PROPOSAL OF
THE THOMAS RHYNE HOUSE, 1799
RIVERBEND TOWNSHIP
TO THE GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTIES REGISTER
MARCH, 1986

GASTON COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Mrs. Richard Penegar, Chrmn.
Mr. Robert C. Carpenter
Mrs. Fred S. Cloninger
Mrs. William N. Craig
Mrs. Thomas W. Springs
Mrs. William B. Shannon
Mrs. H.O. Williams
Mr. H.M. Lineberger
Mr. James F. Love, III

1799

CONTENTS

1. Name and location of the property- Thomas Rhyne House, S.R. 1918, Stanley-LuciaRd, Riverbend Township, Gaston County, North Carolina.

2. Name and address of current owner of the property-
   Richard D. Rhyne
   Rt. 1, Box 241
   Mt. Holly, N.C. 28120 704/263-8266

3. Representative photographs of the property-

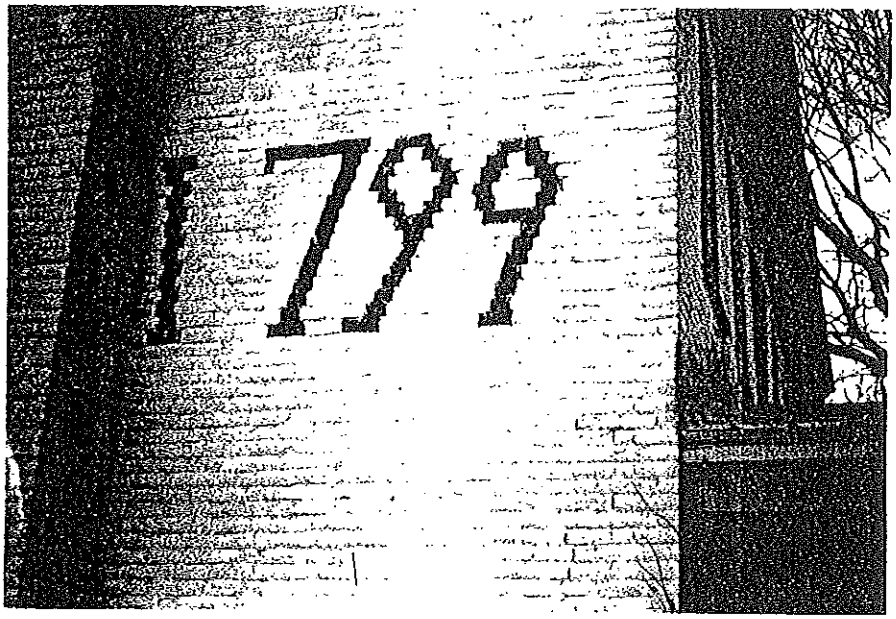
4. Map depicting location of the property-

