

The Spitzer/Rupp House, 9295 Congress Street

Lot 42, as laid out in the original town plan, was sold by Abraham Savage in 1804 as two quarter acre lots, the southern half to David Fisher, and the northern half, which we are interested in and which became known locally as the Rupp House, was sold to William Menefee. The two halves have maintained their own identity throughout the entire period from 1788 through 2004

Deed Book O page 103 dated 6 December 1804, between Abraham Savage and William Menefee.

Consideration 12 pounds. $\frac{1}{4}$ acre. On the condition that the ground rent of five shillings current money of Virginia, be paid on or before 1st day April annually for the said $\frac{1}{4}$ acre to the Proprietor of the said Town of New Market.

On 25 February 1817, William Menefee and Mary his wife, City of Culpepper sold the property to Peter Wolfe, County of Shenandoah for \$550. Condition of ground rent was as shown in Deed Book O page 103

Shenandoah County Tax records for 1805 shows William Menefee was taxed on $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 42, at a rate of 10c per acre. In 1807, he was taxed at a rate of 18c per acre which indicates improvements (probably to a building) had been made to the property

In 1819 Peter Wolfe and Lucy his wife sold to Islam Tatum of the County of Madison for \$1000. The ground rent still applied.

Then in 1834, Isham Tatum Sr and Sarah T his wife sold to John Finfruck for \$350... one certain half lot or $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of land in the County of Shenandoah and town of New Market known and distinguished by number forty two, said half lot lies on the East Side of Congress St. (NOTE - Deed in error as Lot 42 is on the West side of Congress St.) "Subject nevertheless to proviso or condition that the said John Finfruck or his heirs pay unto the proprietor of the said town his heirs or successors the yearly ground rent of two shillings and sixpence Virginia currency on or before the first day of April annually for the said half lot or quarter acre of land".

Note: In 1830, 1831, 1832 and 1833, Isham Tatum paid taxes on $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 42

17 November 1837, "between Henry Hill, Trustee of the first part and Isham Tatum Sr of the second part. Whereas Henry Hill as Trustee aforesaid did on the 19th day of September 1836 sell at public auction in the Town of New Market a certain house and lot lying in said Town and County of Shenandoah to the highest bidder for cash for the benefit of said Isham Tatum Sr. And the said Hill became the purchaser thereof for the sum of \$250".

NOTES: 1. Henry Hill was a Justice of Peace for Shenandoah County

2. It would appear that the error in acreage occurs in this deed as the deed (see below) to John Finfruck only indicates $\frac{1}{4}$ acre. This error is carried forward until plats are correctly surveyed and recorded in 1931.

3. Note in 1834-1836 Land Tax Book, John Finfruck paid taxes on $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 42, Value

of lot and buildings \$325.75. Yearly rent \$437.50. Amount of tax \$20.00
4. Examination of the deeds appertaining to the Southern half of Lot 42 shows that no sales occurred between owners of the Southern half and Northern half, and the lot north of Lot 42 was owned by the church, thus indicating that no extra land could have been purchased at that time to make the Northern half one half acre as shown in the deeds.

On November 17, 1837, Isham Tatum and Frances his wife sold to Charles Spitzer. Consideration \$200 in hand paid.

Charles' father, Henry Spitzer a noted gunsmith, had first purchased in 1796 from Abraham Savage "One half lot, or quarter of an acre, North side of Lot No 74 in the town of New Market (now 9488 John Sevier Rd)" which he sold in 1800 but in 1798 he purchased Lot number 70 across the street (now 9522 John Sevier Rd) which he sold in 1818 and purchased a 1 acre lot just north of the town.

Henry Spitzer had become a gunsmith and worked from his shop in Rockingham County and trained his sons Charles, Moses Augustus (b 1805 and died in the Donner Pass 1847) and William (b 1815 d 1884) to be gunsmiths. Henry died June 12, 1841 and his wife Catharine in October 1854 and both are buried in the Reformation Lutheran Church cemetery in New Market.

Charles was born August 22, 1807, married Elizabeth Frances Amiss in 1833 and they had four children including Mary Catharine b 1837 d 1900 who married William Rupp. and Lewis Amiss b 1840, who at some time in his life moved to California;

Family lore indicates that Charles, and possibly his brother William, manufactured their rifles in this house. These rifles are classed as the Kentucky Long Rifles style, His name became well known - a letter stored in the Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg from R.E. McCann, dated April 18, 1861 from Richmond asks Charles for a rifle. In another letter, March 20, 186? B.G. Patterson asks Charles about a Minnie rifle.

Note: Tax Records for 1850 show Charles Spitzer owned $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 42 and building value was \$400.

Charles died November 1, 1862, and together with his wife Elizabeth and brother William, are buried in the Reformation Lutheran Church cemetery also. His heirs inherited the property. Henry R. Spitzer received 2/3rds of the estate and Lewis Spitzer, who had moved to California received 1/3rd.

