

**United States
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Interior National
Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number ____ Page 1

Located one mile west of Poyen, Arkansas the Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. house was constructed in phases 1848, 1850, 1896, and early 1930's as family growth and prosperity increased. The south elevation faces Highway 270 which replaced the wagon road that ran between Pine Bluff and Rockport at the time of the original construction.

This was the original front of the structure with the addition in 1850. The land to the north and west drops in elevation as dictated by Big Creek which flows north to south. This area is prone to overflow during winter and spring inclement weather; but, was used for summer truck crops.

The structure was built in phases with the first construction being the log room followed by an additional room to the east separated by a breezeway or dogtrot. In 1896 two additional rooms were built adjoining the east room to the north as well as a shed room to the north of the log room.

In the early 1930's a portion of the front porch was enclosed. The house was occupied and maintained until the year 2000. The landscape around it is now wooded where it was once pastoral. In addition to the house three out buildings still exist giving as a representation of the rural farm of the era.

Elaboration

As is typical of dogtrots the Byrd house consists of two rooms of similar size (seventeen feet by seventeen feet) flanking either side of a breezeway eight feet wide. The original room was a log room erected in 1848 with the exception of the two doors there were no windows.

The second room was constructed in 1850 and consisted of rough cut batten pine planks with two doors; one opening onto the south porch and one onto the north porch.

Two windows one over one were located on the south elevation one on each side of the door. Both rooms had mud chimneys.

The log room had two doors one opening to the east onto the breezeway and the other to the south onto the porch encompassing the south elevation. There are indications that the log room had a porch on its east elevation prior to 1850.

In 1896 two rooms and a shed room were added to the structure. The two rooms were added north of the east room each room was ten feet by sixteen feet. A portion of the north porch was removed to accommodate the new construction.

The north door from the east room led into the middle room which served as a bed room. There was a door exiting west out of the middle room onto the dogtrot as well as an opening into the far north room which was utilized as a kitchen.

This room contained one window one over one centered on the east wall. The far north room which was utilized as the kitchen had a door opening west onto a porch that was added to the west elevation toward with the breezeway. There were two one over one windows facing the north and east centered on the respective walls.

The shed room was added to the north elevation of the log room. This was known as the meal room as they stored their flour, corn meal, lard, etc. in this room. It had a door opening east onto the dogtrot with a shuttered window centered on the west wall. In the early 1930's an additional room was added to the south side of the west log room. This was done by enclosing in a portion of the south porch. The roof is a gabled roof over the four main rooms.

The rafters over the log room consist of the original peeled poles without a ridge pole. The rafters of the log room were set directly onto the top log joists with no overhang. The north shed room rafters join onto the peeled pole rafters and were of rough cut lumber making a continuous dropped roof.

The 1850 roof was extended covering the dogtrot and the new room. This was a continuation of the gable with the rafters being of rough cut pine minus a ridge pole. The eastern two rooms added in 1896 roof was gabled with an overhang on the east elevation continuing with the same construction method of rough cut rafters minus a ridge pole.

The southwest room, south porch and northwest porch were covered with a continuous dropped roof The entire structure was covered with pine shake shingles until the 1950's when they were replaced with galvanized tin.

The entire structure including the log room was built on rich pine piers. The majority of these are still in place. There has been some addition of concrete blocks to further support the structure. Steps at the north and south elevations have been replaced frequently over the years and now have a hand rail that was added in the 1990's. Interior The interior of the structure remains at least ninety percent as constructed.

The log room remained a log interior with batten boards over the cracks until sometime around 1920. At that time with the removal of the mud chimney and addition of the windows the west and east walls were covered with planed tongue and grooved lumber.

In the late 1900's the floor was removed by numbering the plank flooring and the floor piers and joists were replaced and then reinstalling the planking. The north and south log walls were covered with paneling to cover weather deterioration.

The north shed room abutting the log room was also refurbished in this same time frame. The exterior walls were reinstalled and closed in on the inside as well as the floor replaced. The south room abutting the log room was covered with planed tongue and grooved pine lumber.

