

Capon Bridge home pre-dates Revolution

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CAPON BRIDGE — Many written accounts of the history of Hampshire County seem to center on the town of Romney. But there are many sites throughout the county with historical significance. One such place is the Parks House. The Parks House is a two-story white structure with green shutters and stone chimneys. It is nestled in the valley between Cooper Mountain and Shaffenaker Mountain on the west side of Rte. 50.

Deeds and records at the Hampshire County Courthouse indicate this is the home of Amos Parks (1770-1844). It is also believed that a Colonel John Parks III, who is believed to have been a colonel in the Revolutionary War, resided at this house from the time of the French and Indian War until his death in 1816. These dates make the Parks House one of the oldest homes still standing in the county. The home's location has a special significance to its owner. Romney historian Ralph Haines now owns the Parks House and is dedicated to bringing it as a county landmark. Haines believes the Capon Bridge

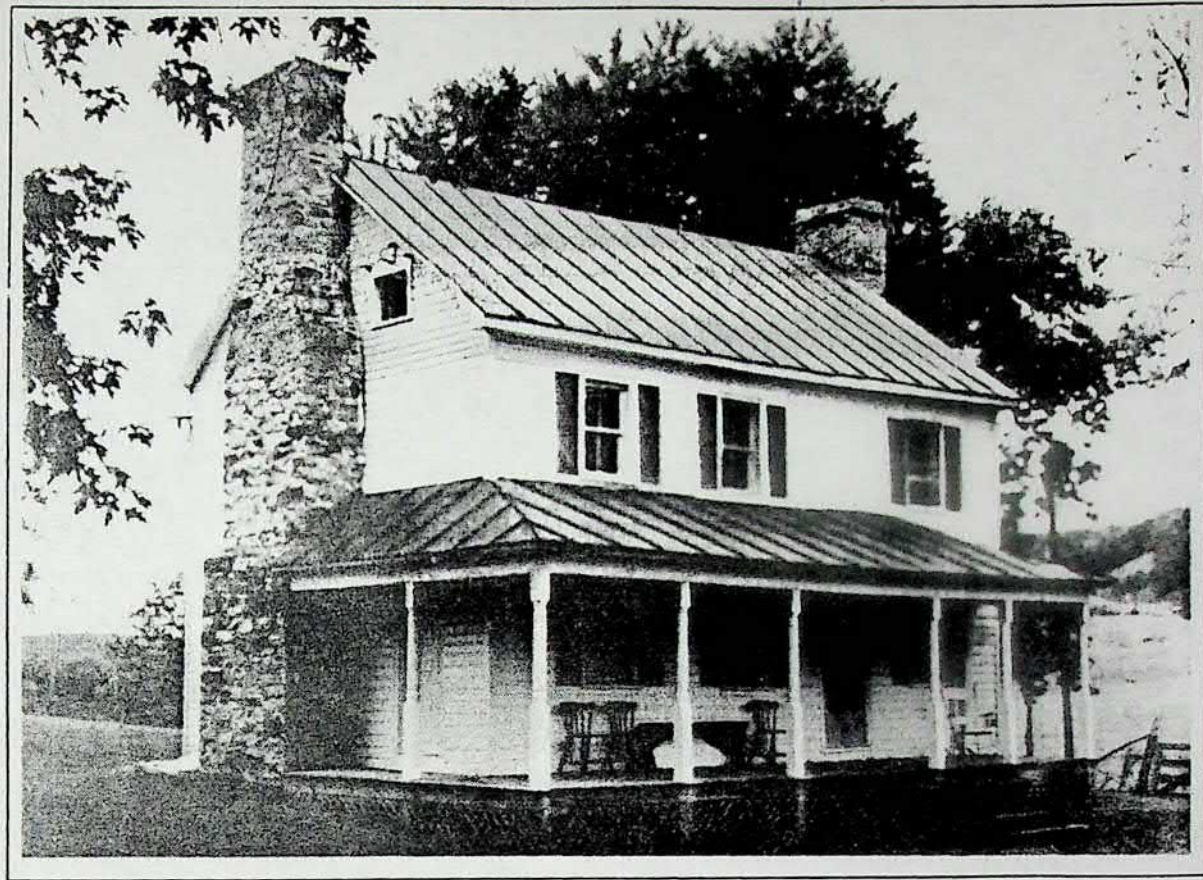
area should be recognized for its significance in the county's development. "I wanted to do something for this end of the county," Haines said. "This house is something tourists might like to see."

As he has done with the Davis History House and the Washington Place in Romney, Haines has brought back the original atmosphere of the Parks House.

The furnishings reflect the lifestyles of its first inhabitants. Haines has enjoyed finding things he had stored away to use as furnishings and frequenting auctions to find things for the house. But it hasn't all been fun.

"There's some frustration in it," said Haines. One of the more disappointing moments was when the Romney historian tore open the wall of what once served as the house's kitchen. He hoped to restore the chimney and fireplace that had long ago been covered over. "We tore up the wall, but the chimney had collapsed. So we covered it back up again. It would have taken too much money to restore it."

There are several stories about the general area where the house is lo-



The Parks House (above) is located just west of Capon Bridge. Those interested in visiting the house, which was built in the 1700s, can contact Ralph Haines at 822-5019 to make arrangements.

located that lend historical significance to the house itself. One story which Haines finds fascinating concerns the harvesting of the virgin timber in the vicinity of the

house and throughout Hampshire County during the late 1700s and early 1800s.

Haines has on display at the house a copy of a contract written

in 1800 for the provision of lumber to be used for building ships. The huge timbers were harvested in

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Hampshire County and floated down river to Washington, D.C. They were to be used to build, the contract states, a 74-gun warship, similar to the USS Constitution.

Haines believes the Parks house served as a tavern, of sorts, to local

men working in the area harvesting timber.

Haines feels it is important to preserve the few things left in the county which speak for the past. "So many we have just let go," he says.

But the Parks House is one of Hampshire County's relics that, thanks to one man's interest, will be a monument to the area's past for many years to come.



The house, which is sometimes referred to as Parks Tavern, was more likely a local watering hole for loggers who were working in the area and not, owner Ralph Haines feels, a public tavern. Haines has furnished the house with items (above) that bring back the home's original atmosphere.