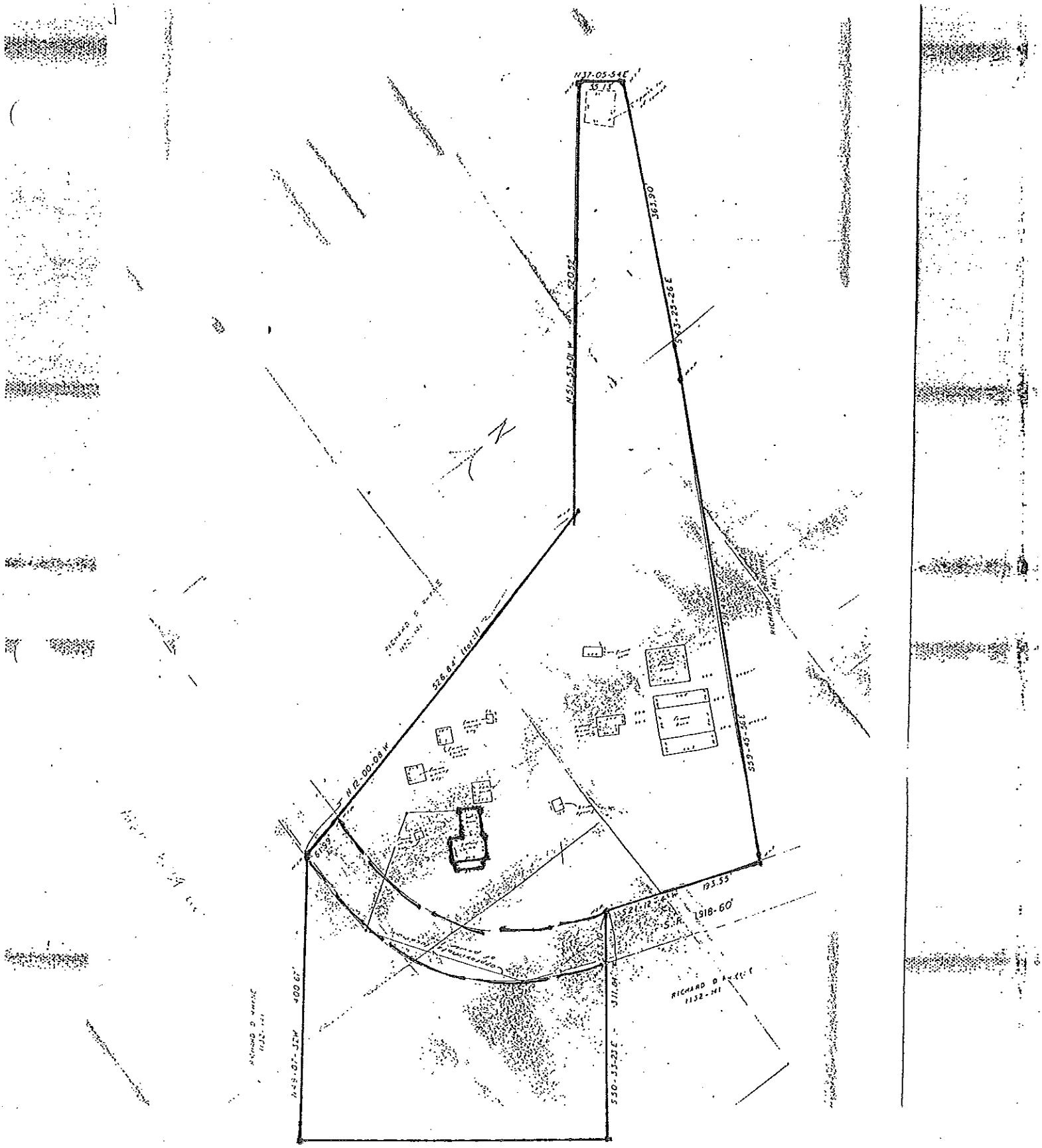
5. Current deed references of the property-

6. Historical sketch of the property- This report contains a brief historical sketch prepared by Historic Properties Commission member, Mrs. Thomas W. Springs.

7. Architectural description of the property-This report contains a brief architectural description prepared by Mr. Alan Waufle, Director of the Gaston County Museum of Art and History.

8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical significance to the county- The Historic Properties Commission feels that the Thomas Rhyne house is of importance to Gaston County because this Federal brick structure is the oldest remaining of hand-made brick. Having been in continuous use by the Rhyne family for five generations, it and its historic surroundings lend evidence to the rich history of the area.


1799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526.84' (tot-1)
N12-00-08W
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S59-45-56E
193.55'
S21-12-4W
1918-60'
S.R.
311.84'
S50-33-23E
400.67'
N49-07-32W
RICHARD D
1132-141

CHAIN OF TITLE

1. Thomas Rhyne acquired 900 acres in Lincoln County on the waters of Stanley's Creek of Catawba River by two patents dated October 9, 1783 and November 1, 1784 and recorded in the Lincoln County Register of Deeds in Patent Book 1 at pages 181 and 260 respectively.

2. On February 28, 1824, Thomas Rhyne conveyed 328 acres in Lincoln County on Stanley's Creek to his son, Daniel Rhyne, for the sum of $1000.00. This deed is recorded in the Lincoln County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 31 at page 80.

