

The James Jarrett House at Fair Hill sits just outside Alderson and dates back to 1815.



GREENBRIER COUNTY
Grandeur



The Greenbrier Valley area is rich in history to say the least. Dating back to the 1700s, properties throughout the county tell the story of early pioneers, the Civil War, and even high society.

Every other year the Greenbrier Historical Society and North House Museum host the Lemonade & Lavender Historic Homes & Garden Tour, inviting the public for a look inside everything from stately homes to remarkably restored cabins. This year's tour will take place June 12 to 14, 2015.

Greenbrier County has an unusually large number of historic homes that have made it across the centuries relatively unscathed, according to Toni Ogden, acting director of the Greenbrier Historical Society. As part of the tour in 2013, locals and tourists alike stepped back into a world of both stagecoaches and farms. "That year we really wanted to get out into the country and show more of what was going on

in other areas not too far from Lewisburg," Toni says. While the tour changes each time, Toni says it never disappoints. The 2013 weekend tour included the James Jarrett House at Fair Hill, just outside of Alderson; The Cedars in Alderson; Spring Valley Farm in Ronceverte; Edgarton Inn in Ronceverte; the Montgomery Cabin near the unincorporated community of Secondcreek near the Greenbrier County border; and many others.

The James Jarrett House near Blue Sulphur Springs dates back to 1815. The three-story farmhouse was built of native sandstone by early pioneer James Jarrett, and the house's remaining original materials show off early carpentry skills. Jarrett and his three brothers are said to have come to the Greenbrier Valley as early as the 1770s. He reportedly made his first house of logs on Muddy Creek, while beginning to gather stones from all around him to make something more substantial.

In Alderson, folks are still talking about The Cedars, which had a ballroom upstairs. "Older people here remember going to balls in that house," Toni says. "Dignitaries and even a president came through. This

Built in 1881, The Cedars was home to the most influential "dime" novel writer of her time.



was a place where they could go and nobody would know they were going to be there. They could do the country's business and have time to talk. That was a big deal."

Built by Alexander McVeigh Miller in 1881, The Cedars also has quite a literary history. Mittie Clark Miller wrote many of her 80-plus "dime" novels here to supplement her husband's schoolteacher salary. Mrs. Miller left The Cedars in 1920 after catching her husband having an affair. The property was used briefly by the Alderson Baptist Academy and Junior College as a dormitory.

In Ronceverte, Spring Valley Farm has always been in the Dickson family and continues to be the site of a significant collection of 18th and 19th century outbuildings, with some of the valley's best examples of pioneer building, from hand-hewn logs to braced frame barns. In 1837 Richard Dickson built the main farmhouse and used oxen to pull the original 18th century log cabin over to become the dining room. There was no door between the dining room and

kitchen into the main part of the house for many years. Finally, in 1864, a door was cut from the dining room into the main house.

Prominent cabinetmaker Conrad Burgess did most of the woodwork for Spring Valley Farm. "He did the mantels in all the rooms except the one in the dining room. It was the original mantel that was there whenever the log part was built in the 1700s," says Page Dickson, who's lived there for nearly 30 years. The mantel in the living room is especially unique, with oak leaf carvings in it. "Conrad Burgess said, 'I think we need to put some interesting motif in this mantel,' so he went out and brought oak leaves in."

A downstairs wing was added to Spring Valley Farm in 1890, and bathrooms were added around 1914. Back in the 1850s, stagecoaches would stop on their way between the area's salt springs to change horses and have breakfast at Spring Valley Farm. "Richard Dickson would serve breakfast for anybody who came through for 50 cents gold," Page says.

Also in Ronceverte, Edgarton Inn on Walnut

Prominent cabinet-maker Conrad Burgess did most of the woodwork in the house on Spring Valley Farm. "He did the mantels in all the rooms except the one in the dining room. It was the original mantel that was there when the log part was built in the 1700s," owner Page Dickson says.



The next Lemonade & Lavender Historic Homes & Gardens Tour will take place June 12 to 14, 2015.

Street is a beautiful Queen Anne-style bed-and-breakfast that dates back to 1810, when the initial structure was built by Thomas Edgar, founder of the Ronceverte settlement St. Lawrence Ford. Victorian architecture was added to the building in 1885. The property's brick drive and manicured lawn with bright flowers and towering, old trees have beckoned sleepy visitors to stay the night since Edgarton opened as a bed-and-breakfast in the 2000s. Today you can stay in one of four rooms, sleeping in a Victorian tower room or enjoying a bay window view.

For a real return to rustic, the region's Montgomery Cabin on the Greenbrier and Monroe counties' border was reconstructed using logs from two 1700s structures near the community of Secondcreek. Multiple buildings are on this off-the-beaten-path property—the main house, a barn, and a woodshed.

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