

= Valley View (Romney , West Virginia) =

Valley View is a mid @-@ 19th @-@ century Greek Revival residence and farm overlooking the South Branch Potomac River north of Romney , West Virginia . Valley View is on Depot Valley Road . The South Branch Valley Railroad adjacent to the farm is currently utilized by the Potomac Eagle Scenic Railroad .

The Valley View property was part of the South Branch Survey of the Northern Neck Proprietary , a large tract that belonged to Thomas Fairfax , 6th Lord Fairfax of Cameron . It was settled by the Collins family in 1749 , and acquired by the Parsons family before 1772 . The Valley View house was built by James Parsons Jr. in 1855 . After the Civil War , Parsons ' widow sold the farm to Charles Harmison . His wife Elizabeth Smith Harmison , inspired by her childhood Virginia home (Western View) and the scenic river views , named the farm Valley View . Following a series of owners , the property was purchased by the Mayhew family in 1979 . Valley View 's current proprietors , Robert and Kim Mayhew , have restored the historic residence and grounds .

The house at Valley View is a two @-@ story brick Greek Revival @-@ style structure with a rectangular architectural plan . The front entrance is covered by a small portico , topped with a pediment supported by wooden Doric columns . The rear of the house , with a two @-@ story (double) wood porch stretching across it , faces the South Branch Potomac River valley and Mill Creek Mountain . Each of the original eight large rooms of the 1855 structure contains a fireplace framed by a wooden trabeated mantelpiece with classical elements . The original windows , wooden trim , and materials in the main section of the house are intact . In 2012 , Valley View was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its locally significant architecture .

= = History = =

= = = Royal land grant and Collins family ownership = = =

Valley View is located on land that was originally part of the Northern Neck Proprietary , a land grant first awarded in 1649 by Charles II of England to seven of his supporters and again in 1688 by official patent . One of the seven , Thomas Colepeper , 2nd Baron Colepeper , acquired the right to the entire grant in 1681 . This was confirmed by King James II , and Colepeper 's grandson Thomas Fairfax , 6th Lord Fairfax of Cameron , inherited it in 1719 . Lord Fairfax selected a portion of the proprietary for his manor . This tract , known as the South Branch Survey of the Northern Neck Proprietary , extended from the north end of the Trough to the junction of the North and South Branches of the Potomac River . In 1748 , Fairfax commissioned James Genn to survey the South Branch Potomac River lowlands for sale and lease , with lots ranging in size from 300 to 400 acres (120 to 160 ha) .

In 1749 , the tract on which Valley View stands was purchased from Lord Fairfax by John Collins . The 425 @-@ acre (172 ha) lot was Lot Number 20 on the South Branch Survey . Collins also owned a large tract of land spanning present @-@ day Hampshire and Hardy counties . His son Thomas Collins is thought to have inherited his father 's landholdings as an " heir at law " , since there is no record of a will by John Collins dispensing of his properties . By 1772 , Thomas Collins acquired Lot Number 20 , where he lived with his wife Elizabeth . In 1816 , Collins was serving as a magistrate when the town of Romney held a Virginia state election for the Electoral College . One representative from each of Virginia 's then @-@ 25 counties traveled to Romney to cast his vote . Collins and county commissioner William Donaldson certified the convention 's election results .

In 1817 , Thomas Collins sold Lot Number 20 to James Gregg Parsons . It is unknown whether the Collinses moved from the tract or continued living on it after the sale . Thomas Collins died in 1822 , and Elizabeth Collins in 1823 .

= = = Parsons family ownership = = =

The Parsons family was among the first English settlers in the Thirteen Colonies in 1635 ; around 1740 , they settled in Hampshire County . By 1778 , Isaac Parsons (1752 ? 1796) , a member of the Virginia House of Delegates , owned 161 acres (65 ha) of Lot Number 16 and all of Lot Number 17 in the Proprietary . James Gregg Parsons , his eldest son , was born in Hampshire County in 1773 . In 1795 he married Mary Catherine Casey (1773 ? 1846) , whose family owned the adjoining Lot Number 21 . After their marriage they lived in the main house at Wappocomo (built by Mary Catherine 's father) , inheriting the house at his death in 1833 .

