

# Hampshire County Historical Society

## Hooks Tavern

Route 50 and Smokey Hollow Road  
Capon Bridge, West Virginia

December 1999

### Welcome to Hooks Tavern

Hooks Tavern is the site of the 1999 Fort Edwards Christmas Traditions House, sponsored by the Hampshire County Historical Society. All profits from the Christmas House will go to the Fort Edwards Visitor Center Finishing Fund Campaign.

The tavern is currently owned by Noble Properties, Inc. and managed by Maxwellton Highlands, Inc. Mr. Vic Schroeder has generously made the tavern available for us to use as the Christmas House this year.

### Enjoy the tour, enjoy the tea

Your tour leader will be Eric Shanholtz, who is a restoration stone mason and worked as construction supervisor on the restoration of Hooks Tavern. He knows the house intimately and will share its secrets with you.

Before or after the tour, enjoy our "High Tea" with home-made delicacies served by members of the Woman's Club of Eastern Hampshire County and The Fort Edwards Foundation.

### A long history

The attached sheet provides details of the long history of the building, and the chain of title to the property. The rear portion of the house is the oldest, perhaps dating back to colonial times. Historian Wilmer Kerns writes' "It is believed that the Hook house is on land that was once owned by Peter and Elizabeth Mauzy II (1765-1835)." Mauzy was a wealthy landowner who owned most of lower Mill Branch Valley, now known as Smokey Hollow. Mauzy died in 1835 and his wife died five years later. Samuel Hook married Polly Mauzy, Peter's daughter, about 1843. It is not clear exactly when Samuel Hook came into possession of the house, but it was Samuel who enlarged it and turned it into a hotel and tavern.

The tavern was located on the Northwest Turnpike (present day Route 50) between Clarksburg and Winchester, Va. It was used during the Civil War, and continued as a tavern into the twentieth century. Margaret Brill has written that her mother, Clara Clark, had worked at Hooks Tavern from 1900 to 1907. She helped cook, serve food to guests, as well as farm help, laundry and some housework. She "worked from sun up to sun down for 50 cents a week."

The last family descendants of the Hook family to live in the house were Ethel Webster Shoemaker and James W. Webster, brother and sister. They each married and raised a child, maintaining separate households in the family homestead.

Ethel, the older of the two siblings, married Charles Shoemaker in 1929 and bore one son named Charles J. Shoemaker. After twenty-two years of marriage, Mr. Shoemaker died, leaving Ethel a widow. She was very active in her church and community affairs. Serving as school secretary for many years at Capon Bridge High School, she is fondly remembered by numerous graduates. It was a daily occurrence to see Mrs. Shoemaker putt-putt around "the bridge" in her ancient Studebaker, making her rounds. In her last years deteriorating health removed her from the family home, sending her to live with her son C.J. in the metropolitan area of Virginia. She

passed away in November 1994, lacking only a few days of reaching her ninetieth birthday. She is buried at Capon Chapel beside her husband Charles, near all her Hook, Caudy and Nixon ancestors.

James Webster, who was always called Jimmy by those who knew him well, married Madeline Clark. Together, Madeline and Jimmy raised a beautiful daughter, Anne Webster Robinson. Anne married an Oklahoman and went west to Duncan, Oklahoma, later having several sons. Jimmy was the local postmaster at Capon Bridge while Madeline worked at the Western Frederick Bank in Gore, Virginia. Jimmy suffered from crippling arthritis but courageously maintained a cheerful demeanor until his death in 1974 at the age of sixty-seven. He is also buried at Capon Chapel with his ancestors. Madeline continued working until her retirement, then she sold her half of the family homestead to Mrs. Shoemaker's son C.J., making him the sole owner of the property. Madeline moved to Duncan, Oklahoma to be with her daughter and her family; she still resides there at the age of ninety-one.

