

JONES & HERRIN

Architecture/Interior Design

August 1, 1994

C. 1830 Houston Library Board
Athens, Alabama

Dear Board Members:

The circa 1830 Houston House and its mid-19th century portico are important and increasingly rare survivors of North Alabama's vanishing early 19th century architecture. Just in Limestone and Madison Counties, I know of at least twenty early 19th century buildings that have been lost in just the past twenty years. At this rate there will be few left in another twenty years, since there were not many to begin with in 1974. It is therefore most important to cherish and preserve these rare survivors such as the Houston House, so that they can continue to help us understand the present by helping us understand the past. This is the most important function of historic buildings. Psychologists have observed that people living in all-new towns have more psychological problems, apparently because their towns have no history, as expressed in historic buildings. The result is a sort of cultural amnesia. Therefore historic buildings are important even to people who think they "don't care about history".

Our firm has since 1970 restored well over 600 historic structures in four states, dating from as early as 1795. Many of these are clapboarded houses similar to the Houston House. We have never applied plastic siding to any of these, since ordinary, careful scraping, sanding and proper priming is all that is needed.

If a house is repainted about every 6 or 7 years, the preparation costs should be minimal. When my wife and I bought our 1929 painted house in 1986 the paint was long-neglected, peeling and generally in bad condition. With the proper preparation that our painter gave to it (in 1987), the house had no peeling seven years later. We repainted in 1994 to freshen the colors and to keep the paint in good shape. The "preparation" work after 7 years was negligible.

I've talked to numerous persons who said they "can't keep paint on their house". In the numerous such cases where I've looked at the subject house I've found that the wood had been allowed to oxidize, due initially to poor paint-maintenance (i.e. many years between paintings) and then poor preparation of the wood surface when repainting finally was done. Oxidation is the gray film that is seen on the surface of weathered wood. This film is essentially dirt, and no paint of any quality will adhere to dirt. The gray film can easily be scraped off with the finger nail, so it is common sense that no paint will stick to it. The exposed-wood spots with gray film must be sanded off down to "bright" wood. Then the bare wood spots must be primed with oil base primer. Latex paint will not stick to bare wood. This is the second error I've seen frequently. Good latex is o.k. for the second coat, but not the primer.

If the paint encrustation is thick, the paint edges at chipped areas should be "feathered" with sandpaper after scraping. If the old paint is dirty, it must be cleaned before being repainted. If heavily-weathered, it must be reprimed. If flaking, it must be scraped, feather-edged and spot-primed with oil base primer, per above.

It is more trouble to properly prepare a neglected surface than to simply slap on a new coat (or spray it on, another technical no-no. Paint must be "brushed-in" for a good job). Therefore it is all-important to get a painter who will conscientiously do the proper preparation on a neglected surface. If bids are required,

the specifications must be specific and clear and the work must be inspected frequently by the owner as to compliance. There are many "inexpensive" painters who won't bother with good preparation. These are the most expensive painters you can hire, since their paint will quickly fail. These painters are the most effective "salesmen" for plastic siding.

Spraying of paint should not be done. The paint will not get worked into crevices as it will if "brushed-in". Since spraying has "spray-shadows", no paint at all will get on the "shadow" areas. If the nozzle is not held and adjusted properly the paint will be partially dry before it ever hits the surface.

Water-blast and sand-blast must not be done. These erode the soft areas of the wood-grain, leaving a heavily-striated, damaged surface. Water-blast impregnates the wood with moisture, causing more peeling immediately.

It should be remembered that plastic siding is also not "permanent". About 20 years seems to be its maximum useful life, with some splitting and cracking before then. Plastic siding gives a building a cheap, mechanical and flimsy look. The slight variations of alignment and surface of historic wooden clapboards are the "patina" that give them a humane appearance, just as true oriental rugs are imperfect in alignment and color, and cheap machine-made false-oriental rugs are mechanically "perfect", and therefore dull.

There are always places for water to get behind plastic siding, typically at house corners, window jambs and door jambs. Condensation can also occur behind thin plastic siding. This moisture is then trapped behind the plastic, causing rot of the historic wood components. I have been involved in the removal of artificial siding from two historic houses. There was significant moisture damage on both due to the entrapment of moisture behind the artificial siding, about 20% rotted surface in one case.

Even with proper preparation, some between-painting peeling can usually be expected to result if the paint is thickly encrusted and "alligatored". This should be accepted as part of the character of a historic house. Visually, this is to be preferred to the cheap appearance imparted by plastic siding, and the probability of causing hidden deterioration behind the plastic.

Attached are several items that relate to plastic siding and the painting of historic buildings. I hope these are helpful to your Board in the continuing preservation of the historic Houston (House) Library .