The interior walls of the east room is made with tongue and grooved planed pine as well as the ten foot ceiling. The floor was originally planked until the late 1940's when it was replaced with tongue and groove pine flooring.

Centered on the east wall is the hearth. There are two windows one on each side of the door centered on the south wall. There is a door centered on the north wall that leads to the middle bedroom, The middle bedroom walls are covered with a tongue and grooved planed pine lumber as well as the ceiling.

The floor consists of pine planking. There are two doors exiting this room one centered on the west wall leading to the dogtrot and the other next to the west wall opening into the north room. This door was an open passageway until the late 1990's when a door was added.

A window is centered on the east wall. The north room, which served as the kitchen, has walls that were of tongue and grooved planed pine lumber. The floor is pine planks. The ceiling is of rough cut pine planks placed on top of the ceiling joists.

There is a door centered on the west wall giving access to the northwest porch. There are two windows one located centered on the north wall and the other centered on the east wall.

North elevation: historical rear of the house

On the north elevation of the Byrd house going east to west the north room (kitchen) is covered with batten pine planks with a one over one single window in the center. Adjoining this room on the west is a dropped roof porch that abuts the dogtrot on the north. To the west is the batten plank wall of the dropped roof shed room.

West elevation

Viewing the west elevation going north to south beginning with the dropped roof shed room which is covered with batten planks . There is a one over one window centered in this room. The Next room being the log room is covered with batten pine planks with two one over one windows centered where the mud chimney used to exist. The gabled roof is visible at this elevation. The next room is the dropped roof south room which is covered pine weatherboard.

South elevation: historical front of the house

Going west to east in viewing the south elevation the south dropped porch room is visible. This room is covered with pie weatherboard with two one over one window spaced apart in the center. This is followed to the east by the dropped roof porch. The dogtrot is visible between the porch room and the east room. The east room exterior is covered with batten rough cut pine planks.

East elevation

The east elevation begins with the south dropped roof porch and extends north to the north end of the house. Next to the porch is the east room with the brick chimney centered tiding above the gable. There is a one over one window centered on the middle room as well as the next room. The roof on the two adjoining rooms is gabled in the opposite direction from the east room. The entire exterior is covered with batten pine planking.

Summary

The Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. house was constructed in the late 1840's and 1850's in the vicinity of Poyen, Arkansas during the early settlement period of eastern Township in then what was Hot Spring County. The house was crafted both with pioneer log construction and state-of-the-art early pioneer carpentry.

Despite minor modifications over the years the structure has maintained its original craftsmanship and appearance. It represents a typical functional home as constructed by

immigrants from the south. It was constructed in phases as growing families necessitated and funds and material became available.

Family history supports that the log room and adjoining east room was built by Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. with the help of one or more of his brothers in 1848 and 1850.

This house is one of the oldest structures still standing in Grant County as well as being continually occupied as a principal residence until the year 2000. It is further consistent with the mere fact that it was in existence during and after the civil war. The area it was located in was between the warring factions characterized by surviving bands that raided, looted and pillaged settlers homes in this area .

It survived as a working family farm from its inception until the early 1990s. The home is an enduring legacy to the central Arkansas settlement process. Elaboration In the 1846-1848 era the area where the Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. home is located was known as Fenter township, Hot Spring County, Arkansas.

Specifically it was located in eastern Fenter Township in a place known as Crossroads about two miles west of Pratt's ferry on the Saline River. The name Crossroads is attributed to the existence of four wagon roads intersecting at this location.

The north road went through a plantation area intersecting with the military road leading from Rockport to Benton. The east road meandered to the Saline River at Pratt's ferry continuing on through small settlement farms to Pine Bluff.

The south road meandered through present day Leola intersecting the military road from Rockport to Camden by way of Tulip. The west road traveled through the Big Creek settlement into Rockport. The area east of Crossroads was characterized by the Saline River bottom land consisting of large white oak timber resources.

The lay of the land east of the Crossroads began to rise in elevation. It was in this area that Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. opted to settle. Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. migrated west to Arkansas from the area of Pickwick Landing, Hardin County, Tennessee on or around 1846-1848.

