

Dr. J. J. Rone House



This report was written on September 6, 1983

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Dr. J. J. Rone House is located on Route 1, Marvin Road, in Pineville, North Carolina.

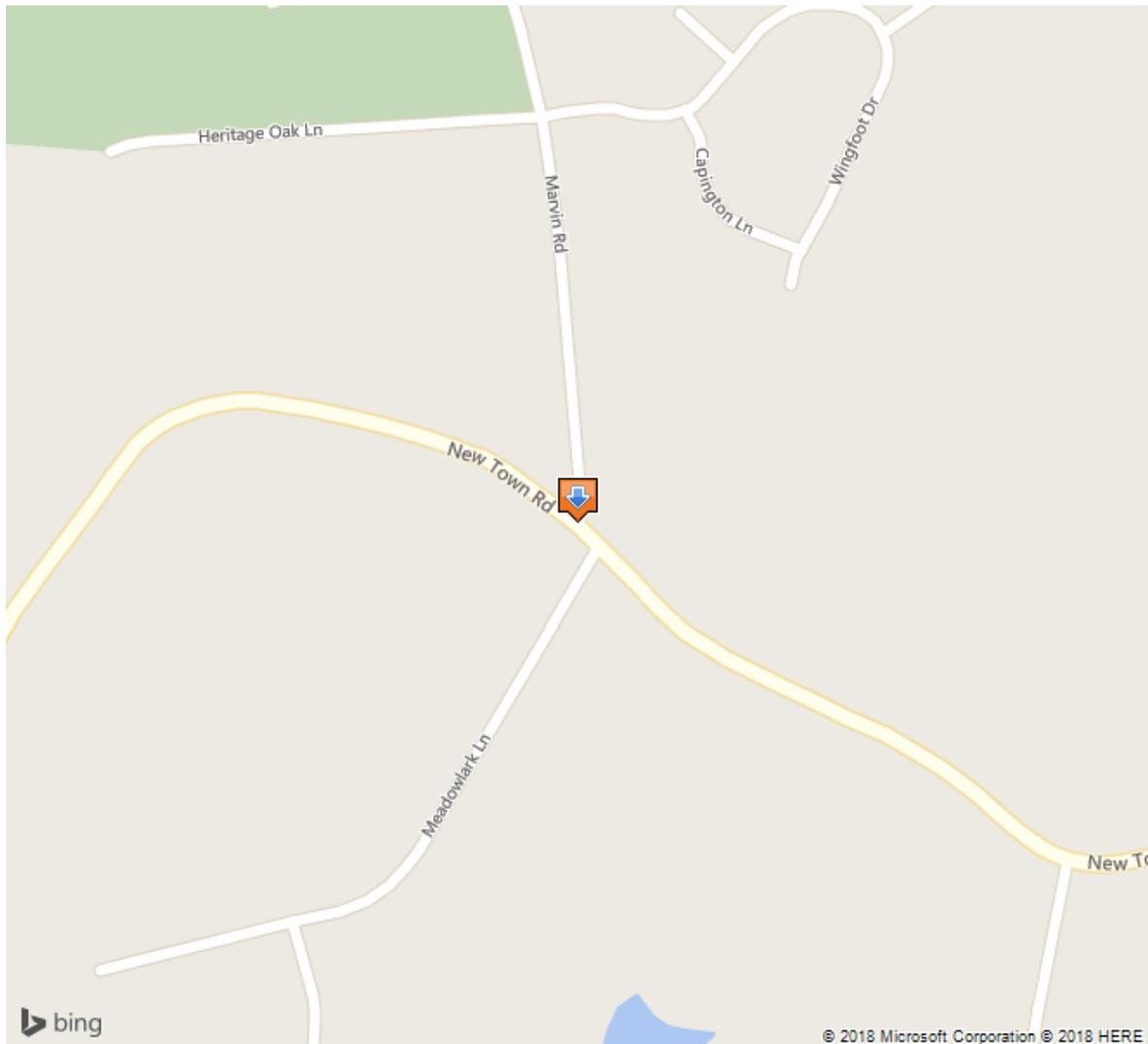
2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner and occupant of the property: The present owners and occupants of the property are:

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Rone Ardrey
Route 1 P.O. Box 503 B
Pineville, N.C. 28134

Telephone: 704/542-3287

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 which depicts the location of the property.



5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property: The most recent deed to this property is listed in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 3144 at page 226. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is-229-031-09.

6. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historic sketch of the property prepared by Dr. William H. Huffman.

7. A brief architectural description of the property: This report contains an architectural description of the property prepared by Thomas W. Hanchett.