Respectfully,



Harvie P. Jones, FAIA
HPJ/tm

cc: HJ

attachments

JONES & HERRIN

Architecture/Interior Design

Written for c. 1830
H. M. Jones H. M. Jones
R. Herrin R. Herrin
OK.

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

EXTERIOR REPAINTING OF & ATTENDANT MINOR REPAIRS TO HISTORIC BUILDINGS

August 8, 1994

1. During preparation for painting, check for decayed wood, either on the surface or in the framing. If decayed portions are found, replace only the decayed portions rather than, for example, removing and replacing a 15 foot plank or mould when only 2 or 3 feet of it is decayed. The reasons are: (1) the object of "historic preservation" is to preserve all of the original historic material and work that is possible to do. A replicated mould, no matter how accurate, is only a modern replica, and is not "historic" in material, workmanship, nails, etc. (2) old wood, particularly that of c. 1800 to 1900, is far more decay and insect resistant than any new wood. Even "treated wood" or "heart redwood" will not last as well as most 19th century heart pine, poplar etc. Therefore slightly-decayed 19th century heartwood components have been observed to far-outlast modern poplar or white pine replacements. "New" is frequently not "better", especially in wood.

If missing or decayed exterior wood components must be replaced in part, it is economically foolish to not use the most decay-resistant woods available, since most of the cost is in fabrication, installation and painting. If available, use salvaged 19th century heart pine or heart poplar. To recognize these, heart pine is dense-grained and full of glistening resin, so that if you break off a splinter, it glistens inside as if it was full of varnish. Heart poplar is a gray-green color inside, throughout. If whitish wood is seen in the poplar, this is sapwood and is not "heart" and has no decay resistance. The writer knows of no "all-heart" pine or poplar available in forests today. Beware of lumberyards that say they have it. All so-advertised "heart poplar" observed has contained copious amounts of whitish sapwood.

Next in decay resistance to all-heart 19th century pine or poplar is modern "clear all-heart" grade redwood or "clear all-heart" grade Honduras mahogany. "All-heart" redwood is a rusty color throughout. If any whitish wood is observed, this is sapwood and has no decay resistance. The stamped grade should be "clear all-heart". Honduras mahogany also should not contain whitish wood for the same reason. Both of these woods are from "rain forest" trees and it is a shame to have to use them, but if proper salvage wood is not available there is no known alternative for decay-resistant exterior finish-quality millable wood for the repair of historic buildings.

Do not use "finger-joint" redwood. All of it contains much white sapwood. "Pressure-treated pine" is good for framing repairs but is not suitable for mouldings, siding etc. since it is wide-grained, subject to warping and splitting, and has many knots.

Replicated wood moulds, clapboard etc. should accurately replicate the original shape, thickness and size. A frequently-seen defect in replications is moulding corners and edges that are "soft" in profile (when the corners of the original mould shape are sharp), or replica shapes that only approximate the original. Look at the end of a cut piece of original mould to see the wood shape without the distorting effect of the thick paint coating, which makes sharp corners look rounded.

In replacing decayed mouldings, do not use "stock" modern moulds that are "sorta-like" the original. Many contractors and millwork houses are equipped to easily and accurately replicate the original shape if it is made clear to them that this is the objective. A short sample of the replicated mould should be carefully compared to the original cross-section to "proof" that the replication is accurate, before accepting the new moulds.

Check glazing-putty at sashes. Frequently this will be cracked and perhaps loose. Carefully remove all decayed putty, being careful to not break the historic glass, which if hand blown (c.1800 to 1870) is thin, fragile, easily broken and irreplaceable. Modern replicas of this glass cost about \$14 each for a small pane.

Gently sand off any gray weathered wood that is on the wood glazing-surfaces. Prime the "bright" wood with oil base (not latex) primer before installing the new glazing compound. Use "first line" glazing compound, and paint it with oil base primer when cured. Do not remove old sound glazing compound.

2. Scrape all exterior painted wood thoroughly to remove all loose paint. Follow all applicable safety regulations regarding paint-dust, breathing protection, and collection and disposed of paint-scrapings, etc. Existing paint that is firmly adhered can remain, and need not be removed.
3. No sand-blast or water-blast shall be used to remove old paint. These techniques greatly harm the wood surface by eating away the soft layers of the wood-grain, leaving a heavily striated surface, fuzzed wood surfaces, and destroyed fine details such as beaded edges on clapboards, moulding corners etc. Water-blast impregnates the wood with water, causing additional paint peeling as the water later works its way out of the wood, creating an endless cycle of spraying and more peeling.

