



R.M. SAMPLE HOUSE

This report was written on June 6, 1979

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the R. M. Sample House is located on the Mt. Holly-Huntersville Rd. in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

2. Name, address, and telephone number of the present owner and occupant of the property:

The present owner of the property is:

Myrtle Bennett Newly

Route 1

Bow 284

Huntersville, NC 28078

Telephone: (704) 399-5764

The property is unoccupied.

3. Representative photographs of the property: This report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. A map depicting the location of the property: This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.

5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property: The most recent reference to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 2488 at page 483. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is 017-031-06.

6. A brief historical sketch of the property:

Richard Milas Sample (1808-1869), son of James and Martha Robinson Sample, married Adaline Henderson and established a homestead three miles east of Hopewell

Presbyterian Church in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.¹ The log house which he occupied thereon was typical of the type of abode found on the majority of small farms in Piedmont North Carolina in the early nineteenth century. Consequently, [square-hewn timbers with dovetailed joints](#), log buildings were well-suited to the region. Labor was expensive and tools rudimentary. Consequently, farmers such as R. M. Sample lived in edifice which could be most as easily fashioned from the timber provided by the our surrounding forests. Logs were hewn to size by an adze. The average log without too much taper was about twenty to twenty-four feet in length. This factor determined the maximum size of the buildings which could be fashioned in this manner.²

R. M. Sample owned no slaves. Obviously, he farmed on a modest scale. He and his wife, however, did have several mouths to feed. Between 1835 and 1847, seven children were born, four girls and three boys.³ Tragically, two of the sons (J. W. Sample and W. I. Sample) were killed in the Civil War, the former at Chancellorsville in May 1863 and the latter at Ox Hill in September 1862.⁴ Marc, their third son, also served in the Confederate army.⁵ In 1882 Eli Hugh McAuley (1851-1934), son of E. A. McAuley and Mary Alexander McAuley, purchased the house from Adaline Sample, widow of R. M. Sample.⁶ Again, the structure accommodated a large family. Eli McAuley and his wife, Mary Laura McCoy McAuley, had eight children.⁷ At the time of his death on January 18, 1934, Eli was the oldest member of Hopewell Presbyterian Church and a prominent farmer of the Hopewell section of Mecklenburg County. His daughter, Minnie McAuley Neely (1882-1967), inherited the house in 1942.⁹ She and her husband, George William Neely (1872-1964), resided there until the mid-1960's. A native of the Steele Creek community in Mecklenburg County, Mr. Neely was the son of James J. Neely and Susan Knox Neely.¹⁰ He worked for Efirde's Department Stores in various capacities, terminating his service as assistant manager of the Charlotte branch.¹¹ Mrs. Myrtle Bennett Neely purchased the R. M. Sample House on December 10, 1963.¹² Born on April 26, 1908, in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, she married Clyde N. Neely, nephew of George William Neely, on February 15, 1959. She continues to own the structure. Her husband died on June 29, 1964.¹³

NOTES

¹ Charles William Sommerville, *The History Of Hopewell Presbyterian Church* (Observer Printing House, Charlotte, NC, 1939) p. 181. Hereafter cited as Sommerville. United States Census of 1840 for Mecklenburg County. p. 331. United States Census of 1850 for Mecklenburg County, p. 43. Mecklenburg County Deed Book 6, p. 186. Mecklenburg County Will Book I, p. 11. Mecklenburg County Old Deed Book 21, p. 160. Mecklenburg County Will Book I, p. 205. On September 20,

1937, Mrs. Eli Hugh McAuley claimed that the structure was more than one hundred and fifty years old and that R. M. Sample had acquired it from a Mr. Allen, a fact causing some local historians to call the house the Allan Place (Sommerville, p. 211). This writer can find no record of property being transferred to R. M. Sample from a Mr. Allen. It is logical to infer, however, that R. M. Sample occupied a structure which had been erected at an earlier date.

² Dr. Lawrence S. Bardon, Dr. James W. Clay, Mr. Owen J. Furuseth, Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Dr. Nelson S. Nunnally, "Socio-Economic Overview Of the Uwharrie National Forest And Environs, (An Environmental Impact Statement submitted to the National Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1978), pp. 17-18.

³ United States Census of 1850 for Mecklenburg County, p. 43.

⁴ *Moore's Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War between the States*, vol. III, p. 14. Both served in Company C of the 37th Regiment.

⁵ Sommerville, p. 181. United States Census of 1850 for Mecklenburg County, p.43.

⁶ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 34, p. 295. Mecklenburg County Death Book 42,

⁷ Sommerville, p. 155.

⁸ *The Charlotte Observer* (January 19, 1934), p. 5. *The Charlotte News* (January 19, 1934), p. 18.

⁹ Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1066, p. 307. *The Charlotte Observer* (April 24, 1967), p. 4C.

¹⁰ *The Charlotte Observer* (January 28, 1964), p. 15A.

¹¹ *The Charlotte News* (August 16, 1962), p. 5A.

¹² Mecklenburg County Deed Book 2488, p. 483.

¹³ Interview of Mrs. Myrtle Bennett Neely by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (May 22, 1979).

