



Burr Family

The Burrs were a prominent family in Connecticut and boasts some familiar connections. The immigrant ancestor of Peter Burr and his family was Jehue Burre, born about 1600, in England, who arrived in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630 with Winthrop. He was settled first in Roxbury, then Springfield, and finally at Fairfield. He became a Freeman of the colony a few years after his arrival. Generations later, Peter Burr I was born, the brother of Aaron Burr, Sr., who was the first president of the College of New Jersey (now, Princeton University) and the father to Aaron Burr jr., the U.S. senator and 3rd Vice President of the United States.

At the time of the Fairfax land grants, present-day Jefferson County was still considered the frontier and prone to attacks during the French and Indian War. Because of this, Peter Burr I, who was the father of 17 children, may not have been too keen on moving his whole family to the area after building his original wood frame house. Peter Burr II took over the house and farm and reared his family here. During his time on the farm, Burr is purported to have supplied provisions to the Berkeley County authorities, which was present-day Jefferson County.

Peter Burr II, the son of the man who built the house, lived there until he died in 1795. He was the cousin of Aaron Burr, whose goals and views were frequently at odds with those of George Washington and his supporters. During the American Revolution, Aaron Burr supported Generals Charles Lee and Horatio Gates in their efforts to depose George Washington. (Both generals settled in Jefferson County after being dismissed by George Washington. Gates' home, Travellers Rest, is located near the Peter Burr farm.) Peter Burr's associations with his cousin and with George Washington's cashiered generals further suggest that he did not share the values of the Washington family members who had settled in the area.

Peter Burr Farm Origins

The oldest section of the Peter Burr House was constructed by Peter Burr I (1699-1779). He arrived in the area in the 1740's and obtained two Fairfax land grants for 886 acres in 1751. However, Peter Burr I moved back to Connecticut in 1754, leaving the house and farm to his son, Peter Burr II. Peter Burr II, who went on to raise 13 children on the farm, died in 1795 and left the house to his son Peter Burr III. Only three years later in 1798, Peter Burr III migrated to Ohio. In 1803, the property was sold to William Lynne Jr. by Moses Burr, Peter Burr II's son and brother to Peter Burr III.

The Burr family represented an interesting dichotomy between themselves and early Jefferson County. While the majority of people in the area were Church of England, the Burrs were Presbyterian; while the county was largely plantation run, the Burrs were yeoman farmers. A great deal of insight to 18th century life can be gleaned from the study of this site and family.

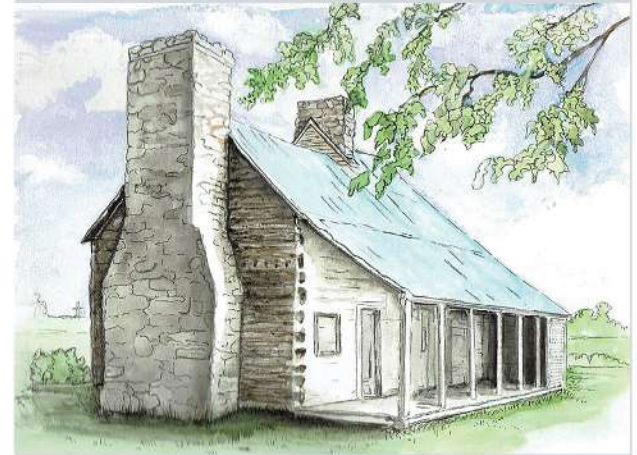


The Peter Burr Living History Farm seeks to restore the site to its late-18th century condition and to use it as a place for heritage education. Activities will include planting, cultivating, and harvesting period and native species as well as performing domestic activities appropriate to the period.

