

Greene County

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Abe's Cabin



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ABE'S CABIN

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"Abe's Cabin" was the home of Abe Dulaney from 1965 until his death in 1988. Abraham Newton Dulaney, the youngest of nine children, was born in May, 1902. At that time the family lived in Celt, about six miles south of Stanardsville on State Route 604; and he continued to live there, taking care of his mother until she died in 1942. When their large three-story residence burned, he built a smaller cement block home. It is known that during this period he operated a gas station and drove a school bus.

In 1948 (after his mother had died) and somewhat later in life than is usual, he married; but unfortunately the marriage ended in divorce the next year.

Abe moved to Ruckersville. In the 1950's he owned about six acres of land on the north side of U.S. 33. Their northern line was the old Rockingham Turnpike. At about the same time, he was buying and

ABE'S CABIN

selling small pieces of land that amounted to a very few acres on either side of S.R. 616 where it meets U.S. 29. At this time he was working for the Virginia State Highway Department. Perhaps in response to a childhood spent in a large family, or to a failed marriage, or to the fact that he stuttered, Abe chose to live alone.

Abe's cabin was located on the east side of U.S. 29 about a quarter mile south of the intersection with U.S. 33. It was, and is, a log cabin about 26 feet by twelve feet with a fireplace at the south end. Because of its location only a few yards from the highway, its small size, its lack of many necessary conveniences in this day, it was undesirable as a dwelling except for the somewhat eccentric Abe. (Inside his tiny picket-fenced front yard were such disparate items as a wooden cannon, a street sign, a wishing well and a barber pole.)

Mr. Jim Woodson, its current owner, soon sought to dispose of it to make more room for his nearby

ABE'S CABIN

business. In the spring of 1989, a fortuitous succession of events occurred. Harold Lacey, Jr., Assistant Scout Master and Chaplain to troop #174 of the Boy Scouts of America, developed an Eagle Scout project for two of his scouts (Greg Lacey and Jason Weisenborn). The project involved dismantling and rebuilding the cabin. The Boy Scouts did not want and could not accept the cabin as property. The Greene County Historical Society was quite willing to accept the cabin as a gift and found a place for temporary storage of materials, but it owned no property on which to rebuild. At that time the County Supervisors graciously solved the problem by permitting the cabin to be placed on County land near the corner of Columbia Road. (State Route 622) and Stanard Street in Stanardsville.

As it stands, the cabin is not an old building; and it was not, as some people have believed, a former Ruckersville Post Office. Nevertheless it has an intriguing history. The story comes from Mrs. Lucinda

ABE'S CABIN

S. Sims, who was postmistress in Ruckersville from 1955 to 1972.

Mrs. Sims' father, Benjamin H. Shotwell, was postmaster in Ruckersville from August, 1897, to March, 1914. The small white building seen in the illustration on the left (north) side of what is now U.S. 33 was his post office. It was located at the front of property which contained a larger Shotwell residence. In his early married life Mr. Shotwell lived in this smaller house, and it is possible--even probable--that he carried on his postal duties from a single room of the house. This often happened in those days. After several years, Mr. Shotwell was able to move into the larger residence, leaving the post office in the smaller house. In later years this same small house became the residence of Mary Mundy, an aunt to Mrs. Sims. It remained in the same place until 1965 when U.S. 33, approaching U.S. 29 from the west, was widened to four lanes. To make room for the road the old post office was dismantled. While we do

ABE'S CABIN

not know the exact age of this building, the fact that it was a log-bodied house would indicate an early date. When Abe Dulaney built his log cabin, he used some of these logs; so undoubtedly we have all that remains of that early Ruckersville post office. Though plans are incomplete, the Historical Society expects to develop the cabin as a museum of early life in Greene County.



Abe's Cabin Local