7. A brief architectural description of the property: This report contains an architectural description prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in N. C. G. 9. 160A-399.4:

a. Historical and cultural significance of the property known as the R. M. Sample House rests upon two factors. First, the main block of the house is one of the few antebellum log houses which survives in Mecklenburg County. Second, the house and its attendant outbuildings illustrate the evolution of a modest but typical farm from the 1830's until the twentieth century.

b. Suitability for preservation and restoration: The interior of the R. M. Sample House has been massively altered from the original. The exterior has also experienced considerable change. Overall, the structure is in a fair state of repair, making its preservation a relatively simple matter. Restoration of the house could be a substantial undertaking. However, because of its somewhat standard design, the structure could be returned to an approximation of its original appearance.

c. Educational value: The property known as the R. M. Sample House has educational value because of the historical and cultural significance of the property.

d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance or repair: At present, the Commission has no intention of securing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property. The Commission presently assumes that all costs associated with restoring and maintaining the property will be paid by the owner or subsequent owner of the property.

e. Possibilities of adaptive or alternative use of the property: The property is not suited for adaptive use. It could serve as a viable residence.

f. Appraised value: The current tax appraisal of the R. M. Sample House is \$170. The current tax appraisal of the 23.68 acres of land owned by Mrs. Neely is \$26,640. The current tax appraisal of the improvements on the land is \$60,480. The most recent tax bill on the entire property was \$738.78. The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply annually for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all, or any portion of the parcel which becomes "historic property."

g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs: As stated earlier, the Commission presently has no intention of purchasing the fee simple or any lesser included interest in this property. Furthermore, the Commission presently assumes that all costs associated with the property will be paid by the present or subsequent owners of the property.

9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places: The Commission judges that the property known as the R. M. Sample House does meet the

criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Basic to the Commission's judgment is its knowledge that the National Register of Historic Places, established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, represents the decision of the Federal Government to expand its recognition of historic properties to include these of local, regional and state significance. The Commission believes that its investigation of the property known as the R. M. Sample House demonstrates that the property possesses local historic and cultural significance. Consequently, the Commission judges that the property known as the R. M. Sample House does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Specifically, the Commission judges that the property known as the R. M. Sample House meets the criterion that properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places must "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction."

10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County: The property known as the R.M. Sample House is historically important to Mecklenburg County for two reasons. First, the main block of the house is one of the few antebellum log houses which survives in Mecklenburg County. Second, the house and its attendant outbuildings illustrate the evolution of a modest but typical farm from the 1830's until the twentieth century.

Bibliography

Dr. Laurence S. Barden, Dr. James W. Clay, Mr. Owen J. Furuseth, Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Dr. Nelson S. Nunnally, "Socio-Economic Overview Of the Uwharrie National Forest And Environs," (An Environmental Impact Statement submitted to the National Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1978).

Estate Records of Mecklenburg County.

Interview of Mrs. Myrtle Bennett Neely by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (May 22, 1979).

Moore's Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War between the States, vol. III.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

Charles William Sommerville, *The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church* (Observer Printing House, Charlotte, NC, 1979).

The Charlotte News.

The Charlotte Observer.

United States Census of 1840 for Mecklenburg County.

United States Census of 1850 for Mecklenburg County.

Vital Statistics of Mecklenburg County.

Date of Preparation of this Report: June 6, 1979

Prepared by: Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission
139 Middleton Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28207

Telephone (704) 332-2726

Architectural Description

Summary of Significance

The R. M. Sample House (ca. 1800) is a double-pen horizontal log house with an exterior gable end chimney. It is typical of the abodes which the Scotch-Irish and German settlers erected in Piedmont North Carolina in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The one-story frame ell at the left rear and its attendant wrap-around porch date from the late nineteenth century. The bathroom on the left of the main block was built within the last twenty years. The interior appointments bear little resemblance to the original. A massive renovation of the interior occurred during the 1950's. The kitchen in the rear all was modernized. The walls and the ceilings on the first floor were refinished. New sills and frames were constructed in every window. The front porch (a late nineteenth century addition) was repaired. New doors and window sashes were installed. On balance, the R. M. Sample House is one of the older log houses which survive in Mecklenburg County. Unfortunately, however, it has been altered substantially from the original. The site contains several outbuildings. A small horizontal log structure to the immediate rear of the house might be an original feature. The others most likely date from the late nineteenth century or the

twentieth century. It is reasonable to infer that most were built during the tenancy of Eli Hugh McAuley (1886-1934). To summarize, the R. M. Sample House and its attendant outbuildings illustrate the evolution of rural domesticity in Mecklenburg County from the early nineteenth century until the present, and, consequently, constitute a significant collection of local historic artifacts.

Detailed Description

The main block of the R. M. Sample House is two stories high, three bays wide and two bays deep. The foundation is composed of stone piers. The main block has a tin [gable roof](#) which covers wooden shingles. Unpainted horizontal board siding covers the exterior walls, which consist of horizontal square hand-hewn logs juxtaposed with chinking. An exterior gable-end brick chimney of random bond and a rock foundation is on the right. A bathroom of recent origin projects from the left. The doors, window sashes, sills and frames were constructed in recent years. The shed porch at the front of the main block probably dates from the late nineteenth century, as do the wrap-around porch and the one-story frame ell at the left rear. The interior of the R. M. Sample House bears little resemblance to the original. The house has seven rooms (two on both floors of the main block, two in the rear ell and the bathroom in the projection on the left). The log walls are exposed in the room on the right of the second story. Elsewhere, the logs are hidden by the results of a massive renovation which George William Neely performed in the 1950's. Indeed, most of the interior appointments date from that renovation. The stairway in the main block is earlier. It and the two mantels in the house (all are unpretentious and devoid of distinction) were probably installed for or by Eli Hugh McAuley in the late nineteenth century.