

# THE EVENING HERALD

ROCK HILL, S. C.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 16, 1948.

SECTION TWO

## Old Avery Home At Ebenezer, Built Before 1832, Now Owned By Steeles

**Except For Addition Of Wing, House Is Little Changed**

BY ELIZABETH REED

The date of the construction of the Avery home in Ebenezer, has been lost in the pages of time. However, the lovely old two story home was built before 1832 and was for many years the home of the Avery family. Early owners and residents of the home were Col. and Mrs. Edward Avery.

Sometime during the latter part of the 19th century the property was bought by Robert Morrison, who had only one leg.

During Morrison's ownership of the property fertile fields between the home and old Ebenezer church were planted in grapevines. Morrison was known for miles around for his grape wine. The full story basement was used for storing of wine barrels and for the curing of the wine. Morrison had one son, Thorn.

Morrison was also well-known as the owner of race horses and had a race track in the level field across the road from the house.

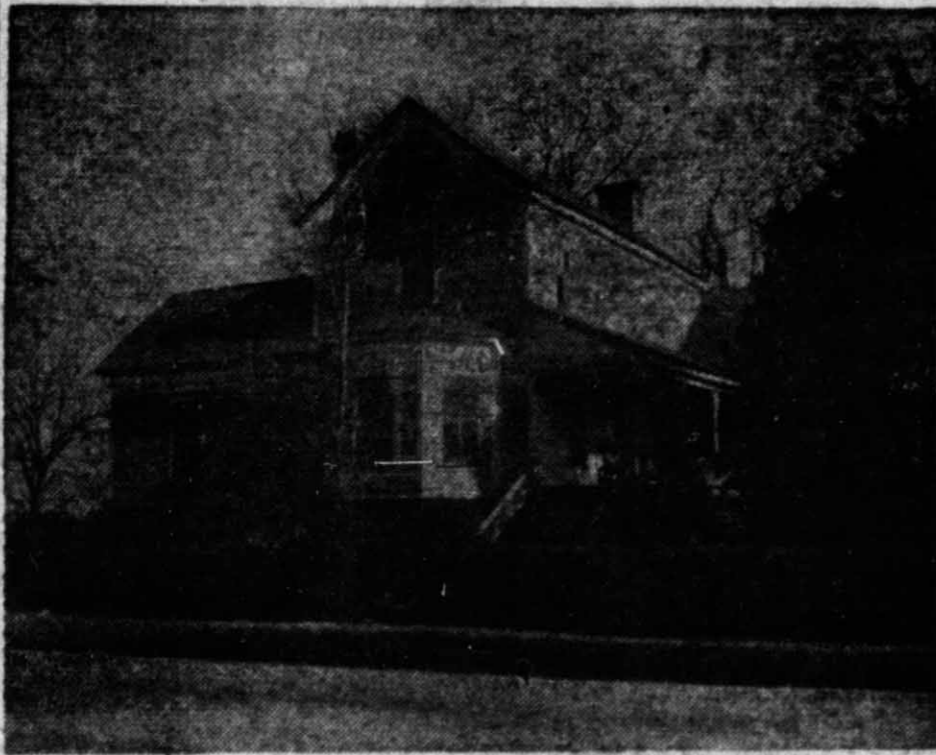
In December of 1900 the house and adjoining land were bought by Edward Partlow Steele and his wife, Mrs. Etta Hutchison Steele. They sold their home and lands in the Concord section when the Duke Power Company entered the area with plans for their big dam.

Mr. and Mrs. Steele built a wing to the lovely old home but otherwise they changed the structure little. For the most part the house stands today as it was more than 50 years ago, and as it perhaps was for many years prior to that time.

The house is now the residence of Joe H. Steele and his sister, Miss Allene Steele. Features of the home include the interesting basement, once the home of the slaves, with its huge hand made brick walls and large fireplace.

Mr. and Mrs. Steele were also

The Avery Home



The beautiful and graceful two story Avery home in Ebenezer, now the home of Miss Allene Steele and her brother, Joe H. Steele, was built according to the Charleston style of architecture with side porch. The house is perfectly preserved and contains many beautiful old articles of furnishings.—Photo by Herald staff photographer.

the parents of Earle Partlow Steele who died in 1933. He married the former Miss Katherine Brandon, who lives next door to the larger Steele home place. The couple were the parents of two daughters, Mrs. Millard Stafford and Miss Dorothy Steele of Ebenezer.

**Mary Avery Toland**

Remembered widest of all the residents of the home through its many years is beautiful Mary Avery Toland, who was born within its walls in 1832.