Parsons died on January 25 , 1847 , leaving most of his land to his three sons : James (Big Jim) Parsons Jr . (1798 ? 1858) , David C. Parsons (1803 ? 1860) , and Isaac Parsons (1814 ? 1862) . James , his eldest son , inherited Lot Number 20 ; his second son David inherited Lot Number 13 south of Romney (on which Hickory Grove was later located) ; and his youngest son Isaac inherited Lot Number 21 (which included Wappocomo) . His sons also inherited the nearby " Jake Sugar Rum Tract , the McGuire Tract , and five town lots in Romney " . According to historian William K. Rice , by 1846 Parsons ' sons and their families were all living on the tracts they would subsequently inherit . Rice determined that James Parsons Jr. moved to the Collins Tract around 1826 , and was living there when his father died .

James Parsons Jr . , known as " Big Jim " because of his size , was a farmer and cattleman who was born in Hampshire County . In her 1913 Parsons ' Family History and Record , Parsons ' relative (and family genealogist) Virginia Parsons MacCabe wrote about him : " He was square and honorable in business , and had a large circle of friends ; he had the urbanity and the gentility of manner which characterizes the true gentleman " . Parsons married Elizabeth Miller on January 8 , 1829 . The couple had eleven children , several of whom attended college .

In 1855 , Parsons began building the present @-@ day Valley View house , 1 mile (1 @.@ 6 km) north of Romney on the Collins Tract . Although he wrote many letters to his sister Mary Gregg Parsons Stump about farming , cattle , family , health and community events , no letters are known to remain from the time of the house 's construction . The Parsons family owned several slaves who are thought to have assisted with construction .

After living in his new house for three years , Big Jim died of tuberculosis on October 14 , 1858 . His widow , Elizabeth , lived in the house until after the Civil War . In 1867 or 1869 , she sold the house , the Collins Tract and the remainder of Lot Number 20 to Charles Harmison (1823 ? 1896) for \$ 8 @,@ 500 , moving with her remaining children to Missouri (where she died in 1883) . The cost of building the house financially strained the Parsons family ; historian Catherine Snider Long suggests that Elizabeth Miller Parsons sold the house as a result of additional , war @-@ related financial stress from which the family could not recover .

= = = Harmison family ownership = = =

Charles Harmison was born in Franklin County , Illinois , to Nathaniel and Lydia Harmison , and married Elizabeth " Bettie " Ann Smith (1827 ? 1903) on May 4 , 1854 , in Taylor County , West Virginia . Bettie , the daughter of C. C. and Martha W. Smith , was raised at Western View (their Fauquier County , Virginia , home) . By 1867 , Harmison and his family were living in Harrison County .

Charles Harmison 's older brother had moved to Romney , where he established and operated a hotel (the Virginia House) . In 1867 , the brother learned that the Parsons farm was for sale , and he advised Charles to buy it . Charles ' wife , who wanted to live nearer to Virginia , also urged her husband to buy the property . Charles did , and he , his wife , their (then) seven children and a young African American boy named Snoden moved from Harrison to Hampshire County in three days . They traveled on the Northwestern Turnpike in an ambulance Charles had bought after the war . Influenced by her childhood home and by its view of the South Branch Potomac River valley , Elizabeth Harmison named their new house and farm Valley View .

Harmison prospered in Hampshire County , acquiring additional land and enlarging his Valley View estate . He later gave this acquired land to his children to establish their own homes when they married . In 1884 , the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad completed its South Branch , connecting the

main line at Green Spring to Romney ; this branch bisected the Valley View property . Charles Harmison lived at Valley View until his death on October 31 , 1896 .

Charles and Elizabeth 's son , George Edward Harmison (1863 ? 1916) , inherited Valley View around 1903 and brought his wife , Carrie Belle Fox (1870 ? 1953) , there after their marriage on October 4 , 1905 . George demolished the old log kitchen at Valley View , replacing it with a contemporary kitchen building .

