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

Whyte House Served As Tavern, School, Postoffice

Historic Home Is Now Property Of John T. Roddey

BY ELIZAZETH REED

"Here comes Marse Jeff Davis," shouted nine-year-old Black Sam that late April morning in 1865 as his nimble heels kicked the dust and he came flying onto the porch of the inn operated by Archibald Whyte.

Whyte's Tavern was to have as noon day guests none other than President Jefferson Davis of the then disintegrating Confederate States of America and his staff.

Still standing today, the one-time tavern, schoolhouse, postoffice and home is about a mile east of the by-pass connecting the Lancaster and Chester highways with the Charlotte highway.

Davis and his cabinet had spent the night at the Springs and White home in Fort Mill and were enroute to Abbeville where Davis was to hold his last cabinet meeting on May 2. He had with him what money was left with the Confederacy.

Interesting historical data concerning the old house is contained in the precise handwriting of Schoolmaster Archibald Whyte and dated December 21, 1842. The paper, now owned by the Hutcheson family is a receipt for letter and newspaper postage and for the schooling of David Hutchison's son Eugene Hutchison. (Capt. A. E. Hutchison, 1826-1903).

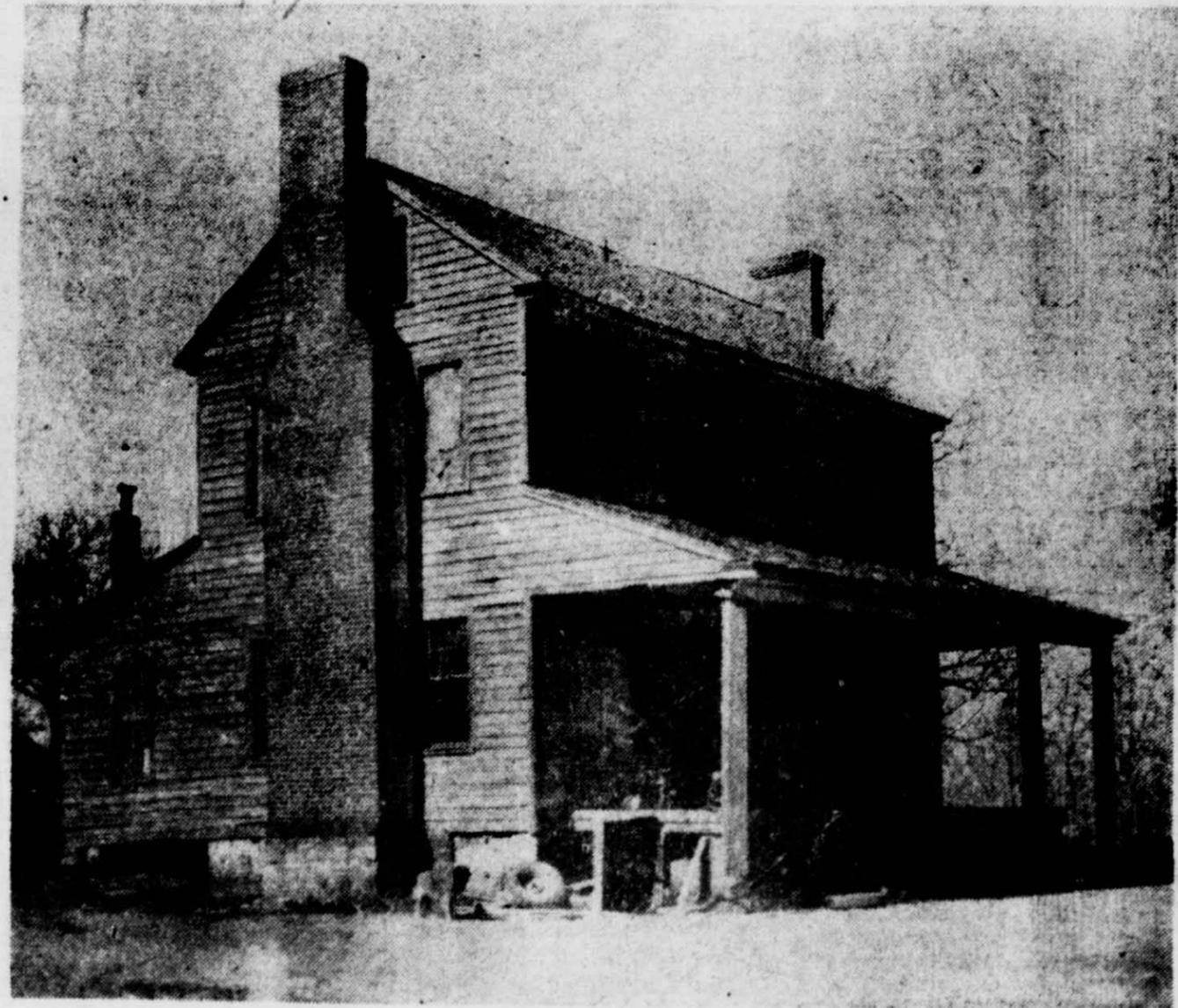
Versatile Archibald Whyte combined in one man an A. R. P. minister, a schoolmaster who could cope with Latin, a postmaster and an inkeeper. Surely he had seven League boots — or a very smart wife.