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

a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural

importance: The Commission judges that the property known as the Dr. J. J. Rone House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the Dr. J. J. Rone House, constructed in 1886 in the nearby community of Marvin, North Carolina, is an especially elegant local example of late 19th Century vernacular architecture; 2) the initial owner, Dr. J. J. Rone, was a leading physician in Marvin and the surrounding countryside, including the present location of the house, at the time of the construction of the Dr. J. J. Rone House; and 3) the current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Rone Ardrey, have faithfully restored the house and have thereby made a substantial contribution to the cultural richness of Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or

association: The Commission contends that the attached architectural description by Mr. Thomas W. Hanchett demonstrates that the Dr. J. J. Rone House meets this criterion.

9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal: The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property." Current appraised value of the .884 acres of land is \$9,000. The current appraised value of the building is \$29,320. The total current appraised value is \$38,320. The property is zoned R15.

Date of Preparation of this Report: September 6, 1983

Prepared by: Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director
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Charlotte, North Carolina 28202
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Historical Overview

*Dr. William H. Huffman
October, 1981*

The charming country home of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Ardrey, presently located about seven miles south of Pineville in the county, was originally built by Dr. J. J. Rone, a country physician of rural Union County, N.C.

James John Rone was born in 1855, ¹ the son of Loyd K. Rone (1817-1886) and Elizabeth Clementine Howie Rone (1829-1862). L. K. Rone was a farmer and owner of real estate in the area of the village of Marvin, which is located in the extreme western corner of Union County about two miles southeast of the Mecklenburg County line. ² After receiving his undergraduate degree from Erskine College, Dr. Rone studied medicine at the Medical College of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, from which he graduated in 1884. Following his graduation and residency studies, he returned to Marvin to practice medicine in that rural community. ³ By one account, he started practice on November 12, 1889. In the late 1870's, Dr. Rone had married Mary Levinia McIlwain, who was the daughter of another long-time local family, Dr. and Mrs. W. A. McIlwain. The two met and fell in love while both were attending Erskine College.

About 1886, Dr. Rone built his grand country house next to the Banks Presbyterian Church in Marvin on the New Town Road. It was an imposing structure in the village of Marvin, and became a center of social activity for the community as well. Mrs. Rone kept abreast of the latest fashion in clothes, and the household had the reputation of providing the best in Southern hospitality to its guests, which sometimes included local children who would feign illness in order to be kept at the house for observation and treatment just to take advantage of the fine care. The Rones also partly raised their own two daughters there, Blanche (later Mrs. James Potts Ardrey of Pineville, 1878-1956), and Anabel (1879-1898), who suffered an untimely death at the age of nineteen. ⁴

About 1891, Dr. Rone and his family moved to Pineville, where he built a house (which burned and was rebuilt) and had some 17 acres of land. ⁵ He practiced medicine in that community until 1896, when, following a written request from an ill classmate to take over his practice, Dr. Rone and his family moved to the town of Doe Run, in St. Francois County, Missouri (about 50 miles south of St. Louis). He practiced medicine for a time in nearby Desloge, Mo. The two daughters graduated from Carleton College in adjacent Farmington; Blanche was a graduate in music, and

taught that subject and piano for a number of years. Tragedy struck the family when Annabel died in 1898, while only 19, and Dr. Rone himself died the following year. After laying her husband to rest in a Masonic cemetery in St. Francois County, Mrs. Rone, accompanied by Blanche, returned to the homestead in Pineville, where she lived the rest of her days. ⁶

In Marvin, Dr. Rone's practice was taken over by Dr. William Herbert Crowell (1866-1933), who was a native of Steele Creek in Mecklenburg County. ⁷ The country home of Dr. Rone, however, had been sold to two sisters and a brother, Sallie A. Ross, Maggie A. Ross, and Dennis C. Ross, who managed their extensive farm holdings in the area, and lived in the house until their respective deaths after the turn of the century. ⁸ In their nearly identical wills probated on the same day in May, 1920, the Ross sisters left the Rone house to the Banks Presbyterian Church next door. ⁹

The Banks Church used the house for a variety of purposes over the years, but in 1964, the trustees decided to build a new structure on the site, and thus the house was in danger of being torn down. Dr. Rone's fine country manse was rescued by Sam and Jennie Ardrey, the present owners, who purchased the house from the church in 1964. In September of that year, they moved it to its present location in a pastoral setting in the southern part of the county, at the end of a long, winding drive leading from the Marvin Road. After extensive renovation efforts and the installation of furnishings which recapture a feeling of its nineteenth-century origins, the Ardreys moved in during June, 1965, and thereby the J. J. Rone house once again recaptured its place as a rural manor, the home of a country gentleman and his family. ¹⁰

NOTES

¹ *Union County Men of Medicine* (Charlotte: Union County Medical Society Auxiliary, Monroe, N.C., 1968), p. 42.

