

EVOLUTION OF THE DRANE HOUSE

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Rather extensive research in the Garrett County Courthouse, Allegany County Courthouse, Frederick County Courthouse, and the Hall of Records in Annapolis has uncovered few actual facts about the Drane House.

It is doubtless the oldest standing building in Garrett County. It consists of two adjoining sections, the larger and older probably built by Captain David Lynn or William Lamar. It appears to have been a one-story frame house with a loft beneath the roof. This part had the massive stone fireplace and chimney quite skillfully constructed of field stones, which stood for over 170 years before toppling in 1970.

The house was probably erected to shelter the slaves and workers who were clearing the land. The smaller, or east section, plus the upper half-story over both parts was probably built by the Dranes and Lamars to provide enough room for the eight Drane children and the parents.

In the U.S. Census of 1790 -they are listed with one child and four slaves in Prince George's County. On the assessment roll of Allegany County for 1798, James Drane was assessed with six slaves, two horses, and two cattle but is not included in the census of 1800 in Allegany County. It appears that he began to establish himself at Accident prior to 1798 but did not bring his family -until after 1800.

Apparently the enlargement of the house was being done before and after the table of the century (1800) by the slaves who were clearing the land for the tobacco farming. The second addition has mostly log construction, as does the half-story above the entire ground floor.

The stairway to the loft of the original part (west) was removed and tile floor opening in the loft boarded over. When the second part (east) was added, a small hallway in this part served as a passage to the east room and the stairway, which was built against the inner wall of the added room.

Most of the logs in the tipper or half-story run the full length of the house, hand hewn but lacking skillful finishes since the house was covered with hemlock ships siding.

Short stone pillars support the sills. Sleepers (beams) run the width of the house upon which the floor rests. Joists, left exposed, with the flooring of the half-story form the ceilings of the ground floor rooms. Pole rafters and lathing support the shakes or shingles.

Boarded inside wall exist in all rooms but the west room on the second floor. It is not known when the partition was put up in the big room where the fireplace is located, probably about the time Heinrich Richter and his wife Catharina purchased the property in 1856 and lived there until 1897. During that time the two brick chimneys probably were erected, one in what became their kitchen, the room that one enters from outside, and the other on the east side.

Apparently only minor improvements were made until Frederick and Emma Richter married and decided to live in the Drane House (1901-1908). Extensive work was done on the interior of the first floor. Rooms were papered, wainscoting was placed on the ceiling of the parlor and the first floor bedroom. Linoleum was placed in the parlor and kitchen, New flooring had been placed over the old flooring in all first floor rooms except the little hall. The fireplace was boarded over and covered with wallpaper when the parlor was freshly papered. Only the east bedroom on the second floor was painted and furnished for use while Frederick and Emma lived there. The ranch-style porch was added after removing the latticed entry porch. Renters arrived and departed, It was never vacant from 1901-1952.

In the summer of 1936, Raymond Georg and his wife, Margaret moved to the Drane House. Insulsiding was placed over the ship's siding and a galvanized roof was added over the shingles. A pitcher pump was installed in the kitchen, drawing water from the same spring used by former residents. Margaret die fresh wallpapering and some inside painting. They left in 1944, but returned again in 1948. Electricity was put in the house and a new pitcher pump.

After 1952 the house remained vacant with little or not repairs. In 1987, the Mayor and Town Council, with the assistance of the Accident Cultural and Historical Society, decided the house should be restored for the sake of posterity. The house is the key to Accident's past and the living evidence of the tobacco plantations of Maryland's uplands.