

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

## **National Register of Historic Places**

### **LOCATION and SETTING**

Hook's Tavern is located on a three acre parcel at the southeast corner of the intersection of U.S. Rt. 50 and Smokey Hollow Road in Hampshire County, West Virginia. Capon Bridge is the nearest incorporated town, located a few miles to the west. The lot is level and open with a few large trees near the inn. Surrounding this location are scattered farmsteads, open cropland and pasture, and some modern homes on large lots. The area is rural.

### **DESCRIPTION**

The tavern is a six bay, two story log building configured in an ell, with lawn on all four sides. It contains ten rooms, four fireplaces, and two baths. Partition walls are wide milled boards of native hardwood. The building contains 4,000 square feet. The façade faces Rt. 50 and the rear leg parallels Smokey Hollow Road. Beginning in the 1760s, it was constructed in four phases over time, with its completion estimated to be in the 1790s. Although the one bay deep building was constructed in the Georgian era, it has many Federal touches. Uneven floor elevations and door locations reinforce the sense that the building was constructed over many years.

The low pitched end gable roof of standing seam metal intersects the ell at the right rear of the front wing. The roof extends across a second story gallery that spans the entire façade. Eave overhang is minimal. Seven chamfered wooden posts support the edge of the roof, joined by circa 1840 flat pierced spindles and railing. A porch at ground level is supported by eight similar posts, spindles, and railing. The eighth porch support provides a visual frame for the windowless span of wall between the right side doorway and the fourth bay. The exterior of the building is finished with hand sawn lapped wood siding. Seven exterior doors are paneled. The two front entries feature narrow federal transoms above. Bold wood trim surrounds the doors and windows, which are 2/2 double hung sash. They are very old, but not the original 6/6. The present window style reflects architectural innovations of the mid nineteenth century when Samuel Hook and J.B. Sherrard acquired the property from Peter Mauzey, its builder. They updated the exterior with the new windows and porch railings after 1848.

The foundation and gable end chimneys on the façade are constructed of locally quarried limestone. They are in the style of the very earliest stone buildings in the Capon River Valley. There is a smaller interior chimney, approximately at the midpoint, also constructed of stone. This chimney may denote the point at which the building was extended to the left. The fourth chimney is centrally located in the rear extension, and is constructed of brick laid in a massive square, with modest corbelled detail at the top. The brick indicates that the rear extension is newer than the façade. Stone and wood construction preceded brick construction in the colonial and early federal eras in Hampshire County.

The front wing was constructed in two iterations. The right side is the original and smaller inn built by Mauzey. The center gap, without bays on both stories, is probably where the left side extension was added to the building. In the rear, a shed-roofed porch shelters a rear entry and spans the width. It features the same flat spindle and rail banister that anchors the façade. At the very end of the rear extension, a handicap accessible wooden ramp reaches a door that is sheltered by a small metal shed portico. This is the only alteration to the building's exterior. Near the end of this leg of the ell, a small portion of the wood siding has been removed, revealing the logs beneath. There is an outside cellar entry beneath the front left face. The ridgelines of both wings are straight and strong. All of the sections of the building are tied together by a common roof.

## **INTEGRITY**

Hook's Tavern is an excellent example of tavern construction that characterized early frontier life and later trans-Allegheny transportation ways. The inn retains historic integrity in terms of its location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. It has been carefully preserved and has no structural deficiencies. It evokes a strong sense of association with early travel ways in America and lends a feeling of continuity with the distant past.

## **STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE**

Hook's Tavern is eligible for the National Register of Historic places at the state and local levels under Criterion A for its association with frontier settlement and the rise of turnpikes and highways in western Virginia, and Criterion C for its architecture. The areas of significance are Transportation, Commerce, and Entertainment/Recreation. Significant dates are 1763, the year it was built when peace was restored after Pontiac's Rebellion, allowing for renewed settlement and travel in Hampshire County; 1848, when the inn was acquired by Samuel Hook and John B. Sherrard, and February 3, 1862, when it was commandeered for a Confederate Hospital. The period of significance is 1763-1960.