So beautiful was Mary Avery that she received the title of South Carolina's most lovely woman and today the lines, now fading from her tomb in historic Ebenezer cemetery, can be seen—

"No one so beautiful as she,

"Perfect in form and face.

"A queenly mien with modesty

"Crowned every other grace."

The fact that Mary Avery Toland's history goes back to another century does not seem so long when one can step into the old Ebenezer graveyard and see the graves of Revolutionary War soldiers dated as early as 1750.

Mary America Avery was the daughter of Col. Edward Avery and Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Vaughn Avery. As a child she must have played in the churchyard adjoining her home and pondered upon those buried within its tombs.

She grew into a breath-takingly beautiful woman, whose oval face and graceful form have been preserved in a portrait painted by an artist of the times.

At about the age of 21, Mary America Avery made her debut at the state ball held in Columbia, the outstanding event of the state's social life. Dr. Hugo Toland of Columbia, one of the state's prominent and wealthy citizens, met her at the ball and declared that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. He said "I expect to marry her."

And, although Dr. Toland was an older man, he did marry the fair Mary after a whirlwind courtship. As a physician, Dr. Toland realized that his bride was not in robust health and prescribed a complete change of climate as a means of improving it and giving the couple an extended honeymoon.

That was before the day of railroad travel. So Dr. Toland fitted out a regular caravan for their use, complete even to silver mounted pistols. So the couple started out, accompanied by Mrs. Toland's brother, Dr. E. T. Avery.

Evidently there was no need for the silver mounted pistols and the couple made their leisurely way across the continent. But an enemy lurked enroute that they had not dreamed of. One September night, six months after they had left South Carolina, the couple camped near San Francisco. Cholera was prevalent in the area and Mary Avery Toland was stricken September 19, 1852 with the dread disease and died three days later.

Mary's mother must have had a premonition of her daughter's death. Before she left home Mrs. Avery extracted a promise from Dr. Toland that if anything should happen to Mary he would bring the body back to Ebenezer cemetery.

Dr. Toland took the body into San Francisco and, although embalming was in its infancy, he had her body embalmed according to his directions. It seems that he himself remained in San Francisco where he built up a successful practice, re-married and eventually founded Toland University. Some say that during this time the body of his beloved first wife remained in his office; others that it was placed in a mausoleum.

He did not forget his promise to Mary's mother and in 1877 he decided to fulfill that promise.

This time the body of Mary Toland traveled across the continent on a train "in seven coffins" finally to reach its permanent resting place in Ebenezer. Dr. Toland said that when the body left California Mary Toland "was as beautiful as on the day she died."

There are today no living members of the Avery family bearing that name. Living until a few years ago were two nieces and a nephew, Miss Ella Avery, Mrs. Mecca Avery Laughlin and a nephew, Julian Avery. S. K. Lowery and E. B. Lowery of York are great grandsons of Col. Edward Avery

(This is one of a series of articles on old York county homes.—Editor's Note.)

### Joseph Steele's funeral today

Joseph H. Steele, 66, a retired Rock Hill farmer, died yesterday in York County Hospital after an illness of three months.

Funeral was to be today at 3 p.m. in the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, conducted by Rev. David Moyland. Burial was to be in the church cemetery.

Steele was born and reared in York County, a son of the late Ed P. and Etta Hutchinson Steele. A former mayor of Ebenezer, he attended schools in York County and Clemson College. He was a member of the York County Saddle Horse Assn. and the Ebenezer church, where he had served on the official board.

Survivors include one sister, Miss Allene Steele, and two nieces, Mrs. N. M. Hollis and Mrs. M. D. Stafford, all of Rock Hill.

### Joseph Steele's rites yesterday

Funeral for Joseph H. Steele of Rock Hill was conducted yesterday at 3 p. m. at the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church by Rev. David Moylan.

Burial was in the church cemetery.

Active pallbearers were Roy Shillinglaw, Sam Jackson, G. F. Thompson, Leroy Williams, Eugene Hutchinson and John Simril.

