



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 098-0004

1. General Property Information

Property name: John Crockett House/Farm incl. Crockett Cemetery

Property address: 743 Crockett's Cove Rd

Wytheville vicinity

Zip code: 24382

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Wythe County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building x

Site

Structure

Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 25

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban Suburban Town Village Hamlet Rural x

Briefly describe the property's overall setting, including any notable landscape features:

Located in northeastern Wythe County, seven miles northeast of Wytheville on Route 600, 1.3-miles northeast of intersection of Routes 600 and 603, the Crockett Farm lies on the south side of the road and extends south to the ridgeline of Cove Mountain. The most conspicuously historic secondary architectural resource is a small stone outbuilding, situated just to the south of the stone John Crockett House. The Crockett Cemetery, established with John Crockett's interment in early 1798, is located near the road, about 260 feet west of the stone house, and is surrounded by a stone wall that replaced a wooden fence circa 1990. A two-story L-shaped log house with Late Victorian detail and a number of modern additions, located 45-50 feet east of the stone house, is now the main residence and primary resource on the property. The schoolhouse is located 35 feet east of the log house's southeast corner addition, and the workshop is 150 feet to the south. See aerial site plan.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): No discernable style, Folk Victorian, Greek Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _____

If the builder is known, please list here: John Crockett (presumed builder of stone house)

Date of construction (can be approximate): ca. 1770 – 1930s

Inventory of Resources

1. Stone house (single dwelling) ca. 1770
2. Log/frame house (single dwelling) ca. 1820 and later
3. Springhouse/wellhouse, ca. 1800
4. Schoolhouse, ca. 1840
5. Workshop, ca. 1930s
6. Cemetery, 1798

Narrative Description

Stone House

The dwelling thought to have been built soon after John Crockett took up residence in the Cove, circa 1770, is a one-story structure with a full basement embanked into a ground slope and therefore appears as a one-story building from the east and as two stories from the west. The limestone walls measure one foot, ten inches thick. The stonemasonry is unusual, employing neatly dressed, slab-like, elongated rectangular stones laid in district courses, punctuated by occasional larger, less regularly shaped stones up to four feet long, especially at the corners of the building. A single massive exterior chimney on the south gable end serves two fireplaces. The chimney masonry employs generally smaller, flatter stones than the walls of the house. Inside the building are undivided rooms measuring approximately 21 by 17 feet on each level including the garret. The first floor and basement have their entrances on the east and west elevations, respectively, with no internal stair between the two floors. Both levels have exposed-joint ceilings, the hewn joists measuring 8 x 6 inches on average. The basement interior walls and ceiling were whitewashed, while the first-floor walls were covered with plaster, substantial remnants of which are preserved on the east wall. There are three small window openings, one in each of the long (east and west) walls near the south end of the building, lighting the first-floor area close to the fireplace where the occupants would have huddled on cold winter days, and a small window in the north gable end, lighting the garret and the top of the enclosed staircase that begins in the first-floor northeast corner and rises steeply along the north wall. In addition, there are two barred vents in the basement walls—one in the west wall near the south corner, and one centered within the north wall. The presumably original mortised-and-tenon roof rafters are covered with replaced board sheathing and a modern metal roofing system that extends over the gable-roofed entry porch on the east side. The building has gutters and downspouts in good condition.

After serving as John Crockett's residence until his death in 1798, the building eventually came into use as a detached kitchen serving the extant large log house standing 45-50 feet to east, described below, and from the mid twentieth century (if not earlier) to the present has been used only for storage. Photos from the latter part of the twentieth century depict the building in a severe state of neglect, and a description from 1970 reported that the house was "in poor condition, used for storage and full of junk. Dangerous back porch, and rotted stairs."

Log House

The current residence on the property is a large two-story-L-plan V-notched hewn-log house, the front gable of which is about 155 feet south of Crockett's Cove Road. The house's estimated construction date cannot be based on the Late Victorian decorative exterior details, which were undoubtedly applied long after the log structure was built. Large two-story log houses appear to have been rare in the region before circa 1820. Houses with gable-ell facades were generally unheard of before the Civil War and were quite uncommon in rural areas before the last quarter of the 19th century. Because the house has been completely remodeled and extensively appended, there are few preserved reliable dating clues; however, large portions of the hewn log walls have been left exposed on the interior.

