Flooring is of 4-1/4-inch-wide hardwood boards, apparently tongue-and-groove. Ceiling height is 106 inches. A ceiling trap (16" x 18") near the southwest corner leads to an unfinished attic space. Internal construction is braced-frame. Sills, plates, posts, and girts are solid beams. All studs, braces, and beams were cut by a circular saw, none hewn.

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The building originally was heated by a cast-iron pot-bellied stove near the east central part of the room. Its 6-inch-diameter flue ran to the ceiling where a short brick chimney was supported by a metal plate held up by two straps slung over two adjacent joists. The date of a Huntington Herald-Advertiser newspaper wadded up to plug the flue-hole in the ceiling was September 2, 1962. A gas pipe near the bottom center of the south wall suggests that the stove was removed many years ago.

The room was superficially electrified. A single two-prong standard outlet was put in through the south wall. Outlets on the east and west walls are merely the ends of three-plug extension-cords tacked onto the walls' surfaces.

All window sash, frames, and their interior casing, as well as the door and its architrave, are replacements, not originals. Surface paint in the room is green. Removing the original elements left bare outlines. Replacement with smaller new casings left those outlines exposed. While many cut nails remain in the window frames, these were merely brought along. On casings, about 60% of the nails used are wire nails; these often fill square holes of cut nails pulled out when the frames were salvaged from some other building. Modern finishing nails fasten the shellacked oak door architrave. The holes for the two window frames removed from the south wall were bridged using some old studs, and then were covered with drywall and boards.

History:

The post office at White's Creek was established in 1866 and was closed in 1955. Its first postmaster was James H. Lambert (1841-1917), a local merchant, who served from 1866 until sometime after 1883 (Comstock 1973, Hardesty 1883: 177-178, Tackett et al. 1991: 510). Throughout the 1870s and 1880s Lambert and John Lockwood (1836-1899) were business partners and together owned a number of commercial lots in White's Creek; between 1880 and 1882 they owned Lot 17, the present site of the White's Creek Post Office [HABS No. WV-270].

The P.O.'s best known postmaster was George B. Dixon (1841-1924), who ran the White's Creek Post Office [HABS No. WV-270] on its present site (Lot 17) between about 1900 and 1923. Dixon was assisted for many years by postal worker M.C. "Mack"

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Fraley (1846-1922). Fraley lived nearby [HABS No. WV-268] and was the last person to run the john-boat ferry, until his very death, across the Big Sandy River to Lockwood Station, Kentucky (Caroline Cyrus interview). Fraley met the mail trains at Cyrus Station, and for a time actually ran the post office (Clifford Smith interview). The last postmaster was Doris Finley, who kept the post office in her store [HABS No. WV-269].

Frank Chadwick (b. 1898) and wife Marie Chadwick (b. 1912) remember White's Creek Post Office [HABS No. WV-270] well. Inside was a pot-bellied stove. All its windows once had large green shutters that locked from the inside. When the building was a post-office, these were kept shut. Later, sometime between 1941 and 1955, probably during the Dodson years (1944-46) the building was used with the store [HABS No. WV-269], which was closed by 1955. Frank Chadwick's daughter Bertha Louise married Virgil Miracle around 1946, and lived in the Dixon post office until Frank's first wife Mary died in 1962. Then, Virgil Miracle used it to store feed for his horse. The building was a yellow color (the same as the store front) until 1977, when Marie Chadwick first painted it white. Frank Chadwick added the garage shed to its side in about 1985. (Frank and Marie Chadwick interviews)

On a 1924 railroad map the only small building on Lot 17 is labelled "office", and Lot 17 was owned by George B. Dixon (Norfolk and Western Railway Company 1924). Northeast of the intersection of the N. & W. railroad and the Whites Creek Road, another building was labelled "Store & P.O."; it was the one run by Jesse R. Piles, who in 1941 bought Lot 18, next to George Dixon's post office, to build a new store [HABS No. WV-269].