C.J. owned the property from 1983 to 1987 but never lived there again. In 1987 he sold Hooks Tavern and surrounding acres and the property which had belonged to a family line for over one hundred years passed into new ownership. The attached page, provided by C.J. Shoemaker, gives the chain of title of the Hooks Tavern property.

### **A bright future**

The property was bought by Edward E. Noble in 1987. Over the past two years Hooks Tavern has been carefully renovated to preserve its historic character. Original mantelpieces are in place and the original cooking fireplace with crane were uncovered. The property is currently on the market at \$575,000, including 46.75 acres of land. For more information, contact Mr. Victor Schroeder, Maxwellton Highlands, Inc., (304) 856-2775.



Hooks Tavern, circa 1973

## Owners of Hook's Tavern

- 1825/34? - June 17, 1876
  - June 17, 1876 - May 5, 1877
  - May 5, 1877 - Jan. 19, 1882
  - Jan. 19, 1882 - June 23 1885
  - June 23, 1885 - Oct. 25, 1918
  - Oct. 25, 1918 - Sept. 15, 1965
  - Sept. 15, 1965 - Aug. 29, 1974
  - Aug. 29, 1974 - May 13, 1983
  - May 13, 1983 - Dec. 15, 1987
  - Dec. 15, 1987 -
- Samuel Hook  
Elizabeth (McMorris) (McKee) Hook  
William S. Hook  
Eliza B. (Hook) McDonald & Ann E. (Hook) Gray  
Ann E. (Hook) (Gray) Nixon  
Sarah A. (Gray) Webster  
Ethel T. (Webster) Shoemaker & James W. Webster  
Ethel T. (Webster) Shoemaker & E. Madeline (Clark) Webster  
Charles J. Shoemaker  
Edward E. Noble

## The Tavern

The house called Hook's Tavern is located one mile East of Capon Bridge, West Virginia, on U.S. Route 50 (The old Northwest Turnpike). It is an "L" shaped structure with one leg parallel to Route 50. Each leg of the house is one room wide. This two story log house has all the exterior walls covered with clapboard. Because the floors on each level are three different heights, there must have been two additions to the house. The oldest part is the end farthest from Route 50. This room has a large fireplace containing pintles upon which a crane could swing a pot over the fire. The family tradition is they first settled about three-quarters of a mile up Smoky Hollow road, where an old log barn stands. After hearing where the turnpike would be built, they moved to the current location. Based on that, the move may have been between the late 1820's and early 1830's. In 1827 the Virginia Legislation authorized building a turnpike from Winchester to Ohio. Little progress was made. Another authorization in 1831 was successful in constructing the Northwest Turnpike<sup>1</sup>. The first addition to the house is the remainder of the leg perpendicular to Route 50. All the floors in this part of the house are lower than any others in the house. When was this part built? A guess is mid 1830's to 1840. By 1840 the Samuel Hook family had grown to seven people. (This is based on the ages given in the 1850 Census.) The second addition to the house is the leg parallel to Route 50. The floors in this part are higher than any others in the house. The half of this leg closest to Smoky Hollow road is the part used as a tavern. This part had been built and was in use by May 7, 1845. That was when William C. Black wrote his name and date on the wall. His was the earliest legible name and date found on the plaster wall when the wall paper was removed in July 1956. John New wrote "I can throw any mule driver on the road", but did not date his remark. The most recent legible date and comment was "May 7, 1853 Too much Snuff McCauley". During the Civil War, on February 3, 1862, J. A. Hunter of the Confederate States Army certified "that in consequence of the severe weather it was necessary to use Mr. Hook house & wood for the comfort of 80 sick men in my charge."<sup>2</sup> Samuel Hook paid the U. S. Internal Revenue service \$10 for a Hotel Keeper license on June 1, 1862. This license was required by "an act to provide Internal Revenue to the Government to pay interest on the public debt, and for other purposes" that had been approved June 30, 1864.<sup>2</sup> The last Hotel Keeper license found for Samuel Hook is for the year ending May 1, 1871. In a letter to John E. Wooten, dated June 27, 1872, S. S. Gore wrote "...come in the Romney stage which will pass Mr. Hooks about 1 o'clock." On June 1, 1877, about a year after Samuel Hook's death, his son, William S. Hook paid state tax for retaining spirituous liquors in his house of entertainment.<sup>2</sup> Further research is needed to determine how long William S. Hook maintained a house of entertainment.