3. Daniel Rhyne conveyed 526 acres lying on the waters of Stanley's Creek to his son, Robert D. Rhyne, for the sum of $1.00 and natural love and affection. This deed is dated December 11, 1873 and recorded in the Gaston County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 6 at page 505. In this instrument, Daniel Rhyne reserves a life estate for his wife, Louisa.

4. On October 28, 1878, H. T. Rhyne, administrator of the estate of R. D. Rhyne, deceased, conveyed 524 acres on the waters of Stanley's Creek to Alburtus Rhyne in consideration of the sum of $4500.00. This deed is recorded in the Gaston County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 94 at page 288.

5. Alburtus Rhyne remained in possession of the Rhyne homeplace until his death in 1910. In his will, recorded in Will Book 3 at page 315 in the Clerk of Court in Gaston County, he devised to his wife, Addie Rhyne, "all my real estate and personal property whatsoever, to have and to hold to her and her assigns forever."

6. On November 8, 1921, Mrs. Addie M. Rhyne conveyed 210 acres described as "the old homeplace of the said A. Rhyne" to her son, R. M. Rhyne, in consideration of $1.00 and natural love and affection. This deed is recorded in the Gaston County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 152 at page 513.

7. By deed dated January 12, 1943, R. M. Rhyne and his wife, Edith, conveyed the same 210 acre tract to Helen Rhyne. This deed is recorded in the Gaston County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 444 at page 590.

8. Helen Rhyne immediately conveyed the property back to R. M. Rhyne and Edith by deed dated January 12, 1943 and recorded in the Gaston County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 444 at page 591.

9. On March 28, 1969, Richard M. Rhyne conveyed the identical 210 acre tract to his children, Helen Edith R. Lieurance, Ruth Anada R. Smull, Mary Benton R. Cannon, and Richard Daniel Rhyne. This deed is recorded in the Gaston County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 1018 at page 72.

10. By deed dated December 24, 1973, Helen R. Lieurance and her husband, Charles L. Lieurance, Mary R. Cannon and her husband, Jack H. Cannon, and Ruth R. Smull and husband, Thomas K. Smull, quitclaimed their interest

in the 210 acre tract to their brother, Richard D. Rhyne in consideration "for divers, good causes and considerations thereunto moving, and more particularly for the sum of ten dollars." This deed was originally recorded in the Gaston County Register of Deeds in Deed Book 1130 at page 6 but re-recorded in Deed Book 1132 at page 141 to correct two calls that were omitted in the original deed.

HISTORICAL SKETCH - THOMAS RHYNE HOUSE 1799

Thomas Rhyne was born in Germany in 1742 and died in North Carolina in 1837. He came to America as an apprentice saddle maker, first to New York, then to North Carolina.[1] It is not certain whether he was kin to the other Rhynes at Dallas, but it seems likely.[2]

His first home was built near Goshen Church, Belmont.[3] Being an industrious man, he soon accumulated quite a lot of property. Deeds about 1771 and a land grant showed about 10,000 acres were in his possession. This land extended from Goshen to Stanley.[4]

Thomas Rhyne married Barbara Wise, an English girl, and they had eleven children: Elizabeth, Mary, John, Sally, Barbara, Ann, Daniel, Suanna, Thomas, Michael, and Jacob.[5] These births are recorded in the family Bible. The Richard Rhyne family possesses this Bible.[6]

This research is interested in the Daniel descent because the present owner traces his lineage through him: (1) Thomas Rhyne (2) Daniel Rhyne (3) Albertus Rhyne (4) Richard Madison Rhyne (5) Richard Daniel Rhyne.

The present day Rhyne house site was chosen because of the type of building material for making brick found nearby. It took some time to build the brick home, but it was eventually completed in 1799. The date 1799 was made into the chimney by using a different shape and color of brick. Unfortunately, the initials "T. R." on the chimney were accidently painted over

a few years later. Thomas's children, with the help of slaves, hand-made the brick and dried them in the sun.[7] The outside walls were made 18 inches thick.[8] Walnut cut from the many trees on the property was used for doors and woodwork. Each room had a large fireplace. The staircase was at one end of the living room, and it wound gracefully up to the next floor.[9]

