

HIRAM LAY CARRIAGE HOUSE (Site)
WORKSHEET
General Information

Name of Structure: Hiram Lay Carriage House
Address: Mays Point Rd opposite where Old Schoolhouse Rd intersects
Property ID: (453400) 13-1-10

Atlas: Dist 9, Lot 49
1852: "Hiram Lay"; 1859: "H Lay"; 1874: "I L Lay"¹
1938 sold out of Lay family to the US Govt for Montezuma National Wildlife Preserve.

When Built/Mason: 1859, unknown mason
Extant: No
When Razed: ≥ 1986
Reason: Cracks formed along quoin lines and some diagonal cracks along walls; stones fallen off front to left of door compromising rubble wall beneath. Safety and liability issues.

Original Use: Carriage House for farming purposes
Subsequent Use: Storage for buggies, etc, then later for MNWR equipment

Pictures: Yes. NABS pictures (and writeup)

Description:

Structural: Gable end faced road. *Front:* Large, nearly centered carriage entrance, loft level divided into 2 bays by louvered openings. No lintel on door; limestone lintels & sills on hay loft openings. Date stone in peak; slate roof. Stones on front were smallest. *Rear:* Large slightly off-center (skewed right) carriage entrance w/hay door above and smaller hay door placed off-center to its left. No lintels or sills on this side. *West* (long side): 2 windows equally spaced along length; 1 loft level louvered opening slightly right of the rightmost window. All openings limestone lintels and sills. *East:* Center door, window to left, small window abutting foundation to far right—all with limestone lintels & sills (including the one at the foundation). The carriage house was 12 quoins high (except 13 in front right corner to accommodate the slope), equating to ~13' on the sides and 20' to peaks of gables.

Masonry: The foundation was rubble stone—most apparent on the east side (due to the sloped site); the core wall was rubble stone. Fieldstones of various colors (buff, light

¹ The 1874 reference should be Hiram Lay. In 1887, by his Last Will and Testament, he left it to his son, Hiram M Lay (per the HABS doc'mn).

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gray, dark red tones), shapes, sizes; 4/Q on front; 3/Q on sides; mortar joints (coarse texture, dull gray to buff-gray), both horizontal & vertical V'd. Cobblestones & mortar gave it an overall tan color, in contrast to the gray limestone quoins, lintels, and sills. Quoins were roughly squared with no ornamentation. Only the lintels above the 3 openings on the right (east) side were finished with bush-hammed panels and tooled margins.

R e s o u r c e s

Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)

A SUPERB description of every detail about the Hiram Lay Carriage House can be downloaded from <https://www.loc.gov/item/ny1407/>. Look for Data Pages from Survey HABS NY-6130-A. This is a 26-page thorough description of this building, its owners, it's uses, it's structural and masonry details, it's deterioration all the way up to 1986 when it was still standing and owned by US Montezuma National Wildlife Reserve (MNWR)² and used for storing equipment despite its deteriorated condition. Accompanied by 26 photographs (B&W) at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.ny1407.photos?st=gallery>.

Highlights from the HABS document

Hiram Lay (1809-1893) had his cobblestone house built in 1847-48. Being delighted with it, and having the means to do so, in 1859 he had the cobblestone carriage house built just across the road along the north side of May's Point Rd. A limestone date stone over the entrance in the barn's gable read: "H.L. 1859".

He farmed 450 acres of rolling hills and rich muck near the borders of the marsh. He also built two side businesses on the brook that ran just north of his house—one for the manufacture and sale of fanning mills to separate wheat kernels from chaff, and the other a cider press business that made use of his orchard. When Hiram Lay died, his only son continued the various operations. His two sons (Hiram's grandsons), however, moved away from Tyre, and the farm operations ceased. By 1929 the house and farm were sometimes vacant, sometimes occupied by tenants, sometimes used as a summer home. A former tenant recalled that in 1928 the carriage house had 3 carriages stored inside—a surrey, a buggy, and a "Democrat" (one seat and long platform in back and no top). In 1938, after nearly 80 years in the Lay family, Florence Nancy (née Lay) Strine sold the carriage house (and property) to the US Government—115 acres³ for \$2890.50.

² MNWR website: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/montezuma>

³ The Hiram Lay Carriage House site is on parcel 36 B (63.08) of the 115.62 acre "Florence Nancy Strine Tract" in the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge.

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The first manager of MNWR remembers the carriage house was rented to Jesse Lay from 1938 to 1950 and used to store automobiles and equipment. In the mid-1960s the MNWR was using it to store tractors, boats and other equipment until 1981 when deemed to deteriorated to use. The roof had begun leaking in the mid-1960s but not repaired, the tractors covered with tarp.

At the time this information was documented, 1986, the carriage house was still standing. Photographs show cobbles falling off the façade and numerous cracks in the walls—but not falling down.