The Hampshire Southern Railroad was completed from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad 's Romney Depot spur to the South Branch Potomac River by 1909 . In October of that year , the first train on the line passed over Harmison 's bottomlands and crossed the river on an unfinished wooden trestle . By 1910 , the 18 @-@ mile (29 km) line from the Romney spur terminus at Valley View to McNeill was in operation . Later that year , freight and passenger service between Romney and Moorefield began , providing a direct rail link between Moorefield and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad main line at Green Spring . The Hampshire Southern Railroad Company operated this line until 1911 , when it was purchased by the Moorefield and Virginia Railroad Company . Moorefield and Virginia transferred the rail line to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company in 1913 , when it became part of the B & O 's South Branch .

In 1911 , George Harmison subdivided the Valley View fields on the Yellow Banks overlooking the South Branch Potomac River . The new development , known as the Valley View Addition to Romney , was south of the Valley View house and west of Romney Depot . Twenty @-@ one lots were sold at public auction on September 27 , 1911 , and several more were sold privately .

Harmison died in 1916 , and Carrie continued to live at Valley View until her death on February 8 , 1953 . Harmison 's nephew , Paul Cresap Harmison (1893 ? 1972 , a grandson of Charles Harmison 's brother Jonathan Harmison) , and his wife Nancy Parker Harmison (1896 ? 1981) had moved to Valley View to live with her . After Carrie 's death , Paul and Nancy Parker Harmison inherited the house and farm . Valley View remained in the Harmison family until 1963 , when it was sold to Philip Newell and his wife Martha .

= = = Mind Garage = = =

The psychedelic rock band Mind Garage lived at Valley View during the summer of 1968 . During its stay , the band wrote many songs that were later included in their first , self @-@ titled RCA Records album and Mind Garage Early Years . Several songs were conceived on the porch overlooking the valley , then developed and practiced in the barn downhill from the house 's backyard . Among the songs written at Valley View was " Circus Farm " , inspired by the view of the South Branch Potomac River valley from the house 's rear second @-@ floor porch .

= = = Mayhew family ownership = = =

During its changes in ownership , the original Lot Number 20 of the South Branch Survey was repeatedly partitioned and sold . By 1976 , the original property was divided into five farms and additional parcels , including the Valley View Addition . The tract on which the Valley View residence is located currently measures 6 @. @ 63 acres (2 @. @ 68 ha) .

Valley View was purchased by Robert Mayhew 's father and a business associate in 1979 . Mayhew subsequently purchased it from his father , and he and his wife Kim have restored the residence and grounds .

After surveys of historic properties in the county , in 2008 the Hampshire County Historic Landmarks Commission and the Hampshire County Commission began an initiative to place structures and districts on the National Register of Historic Places . The county received funding from the State Historic Preservation Office of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History to survey and document its architecture and history . As a result of this initiative , Valley View was one of the first eight historic properties to be considered for placement on the register . The other seven were Capon Chapel , Fort Kuykendall , Hickory Grove , Hook Tavern , North River Mills Historic District , Old Pine Church and Springfield Brick House . The house at Valley View was listed on the

= = Architecture = =

The house at Valley View is significant for its Greek Revival architecture . According to architectural historian Courtney Fint Zimmerman , " Valley View is a characteristic example of the Greek Revival style for more practical residential applications in outlying areas " . The Valley View house has several Greek Revival design characteristics , including a symmetrical architectural plan and elevations and " substantial , formal " mass . Zimmerman (who prepared Valley View 's registration form for the NRHP) said , " Valley View 's applied details in the Greek Revival style , including the front entrance entablature and portico , are more limited , yet the variations that can be seen on Valley View and other estates in the South Branch Valley illustrate the flexibility inherent in the style " .

Valley View 's house consists of the original 1855 brick section and a board @-@ and @-@ batten 1961 ? 1962 kitchen addition . The grounds contain a smokehouse , a water well , the foundations of an ice house , and a summer kitchen .