Most of the furniture , in those days, was made by traveling cabinet makers. Peter Eddleman was engaged to make the furniture for the new home. He lived there for one year and made many beautiful pieces, but the one most treasured and still in the family today is a large cupboard. It is made of walnut and satin-wood inlays in very intricate diamond shaped patterns and reaches to the ceiling. The upper portion has glass panes which had to be made by hand.[10]

A large kitchen stood to the left of the house. The kitchen had a second story of guest rooms and a third floor which had a weaving room. This was torn down around 1900.[11]

Thomas Rhyne's son Daniel inherited the home. He and his wife Louisa McGee were living there in 1851 when a fire destroyed the interior. Only a few pieces of the original furniture were saved. The treasured cupboard, however, which had been made in two sections, was taken apart and carried out by slaves. It took two years to rebuild and during that time the family lived in the quarters over the kitchen.[12]

Daniel died in 1875 leaving the house to his younger son, Albertus. It was a tradition in the Rhyne family for the house to go to the younger son.[13] Records show that Albertus joined the Confederate Army on July 17, 1862. He was a private of Company L, 29th Texas Cavalry, Confederate States Army.[14]

Albertus, or Bert as he was called, married Alice Younts in 1874 and lived in Pineville until her death in 1878. Albertus's mother, Louisa, remained at the home until her death which was also in 1878. Bert then returned to the Rhyne home and lived alone until he married Addie Smith in 1880.[15] Albertus and Addie Smith had four children : Fred, Wixie, Richard Madison, and Beulah.[16]

In 1919 Richard Madison Rhyne brought his bride, Edith Abernathy to the home. They lived there until her death in 1957. They raised four vhildren: Helen, Ruth, Mary B., and Richard Daniel.[17]

Richard, the present owner, attended Belmont Abbey College before enlisting in the Air Force. He was stationed at Carswell Air Force Base, Fort Worth, Texas. There in 1956 he met and married Barbara Lowe, a student at Texas Christian University. He brought his bride to the historic Rhyne home. They have two sons and a daughter.[18] Richard is an automobile mechanic and also maintains the farm, raising prime beef cattle.

The old house has always been occupied by the Rhyne family which includes six generations and they have all been Presbyter-

ians.[19] On the hill above the house stands the old family cemetery where the early generations were buried.[20]

During the years since the house was built we can boast of many historical and interesting events:

Before the Civil War, the men in the surrounding counties would gather in the ten acre field in front of the house for an occasional "muster" with Colonel Richard Rankin drilling them.[21]

When the Union Troops camped near Dallas, some of the soldiers foraging in the areas, stayed at the house and others slept in the barn. The Rhyne's valuables were saved when they hid them under the house and out in the woods.[22]

In the days of Thomas and Daniel Rhyne there were very few inns in the country and the homes were widespread. Travelers on horse-back stayed overnight in homes about a day's journey apart. Visitors and strangers were always welcomed and given a hot meal and a bed for the night. The Rhyne's home was a frequent stop since it was on the road to Charlotte.[23]

The Rhyne house was also one of the first homes in the county with electricity. A Delco plant was installed in the back of the breezeway.[24]

At the present time the house is located on 200 acres with a barn that was built about 1850, a blacksmith shop with the original equipment and a spring house.[25] As one travels the winding road by this picturesque home place, one's mind cannot help but wonder of the joys and sorrows that each generation has experienced and the contributions that each family has given to the life of this beautiful old home.

FOOTNOTES

1. Labon Miles Hoffman, Our Kin, (Daniel E. Rhyne, Labon L. Jenkins, and L.M. Hoffman, 1915), p. 220.

2. Ibid.

3. Gaston County Historical Bulletin, (Gaston County Historical Society) Vol. 15, No. 1, P. 3.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Interview with Mrs. Barbara Rhyne, Rt. 1, Box 241, Mt. Holly, N.C. 28120.

7. Gaston County Historical Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 1, p. 3.

8. Gaston County Historical Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 1.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Kim Withers Brengle, Architectural Heritage of Gaston County, N.C., p. 208.