The writer has seen two clapboard houses virtually destroyed by water-blast, one with 1/8 inch deep trenches etched into the clapboard and the other with deeply etched-out and fuzzed soft wood-grain throughout. The "spray-and-peel" cycle has also been observed.

No torches shall be used to remove old paint. Torching old paint (1) vaporizes the lead fumes, possibly giving lead-poisoning to the operator, and (2) invariably sets the building on fire, usually 2 or 3 hours after the crew has left the job, by starting an unseen smoldering fire to bird or squirrel nest straw that is hidden inside the wall or roof-eave. The fire flares up later when no one is around to notice it. The writer knows of four specific cases where this has happened, and heard of many others.

If it is desired to remove all the old paint, remember that this also "removes" the entire paint history of the historic building exterior. It is always desirable to leave history traces for those in the future.

The only techniques known to the writer to completely remove old paint with reasonable safety are hot-air blowers and heat-plates made to keep the temperature low enough to not vaporize lead or to set straw etc. on fire. This technique is slow and therefore costly. Another product is "Peel-Away" and similar strippers, but the chemical "pH" must be balanced upon completion to avoid

further problems. Fuzzed wood surfaces can also result. The most cost-effective way of preparation is usually properly-done scraping etc. as outlined herein.

4. Sand to "feather-edge" (bevel) all edges of remaining thick paint film that are next to bare wood. Do not sand channels into the wood faces, or sand into details such as clapboard beads or moulding profiles.
5. Lightly sand the faces of all exposed gray weathered wood, back down to expose the "bright" wood faces. This thin gray film is oxidized wood, which is essentially dirt and can be easily scraped off with the fingernail. No paint will stick to "dirt", so it is essential to sand down to bright wood wherever the old paint film is gone. The failure to remove oxidized gray wood-film is the single greatest cause of so-called "paint failure" when in fact it is "preparation failure". Most old wood surfaces have this gray film, even under paint, for usually the wood has been allowed to weather gray at some point in the past, and was then painted-over without proper preparation. The result is cracked and peeled new paint, usually within 2 years, even if "first-line" paint is used.

Vibrating sanders and small hand-held belt sanders have been observed to work well without damage to the wood. Hand-sanding is best when the areas are not extensive.
6. Clean and spot-prime the newly-sanded exposed bright-wood areas with "first-line" quality oil base primer. Do not put latex paint on bare wood. It is not formulated to stick to bare wood and is another observed cause of "paint failure" (which is "application failure").
7. Clean all the old paint surfaces. Re-prime the old paint surfaces as a general rule, depending on the condition of the old paint film.
8. Paint one or two more coats (in addition to the primer coat), to achieve good coverage, using "first-line" quality paint. All paint companies have a "maintenance grade" paint, which is lower quality than "first-line". No "maintenance grade" paint shall be used.

Application shall be by brush, thoroughly brushing-in the paint to get it into all cracks and crevices, under clapboard edges etc.

No spray or roller application shall be used. Spraying involves "spray-shadows" wherein no paint gets into the shadow area, (typically cracks and under and behind edges of boards). Rollers have the same problem. With spraying, the paint is sometimes partially dry even before it hits the surface if the nozzle or spray-distance is not "just right". "Brushing-in" is the most effective way to achieve complete coverage of all surfaces including irregularities, cracks, edges, etc. A brushed texture is also the historically correct surface for historic buildings.
9. The above "scrape, sand and spot-prime" technique, properly done, on old peeled and weathered surfaces, with well-brushed-in "first line" paint, has been observed by the writer to easily last 6 to 8 years with little or no peeling. The writer has observed poorly prepared surfaces to resume extensive peeling in less than two years. Good (and proper) preparation and application are the most important aspects of repainting neglected and weathered historic building exteriors, in order for "good paint" to perform up to its technical capability.

10. Metal components, if rusty, shall have the rust removed, before cleaning and priming with rust-resistant oil-base primer. Terne-metal or galvanized metal roofs or gutters shall be cleaned with stiff natural fiber brushes, not steel brushes which will cut through the thin rust-protective coating of "terne" alloy or galvanized zinc, allowing the bare iron or steel sheet to rust even faster. After brushing the rust off with natural-fiber brushes, wipe the surface with mineral spirits and soft rags to remove the rust-dust.

Large metal areas such as roofs shall be painted with rust-resistant "long-oil" first-line paint systems. "Long-oil" systems have greater film flexibility than standard paint systems for metal, and this is essential to keep the paint film from peeling off the metal as the metal expands and contracts in sun and temperature variations.

A frequent preparation defect seen in the painting of new galvanized metal is failure to clean off the mill-oil film before priming. The new paint is guaranteed to peel off in sheets within a couple of years in such cases. The primer for galvanized metal shall be a "rust-resistant" formulation for that purpose.