The bricks from which the house was built were fired in the immediate vicinity (along the banks of the South Branch Potomac River) , and the brick walls were reinforced with hand @-@ wrought structural iron angles . The nails used in its construction were fabricated by a local blacksmith , and the wooden sills and joists were sawn by hand . As of 2012 , all the original windows , trim and building materials in the main section of the house were still present .

= = = Exterior = = =

Valley View 's house is a two @-@ story brick structure with a rectangular architectural plan and exterior dimensions measuring about 49 by 32 feet (14 @.@ 9 by 9 @.@ 8 m) . The house 's exterior brick walls are 9 inches (23 cm) thick and laid in an American bond . The house is topped with a steep metal gabled roof with standing seam profiles . Two sets of double inside chimneys extend above the steep roofline on the northwestern and southeastern ends .

The front façade of the house faces a hill to the southwest . It is five bays wide , with the front entrance at the first floor 's center bay . Wide double @-@ hung sash windows are uniformly placed on the house 's front façade , with four nine @-@ over @-@ six double @-@ hung wooden sashes on the first story and five six @-@ over @-@ six double @-@ hung wooden sashes on the second . Each window is surrounded by green @-@ painted wooden shutters and white @-@ painted wooden lintels and sills .

The front entrance is covered by a small Greek Revival portico measuring about 12 by 12 feet (3 @.@ 7 by 3 @.@ 7 m) , topped with a pediment supported by wooden Doric columns and engaged columns at the wall . The front porch is flanked by modest wooden handrails and balusters on its left and right sides . The front entrance is post and lintel construction , with a six @-@ pane transom and two three @-@ pane sidelight windows around the doorway . Zimmerman suggests that " Big Jim " Parsons embellished his home 's front entrance to assert his " wealth and status " and provide " an honored welcome to visitors " .

The rear façade of the house faces northeast , across the South Branch Potomac River valley toward Mill Creek Mountain . A two @-@ story (double) wooden porch about 9 feet (2 @.@ 7 m) deep extends across the rear of the house , topped by a shed roof extending from the main gabled roof at a shallower pitch . The first @-@ story porch supports are brown wooden turned posts with no handrail or balusters , and the porch 's second story has white painted square wood posts and vertical railings . Like the front façade , the rear façade is five bays wide ; access to the double porch is through a door in the central bay on both levels . The other four bays have nine @-@ over @-@ six double @-@ hung wooden sash windows on the first story and six @-@ over @-@ six double @-@ hung wooden sash windows on the second story . The northwestern and southeastern sides of the house have one small square window at attic level , between each pair of inside chimneys .

== Interior ==

The interior of the Valley View house has a two @-@ room @-@ deep , central @-@ hallway floor plan . Its wide central hallway contains a staircase from the first floor to the attic , with a wooden handrail supported with square balusters and a modest wooden turned newel post . The ceilings are 10 feet (3 @. @ 0 m) high . Although the house 's foundation is low , the height of the interior walls and the full @-@ sized attic make it appear tall from the outside .

The original house has eight large rooms , each with a fireplace framed by a wooden geometric trabeated mantelpiece with classical elements . The four large rooms on the first floor open from either side of the center hallway . They contain simple wide wood trim , including skirting boards and door frame moldings with " subtly demarcated corners " . The house 's living and dining rooms have wide , wooden dado rails . Most of the wooden decorative trim is painted white , and the walls are plaster . The lone exception is the room serving as an office and den , which has dark stained wooden trim and interior brick structural walls (exposed by the removal of its plaster during the 1960s) . All rooms have the original wide plank wooden floors . The second floor has four bedrooms , with closets on either side of a fireplace and simple wood skirting boards and door frames . Parsons family members painted signatures and graffiti in the attic around 1856 , which remain visible on the stairwell wall .