He was either accompanied by or accompanied other members of his family. Specifically they were brothers Lawrence Cherry Byrd, William Buck Byrd and a sister and brother-in-law John Barnes and Emmaline Jane Byrd and their families. John and Emmaline settled in the Grapevine area in Grant County south of present day Sheridan.

Samuel, Lawrence and William Buck settled in the Poyen and Big Creek areas. There

is family lore that Lawrence and his wife Hannah Delaney Batchelor operated for a period of time just south of Samuels homestead an inn for travelers where they provided food, bedding, forage for the animals and libations.

They had moved west into the Big Creek community prior to the civil war, but, they were in residence at this place at the time Samuel built the log room in 1848. Samuel was noted on the poll tax rolls for 1848 in Fenter Township, Hot Spring County, Arkansas. It is highly probable that Lawrence and his family shared Samuel's residence at the same time.

In 1850 Samuel married Tabitha Jane Reed by Eli Soffield an ordained minister in Hot Spring County, Arkansas There is substantial geneology tracing Samuel's family but as of present all is known of Tabitha Jane is that she was from Tennessee.

Samuel and Tabitha are listed on the 1850 census in Fenter Township with his age as 36 and hers as 16. With the advent of this marriage the east room was constructed with a dogtrot separating the two rooms.

To this union the following children were born: Lovey A., William S., Mary M., Susan C., Matilda Roxie, James C., and Samuel D, Jr.. On July the 1, 1857 Samuel Byrd was issued a Patent from the United States of America containing 80 acres and purchased same.

The 1860 census records Samuel as head of household with Jane and three children. There is no record of Samuel serving on either side during the civil war. The war did have its presence in the vicinity of the homestead with the battle of Jenkins Ferry occurred approximately 10 miles south southeast of their home.

His brother Lawrence who resided about 5 miles west in the Big Creek community was hung by Jayhawkers or Scalawags when he refused to give them money.

Approximately 2 years after the civil war the family found a sword in Little Rhinehart Creek which probably belonged to one of Fagan's cavalrymen who lost it as they went from Pratt's Ferry to Arkadelphia at the time of the Jenkins Ferry battle.

The 1870 census has Samuel listed as head of household and occupation as farmer with Jane and six children. His personal worth was \$200 and a real worth of \$240. Four of the children were listed as being in school. They undoubtedly attended the a school located next to School House Ford on Francois creek built in 1855, the Batchelor school or the latter one built in Crossroads after the civil war. Samuel, Jr. who couldn't read or write did recall attending school when farming duties did not preclude.

He commented many times about the chore of getting to and from school through the woods and trails. When Samuel, Jr. was six years old somewhere around 1873 his little dog died. His brother William Smyth helped him bury it and planted a pine tree at its head. The tree still exists today north of the house and was the Grant County Centennial tree.

The family was utilized in operating the farm. They grew crops to feed the livestock, cotton for a cash crop and vegetables for their consumption.

In 1889 Samuel, Sr. was a charter member of the Poyen Missionary Baptist church. September 15, 1890 Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. deeded for love and affection to Tabitha Jane Byrd 40 acres of said property during her lifetime and upon her death to Samuel D. Byrd, Jr.

September 15, 1890 Samuel, Sr. and Tabitha Jane deeded for love and affection the additional 40 acres to Samuel, Jr. and Miranda E. Byrd. April 18, 1891 Thomas F. Sweeney and Miranda E. Byrd Sweeney by warranty deed sold to Samuel D. Byrd, Jr. her portion of the additional 40 acres. Samuel D., Sr. preceded his wife in death and Tabitha Jane expired in 1897. They are both interred in Poyen Lindsey Cemetery.

Upon the death of Tabitha Jane Byrd in 1897 the ownership transferred to Samuel Daniel, Jr.. Samuel Daniel Byrd, Jr. married Susan Amanda Ballard in January 1896. With his mother still being alive and with a new bride he added the three north rooms onto the existing structure. To this union was born William Hobart, Samuel Daniel III, John Wesley, David Hugh, Martin D., Madge Cleo and Arvin Elwood.