On a 1953 map the small building on Lot 17 was labelled "Old Store Bldg." alongside which was a "Kerosene Pump"; beside it is the "1 S.F. Store" belonging to Edgar Finley (West Virginia State Road Commission 1953). The label suggests that the small building no longer was used in association with the Finley Store, nor yet had become a residence.

Sources:

Comstock, Jim

1973 Hardesty's West Virginia Counties: Gilmer, Ritchie, Lincoln, and Wayne. Richwood, West Virginia. (Reprint of 1883 text)

Ely, William

1887 The Big Sandy Valley: A History of the People and Country from the Earliest Settlement to the the Present Time. Central Methodist Publishing Company, Catlettsburg, Kentucky.

Hardesty, H.H.

1884 Map of Wayne Co., W. Va. (Reprinted in the Oct. 1, 1977 issue of the Press-Observer, Vol. 6, No. 3, Page 1)

Norfolk and Western Railway Company, Big Sandy Line

1924 Land to be Acquired from T.J. Booth et ux, M.P. NA 51 + 1724.2', Wayne County, W. Va. Scale 1"=200'. Office of Chief Engineer, Roanoke, Va., Feb. 7, 1924. N-8609. From D-208 & Notes of 10990-A.

Tackett, Regina, Patricia Jackson, and Janice Thompson

1991 History of Lawrence County, Kentucky. Curtis Media Corporation, Dallas, Texas.

Tuttle, Elizabeth H.

1991 Historical and Architectural Assessment of the Potential for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places of the Project Area and Vicinity of the Cyrus Dock Company Project on the Big Sandy River in Wayne County, West Virginia. Prepared for the Cyrus Dock Company, Charleston, West Virginia.

West Virginia State Road Commission

1953 Plan and Profile for Construction of State Road Project No. S-617 (1), Route No. Sec. 1, Ceredo District, Wayne County, White's Creek Bridge and Approaches. Plan scale 1"=100'. On file, Map Drawer 21, Wayne County Clerk's Office, Wayne, West Virginia.

Interviews

Frank Chadwick, Jr. and Marie Chadwick
Interview by D. Bailey, 3-5 P.M., August 3, 1992

Miss Caroline Cyrus
Interview by D. Bailey, 3-4 P.M., February 4, 1993

Clifford and Sadie Smith
Interview by D. Bailey, 12:30-4:30 P.M., February 15, 1993

Historian:

Douglas L. Bailey, Consulting Archaeologist
618 Grant Street, Fairborn, Ohio 45324
May 31, 1994

CHAIN OF TITLE

References to the Chain of Title to the land on which the structures stand are in the County Clerk's Office, Wayne County Courthouse, Wayne, West Virginia.