In those days postage was charged on the basis of weight and distance. The postmaster kept a record of letters sent and by whom and sometime during the year received his payment. This is the receipt:

"David Hutchison Dr. to postage from 30 June 1842 to 21 Dec. 1842. "August 9 one letter Mary from Hamburg — 18 and three-fourths cents; August 11 one letter Mary from Spring Rock—six cents; August 31 one letter Mary from Pendleton—12 and one-half cents; September 7 one letter David Hutchison Hamburg — 37 and one-half

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The Whyte Home



If this old home could talk, it could tell many stories of the great and near great who slept within its walls in the more than 100 years of its existence. Now owned by Attorney John T. Roddey, the home was for many years a combined tavern, school house and postoffice, operated by the late Archibald Whyte, A. R. P. minister—(Herald Staff photo).

cents; September 14 one letter David Hutchison from Pendleton 12 and one-half cents."

And "New World from September 30 to December 31 -19 one-half; Presbyterian from Sept. 30 to December 31, 19 one-half; Gody Lady's Book for 1842, 90 cents.

"Tuition Eugene for one quarter \$2.50 and one Latin grammar 75 cents.

Recd. payment
A. Whyte"

Imagine receiving \$2.50 for a whole quarter tuition for the boisterous lad Eugene Hutchison must have been in 1842 when he studied Latin grammar under the Rev. Archibald Whyte. Imagine a teacher receiving as little as \$10 per year per student for teaching!

The Home

In spite of its lack of any particular care over the years the Whyte home is today marvelously preserved; a tribute to the builder who built for keeps.

The house is the typical two story house of the early 19th century with small hall across the front and stairs leading to the upper floors.

Here the similarity to many homes of the period stops. The foundation is of huge sandstone blocks sawed by hand from the sandstone in the neighboring Catawba River at Ivey's Old Mill. Across the full width of the house, but not the full depth of the home, is a room-height basement with fireplace at one end. Small win-

dows light the room, although not sufficiently for it to have been used as a school room. In all probability the mammoth room was used by the slaves or in a pinch by the traveler when quarters above were crowded.

A small stairway leads to the main floor. Except for the two main rooms, probably used for school room and parlor, the other rooms of the nine or ten room house are small, adapted to its use as an inn.

The second floor has three large rooms and a hall. From the upper floor an enclosed stairway, resembling nothing more than a large coffin, leads to the attic. The attic is unfloored.

Detail work is not too abundant. Beneath each window is to be found a paneled space from the window sill to the floor. The mantels are of pine but are well proportioned and pleasing. Most remarkable of the interior construction is the fact that after more than 100 years the plaster is so perfectly preserved. In some rooms it is intact, in others it has fallen away to a certain extent. Horse-hair was used in the plaster to keep it from cracking and falling away. The hand-hewn laths may be seen in spots where the plaster has fallen away.

"Judge a house by its hardware" is a common expression. Very little of the original hardware is left in the Whyte home, but that little is revealing. On one door at the back of the house and on one door in an upstairs room are massive locks with shiny brass doorknobs. Other hardware has vanished with time.

No more remarkable chimneys are to be found anywhere in the county. At each end of the home they stand in magnificence and as perfect as the day built. They are of Flemish mold, a brick laying process that is very unusual. Each fifth row of bricks in the chimney is placed with the end rather than the side exposed. Chimneys are unusually wide and are of remarkably smooth bricks to have been made by slaves.

The wide porch is held up with cypress posts about 20 inches square. They must have been hauled by wagon from Camden or points south of Camden.

The house is unusual for an old one in that it is not symmetrical on the front. The two front doors and the two front windows are placed irregularly from the end walls. The necessity of two front doors is easily understood when one realizes that the building was a home, a postoffice and a school.

The front doors are still topped with four glass panels.

Family History

At the death of the Rev. Archibald Whyte in the late 1860's the house passed to his son, William. William was also the owner of a small brick home on White Street in Rock Hill and he lived in this house, not the homestead.

William married a Miss Fannie Steele, daughter of Mrs. Elizabeth Steele. Mrs. Steele had a brother, noted for galloping horses, so he was known as John G. (Gallopings) Steele.

William Whyte left one son, Hope Whyte, who married a Miss Hopkins of Hopkinsville. He died a few years ago leaving one daughter, Miss Emma Whyte, who is the last of the Whyte family.

After William Whyte disposed of the house and land it passed

through the hands of several owners, one of whom was the late B. F. Massey. The property has belonged for the past 20 years to John T. Roddey, Rock Hill attorney. The family of William Brooks has lived in the house for the past year.

The Whyte home has wonderful possibilities for restoration. York county and the present owner have a treasure in the old home that should be preserved for posterity.

(This is one of a series of articles on old homes in York County.)