== Kitchen addition ==

A one @-@ story kitchen addition , built in 1961 ? 1962 and measuring about 21 by 14 feet (6 @. @ 4 by 4 @. @ 3 m) , extends from the northwest side of the original 1855 house . The addition has a gabled standing seam metal roof , and its exterior is covered in white @-@ painted board @-@ and @-@ batten siding . It has a vinyl bay window on the southwest side , a one @-@ over @-@ one double @-@ hung vinyl window on the northeast side and a door (adjoining the wall of the 1855 house) on the southeast side . An enclosed board @-@ and @-@ batten porch , measuring about 14 by 10 feet (4 @. @ 3 by 3 @. @ 0 m) , and a shed roof extend from the front (southwest) of the kitchen addition . The original basement under the 1855 house is accessible through this porch extension . A ghost building outline on the northwest side of the 1855 house indicates an earlier structure where the present kitchen addition stands .

== Ancillary structures ==

There are several ancillary structures near the house at Valley View , including a smokehouse and a water well , and the foundations of an ice house and a summer kitchen . Although the smokehouse , the summer kitchen and the ice house are believed to have been built by the Collinses before Big Jim Parsons built Valley View , the dates of construction are uncertain .

The smokehouse , measuring about 15 by 20 feet (4 @. @ 6 by 6 @. @ 1 m) , is adjacent to the kitchen addition . It is set into a hillside , allowing at @-@ grade entry to its two levels . Built of square @-@ cut logs with white chinking atop a rubble masonry foundation , the smokehouse is topped with a standing seam metal gabled roof .

South of the smokehouse is the brick foundation of an ice house measuring about 15 by 20 feet (4 @. @ 6 by 6 @. @ 1 m) and topped by modern wooden pergola and patio structures . The 15 @-@ by @-@ 20 @-@ foot (4 @. @ 6 by 6 @. @ 1 m) brick foundation of Valley View 's summer kitchen is north of the smokehouse and topped by a contemporary wooden pavilion with a gabled roof .

In the rear yard of the house is a water well , enclosed by a brick building about 7 by 7 feet (2 @. @ 1 by 2 @. @ 1 m) in area and 3 @. @ 5 feet (1 @. @ 1 m) in height . In the center of the well cap is a metal hand pump . Although the well cap 's bricks are similar to those used in the construction of the main house , the well may date from an earlier residence on the site .

== Geography ==

The Valley View house is about 1 mile (1 @. @ 6 km) northwest of downtown Romney , atop a promontory (known locally as the Yellow Banks) where Depot Valley joins the South Branch Potomac River valley . Depot Valley runs 0 @. @ 5 miles (0 @. @ 8 km) from West Sioux Lane to Valley View , and an unnamed tributary of Big Run flows north along its bottom . Depot Valley Road parallels the stream .

Depot Valley is named for Romney Depot , located at the end of a former spur of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad 's South Branch line near the intersection of present @-@ day West Sioux Lane and Depot Valley Road . The unincorporated area around the depot was once known as Valley . A post office operated there from 1928 until 1937 , when its mail was routed through Romney ; it is assumed that Valley View farm used it , since it was 0 @. @ 5 miles (0 @. @ 8 km) south of the house .

The Valley View farm property adjoins the Wappocomo farm on the northeast , the corporate limits of Romney on the east and south and the Yellow Banks on the west . In addition to Valley View 's 6 @. @ 63 acres (2 @. @ 68 ha) tract , the Mayhew family owns agricultural land rich in alluvial soils along the South Branch Potomac River west of the house . The South Branch Valley Railroad bisects this farmland , crossing the South Branch Potomac River via a wooden trestle .

The Mayhews also own Valley View Island , an island in the South Branch Potomac River north of the mouth of Sulphur Spring Run and about 0 @. @ 5 miles (0 @. @ 8 km) southwest of Valley View . The island is ringed by forests , with agricultural fields in its center . When Lots Number 17 and 19 of the South Branch Survey were surveyed in 1749 and resurveyed in 1788 , the island belonged to Lot Number 19 . At that time , the river flowed east of the island , along the base of the Yellow Banks ; its course later changed to run around the west side of the island .

Mill Creek Mountain , a narrow anticlinal mountain ridge , rises westward from the South Branch Potomac River across from Valley View . The western foothills of South Branch Mountain rise to the east . Both mountains are covered with Appalachian @-@ Blue Ridge forests of hardwoods and pine .

= = = Explanatory notes = = =