Well/Well House

The well house is a very small one-story stone building with a rectangular footprint and front gable roof. Its coursed-limestone construction is somewhat similar to, yet clearly discernable from the adjacent house. Like the house, the outbuilding's foundation is embanked into the sloping ground. Sited only about five feet south of the stone house's chimney, the outbuilding has a small east porch beneath an overhanging extension of the main roof, although the east elevation has no entrance. Beneath the porch is a stone-lined well, and at some time, water was piped into an extant trough inside the building. The only entrance is at ground level on the west elevation, and the only window is centered on the north elevation where a good deal of sunlight is blocked by the stone house. The interior has exposed stone walls and a tall ceiling with chains hung across, presumably for hanging meat. The floor is comprised of flagstones.

A large log building, no longer extant, is pictured in a circa 1990s photo standing about 20 feet south of the wellhouse and is said to have been used as a smokehouse or meathouse.

Schoolhouse

The former schoolhouse is a one-story one-room weatherboarded frame building located 150 feet east of the stone house and less than 40 feet from the expanded two-story log house. It is built on a coursed limestone foundation and has a coursed limestone exterior chimney on the south end. The ridge of the gable roof is oriented north-south. The only entrance is on the west elevation near the north corner, and a single window is centered in the east wall. Beneath the building is an excavated cellar seen through a break in the east wall of the foundation. Inspection of the building interior reveals that much of the north wall was removed to make a large opening and later reframed and re-clad. The other interior walls and the ceiling are finished with plaster on riven lath, suggesting a pre-1850 building construction date, consistent with the plain Greek Revival-style fireplace mantel. Although the chimney has been stabilized and repointed, the brick firebox is largely collapsed.

Workshop

Located 150 feet south of the occupied two-story house, the workshop is 80 feet long and 25 feet wide with its long axis oriented east-west. The timber-frame building has a concrete foundation, board-and-batten siding on the long elevations and vertical boards without battens on the ends, and a corrugated-sheet-metal-clad pitched roof with exposed rafter ends. Each end of the building has a pair of large folding doors, and a large sliding door is at the center of the north elevation with three windows to each side, evenly spaced across the building. The interior features exposed framing including 2x6 floor joists with bridging. The vast attic was not entered during the visit, but it was used as a functional space. A rectangular void in the attic floor has been identified as a hay drop.

Crockett Family Cemetery

The cemetery, which is part of the farm parcel, reportedly contains the graves of six generations of Crockett family members interred since John Crockett's death in January 1798. The surrounding stone wall was built around 1990 with stones from the Crockett Farm, replacing an earlier wooden fence, and encompasses an area measuring 185 feet by 102 feet (0.43 acres). The north wall is as close as 10 feet from Crockett's Cove Road and runs nearly parallel to the road.

Within the cemetery walls are about 54 gravestones, about 49 of which have legible inscriptions. The oldest grave is that of Revolutionary War veteran John Crockett (d. 1798). The next oldest is that of an infant, Louisa Crockett, who died in 1817. The few interred without the Crockett surname include William Patterson, who died in 1825 at the age of 81, four members of the presumably related Wood family, and Mamie Blessing, an infant who died in 1888. Also among the interred are three Civil War casualties: Samuel E. Crockett who at age 17 was wounded at the Battle of Manassas and died from his wounds on Aug. 4, 1861; Robert Crockett, Captain of Co. F, 45 Regiment, Va. Infantry, who fell at the nearby Battle of Cloyds Mountain on May 9, 1864; and William N. Crockett, also of Co. F, 45 Regiment, Va. Infantry, who was wounded at the Battle of Piedmont June, 5, 1864 and died from its effects on July 17, 1864.

4. Property's History and Significance

The Crockett Cemetery established in 1798, an evolved early nineteenth-century two-story L-shaped log house, a mid-19th-century frame schoolhouse, and a 1930s workshop are all included on this parcel with the eighteenth-century stone John Crockett House and an adjacent late-eighteenth or early nineteenth-century stone outbuilding. Collectively their significance spans from circa 1770 to circa 1940, at the local level, under Criterion C for Architecture/Craftsmanship. Stone domestic buildings of this vintage and scale are extremely rare in southwestern Virginia, thus their presence alone makes the site highly significant. In fact, buildings of eighteenth-century vintage, whatever the building materials used, have become exceptionally rare in the region. Crockett's stone house is thought to be the oldest standing structure in Wythe County today, and it is certainly the oldest stone structure, substantially predating the well-known landmark on the New River, the Shot Tower, built of stone in 1808.