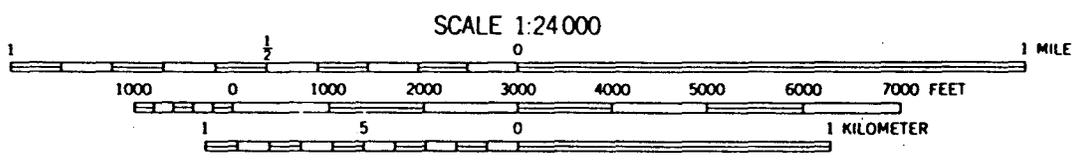
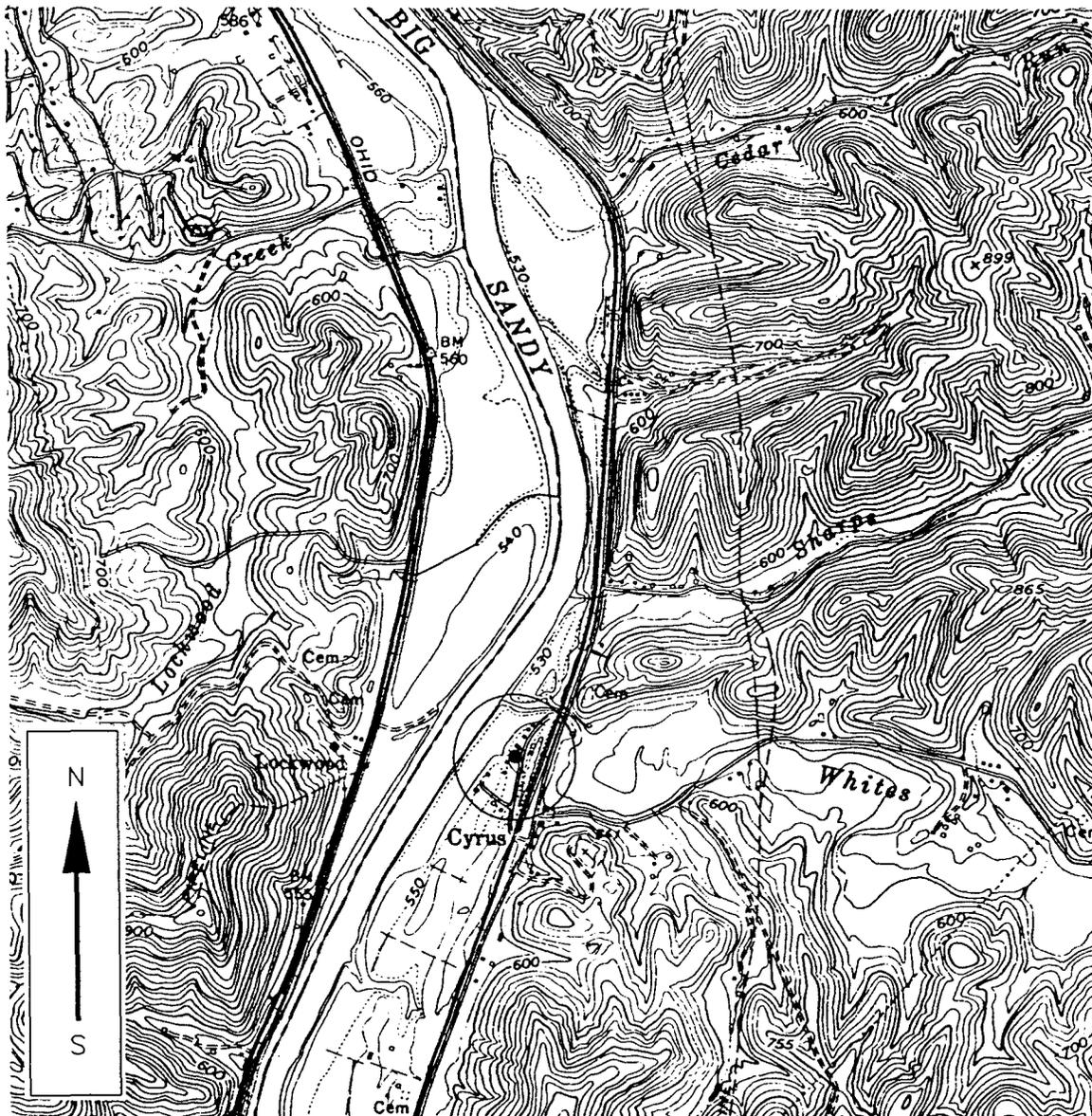
- 1991 Deed, October 31, 1991, recorded in Deed Book 545, Page 645.
Frank Chadwick and Marie Chadwick (wife) to Cyrus Dock Company,
Inc.
- 1989 Contract of Sale, June 26, 1989.
Frank Chadwick and Marie Chadwick (wife) to M. P. Coals, Inc.
- 1948 Deed, March 19, 1948, recorded in Deed Book 243, Page 29.
Emma Dixon and Dollie Dixon Daniels et al.
- 1941 Deed, November 27, 1941, recorded in Deed Book 218, Page 335,
Heirs of Nancy A. Dixon to Frank Chadwick.
- 1938 Will, February 19, 1938, recorded in Will Book 5, Page 342.
Nancy A. Dixon to Emma Dixon.
- 1924 Deed, January 25, 1924, recorded in Deed Book 131, Page 289.
George B. Dixon to Nancy A. Dixon.
- 1903 Deed, March 1, 1903, recorded in Deed Book 58, Page 395.
Nancy A. Dixon to George B. Dixon.
- 1900 Deed, January 31, 1900, recorded in Deed Book 5, Page 580.
William F. Bruns and Sallie Bruns (wife) to Nancy A. Dixon.
- 1892 Deed, September 19, 1892, recorded in Deed Book 37, Page 147.
Charles W. Ferguson and Martha Jane Ferguson (wife) to William F.
Bruns.
- 1882 Deed, August 23, 1882, recorded in Deed Book T, Page 84.
John Lockwood and Lucinda Lockwood (wife), and James H. Lambert
and Louria Lambert (wife) to Charles W. Ferguson.
- 1880 Deed, November 10, 1880, recorded in Deed Book Q, Page 327.
Milton J. Ferguson and Martha Jane Ferguson (wife) to John Lockwood
and James H. Lambert.