12. Gaston County Historical Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 1.

13. Interview with Mrs. Barbara Rhyne

14. Chapter 92, Confederate Homes and Pensions Laws 1929, Chapter 300, p. 361, 1899 year, Washington, D.C.

15. Gaston County Historical Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 4.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Gaston County Historical Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 3. and interview with Frank B. Rankin, 129 W. Catawba Ave., Mt. Holly, N.C. 28120.

22. Gaston County Historical Bulletin, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 3.

23. Ibid.

24. Interview with Richard D. Rhyne, Rt. 1 Box 241, Mt. Holly .

25. Ibid.

Thomas Rhyne House

The Thomas Rhyne House is located a few miles east of Stanley, North Carolina on the Stanley-Lucia Road. This handsome, brick home was constructed in 1799 and is the only eighteenth century, brick house extant in Gaston County. The home continues to remain within the same family through five generations.

Facing south, the Rhyne House has an impressive siting on a tree-shaded rise; overlooking farm fields across the road. The fields are part of the Rhyne family property. The house is a two story, fivebay, brick pile. Its low hip roof is covered with aluminum-painted metal. The main (south) facade now includes a one-story porch which extends from side to side and is covered with a hip roof, covered in metal. The porch appears to be a nineteenth century addition with considerable modernization. The simple, square columns rest on painted brick piers. Treatment of the porch is rather severe with simple molded cornice, plain frieze, and very simply molded caps on the columns.

On the west elevation one finds one of the house's most distinguishing features, the date of 1799 which is worked into the brickwork. Although the exterior has been painted white in the twentieth century, the numerals are formed with easily identified variances in the bonding. The date was formed with brick headers placed out of sequence in the Flemish bond brickwork which does not reveal any other masonry errors. Local historians tell that Thomas Rhyne's initials (T.R.) were visible before

being covered with paint. However, no masonry changes are visible to substantiate the claim. The west side of the house includes one chimney and only one window which is found at the northern end of the first floor. The chimney is a double paved shoulder end type and is laid in Flemish bond like the house.

The eastern end of the house has been stuccoed; including the two chimneys. Both chimneys are designed like that found on the west side with double paved shoulders. Again, reflecting the west side, there is one window at the northern end. This window, like all in the main block of the house, is a sash type with nine-over-six lights and is set in simple molded surrounds.

The northern side of the structure originally showed three bays but has been altered with the addition of a nineteenth century, single story, kitchen ell; leaving only the north west window uncovered. It should be noted, that windows on the original, northern facade differ slightly from all others. They do not have lintels but are set into arched openings. This ell is covered in clapboards. Its gable roof has been extended on the west side to form an engaged porch. Part of the porch has been enclosed to form a modern bathroom which is reached from the first floor, center hall. There are two chimneys on the ell. At the northern end is the kitchen chimney which is a single, stepped shoulder type with minimal corbeling at the top. On the east side of the ell is a simple, square

brick chimney added for flue ventilation of a heater in the twentieth century. Windows in the ell are six-over-six and nine-over-six, sash types with simple surrounds.

Although the Rhyne House has remained within the same family, considerable change has occured on the interior, due in part to an 1851 fire. The interior was entirely rebuilt after the fire and has been modernized by the last two owners, most notably during the 1930's. The fire and the rebuilding have removed any traces of the early interior and no family records indicate anything of the architectural detailing.

The present front door is a modern, two panel and twelve-light replacement, topped with a four-light transom. This door enters into the center hall. The hall contains the stairway to the second floor and four doorway openings. All doors are four-paneled and surrounded by architraves made of plain boards. A doorway at the end of the hall opens into the modern bathroom. This room was formed by enclosing part of the ell addition. Under the stairway is a small, four panel door which leads to a closet. The house has no usable basement, only a crawl area reached from under the front porch.

The main floor has three rooms; parlor, bedroom, and dining room. The parlor is found on the west side and runs the full depth of the house. The prominent feature of the room is the large fireplace with a handsome, but simply molded mantelpiece. The frieze contains a triglyph motif which supports a narrow mantel shelf. The substantial hearth is a granite slab. The

fireplace opening and sides have been stuccoed and the fireback replaced with modern brick.