Owing to John Crockett being among the first to settle in the Cove after the French and Indian War and the Cove being named after him, the farm is likely eligible under Criterion A in the area of Exploration/Settlement; and the schoolhouse adds the potential for Criterion A in the area of Education. Although the property was indeed a large farm, the agricultural buildings and structures have been lost over time; therefore, the Agriculture area of significance does not apply. Criteria Consideration D applies for the Crockett Cemetery, an important contributing resource to the John Crockett Farm.

Most of the John Crockett Farm is within the boundary of the Cove Mountain Battlefield (098-5023) determined potentially eligible under Criteria A (Military History) and D (Archaeology: Historic–Non-Aboriginal) in October 2016 when the area was considered under Section 106 review (details below). The farm's involvement in the battle is not well documented, therefore it is not recommended eligible under these criteria; yet there is likely potential for archaeological finds related to the battle on the property. Oft-repeated stories tell of Union soldiers being fed with food made in the stone house, which at the time functioned as a detached kitchen of the log house; and the stone house is located precisely halfway between the brick Presbyterian church that figured prominently in the aftermath of the battle (1.16 miles northeast of the stone house property) and the central locus of the battle, thought to have occurred around the junction of Cove Road (Rt. 603) and Crockett's Cove Rd (Rt. 600) (1.16 miles west of the stone house property).

Historical Background

John Crockett, born in 1737 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, was among the first settlers of the post-French-and-Indian War period in the narrow, fertile valley known as the Cove, between Cove Mountain to the south and Little Walker Mountain to the north. The courthouse town of Wytheville, chartered in 1790 when Wythe County was created, lies only a few miles to the southwest. When John was still a child his father Samuel died. Samuel was an Irishman who in the late 1740s came to Wythe County via Pennsylvania, and settled on Reed Creek. After Samuel's death, his wife (John's mother) Esther remarried to William Sayers. From them John obtained 180 acres of the 1,150 acres in the Cove surveyed in 1750 and patented in 1752 as part of Augusta, and later Botetourt County. John Crockett was a sergeant on the frontier, serving in the French and Indian War as a member of William Christian's Company in 1763-1764. In 1780 Crockett claimed 200 acres of land for his military service. An undated newspaper column by local historian Dr. Goodridge Wilson states that John Crockett fought under Gen. Washington in the Continental Line during the Revolutionary War. Wilson also relates that Patrick Calhoun, another early settler in the Cove, and "Cove John Crockett" (as he came to be known) "became involved in a bitter land boundary dispute which caused that beautiful area to be called 'The Valley of Contention and Strife,' a name by which it is identified in the deed transferring the part of it that included the site of the town of Max Meadows to James McGovock."

Prominent local historian Mary B. Kegley wrote that John probably moved to the Cove about 1770 when he and Walter Crockett were court-ordered to "view" the road from the New River by the headwaters of peak Creek through the Cove to Kitterling's Mill. On January 25, 1798, John Crockett wrote his will, which was probated on February 14, 1798, indicating he died in 1798 and not 1799 as many believed and is inscribed on his gravestone. The fact that Crockett was a slaveholder is evident from his will, although the number of enslaved persons is not clear. At his death he owned large tracts of land in Davidson County, TN and Jefferson County, KY. The inventory of his estate made on May 8th, 1798 covers several pages and lists 22 "negroes".

John married Elizabeth Montgomery, eldest daughter of Samuel Montgomery who owned land and lived in the Cove by 1770. John and Elizabeth had 11 children. In 1808, John and Elizabeth's two eldest sons, Samuel and John Jr., held as tenants in common 1,625 inherited acres in the Cove. When special excise taxes were levied in 1815 to help pay for the War of 1812, John's widow Elizabeth held 1,365 acres in the Cove, five miles north of the courthouse, a dwelling of wood 1 ½ stories, measuring 24 by 20 feet, in addition to a kitchen, smokehouse, springhouse, barn, stable and corncrib, and nine enslaved persons. The house "of wood" may be the extant log house, which would later have been raised to two-stories and otherwise enlarged. In 1816, Elizabeth moved to West Tennessee with her unmarried daughters, where she lived until 1830 or later.