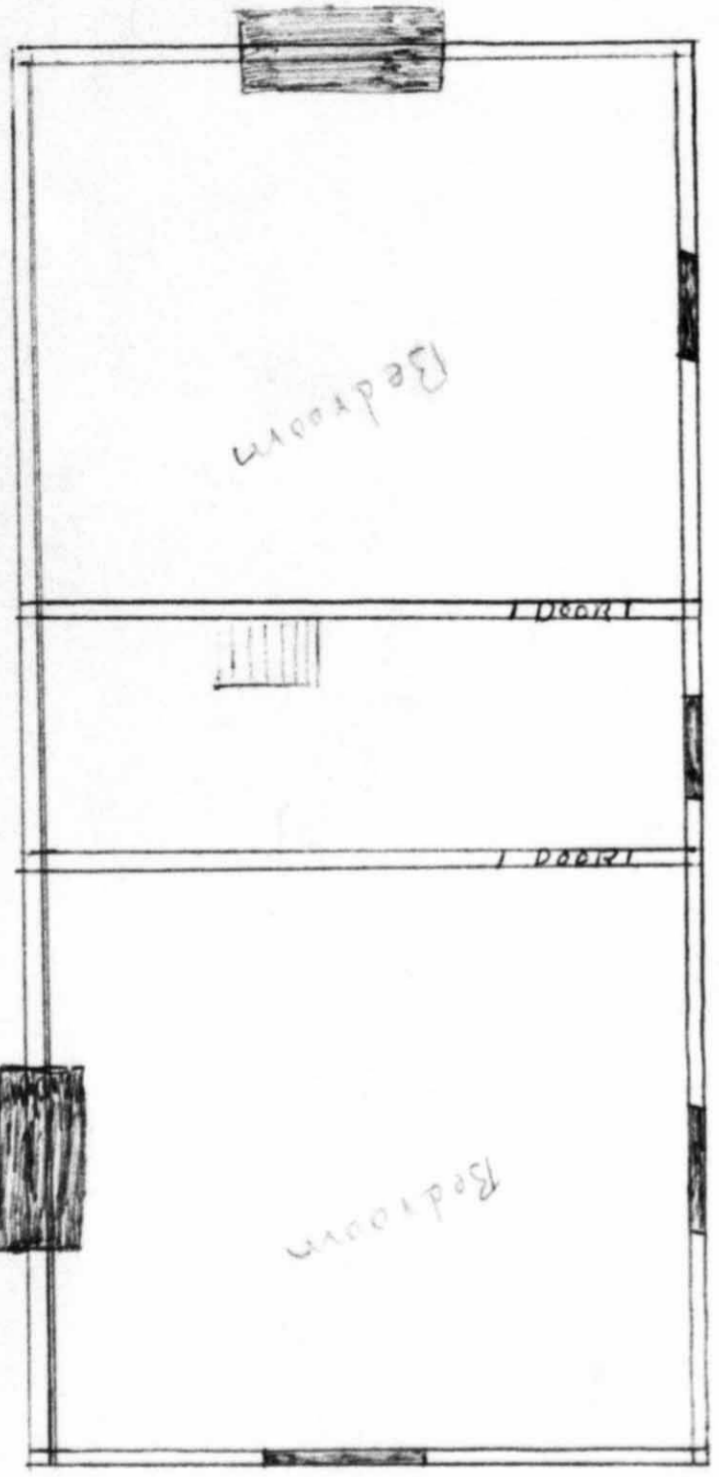
Honorary pallbearers were the officers of Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, Jess Hawkins, Hazel Simril, Robert A. Gettys, Walter Jenkins, Dr. J. E. Welsh, William White, Lindsay Waldrop, Moubrey Beaty, Ed Allen, Huey Smith, Stan Whiteaker, Bob Long, Bob Williams, Dr. Frank Gaston, Herbert Rollins, Frank Carothers,

