



AMIS STONE HOUSE ONE OF OLDEST IN AREA—The Amis stone house near Rogersville is one of the oldest in the Kingsport area. Built in 1780 the house is now owned by Miss Anne Amis, a member of the sixth generation of the Amis family to live in the house. The house was the subject of a prize-winning essay entered by Mrs. Charles Schumacher in the state United Daughters of the Confederacy old homes contest in 1948.

Amis Stone House Dates Back To Colonial Period

—Editor's Note: The following is one of a series of essays by Mrs. Charles Schumacher of Hawkins County, which won first prize for her in the state United Daughters of the Confederacy old homes contest in 1948.

By MRS. CHARLES SCHUMACHER
The Amis Stone house is located on Big Creek, some three miles from Rogersville, Tennessee. It was erected in 1780 atop a hill by Thomas Amis upon a thousand-acre estate granted him by the government. Miss Anne Amis, the present owner, is the sixth generation of the Amis family to live in this house. It is not a spectacular house until you learn it has been there since shortly after the Revolution.

Thomas Amis, of French Huguenot descent, was born in Virginia and served throughout the Revolutionary War as Captain of the Third Regiment of the Continental Army. He was also distinguished because of his election to the Provisional Congress of Carolina which was held in Halifax on April 4, 1776.

After the Revolution, Thomas Amis and his wife moved to Hawkins County, Tennessee, where he built his home. A man of keen

business ability he built a blacksmith shop, grist mill, sawmill, distillery, and store on Big Creek not far from his home. He did a thriving business with Indians and early white settlers. The extent of his trade is indicated by records which tell of the seizure of some of his boats and goods at Natchez. Miss Amis in a huge old secretary, you will find the account books of Thomas Amis, dated in his own careful writing from 1792.

The original house, the stone part, which earned the building its identity, was built in 1781-1783 by one Thomas Harlan from Pennsylvania. It was designed along the lines of a fortress. The dangers of life in that day dictated a sturdy stone house with walls 18 inches thick and port holes instead of windows in the upper half story. Each room had its own fireplace and likewise its own unclimbed stairway leading to the upper floor. From the living room additional stairs descend to the stone wine cellar. The heavy doors were made of double thickness, with outside panels running vertically and inside horizontally. The hinges and bolts, made for strength and pro-

tection, as well as heavily worn wrought in the owner's blacksmith shop. There are no door knobs on the outside.

No one will stop you from sitting in one of the fine, delicately carved chairs that have been the despair of many antique collectors. A grandfather clock, the works brought over from France by the first Amis in the 1800's, looks you over solemnly, as you sit before the same fireplace that warmed Bishop Ashury in 1789.

Leading to the front door of the house is the original wall of irregular stone alaba bordered on each side by boxwood and blooming shrubs. The garden with its flowers and shrubs is at the rear of the house. An ancient lilac blooms there and an apple tree which is said to have borne fruit in 100 years, still flourishes.

Many notable guests have visited there, and accounts of travelers who enjoyed the hospitality of the old house are preserved in the diaries of distinguished people who passed that way. Among them were Brother Martin Schneider, a Moravian missionary; Bishop Francis Ashury, John Revler, Andrew Jackson; Andrew Michaux, a French botanist; and others who testified to the gracious manner in which they were welcomed to this home.