

Red log house to be moved

One of Woodstock's oldest homes, predates town, stone courthouse

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One of Woodstock's oldest structures, a tiny red log home on Church Street, will be moved to make room for Yeager's Farm subdivision, 28 lots of closely packed townhomes on South Church Street.

On Thursday, the town planning commission approved the final plat for builder Gary Modjeska of Bethesda, Md. He said after the meeting that the house is being moved at the request of the Woodstock Planning Commission.

Town Planner Brent Manuel confirmed, saying the house sits so close to the intersection of Church and High streets, it interferes with the line of sight of drivers. Southbound drivers on Church Street and westbound drivers on High Street cannot see each other until they enter the intersection.

Modjeska hired Bill Wine, a historical preservationist from Woodstock, to study the three homes existing on Church Street when he bought the acreage. Two 20th century houses were torn down, but

the log home remains.

There are three interested buyers, including one in Toms Brook and one in Woodstock, Modjeska said. One would move the entire two-story home and its foundation, another would take apart the home and use its parts.

"I'd hate to see it sold for scrap," Wine said.

Wine estimates the log house was built between 1755 and 1780. Woodstock became a town in 1752.

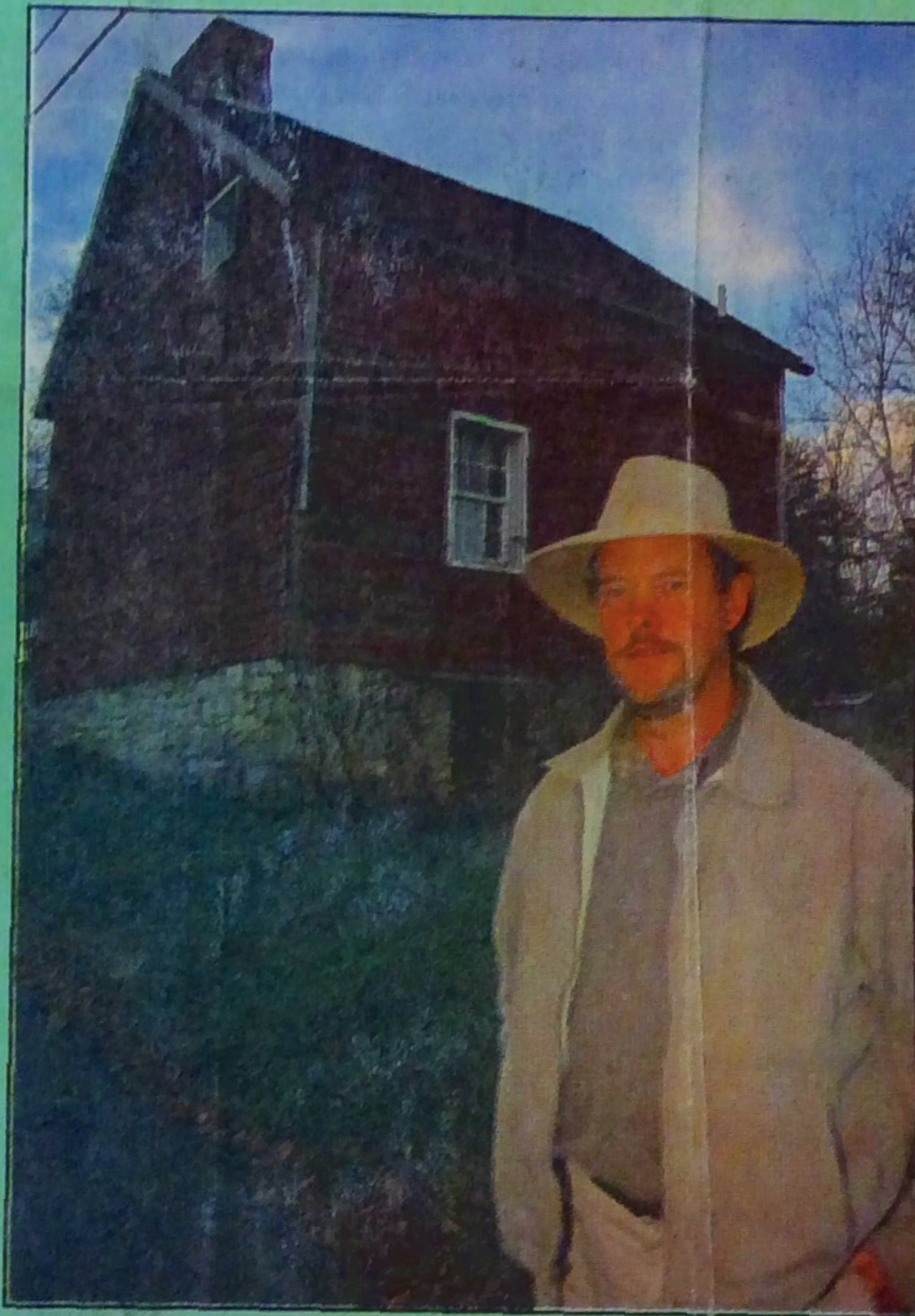
"I don't know a whole lot about its history," Wine said Monday. He hasn't researched its ownership at the courthouse.