## **HISTORY**

The original portion of Hook's Tavern was constructed as early as the 1760s. The French and Indian War interrupted settlement into Hampshire County, which was established in 1754. A few of the earliest settlers remained throughout the war, but most fled from the danger posed by Native American allies of the French. After the close of Pontiac's rebellion in 1763, settlers again flocked to the fertile valleys of Hampshire County. This is the era that saw the beginning of the building that became Hook's Tavern. The inn was expanded to its present size over several years. Its fortunes were tied to the Great Wagon Road and later to the Old Northwest Turnpike. Both roads were constructed in response to political and social pressures that demanded an improved western passage. After returning from Ft. Pitt in 1758, George Washington suggested that Virginia develop its own way west, and abandon Braddock's road through Maryland and Pennsylvania. The Ohio Company of Virginia then developed a section of the Great Wagon Road to link Winchester to their trading post on Will's Creek in Maryland – now Cumberland. Washington and his brother Lawrence were stockholders in this venture and traveled this road frequently.

The Ohio Company built strong houses along the route for storage, safety, and occasionally, lodging. Hook's Tavern was built during this initial period of western travel, but it continued to grow and expand to accommodate growing traffic on the old Northwest Turnpike in the 1830s and 1840s and the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike that was completed to the Ohio River in 1857. As roads improved, travel increased. Hook's Tavern enjoyed a prized location in that all of the early roads passed by it. The inn was a popular resting place for travelers. Patrons included migrating families, cattle drovers, and business travelers. During this era, a day's travel in a stage coach could cover as little as 10 miles of distance, therefore there are many of these old inns in Hampshire County, but none are so large, so well preserved, or so imposing as Hook's. They all owe their survival to the substantial log construction techniques of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The inn is located on land that was surveyed by George Washington in 1751-55. A parcel was conveyed shortly thereafter to Peter Mauzey, a son of a French Huguenot who immigrated to America in the 1730s. Mauzey built the first portion of the inn in the 1760s. He conveyed the inn to Samuel Hook and John B. Sherrard in 1848 and retired to east Virginia. It is difficult to ascertain precisely when each of the sections was built, but the 1840s exterior trim indicates that it was fully completed by that date. Hook and Sherrard operated the inn as a full service hotel. Hook reapplied for a license to operate the inn 1862. The Hook family also operated a mill on another site, which survives and echoes the architecture of the inn. Hook's Tavern hosted thousands of travelers over the 250 years it has been standing. While the inn owed its

success to the scarcity of other transportation ways, it did suffer when public attention on canal development in the 1830s and then railroads in the 1840s turned away from turnpike travel.

The Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike was completed by 1857, providing a much improved road from the east to the Ohio River. In the early twentieth century, this road was upgraded further to become U.S. Rt. 50. This highway remained a major transportation artery across West Virginia until the construction of Interstate 68 through West Virginia and Maryland in the 1970s. Hook's tavern functioned until the Interstate siphoned off much of the traffic across West Virginia. The inn was last refurbished in 1956, and closed a few years after that. The building was occasionally reopened for special events. The Hook family owned it until 1987.

Much of the inn's earliest history remains shrouded and inaccessible. Land grant records reveal that Mauzey in 1762 received land grants for 258 acres on Bear Garden Ridge and for 438 acres on the Great Cacapon River. In 1786 he received a grant for another 318 acres on the Little Cacapon River. In that same year, Peter Mauzey Sr. received a grant for 101 acres on Timber Ridge.<sup>1</sup> Sons John and Peter Mauzey operated a saw mill in the region in the early 1800s. The will of Peter Sr., was probated in 1835. He left a widow, Elizabeth, four daughters, and five sons: Henry, Peter, John, George and William. Little is known about Henry and George. William married Sara Leith, the daughter of another early settler in the Forks of Capon area of Hampshire County. Leith Mountain is named for her family. John died in 1830, and his estate was settled by his brothers Peter and Henry, and his nephew John. A codicil to this will mentions Samuel Hook. David S. Hook was a witness to the will.