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- 1875 Deed, September 16, 1875, recorded in Deed Book L, Page 267.
Heirs of Henry H. Bean Estate, via G.G. Burgess, Special Commissioner,
to M. J. Ferguson.
- 1859 Deed, April 6, 1858, recorded in Deed Book E, Page 285.
Joshua Cyrus and Elizabeth Cyrus (wife) to Henry H. Bean.

LOCATION MAP

Portion of USGS Topographic Quadrangle: Burnaugh, Kentucky/ West Virginia
Scale of 1: 24, 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET

LOCALE MAP

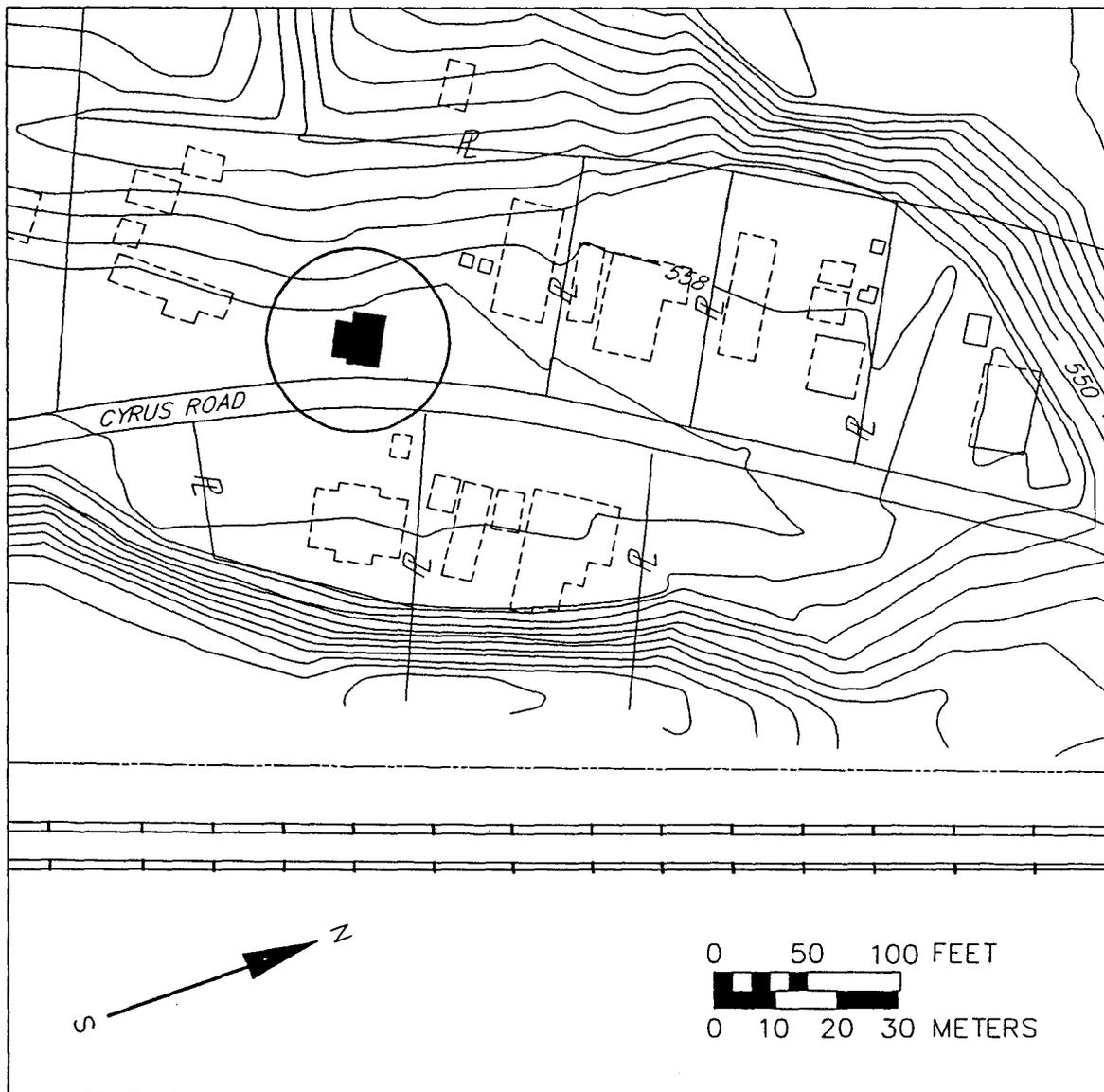
Annotated portion of:

