

A Special Setting in Union County

In 1792, Samuel Dale purchased a 303-acre Buffalo Township farm with log home of James Fleming. Dale was an Ulster-Scot immigrant who first lived in Chester County, PA, then in White Deer Township before settling on the land along "Dale's Ridge." Dale's limestone house was completed in 1793, using stone from the ridge. The house is a typical two-story five-bay center hall farmhouse such as are found in the area still today. It has a center front door topped with a semicircular fanlight. Two pairs of twelve-over-twelve windows are on either side of the door. Solid two-panel shutters are held back with iron shutter ties. The second floor eight-over-twelve windows, directly over the lower windows, have louvered shutters with plain iron ties.

The original Dale House consisted of four rooms, a center hallway and a kitchen cellar. The front door leads into the hallway with a staircase to the upper floor. On either side of the hall are the parlors.

The room to the right has a fireplace and bookshelves with doors. The walls throughout the house are plaster made of lime, sand and horsehair, applied to lathe. The parlor windows and doorway are trimmed and there is a chair rail. This room would have served to entertain guests and as a family sitting room. The room on the left also has a fireplace. The room may have originally been used as a dining room.

There are two bedrooms on the second floor, over the first floor rooms, with a small room between.

Underneath the main floor is the original kitchen with large fireplace. It is accessed from a stairway in the center hallway, and from the outside by a side door. A window lets in light beside the hearth.

A two-story limestone addition was made to the back of the house in the 1840s (perhaps over the early log foundation), giving the building an L-shape. The addition contained a kitchen with fireplace on the main level and two additional bedrooms on the second floor, plus a back stairway. A porch was added c. 1880 along the side of the original structure and the ell.

Members of the Dale family lived on the farm until about 1840. Although they retained ownership, tenant farmers managed the property for the next nine decades. In 1929, the Engles bought the property and ran the Dale's Ridge Dairy, also growing various crops and fruit. The milk house on the site dates to the Engle's era. The property then passed to the Walkers in 1957 who bequeathed the property to the Union County Historical Society in 2001.

Rural Heritage Day

The site is uniquely suited to host *Rural Heritage Day* on July 12, 2014, from 10 AM to 6 PM, celebrating the traditions and skills of rural life in central Pennsylvania. Each year the Union County Historical Society invites local residents and visitors, children and families, to the Dale/Engle/Walker property for activities and demonstrations of 18th and 19th century country living.

Regular demonstrators include Buffalo Valley Antique Machinery, stone mason Mihai Epure, blacksmith Bill Clemens and chair caners, John and Viola Pfleegor. Nada Gray will demonstrate traditional fractur designs.

Newcomers include David Witmer making a wooden rake; Liz Rhode demonstrating her antique sock knitting machine; Scott Baylor fashioning tin vessels; and Brad Mertz showing how wooden wheels were made and repaired in the past. Furniture maker David Morris will demonstrate making traditional Windsor chairs, and William Hill will begin with a freshly cut white oak log, and through a series of energetic steps, fashion a basket or two. Elaina Hoffman, American Honey Princess, will describe the history of bee keeping and Gail Moser will demonstrate quilting.

Architect, Ted Strosser, will lead tours around the exterior of the Dale/Engle/Walker House, and into the hearth for a look at early cooking implements.

Music will be provided by “Dale's Ridge Ramblers,” “Any Jig Will Do” and “Joyful Noise.”

Children can create their own fraktur artwork, make a corn husk doll and lucet cord, help make a rope, pet farm animals and harvest potatoes, play individual and group games and take saddle and cart pony rides. Hamburgers, hot dogs, BBQ chicken, and home-made ice cream will be for sale. Admission is \$5 per vehicle.



The Dale House c. 1907 with tenant farmers Ulysses Grant Chappell, wife Mary Ellen Duck Chappell, Maurice (in wagon) and left to right, Lester Lodge, Gertrude, Henry and Bessie.