Modernizations in the house include knotty pine paneling applied to the west and north walls. The windows have simple, molded surrounds and moderately deep sills. Baseboards here, as in the rest of the house, are plain and approximately twelve inches high.

Across the hall, in the southeast corner is a bedroom with two windows. A fireplace on the east wall is graced with a mantel that is more elaborately carved than that of the parlor. Side pilasters support the mantel shelf with double fluted brackets. Both the frieze panel and the pilasters are decorated with inset panels of a basket weave design; created with fluted and unfluted areas. Center medallions between the pilaster brackets help create the appearance of column capitals.

The room in the north east corner of the first floor, is currently used as a dining room. Architectural detailing in this room is very plain. There is one window and one doorway which leads to the ell. The fireplace has been closed and has an undecorated mantelpiece with shelf.

The ell addition contains rooms used by the current owners as kitchen and den/family room. The rooms are connected and both open onto the engaged porch. The fireplace in the kitchen continues to be used with a wood stove for heating. The fireplace has a simple surround of plain boards and no mantel shelf. Walls in the ell are covered with combinations of gypsum board

and horizontal plank boards.

The stairway to the second floor of the house dates from a 1930's modernization. The newel is square in design with few accentuating details. Balusters are square and painted. The rounded handrail is varnished and without detail.

The second floor contains four rooms; two on each side of the hall. There are three bedrooms and one storage room. The changes in the house are seen in the various types of flooring found here. Finished floors include wide boards from the nineteenth century and narrow, oak flooring from the twentieth century. This flooring is laid over the wide boards creating slight variations throughout the second floor.

The northwest storage room is interesting in that it has received few improvements. The masonry wall on the north side has no interior plaster. The plain window surround has not been painted, nor have the plank walls and ceiling. Owners of the property tell that this room was used by ancestors as a workroom for saddle making, a family trade.

Through a hatch-type opening, one gets access to the attic. The shallow attic is not floored and is not used. Nailed rafters and replacement members indicate a roof replacement, most likely after the 1851 fire with subsequent changes as the roofing material was changed to metal.

Doors on the second floor are five-panel types with the same simple architraves that are seen on the first floor. The three bedrooms are approximately the same size. Differences

can be seen in ceiling materials and mantels. One bedroom has been partially panelled in the same knotty pine that is seen in the parlor downstairs. The ceilings on the second floor are random width plank boards. In one bedroom, this has been covered with panels and battens, dating from the 1930's. Each bedroom has a fireplace and mantle. The mantles differ slightly from room to room, but are common in their extreme simplicity. Narrow shelves are supported by plain friezes and unembellished pilasters.

Outside, several barns and outbuildings stand near the house. Most, however, date from the twentieth century. The two story kitchen which stood near the house was removed in the early twentieth century. Except for one small barn and shed, currently standing outbuildings date from the 1930's when the father of the current owner inherited the property. Most of these structures are simple wooden construction. A storage house and the spring house are made of brick which are laid in common bond with a header-to-stretcher ratio that varies, 1:5, 1:6, and 1:7. A blacksmith shed dating from the nineteenth century contains the stone forge and tools, but is seriously dilapidated.

The barnyard is located to the east of the house. Rhyne family members tell that slave cabins were located to the east of the present barnyard. No evidence of these structures remain. Spring flowers, however, were supposedly planted around them and continue to surface in patterns each year, indicating the sites of the slave quarters.

The Rhyne family cemetery is located at the top of a hill behind the house, several hundred feet away. The gravesites are located in a wooded area and are kept in good repair. Thomas Rhyne, the builder of the house, his wife, and other family members are buried at this site.

The land areas situated across the road from the house should be noted in this description as well. Directly across from the front of the house was once a small barn used as a stable and carriage house. This no longer stands, but granite slabs used in the foundation may still be seen as immediate evidence of its existence. Southwestern fields which face the main house have been described as places where troops from the local militia mustered and drilled. No evidence of any structures exists, however, archeological investigations could reveal remnants of military hardware and weapons to support the claims of local historians.