His study of the structure revealed it was originally built as a residence.

"It has a fully functional kitchen in the basement level (street level from High Street), a large walk-in fireplace in the basement, and ladder access to the living quarters on the main level," Wine said. The main level – street level from Church Street, is divided into two rooms. It was modernized in the 20th century, but it's apparent that no one has lived there for years.

The fireplace continues on the

See LOG HOUSE A2



Gary Pinnell/Valley-Herald

Because of its small size and low ceilings – it has about 400 square feet on each level and 6.5 foot ceilings – historian Bill Wine believes this 18th century log house was possibly a merchant or servant's home.

6 new parcels Okayed

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The Woodstock Planning Commission and the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors on Thursday gave the nod to 131 more building lots.

The Woodstock planners will recommend the council approve the final plats for:

- Woodlawn Estates, 4 lots on Stonecrest Drive and Indian Springs Road. It will be designated R-1 for single family homes.

- Yeager's Farm, 28 lots on South Church Street designated R-3, or closely packed \$250,000 townhomes. Builder Gary Modjeska of Bethesda, Md. said the houses will face each other in a center courtyard. Pairs of houses will be placed closely next door to each other but not touching like duplexes, with a larger space between each pair to allow for the appearance of more open space.

A walkway between rows of townhomes will be surfaced with uneven tiles and steps so skateboarders won't use it. About 30 people came to a public hearing three months ago when it was

See PARCELS A2

Log house

Continued from A1

second level. There are two bedrooms on the highest level.

"It retains about 80 to 90 percent of its original fabric," said Wine, meaning the logs and stone foundation. But he believes the clapboard siding may have also been an original feature, because the logs were indented with an ax for a vertical rail to hold the horizontal clapboards.

If the clapboard was removed, the log home would look like the log spring house one block to the south.

Who was the original occupant?

"Any of the founding families in Woodstock," Wine speculated. "It was here right after Woodstock was laid off and chartered as a town. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, it was here before the old courthouse was built." The stone courthouse was constructed in 1795.

Wine himself is interested in buying the house and moving it, but he believes it should remain on the property.

Modjeska "and I have talked about this for about a year," Wine said.

They wanted to move the house by a few feet to open the line of sight for the intersection, but the town administrators weren't interested.

Woodstock officials wanted the house to occupy one of the lots, which Modjeska wouldn't agree to because the solution was too expensive.

Modjeska, Wine said, "has voiced a great deal of frustration. He feels the town is throwing up every roadblock possible to keep him from preserving the building."

Ironically, Wine has thought about contacting John Avoli, executive director at the Frontier Culture Museum.

Wine and Avoli were on opposite sides of the old Zirkle Mill. Wine wanted to preserve it in Forestville, the Museum is buying it and moving it to Staunton.