Cyrus Dock Company, Inc.

1992 Supplemental Map: Modification No. 1, DEP Permit No. 0-5003-91,

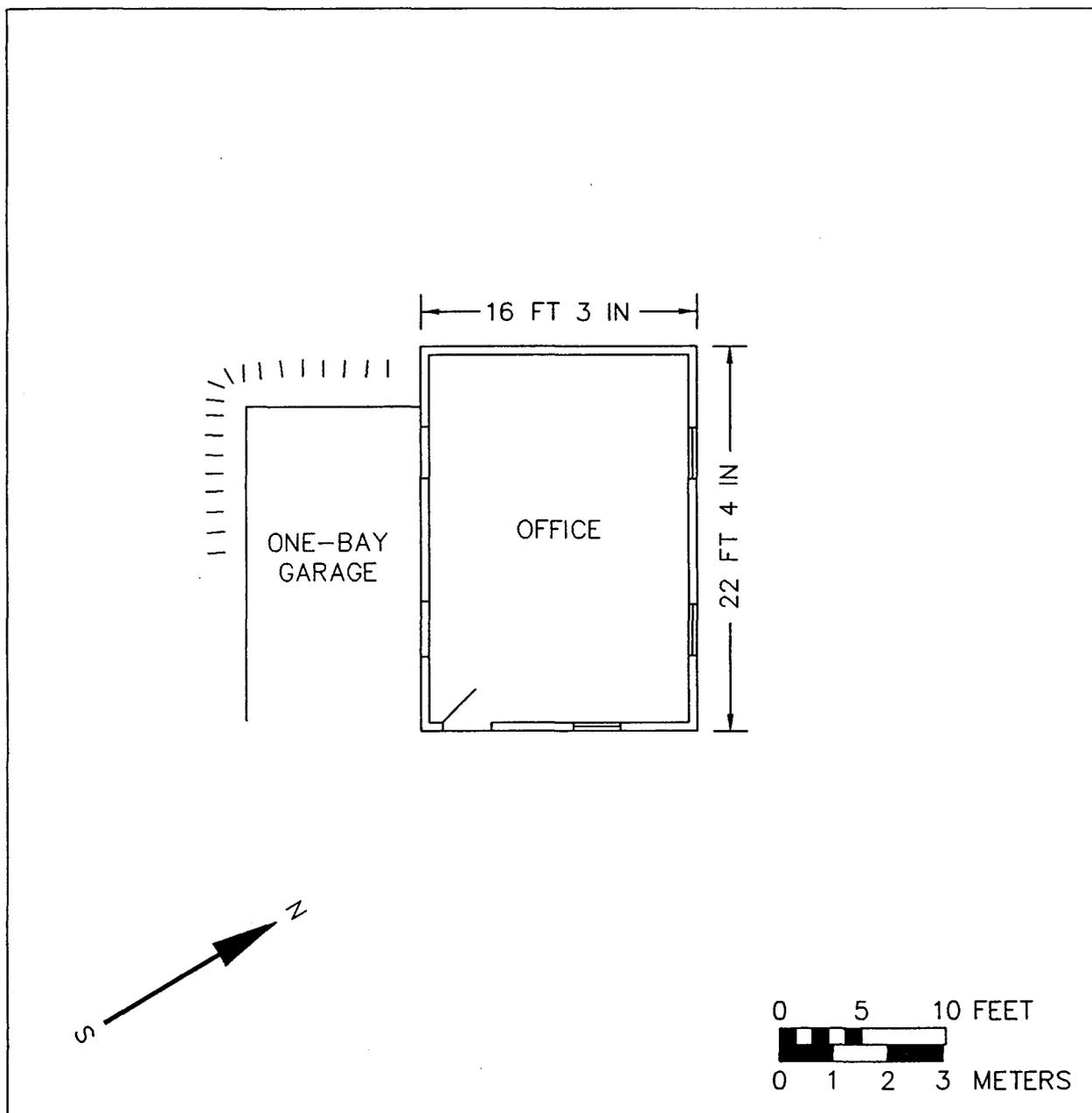
NPDES Permit No. WV 1010808, MSHA I.D. No. 46-07946. April, 1992.