John Crockett Jr. remained in the Cove until his death in 1835, and the Crockett homestead would be handed down through generations of family members. The last Crockett family members to live at the farm were Mary A. Crockett and Julia Crockett, great-granddaughter and great-great-granddaughter of John Crockett the original settler. Mary died in 1949 and the property was sold out of the family the following year, soon to come under the decades-long ownership of Mr. Eural Clippard.

Cove Mountain Battlefield (098-5023)

(VCRIS) Sept 2016: One major [Civil War] skirmish took place in Wythe County, known as the Battle of Cove Mountain. The Battle of Cove Mountain took place on May 10, 1864, when Union Brig. Gen. William Averell, who was in the process of raiding sections of the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad with the 2nd Regiment, encountered Confederate soldiers under the command of William E. "Grumble" Jones. According to some accounts, the Confederate army had learned of Averell's intention to raid Wytheville and Saltville, and had set up fortifications and cannon at the gap in Cove Mountain. A skirmish between the two brigades, which lasted at least four hours, took place in the gap and the open fields surrounding Cove Mountain. Eventually the Union forces, facing heavy cannon fire and several thousand Confederate soldiers, retreating east through

Crockett's Cove via Crab Orchard and across Little Walker Mountain. The Union left 17 of their number in Crockett's Cove Presbyterian Church. The Union soldiers were fed and cared for by the local residents of the cove, supposedly because the Union army had not burned local homes as they retreated. Several who did not survive are said to be buried in the church cemetery. Unconfirmed reports place the total number of Union soldiers killed in the battle, retreat, and related actions at 114; the number of Confederate dead is not known. The remainder of the 2nd Regiment would march to Christiansburg, burning the New River Bridge of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad en route, and then join the forces of Gen. George Crook at Dublin. According to a recent Civil War Sites Advisory Commission (CWSAC) report, modern-day land use of the battlefield has changed very little since the Battle of Cove Mountain, and therefore it has significant areas that are potentially eligible for the National Register. Currently, none of the 2,285.8 acres of potentially eligible land is protected or under the stewardship of either public (local, state, or federal) or private (non-profits, private individuals, conservation group) entities.

Sources

Kegley, Mary B. *Early Adventures on the Western Waters, Vol. 3*. Wytheville, 1980.

Crockett, Rush S. "Crockett's Cove" Wythe County Historical Review, No. 14, July 1978: 6-16.

Numerous other undated and/or unattributed, published and unpublished written papers, newspaper columns and articles.

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: x Public\Local Public\State Public\Federal

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: Brian Mann

organization: n/a

street & number: 743 Crockett's Cove Rd

city or town: Wytheville state: VA zip code: 24382

e-mail: bwmann71@gmail.com telephone: 540-392-4471

Legal Owner's Signature: Brian W. Mann Date: 1/12/2023

• • *Signature required for processing all applications.* • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: n/a

Daytime Telephone:

