

Malden Historic District
(4406 Malden Drive - Richard E. Putney House)
Malden
Kanawha County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-210-17

HABS
WVA,
20-MALD,
18-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

HABS
WVA,
20-MALD,
18-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MALDEN HISTORIC DISTRICT, 4406 Malden Drive,
Richard E. Putney House

HABS No. WV-210-17

Location: 4406 Malden Drive, Malden, Kanawha County, West Virginia
(Within the boundaries of the Malden Historic District)

Present Owners
and Occupant: Double Jim, Inc. (James H. Coleman and James C. Jeter)

Present Use: Law Offices

Significance: The oldest residence is Malden, the Richard E. Putney House is also one of the most imposing and least altered among Malden dwellings. Built circa 1836, the house ranks locally as a mansion. The first owner was Dr. Richard E. Putney, a physician who married David Ruffner's daughter, and from 1868 until 1952 the house served as the manse of the Kanawha Salines Presbyterian Church. The mid-nineteenth-century porch fronting the elliptical-arched Federal style main entrance provides one of the most salient examples of the general Malden tendency to mix styles. This unusually fine dwelling for its time and place is rated as one of the three pivotal structures of the Malden Historic District.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1836. (According to a memorandum by the granddaughter of Dr. & Mrs. Richard E. Putney)
2. Architect: Unknown. (The statement that the house was built by Dr. Richard E. Putney means simply that it was built for him, although he probably instructed the builder as to the accommodations he required.)
3. Original and subsequent owners: The house and lot were originally owned by Dr. Richard Ellis Putney and his wife. After Dr. Putney's death, the property fell to the Thayer family, Putney's granddaughter having married a merchant named Thayer.

In 1868, Thayer sold the property to the Trustees of the Kanawha Salines Presbyterian Church, as found in Deed Book 25 at page 318 in the Kanawha County Courthouse. In 1952 the church built a new manse and sold the former Putney House and lot to C. C. Dickinson. The property was willed to the Dickinson heirs (Turner Ratrie) and was used as rental property until April 1973, when James C. Jeter and James H. Coleman purchased it.

4. Alterations and additions: The originally unpainted brick of the house was first painted red with green shutters, then yellow with blue shutters, and finally white with green shutters. The present owners had new floors laid in the original manner, using oak planks and cast nails. The four original fireplaces with their mantelpieces were retained with one exception, and one original mantelpiece was relocated. All fireplaces were restored to working condition. Circa 1870 a one-story ell was added to the rear of the house. The ell appears to have been built in two stages. Circa 1870 a three-bay porch was added across the front. The two end bays were later removed, leaving the entrance porch. Original window sash has been replaced by replicas, but the front door with its fanlight and sidelights is original.

The house was the first in Malden to have a modern bathroom, installed circa 1910 in the upstairs hall, where a door leads to the entrance porch roof. The present owners have removed that bathroom and restored the hall to a condition resembling its original state.

B. Historical Context:

The first owner, Dr. Richard Ellis Putney, was born in Buckingham County, Virginia, on March 13, 1794, and came as a resident to the Kanawha Valley between 1812 and 1814. He was well educated and became one of the best-known physicians of the region, practicing in the Salines area for fifty years until his death in 1862. In 1815 he married Ann Ruffner (1792-1852), daughter of David Ruffner, a prominent landowner and salt-maker who had moved to the Salines from Charleston and who had the Kanawha Salines Presbyterian Church built in 1840. For the 84 years from 1868 until 1952, the house served as the manse of the Kanawha Salines Presbyterian Church.

Prepared by Donna Sue White
Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey Team
June 1979

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The two-story five-bayed main hlock of this imposing brick residence, its roof ridge parallel to the street, was built circa 1836, making this the oldest extant dwelling in Malden. The one-story rear ell was apparantly erected in at least two stages at subsequent dates. The late Federal fan-lighted entrance is unique in Malden and is fronted by an ornate later wooden porch typical of the eclecticism so frequently encounterd in the town.

