

Fort Egypt In Page

Shows How Pioneers Lived

Stone And Log Inner Fort Gave Protection From Indian Tribes

10-6-60

LURAY — Page county visitors are carried back more than 2½ centuries to the Blue Ridge pioneer days when they visit Fort Egypt, the ancestral home of the Stricklers and now owned and carefully preserved by Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Hoover of Harrisonburg.

Mrs. Hoover is a direct descendant of Abraham Strickler who established the farm and hued out the fort-house in Egypt Bend, west of the Shenandoah River, in the early 1700's.

Large Fort-House

On the historic farm with its log and stone home, a Page county landmark, may be found what is believed to be the oldest grain mill in the Shenandoah Valley, an

Indian mound so interesting that it attracted the attention of the Smithsonian Institution and the stone pyramid built in 1954 to the memory of Abraham Strickler.

Fort Egypt, the Strickler home is a large square building, it is believed to be the most complete and well preserved of any of the fort-houses which dotted the Massanutten and other Blue Ridge settlements long before the Revolutionary War.

This home is built of giant logs of maple, walnut, pine and oak and some rooms are paneled with boards 15 to 20 inches wide. The big hand-forged good luck "H" and "L" hinges and latches are well preserved. They are seen as

perfect specimens of handiwork of the era.

Chimney In Center

A vast stone chimney rises in the center of the log house. There are fireplaces in several rooms. The kitchen fireplace is a monster 11 feet long. Rooms also contain square well recesses in which were placed pine knots for illumination.

The fort-cellar, probably the best preserved in the Blue Ridge area, is the last word in protection from the Indians and an example of how well the pioneer artisans built with their crude tools and rough wood. The large room extends the length of the house.

Outside walls contain the familiar loop-holes through which the settlers fired at their foes. The construction is interesting. They were large enough for a man to stand and fire through but the Indian without had only a small area, 8x12 inches at which to aim. The loop holes slant upwards and out.

Spring in "Inside Fort"

The "inside fort" — designed as a defense post of the last resort" is a smaller room adjoining the outer fort. A huge wooden door with hand-made latch provides the entrance. Inside are more loop-holes, a spring to furnish water, and big hooks, apparently used to hang hammocks or supplies in case the occupants were besieged.

In the yard of Fort Egypt is the old mill, which may have been the Blue Ridge's first. A solid stone bowl about the size of a wash tub has a hole in the bottom to the outside through which the meal passed after being ground by a pestle. This mill may have been used as early as 1726 by Abraham Strickler.

Indian Mound

The famed Indian mound on the Strickler farm is located on a hill overlooking Fort Egypt. At one time, it was an ordinary mound with a moat encircling. Smithsonian Institution Indian curators were permitted to open the mound some years ago. They found pipes, necklaces, arrowheads and other artifacts of the redmen who once roamed the surrounding fields. These relics are preserved in Smithsonian as a rich find of Indian lore.

Visitors likewise are attracted to a modern reminder of white men who passed away at Fort Egypt — the Strickler monument erected in a field near the family cemetery in 1954. This rough stone pyramid built by Robert Strickler carries the inscription: Erected to the memory of one of the pioneers of Page county, Abraham Strickler, 1670-1746, by Descendants, 1954."

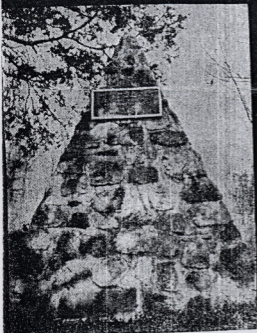
The Strickler family farm house was built of brick in 1875 by the father and grandfather of Mrs. Hoover and Miss Martha Strickler. The brick were made on the grounds. Another attraction is an old bake oven in excellent condition and one of the really old spring houses.

Have Developed Farm

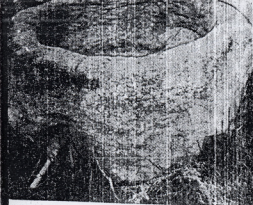
When Mr. and Mrs. Hoover acquired the Fort Egypt Farm they found it quite "farmed out." With the adoption of soil conservation and improvement practices they have made it one of "Page county's most productive, neighbors assert. Abraham Strickler was born in the canton of Zurich, Switzerland, probably as early as 1670, according to the late historian, Harry M. Strickler. The Page pioneer was an expert weaver and may have learned his trade in Holland.

Before 1730 he migrated to the Shenandoah Valley and settled at "Mesenuttin in Gerundo," (Massanutten) in Page county. He received a deed for 1000 acres from Jacob Stover in 1735.

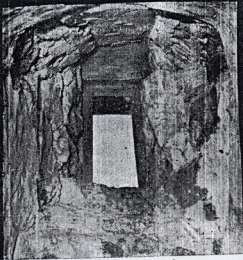
His property was always known as "Egypt" and that section of the county still bears the name. He died in 1746 and is believed to be buried in Egypt opposite the mouth of Mill Creek.



Abraham Strickler Memorial



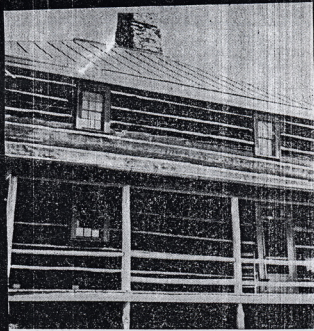
Pioneers' Grist Mill



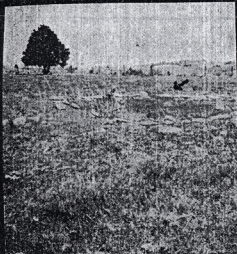
Defenders' Loop-Hole



Hand-wrought Latch



Strickler Fort-Home Page Valley



Indian Mound Site