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

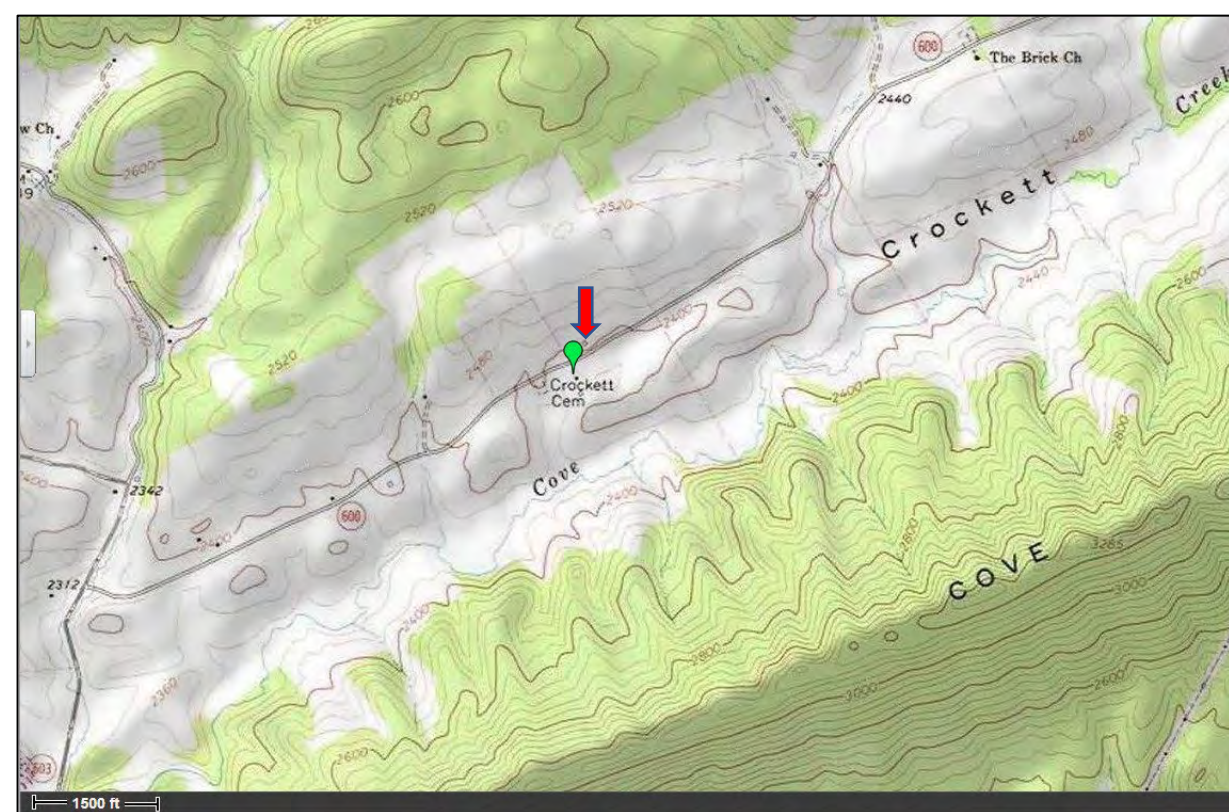
name/title: Mike Pulice, architectural historian