Alan D. Waufle

June 15, 1986

The 1799 Rhyne Site Information by Barbara Rhyne

The family cemetery located on the hill above the house contains nine marked graves with headstones from the 1800s. At least three marked graves are the final resting places of small children. There are five graves marked with rocks at the head and foot and stories handed down through each generation says that these contain the remains of beloved household slaves. Thus, the cemetery contains fourteen known graves.

The final resting places of the founder, Thomas Rhyne and his wife, Barbara Wise Rhyne are marked with rocks and have the initials T R and B R carved deeply into each rock. Miss Beulah Rhyne had a granite headstone erected to mark the site in the late 1940s.

Also here is the grave of Robert Daniel Rhyne, an officer in the C S A and an early sheriff of Gaston County. The Confederate Iron Cross rests at the foot of the grave.

Outbuildings

Blacksmith shop has dirt floor, the original forge, bellows and very large anvil-- circa 1850.

Barn built around 1920 has hay loft and the downstairs has holding pen and loading shute and a holding gate. This barn is used regularly for worming cattle and regular checks for cattle maintenance.

Large red barn built in 1929 as a diary barn has a concrete floor and stanchions for the large dairy herd that was Rhyne Dairy Farm until about 1946.

A smaller milk processing barn sits in front of the large dairy barn. This barn was used to separate the milk and sterilize the bottles. The milk was bottled and capped by hand and was delivered throughout the town of Stanley and surrounding area each morning. Several glass bottles imprinted with "R. M. Rhyne Dairy Stanley, N. C." have survived the years.

The spring house is fed by a cool underwater spring and was used to cool the milk and milk products used by the family prior to refrigeration. A few pottery milk containers remain in the water as a reminder of the past.

Several chicken houses, built in the 1920s, sit behind the house. Chickens still provide all the eggs used by the family today.

A large granary built in 1950 contains a very antique seed cleaner still in use today. The granary is still used for storage of the grain and soybeans raised by the present owner.

Until about 1932 when the first tractor, a Fordson, was purchased, all the farming was done with mules. Cotton and hay and corn were the main crops.

Daniel Rhyne's ledger and journal records that in 1880 a bushel

of corn sold for 75c, a bushel of peas was 70c, 1 gal molasses at 40c, 4 lbs flour at 12c, bacon at 11c lb., a peck of cornmeal at 20c, beef at 4c a lb., 1 bushel of wheat at $1.80.

The last cotton was planted and harvested in 1956. Since then primarily wheat, oats, soybeans and fescue hay has been grown.

Many of the old pieces of farm equipment such as walking cultivators, plows pulled by mules, and an old hay rake pulled by mules are still in evidence in and around the outbuildings.

The old stable and carriage house house which was located across the road in front of the house was torn down in early 1957. This very fertile area is now the site of the family vegetable garden.

Dozens of pecan and walnut trees in the barnyard and in the yard surrounding the house are very old and supply the family with a bounty of nuts each fall.

Daniel's journal lists the following items purchased and prices in 1880:

3 pairs shoes $4.75
1 corset $.75
1 bedstead $3.25
1 plug tobacco 10c
1 spool thread 10c
1 lb. salt 7c
1 hat 75c
1 coat $3.00
1 pair of half soles 15c
1 pair of pants $4.00
3 yards of pants cloth $1.10

The above are only a few of the many entries in the journal. This journal has been microfilmed and is in the libraary at U N C C in the history department as a representative journal of the economics of this area in the 1880s.

The large field beside the house was used as a muster and drill area prior to the Civil War. Richard was plowing in the field in 1950 and unearthed an old rusty musket. The plow cut it into several pieces before he could stop the tractor to investigate.

The only physical evidence left to mark the location of the slave quarters is the flowers which still bloom in the spring and summer -- iris, jonquils, and a few day lilies. These are found in the pasture below the big barns in a straight line through the pasture. This area has been used for pasture through the years and has never been plowed or replanted thus preserving these bulbs for over a century.

On the hillside above the barns, there is still evidence of the area where a small amount of gold was removed in the 1850s. Family stories say that only a small amount of gold was recovered -- not enough to be profitable. Gold dust is still removed from the stream below the hill in small amounts by those who have the time and patience to pan.