

Haven B. Howe

(6/2/1847 - 12/12/1912)

Haven B. Howe was the son of John Dunbar Howe (1/4/1801-1/2/1885) and Sarah Boyd Logan Shepherd Howe (8/20/1815-3/22/1859). His father operated a mercantile store in the mid-1800's on "Main Street" (now Newbern Road) in Newbern, Virginia. Around 1850, they moved to "Sunnyside," the 1767 homeplace of ancestor Daniel Howe located along Back Creek, Virginia. Haven would spend the majority of his childhood at Sunnyside and the nearby Belle-Hampton estate.

At the age of 16, Haven Howe was briefly enrolled at Roanoke College until students were needed for the Civil War. On October 1, 1864 at the age of 17, Haven joined the 14th Virginia Cavalry, Company F (2nd). He was present for the battles of Milford, Dinwiddie Court House, and Five Forks.

Haven advocated for the establishment of the Pulaski County fair and served as officer for a number of years. At the time it was called the Pulaski County Agricultural and Mechanical Association.

Haven served as the Pulaski county supervisor from July 1, 1879-July 1, 1883 and Delegate of Virginia from 1891-1892 representing both Pulaski and Giles counties.

Haven was also Director of the Bank of Dublin, Director and Vice-president of the Farmers Merchant Bank of Radford, and President of the Pulaski and Giles Insurance Company. He was also a Free Mason and served as Lodge Master of the Henry Clay Lodge in Dublin.



Crescent Falls Stock Farm

Haven Howe married Catherine (Katie) Cloyd Howe (7/7/1852-5/9/1895) in 1873. Haven formally renounced his dower rights of the land in favor of Katie. This part of the Howe estate was known as the "Big Lease," or the western inherited lands of Katie's father, David M. Cloyd (1824-1863).

Crescent Falls Stock Farm was named after the distinctive shape of the river adjacent to the property and the falls that existed in the river before the formation of the lake. The property would eventually be referred to as the "Howe Woods" by the family and local community.

Haven was an energetic farmer specializing in white-faced Hereford cattle and stressed purebred stock only. At its most expansive point, the cattle farm was comprised of about 2,000 acres and stretched to Newbern township.



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Historical Haven B. Howe House



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Interior

The woodwork in the interior exhibits master craftsmanship and the timbers to construct the house were harvested and milled on the property. The front hall floor consists of

alternating walnut and ash planks. The steps are pine and the hand-turned newel posts, banisters, and railings are walnut.



Kerf bent trim and baseboards are noticeable. The current light fixture isn't original-it would have been a swinging kerosene lamp. At a later time, the lighting was upgraded to an acetylene gas system, prior to electricity.

The room that is now the Gift Shop was called the Parlor. It had wall to wall floral red carpet, floral wallpaper, and various pieces of furniture. Every room of the house had a fireplace. The first room of the Visitor Center was Haven Howe's room. Samples of the original wallpaper are displayed. Beyond Haven's room was Katie's (wife) room and nursery. This room has two windows, a fireplace, back stairway, and a door to the back porch that are not visible.

The entire 3rd floor was for guests of the family and each room contained bedroom furnishings.

Directly below Haven's room was the dining room. Its original encaustic tile floor is still in tact. The fireplace is soapstone and was transported by ox wagons from Floyd County, Virginia. Square dances also frequently occurred in this space. The kitchen was beyond this room towards the back of the house under Katie's room. The area beneath the Parlor (where the bathrooms are currently located) was the cellar and it had a dirt/brick floor. Being at ground level, it provided easy access for food that was brought in from the fields in wheelbarrows. There were shelves and bins for canned goods and vegetables.



Exterior

Haven Howe built the two-story brick house between 1876 and 1879. The house is in the form of an offset T-plan which exhibits a balanced traditional Federal/Greek Revival plan with Italianate detailing. The house illustrates a traditional form, with projecting one-story bays on both end walls.

The porch has its original ornamental wrought iron railings and porch supports. These were likely a product ordered from an urban foundry and shipped by railroad to either Dublin or Radford, Virginia. Three limestone carriage/mounting stones reside in the front yard. These were originally where the mailboxes are now.

The bricks were molded by hand from natural red clay found on the property. These bricks were then baked and dried in a kiln in the front yard. The bricks are tuckpointed (worn off in many areas).

Tuckpointing is a detailed art of deception using two contrasting colors of mortar in the mortar joints of brickwork. This was done by lightly incising the mortar and applying lime putty in a fine groove of the brick joints. This detail work gave rough handmade bricks a clean cut polished look. The brickwork on the back porch has the best preserved examples of the original tuckpointing.



The star pattern shown here in the attic window is believed to be a symbol of Haven's Masonic affiliation.

Exterior Buildings

Many buildings originally surrounded the property. These include: a smokehouse, woodshed, carriage-house, springhouse, storehouse, garden-house, and barns. There was an icehouse located under the carriage-house in which ice was harvested from the river in winter and kept packed in sawdust.



Pictured above is the two-story brick summer kitchen that was located directly behind the house.

Water was provided for the house initially through a pump powered by a windmill, but it was later replaced with a hydraulic pump.

Environmental Advocate

Haven Howe was an early advocate (if not the earliest) for environmental reform of water pollution caused by iron mines and smelting furnaces that were discharging waste along the banks of the river beginning in the 1880's. For over 20 years, Haven led a campaign to prevent the discharge of mine tailings into the, then muddied, New River. In 1911, he received a summons to appear as a state's witness in Federal Court for the U.S. War Department in Wheeling, West Virginia. Known as the "muddy water fight," it was Haven's efforts and testimony that aided the court in banning the dumping of iron ore mud into the New River starting January 1, 1912.