² Monuments in Marvin United Methodist Church cemetery; interview with Lavinia Kell and Janie Moss Ardrey, 30 September, 1981.

³ *Union County Men of Medicine*, p. 42.

⁴ Interview with Lavinia Kell and Janie Moss Ardrey, cited above; Dr. Rone inherited the property from his father's intestate estate: Union County Deed Book 20, p. 701.

⁵ *Ibid.*; Mecklenburg County Deed Book 77, p. 330, 9 March 1891.

⁶ Interview with Lavinia Kell and Janie Moss Ardrey, cited above.

⁷ *Union County Men of Medicine*, p. 44.

⁸ Union County Deed Book 20, p. 701, 6 February 1888; Deed Book 23, p. 443, August 1892.

⁹ Union County Will Book 4, pp. 252 and 256, probated 26 May 1920.

¹⁰ Interview with Janie Moss Ardrey, 27 September 1981.

Architectural Description

Thomas W. Hanchett

The Dr. J. J. Rone House is a good example of what folklorists call an "I" house; the most common nineteenth-century house type in the Carolinas. Built in 1886 by the grandfather of the current owner, the two-story frame structure shows some Victorian influences in its elaborate front porch, but generally reflects the persistence of the simple forms and decoration popular before the Civil War. The house originally dominated the tiny crossroads community of Marvin until it was moved to this completely rural site in 1964 to escape demolition.

The "I" house is a long, narrow dwelling that looks like a sans serif "I" when viewed from above. Most have a central stair hall flanked by a room on each side on each floor, for a total of four rooms. The symmetrical form came to favor along with the classically inspired Federal style sometime after the Revolutionary War, and persisted in rural Southern areas into the early twentieth-century.

The Rone house is composed of a two-story main wing, an "I" house in form, with a hip roof and a pair of exterior end chimneys. A one story wing is hidden at the rear, which has a hip roof and originally had a central chimney between its two rooms. The roofs with their asphalt shingles, and the chimneys, stepped at the eave line, both date from the 1964 move. Eaves are boxed and walls are sheathed in clapboard with simple cornerboards, except for a section of more elaborate "German" siding in the front porch area. The central front door is flanked by narrow sidelights, as is the door to the porch above it. This tripartite entryway form is characteristic of antebellum design. Windows throughout the house are six-over-six pane double-hung sash, also a pre-Civil War practice.

The conservative simplicity of exterior form and decoration is broken sharply by the elaborate front porch. Four square-tapered, two story wooden columns support a broad roof that extends across almost the entire front of the dwelling. Under the roof is a two-story freestanding front porch with turned columns, turned balusters, a turned spindle-frieze, and scroll-sawn brackets. This porch is structurally completely separate from the square-tapered columns that support the roof that shelters it. This complex form, and the ornate machine-produced woodwork, reflect big-city Victorian ideals, the "modern architecture" of the period. They show that Dr. Rone, though enough of a country doctor to build a residence whose overall form echoed those of his neighbors, nevertheless had an awareness of new trends outside his rural community and was willing to try them.

The interior of Dr. Rone's house is more traditional than his porch. The stairs in the narrow central hall have simple square balusters. There are two rooms on the first floor, plus the two rooms in the rear floor. Doors close off each space. Sliding doors that were beginning period. Window and door surrounds are wide and plain, without Victorian corner blocks or elaborate molding. The two downstairs mantels are built up of flat boards with only the slightest hint of enrichment. Many doors retain their cast iron panel locks with porcelain knobs.

The clean simplicity of decoration is not a fault, but an indication of prevailing tastes. This is shown clearly in the horizontal matchboarding of the walls in the stair hall and main parlor. Pine boards were carefully planed to provide smooth wall and ceiling surfaces. Unusual triangular molding strips were nailed into the corners to make a smooth transition from wall to wall and wall to ceiling. This matchboarding and the elaborate front porch are the two outstanding architectural features of the J. J. Rone house.

Over the years minor changes have been made to the house. Upstairs the mantels and fireplaces are no longer in evidence, and a small bathroom has been added in the stair hall. Downstairs a one-story bathroom addition runs behind the main wing, and an enclosed porch runs along the rear wing. The rear wing has received new windows and kitchen equipment, the central chimney has been removed, and the door from the wing into the front parlor has been widened into an archway. The front facade of the house and its major spaces are unaffected by these alterations.

The owners of the Rone house, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Ardrey, now enjoy a view of rolling Piedmont farmland from their front porch. Behind the house are a number of period outbuildings, including a log dwelling from near Burlington, North Carolina, and a well house and session house from the more immediate area.