November 1866, Henry R. Spitzer of the County of Champaign, OH sold his share to William F. Rupp, of the county of Shenandoah for \$200 in National Bank Notes. \$100 paid cash in hand, with \$50 due 1 November 1867, and \$50 due on or before November 1, 1868. In December 1866, Lewis A. Spitzer and Bettie his wife, County of San Luis Olispe, California sold their share to William F. Rupp Consideration \$200



in National Bank Notes. \$100 cash and two bonds.

Arriving in America from Germany in April 1854, William Rupp traveled to Luray, Virginia in October of that year 0000...0000to work as a draughtsman or mapmaker for a copper mining operation on Stony Man Mountain. This operation was not a success, so William Rupp was forced to find other work.

According to the family, his first fresco work was for Captain Thomas Jordan in Luray, whose house later became the Mansion Inn. In 1865 he frescoed the house of Dr. Salon Henkel in New Market and while working there probably met Miss Mary Catherine Spitzer, daughter of gunsmith Charles Spitzer, and married her on January 28, 1862.

From thereon he lived in the Spitzer home on Congress Street, New Market.

As a musician he is believed to have been a member of the band of the 13th Virginia Regiment during the Civil War. The 13th was mainly comprised of Germans who lived in the vicinity of Fredericksburg.

After the war, he continued his vocation for fresco painting and became widely known, working in Delaware, Tennessee, North Carolina and Philadelphia. In 1872 he frescoed the Shenandoah County Court Room in Woodstock.

Unfortunately this has long been painted over as have most of his work which was done in churches. Normally in private houses only the parlor and hallway were frescoed. The remaining frescos in the Rupp house could be seen in the upstairs hallways and a closet but unfortunately it was necessary to repair the ceilings when the house was being restored in 2005 and the paintings are covered.



Frescoed ceilings usually featured a large circular geometric or rococo pattern with matching border and corners. Walls usually featured rectangular or arched panels, whilst walls of hallways were usually marked off in large blocks and shaded to represent stone. Willim Rupp made full scale patterns on brown paper and punched holes about .inch intervals along the lines of the pattern so that it could be held against the wall or ceiling and dusted with a bag of powdered chalk so

that the outline was transferred to the newly plastered surface. The painting, using water colors, was done by hand quickly as it had to be completed before the plaster dried. The lime in the plaster as it dried reacted with the carbon dioxide in the air to form calcium carbonate which formed a film over the water color binding it to the plaster.

On dated 15 January 1880, the Trustees of St Matthews Church in the town of New Market sold to William F. Rupp for \$85 "...certain lot lying in the town of New Market, North of what is known as Lot 42, in the town map and next adjoining the latter, 25 feet in width on the front street and 35 feet in width on the opposite line, adjoining Dr A.S. Miller on the north, bounded by William F. Rupp and in the north by St Matthews church lot (and public road leading to the river). Of which it formerly occupied a part, and which was

conveyed by Noah Price, to the said Trustees of the said church by deed. One third of the purchase money paid down in cash, the second third payable Jan. 1, 1881 as per bond, the last third payable January 1, 1882 as per bond, both deferred payments to have interest from date".



House in the 1920's

Then in June 1931, The Rockingham National Bank of Harrisonburg, Executor of the last will and testament of C.E. Rupp, deceased (grandson of Henry Spitzer) sold to Mary E. Rupp, for the consideration of \$4000, paid \$1650 cash in hand, the remainder in bonds which were paid off by September 1940 "being the same property wherein the grantee now resides". William F. Rupp had left his property in his Will recorded in 1905, to his heirs William H. Rupp and C.E. Rupp. William H. Rupp died intestate in 1925 leaving him surviving as his heirs in law, C.E. Rupp, a brother and the grantee therein, and Mary E. Rupp, a niece (the only child of a deceased brother of the said William H. Rupp).

Note: in 1898, Land Tax record show that William Rupp paid taxes on $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 42. Lot valued at \$50, Building valued at \$400. He also paid \$50 tax each on two $\frac{1}{2}$ acre lots, whereabouts not specified. In 1920 C.E. Rupp paid taxes on $\frac{1}{2}$ Lot 42, land value \$75, building \$500.

Mary R. Orebaugh (formerly Mary E. Rupp) died October 22, 1985 and under Article II of her will, devised her real estate to Fritz F. Orebaugh and Susan O. Nicholson. They sold the property in August 1994 to Bedrooms of America Wholesale Inc.

Who in turn sold it in June 2004 to John and Beverly Holsinger. A right of way was purchased in 2004 from the Trustees of the Reformation Lutheran Church allowing right of

passage from their property on the south side of Breckinridge Lane into the parking area of the northern section of Lot 42.

Extensive restoration of both the exterior and inside took place during the next year and it was proved that originally the building had been a dog trot cabin (two cabins which were joined by a covered area) as the sawn off logs were revealed when the cabins were converted into a single dwelling.