Samuel Hook's father William came to Hampshire County before 1780. He was a veteran of the American Revolution who appears in the 1782 county census on Levi Ashbrook's list. In 1795 the County Court appointed Hook to oversee the construction of a road from Pugh's Mill to the County line.<sup>2</sup> Hook and his wife Mary raised four daughters and six sons: Thomas, William, Samuel, Joseph, Josiah, and Robert. William and his son Thomas each paid taxes on four to six horses each year, suggesting that they were farmers.

In 1819, Thomas was recommended by the court to be a Captain of the 114<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment.<sup>3</sup> William and Thomas appear regularly in the tax records of 1810-1814, but Samuel and the younger brothers do not. Robert Hook probated his father's estate on May 24, 1837, after which some trouble erupted between two of the brothers and a cousin, perhaps. On July 8, 1837, an Archibald Hook sued Josiah and Robert Hook. In January of 1838, Robert counter sued Josiah.<sup>4</sup>

These family snippets establish that the Mauzey family and the Hook family were families of means in the Capon Bridge community and that they occasionally conducted business affairs together. Samuel's first venture into inn keeping was with Charles Blue, at Blue's house in 1844. Four years later, he and Sherrard purchased the large inn from Mauzey.

Hook's Tavern operated throughout the Civil War, and was briefly used as a Confederate hospital for 80 sick soldiers under the command of J.A. Hunter. Severe weather forced Hunter to commandeer Hook's Inn and his firewood on February 3, 1862.<sup>5</sup> Although there were a few skirmishes in the county, Hampshire was never a battle field in this war, but its farmers and businesses were requisitioned to provide comfort, blankets, horses, beef, flour and other stores to both Confederate and Union Forces. After the war, the county court heard thousands of petitions for reimbursement for these requisitions.

The tavern remained in the Hook family and in use until 1987. It has opened for special events occasionally since then. During an interior renovation in July 1956, workers discovered some clues about the clientele

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<sup>1</sup> Simms Index to Land Grants in West Virginia

<sup>2</sup> Hampshire County Minute Book 1, December 14, 1795; Census of 1782 Hampshire County.

<sup>3</sup> Hampshire County Minute Book 1, June 14, 1819.

<sup>4</sup> Abstracts from the *South Branch Intelligencer*, July 8, 1837, January 13, 1838.

<sup>5</sup> Hampshire County Historical Society. 2006. *Christmas in Old Hampshire*.

who patronized the inn. Written on the walls were these observations: “William C. Black, May 7, 1845”, “I can throw any mule driver on the road, John New,” and “Too much snuff, McCauley, May 7, 1853.”

Hook’s Tavern is an eighteenth century building that began as a much more modest building than it is now. It was a single house when Mauzey built it in 1763, but it steadily expanded into the 1790s to serve travelers on the 1786 state road that was built to link Winchester and Romney via Capon Bridge. This road also carried the U.S. Mail. By 1830, Virginia used this primitive road as the first part of the Old Northwest Turnpike. This project brought upgrades. The pike was widened and tree stumps were removed. By easing the rigors of travel, the numbers of settlers pushing into western Virginia rose quickly. By 1845, a stage coach departed daily from Winchester for Morgantown and Parkersburg. All of this traffic brought prosperity to the inn’s owners, who enlarged it to accommodate the increasing stage traffic.

Samuel Hook was a prosperous man. He continued to acquire land while operating the inn. He acquired 69 acres on Stony Mountain and 90 acres on Bear Garden Ridge in 1858. (Another Samuel Hook, perhaps his uncle and namesake, acquired 57 acres on the Great Cacapon in 1800.)

## **SUMMARY**

Hook’s Tavern is an outstanding example of the log construction used in frontier Appalachia in the eighteenth century. Although there are many such buildings in Hampshire County, few retain the same high level of integrity. The building is significant for its long association with transportation in the Allegheny Highlands. It further inseparably associated with the system of public travel and the rise of turnpikes in the pre-and post railroad history of Hampshire County and West Virginia. For these reasons, it is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C at the state and local levels.