Samuel pursued a career as a farmer in the same mode as his father. He also worked in the timber industry as it existed in and around Poyen. He was very active in the Woodmen of the World. There is some documentation that he served as an agent for persons selling or procuring property in the area.

Poyen became a reality in 1908 when J.W. Hamlen and Sons built a saw mill. at Crossroads. They plotted off a town site built a commissary store and sold lots. The Rock Island, Arkansas, and Louisiana Railroad Company had built a line previous to this in 1905 making this all feasible. 1908 also saw the emergence of a post office and a two story frame school was erected.

About this time there were saw mills, a cotton gin, and a brick plant operating in the Poyen area. The area still maintained its small farm agriculture personality combined with the increasing timber industry.

Susan Amanda was active in women's organizations of the period notably the Poyen

Home Demonstration Club. The family worked on their farm and neighbors farms as was the custom at the time. The children attended the Poyen School and received the education at a level offered at the time.

With the advent of WW I William Hobart enlisted in the army and served as a medic in the Fourth Division in France and later in the occupation of the Rhineland. Upon his return home he farmed on the family farm with his father and those brothers still at home.

He attended college and became a school teacher in Poyen, Fenter, and Sheridan. He served two terms as Justice of Peace for Fenter Township.

In he married Nancy Bertha Sheppard the daughter of William Sheppard an ex County Judge of Grant County. They resided in Poyen and Prattsville teaching school and farming on the home place. The depression forced them to seek employment elsewhere and they moved to Illinois and Texas where he was employed in the oil industry.

They returned to Arkansas upon retirement in 1962. He was active with his two brothers and sister who resided on the home place until his death at the age of 83 in 1980.

John Wesley Byrd pursued a career in and around Poyen as a carpenter and a worker in the timber industry. He married Zehna Ashcroft from the Prattsville community. He died at the age of 81 in 1981.

David Hugh married Jamie Hamilton and pursued a career early in the oil field before settling in as a carpenter and general contractor in Malvern and Hot Springs area. David died at the age of 85 in 1996.

Martin Byrd never married and was engaged during his lifetime exclusively in the timber industry where he was a timber scout. He died at the age of 72 in 1977.

Madge Cleo remained unwed taking care of her mother and father. Upon their death she stayed at the home place with her two brothers. She was a talented seamstress specializing in quilts. One of her quilts was recognized by the Progressive Farmer magazine. She continued in an active role living in the house until her death at the age of 90 in 2000. She was the last permanent resident of the Samuel Byrd home.

Arvin Elwood Byrd was the youngest and in 1943 became the owner of the property when his mother and father for love and affection deeded the property to him. Arvin served in WW II in the China-Burma theater. Upon being drafted he was stationed at

Fort Brown, Texas with the 124th (horse) Cavalry. They were sent to India and became members of the MARS Task force and participated in opening the Ledo road which was vital in providing supplies to the Nationalist Chinese Army.

After the war he settled onto the farm continuing the activities of prior families. The farm grew corn, hay, sorghum cane and various truck crops specializing in sweet potatoes. He was further engaged in buying and selling timbered lands. He died in 1993 at the age of 82.

Statement of significance

The Samuel D. Byrd, Sr. house is being nominated as a significant structure of the periods prior to and after the civil war indicative of the early settlers and their structures. The transformation over time from a log room to additional lumber construction was indicative of the period.

As families and resources became available these early settlers transformed rude structures into livable utile homes that served theirs and their families needs. It is also indicative of a one family permanently occupied structure for 162 years. It has withstood the storms and hardships of time and is a monument to a bygone era and time.

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Poyen Settled by the David Fenter Family, The Sheridan Headlight, Thursday April 17, 1969, Page 6

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is in the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 31, Twp. 4S. R. 15 West containing 80 acres. From the intersection of highway 229 and 270 at Poyen, Arkansas the Samuel D. Byrd house lies, 1.3 miles west on 270 toward Malvern, Arkansas on the north side of the highway.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This boundary defines the property at the site that contains all of the property associated with the site that retains its historical significance.