2. Condition of fabric: Maintained with varying degrees of care during its history, the interior was refurbished for office use circa 1973.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This building consists of a five-bay, two-story gable-roofed block to the rear of which is a one-story addition, apparently built in at least two stages. The over-all width is approximately 42'-2" while the depth is 68'-6", the maximum height above grade being 32'-6". The long axis of the two-story block runs north/south while that of the one-story block runs east/west. The northeast corner of the rear addition rests atop a stone cellar. A low, inaccessible attic space occurs above the second floor of the main block.
2. Foundations: Foundations for the main block and for the brick addition are composed of cut stone units averaging 3'-6" in length and 1'-0" in height. At the wooden addition, the foundation consists of concrete blocks. The foundation for the front porch is of cut stone units while that for the rear porch is a collection of short brick piers.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The main block and the northernmost of the rear additions are constructed with solid brick exterior walls. Those of the main block are built in Flemish bond while those of the rear addition are built in common bond. Exterior walls of the southernmost addition to the rear are sheathed in clapboards averaging 4-1/2" in width. All exterior wall surfaces are painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: With the exception of the southernmost addition at the rear, which appears to be of stud wall construction, the structural system consists of solid brick bearing walls atop a stone foundation. The roofing system appears to be of simple wooden frame construction, though the attic space is inaccessible for verification.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: To the two-story main block is attached a single-bay wooden porch which is elaborately decorated with planar patterns executed in wood to resemble ornamental balustrades both at the porch level and atop the roof. Wooden open arches with small central pendants span the spaces between adjacent columns and between columns and the brick wall of the main block at each side of the porch. The porch floor is of wood; the porch roof is also of wood and is covered asphalt roofing material. A simple shed roof covers a second wooden porch at the rear entrance. No elaborate trim occurs there. At both porches, roughly cut stone steps lead to grade level.

6. Chimneys: Both north and south ends of the main block exhibit a single, low chimney flanked by small attic windows. The chimneys are not expressed on the first and second-story walls.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Four exterior doors occur. The principal entry is a seven-panel wooden door centered on the west facade and flanked by side lights having one blank panel topped by three lights. The whole is surmounted by a semielliptical fanlight. A rear door occurs on the east wall of the rear attachment. It is a six-panel wooden door. A minor entry, having a four-panel wooden door, occurs on the north wall of the rear attachment. This last entry is headed by a segmental arch of two superposed sets of rowlocks. The foregoing entries have dark green doors set into white frames. The final exterior door occurs at the second-story level in the center of the west front. It is a wooden-frame door having eighteen lights arranged in three vertical rows of six lights each. Flanking this door are side lights, each having five lights. This doorway is used only for access to the roof of the front porch. It is the only door which appears to have been covered by shutters at an earlier date, as attested to by photographic records. This door is painted white and set into a white frame.
 - b. Windows and shutters: A variety of window sizes occurs, all being of the double-hung sash variety. On the west front, the original lower-story windows have been replaced by nine-over-nine units. The upper-story windows on both east and west walls are apparently older and are composed of six-over-nine units. Frames around the west windows are minimized, the major exception being the sills of the lower-story windows. All west windows, including the side lights flanking the upper-story glazed door, have hinged, louvered wooden shutters painted dark green. The only windows in the south and north ends of the two-story block are small square windows of four lights each. Each of these small windows is flanked by shutters. The present owner reports that he installed these fixed sashes c. 1973, replacing sashes having two longer vertical lights. The second-story windows of the east wall are the only windows on the main block not flanked by shutters. On the rear attachment, the south wall has four windows, two six-light center-pivot units and two one-over-one sash units with a fixed upper sash. The east wall of the rear ell has a single window composed of a double-sash, and identical to those on the north wall of the rear attachment. The north wall of the rear ell has three

triple-sash windows, each sash having six lights. The frames of these large windows have an upper member whose top edge is in the shape of a shallow arch upon which bricks are set in rowlocks. Windows in the rear ell have no shutters and are all composed of white sashes set into white frames.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof of the main block is a simple gabled roof covered in green asphalt shingles. The axis of this roof runs north/south. The rear ell has a low-pitched gable roof over its northernmost portion, an intergral shed extension having been added to the south. The majority of the roofing on the rear ell is metal, having alternating single and double standing ribs spaced at one-foot intervals. This metal roofing is painted silver. The southwest quadrant of roofing on the rear attachment consists of black asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: All exterior walls are topped by eaves except on the north and south ends of the main block. The eaves are of wooden construction with closed soffits. Metal gutters and downspouts currently serve each sloping roof surface. Cornices and eaves are of very plain wooden construction, being composed of flat wooden moldings and a few simple rounded moldings.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: First and second stories of the two-story block each consist of two rooms which are approximately square. These rooms are separated by a central stair hall. The rear wing contains one large rectangular room opening directly into the front block plus a collection of five smaller spaces, two of which serve as passages leading from the main block toward the rear entrance. The only rooms currently containing closets are the two large second floor rooms, each of which has two shallow closets.
2. Stairways: The principal stairway is located to the rear of the central hall in the two-story main block. It consists of fourteen risers in two opposing flights, eleven ascending east and three west, joined by a landing. A wooden handrail of circular cross section with plain rectangular balusters constitutes the balustrade. The other interior stairway leads to the cellar and has no decorative treatment.