organization: DHR Western Regional Office

street & number: 962 Kime Ln

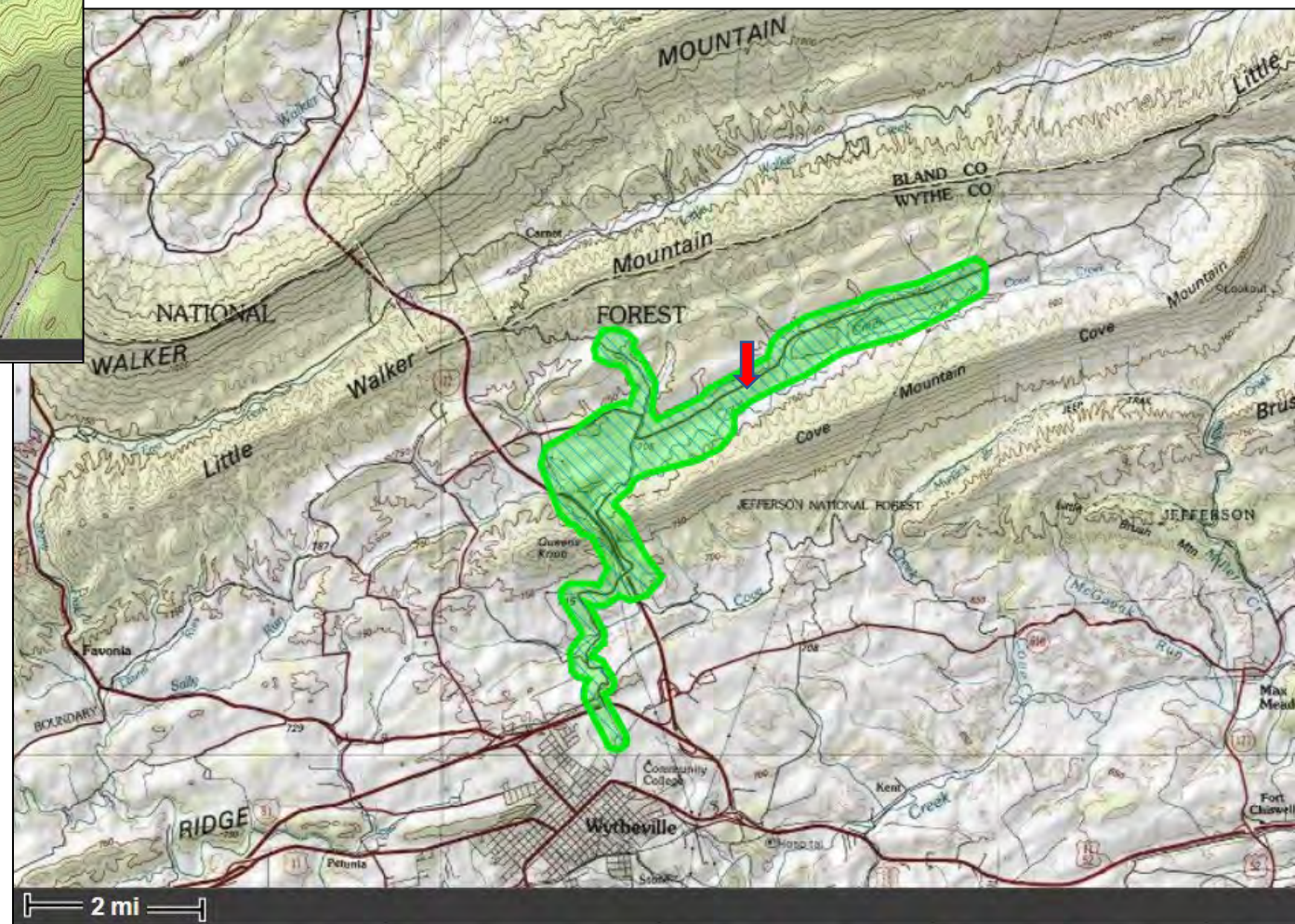
city or town: Salem state: VA zip code: 24153