Scale 1 inch: 100 feet, or 1: 1200.



FLOOR PLAN

(Based on field data collected by D. Bailey, 1992.)



EXPLANATION

This small building was identified as "Buena Vista Masonic Temple/Hall" in Tuttle (1991). However, no evidence could be found to confirm its use as a masonic hall.

The Buena Vista Lodge No. 60 operated for about nine months on Articles of Dispensation granted via a letter of December 28, 1872 to James M. Rice. It was chartered November 11, 1873. The Lodge was named to commemorate the Battle of Buena Vista, fought February 22-23, 1847, on whose 25th anniversary the lodge was organized. In 1878 the Lodge bought "Lot 2 on second street" for \$150 from James M. Rice and Louisa Rice (Wayne County Deed Book F, Page 607) and sold it May 2, 1959 to Frank Chadwick. This lot is now occupied by a denatured building where the lodge met for many years. The hiatus 1873-1878 at first seems to suggest that another building could have been used prior to the Smith Garage. However, the Lodge has no tradition that the smaller building [Whites Creek Post Office, HABS No. WV-270] was their first meeting hall (Bob Bolton, Corresponding Secretary, 1960s-1992, and Frank Chadwick (b. 1898), Past Master, 1936). It seems too that James M. Rice, who bought Lot 2 on April 1, 1872, and owned it 1872-1878, was important if not instrumental in organizing the Buena Vista Chapter, serving as its first Master, 1872-1873. The lot likely was purchased on behalf of the organizing lodge, and that when repaid, James Rice deeded the lot to the Lodge. The modest increase in value (\$125 to 150) does not suggest that a lodge building was erected in the Rice period, 1872-1878. The Lodge grew from an initial 11 in 1873 (Comstock's 1973 Hardesty 1883: 170) to 58 in 1881 (Grand Lodge of W. Va., A.F. & A.M. 1886: 96) so presumably by the late 1870s needed a substantial building. While the use of the small building on Lot 17 as its first lodge cannot be ruled out except by positive confirmation of another origin and use in the period 1872-78, no written or oral evidence confirms such use. Moreover, as Frank Chadwick (b. 1898) is a Past Master of the Lodge and owned both Lot 17 and Cyrus Lot 2, his skepticism must be taken into account. The present brick lodge (built 1960) on U.S. Route 52 succeeds the first known lodge building, still extant on Cyrus Lot 2, which was built in 1878 and last used as a lodge in 1960. The cornerstone from this old lodge is kept within the newer lodge.