3. **Flooring:** Flooring throughout the first and second stories consists of uniform-width wooden planking (ranging from 2-1/4" to 3" to 5" in width, depending upon the particular space) and random planking of a newer wood-like material (ranging from 4" to 8" in width). The latter type of planking is restricted to the first-floor rooms of the main block and to the central stair hall on the second story. In most spaces, the flooring has received transparent finish coats; in the rear hallway and the two small rooms in the southeast corner of the rear ell, the planking has been painted. Also, the treads of the main stairway have been painted. The floor of the cellar is concrete.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Walls throughout the first and second stories are painted, together with all interior wooden trim. Wall surfaces are usually plastered, though walls surfaced with three-inch-wide vertical paneling or revealing exposed brick do occur on occasion. In the main stair hall, decorative wooden paneling consisting of rectilinear panels in a grid arrangement occurs beneath the stair stringer. Ceilings are of painted plaster.
5. **Doorways and doors:** Doorways are surrounded by molded architraves in a variety of profiles, often joined at the corners by bull's eye corner blocks. Interior doors are composed of from two to seven panels.
6. **Special decorative features, trim and cabinet work:** Decorative trim consists of the stair hall paneling and door frames described above plus several bookcases throughout the first floor. Also, the main stair itself is a bracketed stair, thus having low relief sawn scroll embellishment along the face of the stringer just below each tread. The paneling beneath the stringer is also in low relief, the grid within which the panels sit projecting approximately one inch in front of the panels themselves.
7. **Notable hardware:** In one case only, the door hardware is said to be original. This situation occurs at the hall door leading into the southernmost first floor room in the main block. At this door, the knob is spherical and has no escutcheon; it is made of brass. At doors leading into major spaces, similar hardware has been installed, the items used being reproductions similar to the allegedly original piece.
8. **Mechanical equipment:** The original heating system of the two-story block was a collection of four fireplaces, one occurring in each of the four principal rooms. A gas furnace for both the

main block and the rear ell was installed later, though it has subsequently been removed in favor of electric heating. Electric lighting has been installed throughout. One functioning bathroom occurs in the rear attachment.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The building sits on a wooded site fronting onto Malden Drive (approximately west). The site is relatively flat except to the east of the building, where a swale parallel to and near the eastern lot boundary occurs at the bottom of a long slope atop which the building is situated.
2. Outbuildings: Only one outbuilding occurs. It is a one-story concrete block structure approximately 21'-8" by 11'-6" and is located approximately 15'-2" east of the rear attachment.

Prepared by James Murray Howard
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings Survey
June 1979

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. Old Views: There are photographs of the Putney House, also called the old Presbyterian Manse, on file at the Department of Archives and History in the State Capitol Complex, Charleston, West Virginia.
2. Bibliography:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Book, Kanawha County Courthouse Records
Deed Book 25 at page 318.
 - b. Secondary and published sources:

Woods, Ruth Dayton. Pioneers and their Homes on Upper Kanawha, West Virginia. Charleston, West Virginia: West Virginia Publishing Co., 1947. Pages 206-208.

"1836 Home Restored To Past Beauty," Charleston Daily Mail, May 10, 1974.
 - c. Interviews:

Mr. James C. Coleman, 4406 Malden Drive, Malden West Virginia . (Present owner and restorer of the Putney House)

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) with funding from the West Virginia Department of Culture and History. The recording was completed under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect of HABS, in the HABS field office in Charleston, West Virginia. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1979 by James Murray Howard (University of Illinois), Project Supervisor; Donna White, Project Historian; and Student Architects James Barrett Garrison (Carnegie-Mellon University) and Keith Edward Soto (University of Florida). The photographs were taken by Walter Smalling, Jr., Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service Photographer.