

Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission

Landmarks Nomination Report: *Billmyer-McQuilken Farm (Rock Spring)*

Physical Description:

The Billmyer-McQuilken Farm is located on the north side of Route 45 in northern Jefferson County, West Virginia. The property, known locally as Rock Spring, sits about two miles west of Shepherdstown, near the Berkeley County line. The farm consists of rolling agricultural fields and historic buildings along Rocky Marsh Run.

Historic Description:

The farm was first purchased by Martin Billmyer in 1810 from John Clawson. This land was the southern end of John Van Meter's 1734 grant. Martin Billmyer owned and operated Billmyer's Mill just downstream from Rock Spring. He lived near the mill with his large family in the stone house he bought from Christopher Orndorff in 1805. That is when the Billmyers moved to Jefferson County from Washington County, Maryland. This adjacent farm, Rock Spring, has a large brick house built in 1831. It was apparently used as the house of Martin Billmyer's son, Conrad, who received the property in 1838 when his father died. Conrad's brother, Solomon operated a fulling mill along the stream north of the house during this period. In 1847, Conrad Billmyer died and his will stipulated that the farm be sold. The property was purchased by George Emmert who sold it ten years later to William T. McQuilken for \$13,453. McQuilken was married to Susan Billmyer, daughter of Martin Billmyer, so, the property reverted to the Billmyer family. The farm is still owned by the McQuilken family today.

Rock Spring has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Resources:

The main house, built in 1831, is one of the county's finest brick houses of the period. An ornate fanlight surround adorns the entry. The house has unusually developed millwork, including an excellent stair. The decorative porch, slate roof, and the rear ell were added in the late Victorian period.

The Swisser-type, bank barn on the farm was constructed about 1900. It is a well preserved example of the local timber framing techniques. In addition to the bank barn, the farm retains its historic corn crib and other agricultural buildings.

Nomination Criteria:

The JCHLC nominates this property under Criteria C for inclusion on the list of registered county landmarks. Criteria C states that a site may be nominated if, in the opinion of the JCHLC, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. Owner, Cooper McQuilken, has agreed to have the property listed as Jefferson County Historic Landmark.

Nomination Action:

The JCHLC voted unanimously to add the Billmyer-McQuilken Farm (Rock Spring), under Criteria C, to the rolls of registered Jefferson County Historic Landmarks on October 15, 2008.