



STILL STURDY after about 172 summers and winters, the house that Stephen Stone built has become a fine country home for the Donald R. Riebling family. The old porch was replaced with the new one some time before 1950 and some structural changes have been made inside, but it is fundamentally the same house that Stone built in what is now Marion Twp. about 1805.

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Ellwood City (PA) Ledger, Fri., July 29, 1977

**IT STILL STANDS IN MARION TWP.
STONE BUILT BRICK HOUSE IN DAYS OF THE
LOG CABIN**

By C.R. Moser

In a day when most settlers were building log houses Stephen Stone III built a large eight-room brick house in what is now Marion Twp.

That's one of the reasons his house, built in ¹⁸⁰⁵~~1805~~^{GR} according to family records, still stands overlooking the Connoquenessing Creek to the north of the fertile land that now includes the Woodrow W. Dambach nursery to the south.

The house stands in "Washington," one of 13 different tracts in the Leets District of Depreciation Lands that Stephen Stone either owned or had claim to at one time. Those 13 tracts contained 2,684.5 acres according to the original land surveys.

It is difficult to place exact times of occupancy because agreements often preceded the actual transactions. In the case of Stephen Stone III and some of the men with whom he was associated it is even more difficult because they were land wheelers and dealers and at this time, about 170-175 years later, it is impossible to know what went on behind the scenes.

The 13 tracts — 11 of them containing 207.5 acres and the other two 201 acres — were originally patented by the commonwealth to Joseph McGuffin (also spelled Magoffin and McGoffin in deeds) of Philadelphia when the depreciation lands went on sale in the state. The date of the patent was July 13, 1787, about six or seven years before settlers actually came into the area.

McGuffin, through his attorney, James Ross, entered into an agreement with Detmar Basse Muller for the purchase of the 13 tracts on Nov. 22, 1804, according to records in the recorder of deeds office at the Beaver County Courthouse. Muller assigned the property to Stone on Oct. 20, 1808, the courthouse records indicate.

However, no deed was ever made by McGuffin for the sale of the property before his death, in 1806 and when the actual titles were made for the tracts, they were made to John Hull and John Purviance for seven of the tracts (March 23, 1810) and to Gabriel Faure de Fombelle for the other six tracts (Feb. 3, 1809) to whom they had been assigned by Stone.

It is all very complicated and in the case of Purviance and Hull it may have been purely technical. Hull was a brother-in-law of Stone and in subsequent transfers much of the land was transferred back to Stone. The tracts that went to Fombelle remained in that family for generations and led to the designation of that entire section of Marion and Franklin Townships as Fombell in later years.

Before Fombelle, however, there was Stone and the first village in this section was Stonesville, laid out apparently by Stephen Stone about 1810 near the southern border of the land sold to Hull and Purviance and the land sold to Fombelle. Fombelle sold Lot 340 in the village to James Jones Sept. 7, 1810, and Charles Von Bonnhorst (another who was connected with Hull, Purviance and Stone in land transactions) and Hull sold Lot 3 to Sampson Piersol and Lot 86 to Henry Alleman April 29, 1811.

The old brick house, built by Stone, was about four-fifths of a mile north of and a little west of that village.

Family records indicate that Stephen Stone, a retired schooner captain who had traded between New England and the West Indies, first came to this area in 1804, which coincides with the date that the 13 tracts were assigned to Muller.

Robert A. Quay of 2030 Dutch Ridge Rd., Beaver, great-great-grandson of Stephen Stone III, reports that Stephen became fed up with "the hurricanes, pirates, damn British and damn French" and traveled up the Hudson River valley across the Mohawk River valley to Buffalo, by water to the present Erie area and by horseback to this area.

Quay speculates that Stone was headed for Pittsburgh but became so enchanted by the rolling hills, fertile valleys and flowing streams of the area that he decided to make his home here. The family history reports that he went back east and returned with his family (including his wife's family, the Abijah Hulls).

Jordan's 1914 genealogical history of Beaver County reports that Stone moved to western Pennsylvania in 1804 and purchased 2,400 acres in Franklin and Marion Townships, returned to Derby, Conn. for his wife and children, returned to this area and built a dwelling, store and barn, all of logs. That history book reports that he later replaced the log dwelling with a house of brick, containing eight rooms and considered the finest in the township.

Jordan also reported that Stone later became owner of land upon which he built a house in Harmony; but records at the Butler County Courthouse show only purchases in Zelenople (lots bordering Harmony) in 1806. This indicates, however, that he might well have built his brick house in Marion Twp. in 1805.

At any rate the brick house was built about that time and was built to last. The walls (outside and in) were built of bricks made near the site from clay taken from the ground nearby and made about a foot thick. It