Contact Us

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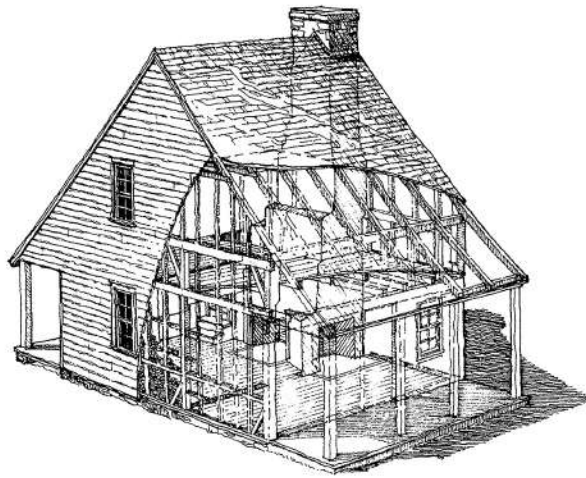
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Peter Burr Farm Historic Site

ARCHITECTURAL AND FAMILY NOTES

The Peter Burr House was nominated in 1976 as a Jefferson County Historic Landmark, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. It is the oldest extant wood frame structure in West Virginia and acts as an example of early settlement period post-and-beam architecture.



ARCHITECTURE

The Peter Burr House is an 8-room, 2-story building. The house itself was constructed in 3 parts or phases:

ca. 1751

The oldest portion of the house is the timber-frame eastern sections, which was built ca. 1751 by Peter Burr I.

ca. 1803

The western side of the house was built as a freestanding log kitchen around 1803 by William Lynn, Jr.

ca. 1815

An intermediate room was added to join the freestanding log kitchen and the original timber frame eastern section by David Moore, the owner at the time.



The original structure, built with techniques common to the northern colonies in the 18th century, is framed with heavy log uprights pinned to horizontal beams. The voids between the vertical posts are in-filled with brick and mortar and plastered. The exterior is clad with hand-riven clapboards. The original roof was made of wooden shingles while the floor of the house was constructed with smooth, wide boards nailed with wrought iron nails. The original doors of the Burr House had long wrought iron hinges, and fastened with a wooden bar. The chimney measures five feet by ten feet, and forms mantels in two rooms.

The western end of the house is typical of local summer kitchens, with a large cooking fireplace and stone hearth.

The stone outbuilding to the west of the residence was built in the early 19th century and served several uses. The first floor of the structure functioned as a spring house. Its raised interior water trough stored and secured farm produce. The cool water pumped into the trough would keep perishable items such as butter and milk from spoiling. The upstairs has a small firebox that may have been used to heat a quarter for servants, or to smoke meats that hung from rafters.



1933 Photos of the Peter Burr House from the *Historic American Building Survey*, courtesy of the Library of Congress

The barn that is presently on the property is a reconstruction of the type of barn that likely existed here in the late 18th century. The four crib log barn is a type that has been documented in the Cumberland Valley, and has a steep-pitched wool shingled roof with vertical siding and dirt floors. This reconstruction style is favored because the barn was likely quickly built upon the Burr's arrival on the land out of logs.

Other structures and installations on the property include a kitchen garden that would have been similar to the type maintained by the Burr family in the 18th century, restrooms camouflaged to look like a typical outbuilding, and an orchard in which the trees comes from heritage stock grown at Monticello in the 18th century.



One valuable source of insight to the wealth and life on the Peter Burr Farm comes from Peter Burr II's death inventory. Property was inventoried and valued, all the way down to the amount of pots and cards. Below is an excerpt of the 142 item inventory, totaling in value 215 pound, 1 shilling, and 6 pence, which roughly equates to the purchasing power of \$21,500 United States Dollars in 2020.

The Sorrel Horse.....	22 pounds
The Young Bay Colt Shod	18 pounds
The Black Cow.....	2 pounds
Four Calves.....	4 pounds
Ten Sheep.....	3 pounds, 14 shillings
The New Wagon.....	18 pounds
One Harrow.....	10 shillings
One Old Plow.....	6 shillings
One Plow.....	12 shillings
One Red Beadstead.....	6 shillings
2 Dozen Old Spoons	4 shillings
Oven and Hooks.....	6 shillings
Big Kettle.....	18 shillings
One Hand Saw.....	2 shillings, 6 pence