



## THE HOUSE OF MANY STAIRS

### The Oldest House in Pennsdale

By HOMER EATON KEYES  
(*Editor of Antiques*)

I retain a very distinct vision of a little stone house that burrows into a hill beside the turnpike in the slumberous Quaker village of Pennsdale. Burrows, I say advisedly; for the builder who, more than a century and a quarter ago, chose the site had little thought of making the terrain conform to his notions of construction. Being a patient man, and no doubt pious withal, he admitted the superiority of God's handiwork in erecting the hill, and did his best to adjust his own building to the contours devised by the Almighty. The consequence is a delightfully meandering plan.

The living room, which lies directly across the hall from the entry, is elevated some feet above the entry level. The dining room, on the other hand, which rides a downward slope, sinks well below the general altitude. And since the chambers above are more or less casually adjusted to the ceiling heights beneath, each one of them appears to have its own special stairway of approach.

In this, however, I may be wrong; for if this fascinating abode really enshrines as many stairways as I have credited to

it, there would be no place for the apartments to and from which all properly regulated stairways must lead. So doubtless I have miscalculated.

But I am sure of two flights, for each points to an indelibly charming vista. As you enter the house, once a local tavern, you find yourself in a cozy vestibule, which may, at one time, have served as a taproom—place of first aid to thirsty souls steering their way toward good cheer out of the cold blackness of the night. Right and left, before you extends a shelf, table high, wide enough to support an elbow and a glass, and providing sufficient area even for a trencher of hot food. What a place of exhibit now for the glass and earthenware of homely days!

Squarely in its midst, the long horizontal of this shelf is cut in twain by a narrow portal, whose threshold rises several steps above the taproom floor. You look upward and inward between enframing jambs, across a few feet of space to a cavernous chimney within whose capacious fireplace, almost at eye line, beckons the brightness of flaming logs. Just why this added elevation and the restricted vision occasioned by the

tiny doorway should lend the glowing hearth such irresistible allure, I cannot say. But no high altar flame could more keenly quicken the imagination or more certainly compel approach.

So you pass from vestibule to living room, only to be arrested by another vista. At your left, down two steps, across a narrow passage, down three steps more—I will not guarantee the count—through two doorways and the length of a room away, another blazing fireplace spreads invitation. Having reached one goal by climbing upward, you hasten to another by stepping down. Like life it is—uplift and depression,

and then back again. No wonder this ancient dwelling and others like it have an appeal for us that no modern mansion, however artful its planning, can ever exercise. In itself it is a living thing, an entity that has grown to meet expanding needs, has shaped itself to its environment, and waxed kind and mellow with experience. Inconvenient, no doubt; but still radiating the aura of past generations: lacking in elegance, to be sure; but rich in snug compatibility. Old wine—that has been taken from us: thank heaven we have yet old friends, and yet a few old houses.



Below is a photographic reproduction of a Sales Bill published in the Muncy Telegraph, Oct. 5, 1835. It offers a detailed description of the "House of Many Stairs" and surrounding property.

### VALUABLE TOWN LOTS FOR SALE,

in the village of Elizabeth Town, better known by the name of "Goosetown."

THE Subscriber will offer at Public Vendue, at the premises, in Muncy township Lycoming county, at the house of Job Packer, on Saturday the 14th day of November next,

### 14 Town Lots,

in the above named village, which is beautifully situated in the heart of a rich, healthy and fertile settlement, called the Quaker settlement—on the great road leading from the village of Hughesville to Williamsport, and near the State road leading from the borough of Muncy to Towanda. It is about two and a half miles from the borough of Muncy and one from the Pennsylvania canal—on one of the above lots is erected

**A LARGE & COMMODIOUS  
STONE DWELLING HOUSE**

30 by 46 feet, with 10 rooms and 2 cellars, at the door is a well of first rate water. There is also, a stone smoke house and a good barn with overshoot and carriage house and an excellent garden.—It is a good situation for a tavern. On another of the lots, there are erected

### A small Frame House and STONE SHOP.

AND A  
**FIRST RATE POTTERY,**  
with a kiln, kiln house and all the necessary fixtures and appurtenances. It is now in operation.

All the other lots are cultivated and in fine order. An excellent Run of Spring water passes through part of two of them. A Plot of the town can be seen at the office of the subscriber, in the borough of Muncy, at any time, and at the premises.

Sale to commence at 10 o'clock. The terms will then be made known—they will be liberal.

WM. A. PETRIKIN.  
Muncy, Oct. 5, 1835. 26.