<sup>1</sup>A History of Roads in Virginia "the most convenient ways": Prepared 1992 by the Virginia Department of Transportation: page 6.

<sup>2</sup> Original in possession of Charles J. Shoemaker

## Chain of Title

**Samuel Hook:** Born March 23, 1792. Died June 17, 1876. Built at current site 1825/34? His will gave the home farm to his wife Elizabeth for her life. His son William S. Hook was to manage the farm for her and to inherit the farm upon her death. (Will Book 22, page 163)

**Elizabeth (McMorris) Hook:** Born April 23, 1797. Died May 5, 1877.

**William S. Hook:** Born March 23, 1819. Died January 19, 1882. Oldest child of Samuel Hook and Anna (McMorris) Hook. William S. Hook died intestate leaving the farm to his only children, Eliza B. (Hook) McDonald and Ann E. (Hook) Gray.

**Eliza B. (Hook) McDonald & Ann E. (Hook) Gray:** Eliza B. was born October 23, 1848. Ann E. was born July 28, 1852. Both were daughters of William S. Hook and Sarah Ann (Mauzy) Hook.

**Ann E. (Hook) (Gray) Nixon:** Ann E. (Annie) Hook married Joseph E. Gray December 12, 1872. Joseph E. Gray was born September 24, 1849 to Spencer R. Gray and his second wife Sarah. Joseph E. Gray died November 3, 1884. By a deed dated June 23, 1885, Eliza B. McDonald conveyed all her rights in the farm to her sister Ann E. Gray. On December 1, 1887 Ann E. Gray married Caudy John (C. J.) Nixon. Caudy John Nixon was born July 28, 1862 and died January 28, 1941. Ann E. (Hook) Nixon died October 25, 1918. Her will divided the farm into two parts. The part containing the house went to her daughter Sarah A. (Gray) Webster for her lifetime, then Sarah's children were to have this portion of the farm. The second part of the farm (containing an old log barn) went to her son William S. Gray. (Will Book 23 page 115)

**Sarah A. (Gray) Webster:** Born December 22, 1878 to Ann E. (Hook) Gray and Joseph E. Gray. Died September 15, 1965. Married James S. Webster on December 26, 1901. James S. Webster was born June 22, 1870, in Scotland, and died February 28, 1929.

**Ethel T. (Webster) Shoemaker & James W. Webster:** The children of Sarah A. Webster and James S. Webster. Ethel T. Webster was born December 27, 1904 and died November 11, 1994. She married Charles Shoemaker on August 28, 1929. James W. Webster was born February 27, 1907 and died August 29, 1974. He married E. Madeline Clark on January 1, 1932. James W. Webster's will left his undivided interest in the farm to his wife. (Will Book 31 page 548)

**Ethel T. (Webster) Shoemaker & E. Madeline (Clark) Webster:** Each had 1/2 interest in the portion of the farm containing the house.

**Charles J. (C. J.) Shoemaker:** Born October 17, 1933, to Charles Shoemaker and Ethel T. (Webster) Shoemaker. His Aunt, E. Madeline Webster, sold him her 1/2 interest, and his Mother, Ethel T. Shoemaker, conveyed her 1/2 interest, in the portion of the farm containing the house. In addition his Mother conveyed to him the portion of the farm containing the old log barn that she and his Father bought from the widow of William S. Gray.

**Edward E. Noble:** Bought from Charles J. Shoemaker both portions of the farm.