e-mail: michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov telephone: 540-387-5443



Cove Mountain Battlefield (098-5023)

Crockett Farm (098-0004)







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743

etts Cove Rd

13-2-22

13-2-23



Crockett Farm
Wythe County
DHR 098-0004

Sept. 2022 M. Pulice

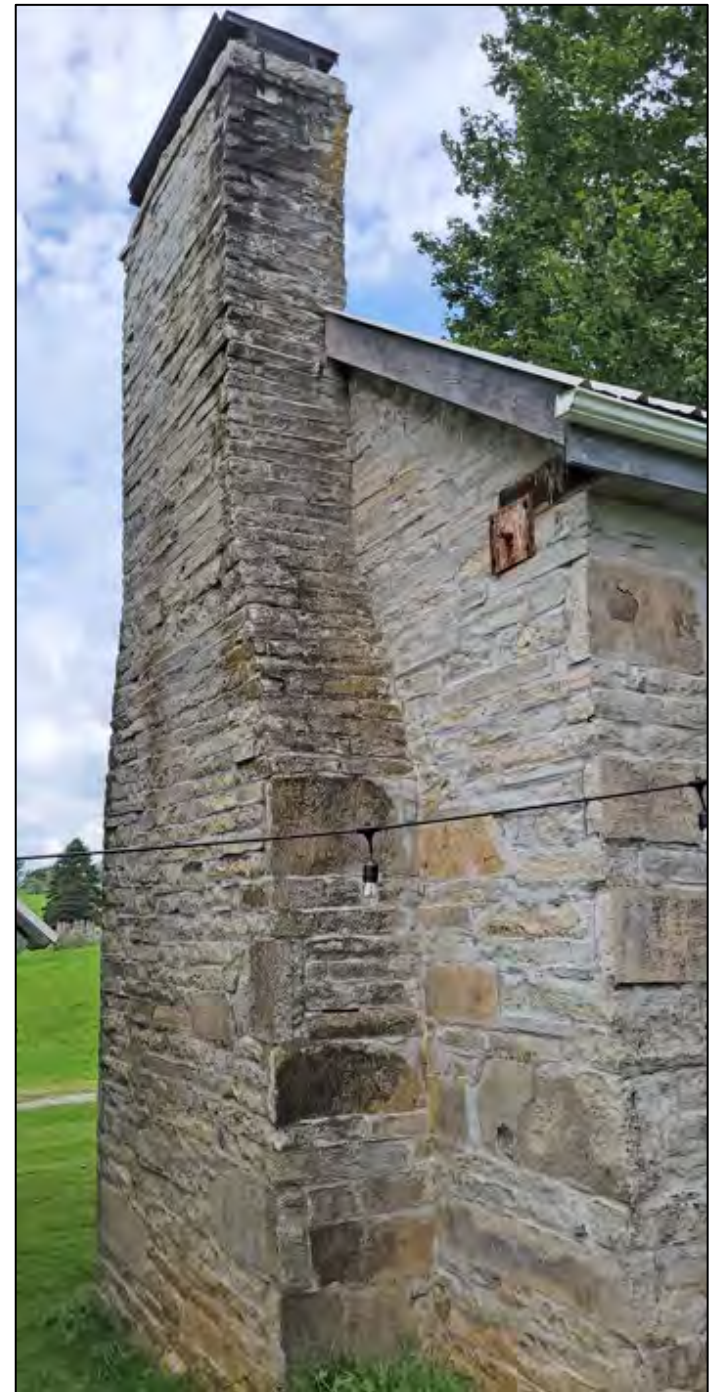






Well House and “Cove John” Crockett House







Basement
Images

First Floor
Images





Garret
Images

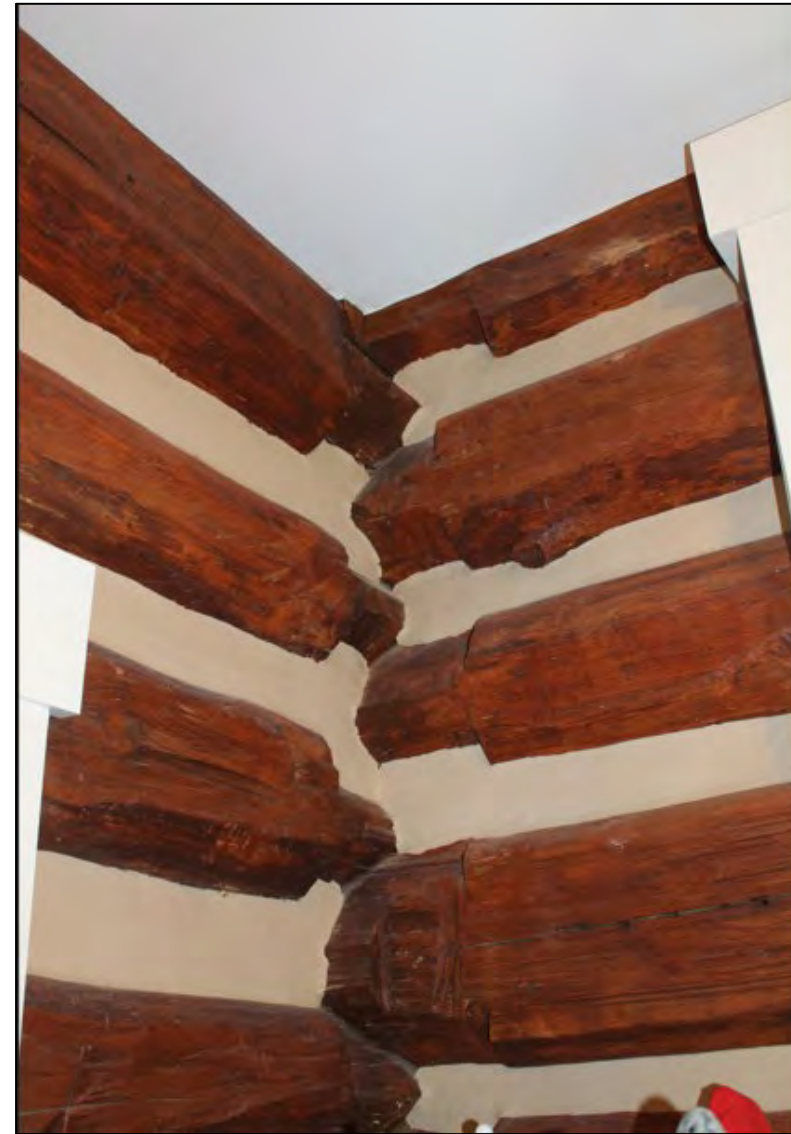


Well House Images



Main House





Main House Interior

Schoolhouse





Schoolhouse



Workshop





Workshop





Crockett Family Cemetery