Evening Herald, Rock Hill Tuesday, Jan. 30, 1962

Evening Herald, Rock Hill Wednesday, Jan. 31, 1962

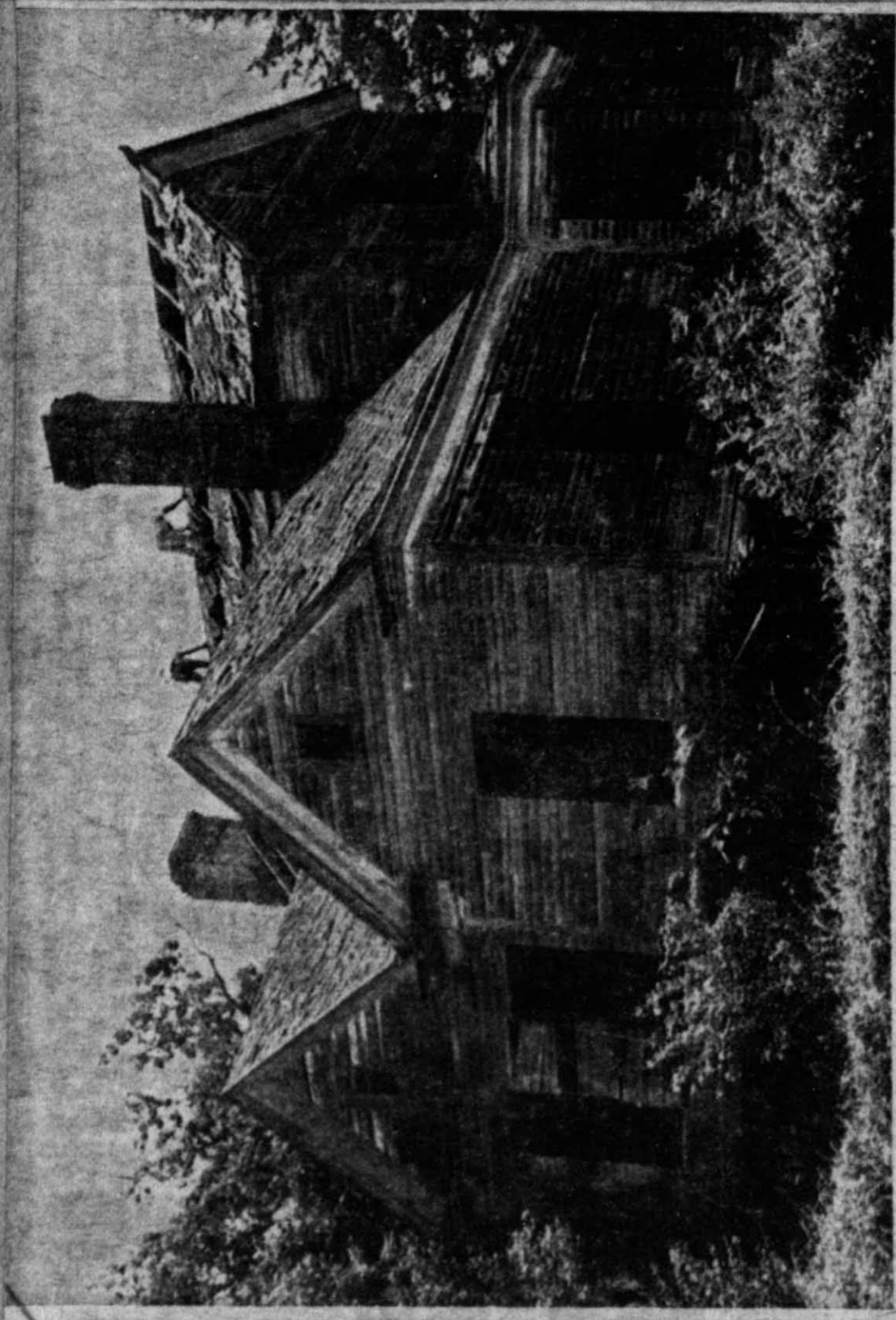
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# S. C. - Homes, Historic - York County



Second Floor Plan

FRONT



Herald photo—Lewis member of the family, lives in a smaller house near the old home which has been unoccupied 10 years. The home contained slave quarters in the basement and a secret stairway from the basement to the first floor.

This historic home in Ebenezer is being torn down. The seven-room house was built during the 18th century by the Averys and was purchased in 1900 by Edward Partlow Steele. Miss Allene Steele, last surviving

-Evening Herald, Rock Hill Monday, July 9, 1962

## Miss Martha A. Steele

ROCK HILL — Miss Martha Allene Steele, 80, of 1936 Ebenezer Rd., died Thursday at York General Hospital after a year of declining health. Funeral services will be conducted at 11 a.m. Saturday from the chapel of Bass Funeral Home by Rev. Charles Parrish. Interment will follow in Ebenezer Cemetery.

Miss Steele was born and reared in York County and attended Statesville College. She was a member of Ebenezer Presbyterian Church.

She is survived by two nieces, Mrs. N. M. Hollis and Mrs. M. D. Stafford, both of Rock Hill. Pallbearers will be Gene Williams, Watson Barron, G. S. Thompson, Tommy Matthews, Sam Jackson and Stan Whittaker.

2-Evening Herald, Rock Hill Friday, Aug. 13, 1965

Honorary pallbearers will be Robert S. Williams, Roy Shillilaw, Roy Black, J. W. White, Clyde Covington, George Martin, Simril Matthews, John Simril, Dr. Frank Gaston, Tommy William, Sam Barry, R. F. Bankhead and Starr Chambes.