11. Galvanized gutters shall be cleaned and painted three coats inside as well as outside. Galvanizing is thin and new gutters will rust-out in about 14 years if left unpainted on the inside. If properly painted and kept painted they will last many years.

Do no remove original roof-cornice moulds to install new "ogee" gutters (a frequently-seen case). Keep the historic moulds and install slung half-round gutters and round downspouts of painted galvanized metal (or better, painted 16 oz, copper). This was a frequent 19th century type. An alternative is the installation of "Boston" or "Philadelphia" gutters that lie on and flash into the roof about a foot from the eave (see attachment). Many 19th century houses were built with concealed gutters sunk into the roof behind the cornices. These invariably leak and cause extensive damage to the wooden roof cornice. For the sake of preserving the historic wooden cornice it is better to forsake this original but technically harmful detail and use either a Boston gutter or slung half-round gutter. Most historic concealed gutters were covered and abandoned decades ago because of the still-unsolved leaking problem and the subsequent cornice decay.

12. Where possible, replace rusted-out metal parts with painted copper or painted terne-coated stainless steel. While the metal cost is more than galvanized iron, the life is many decades, as opposed to usually 15 to 20 years for galvanized iron. There are "long-oil" paint systems designed for both copper and terne-coated metals.



Harvie P. Jones, FAIA

JONES & HERRIN

Architecture/Interior Design

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON CIRCA 1830 HOUSTON HOUSE (AND LIBRARY) 101 NORTH HOUSTON STREET ATHENS, ALABAMA 35611

SEPTEMBER 6, 1994

The following preliminary notes are based on three brief site visits of about 3 hours total in August and September of 1994 by Harvie P. Jones, FAIA, prepared as a civic effort to assist the Houston Library Board in better understanding the architectural nature and history of the Houston House, its present technical condition and some suggested improvements. These preliminary notes should not be considered as a detailed "historic structure report", but should nevertheless be of some assistance to the Board in the continued preservation of this fine Federal Period house, the home of Governor George S. Houston, and now a library and museum serving the City of Athens.

A. APPARENT HISTORY OF CONFIGURATION CHANGES IN THE HOUSE

1. The primary sources for this preliminary study are the Sanborn Company maps of 1884, 1899, 1905, 1910, 1921 and 1932; and three site visits, including examinations in the attics and basement. The history is most clearly summarized on the accompanying sketches that show the apparent plans and perspective views at various periods. The initial indications of the various additions and removals are mutually supported by observations and by the Sanborn maps.
2. The original frame house was a Federal Period two-story gable-roofed hall-and-parlor plan (no center-hall) of two large ($\pm 18'$ square) rooms per floor, the north "hall" room containing the still-extant open Federal Period corner-ell stair in its S.W. corner.

The original house thus contained only the front four rooms, two per floor, and either no portico (some Federal Period houses had none, such as the 1820's "Woodlawn" House near Florence and the 1830's Chadwick House in Huntsville); or else a small one-story portico, perhaps similar to the 1828 Shackleford-McMahon House in Courtland. The two-story portico came later, probably when the Federal Period N.W. wing was added, because the atypical saw-marks on the framing of the added N.W. Federal Period wing and the portico attic are the same. The evidence that the two-level portico is later (but still Federal Period) is abundant. The strongest evidence is in the attics. The front slope of the house roof-deck, which is wide, pit-sawn, bark-edged slab-planks typical of The Federal Period, is continuous across the portico attic space, and shingle-nails are still present on the house roof-deck boards that are now inside the portico attic. There would be no shingle nails here if a portico second-floor had been originally present, and typically no roof-deck boards either.

The present 2-level portico was, per evidence, added a little later but still in the Federal style and period. The door which opens from the second floor S.E. room to the portico upper level appears to be added, but is Federal in design. Its frame chops through the dado panels at an unplanned location. The +.8 inch-wide bottom of the portico roof architrave indicates that the top of the portico columns were also 8 inches in diameter or in square. This second (but early) two-level portico probably, and typically, would have originally had four small wooden columns per floor, or eight total, usually of Tuscan design, in the manner of typical Federal Period houses such as the 1829 Dancey-Polk House in Decatur and the 1825 Cedarhurst House in Huntsville. The present "grand-order" tall, thick, boxed two story columns are of a

later period and probably were added by Governor Houston after c.1845, when he moved into the house, to "modernize" it in the then-fashionable classical style, (inspired by the Roman and Greek revivals).

It is possible that the modillioned cornices of the present (second) portico are reused from the original one-story portico, as is the south cornice of the rear shed addition reused from the Federal Period addition south cornice. The portico modillions and frieze decorations appear to exactly match the original cornice, unlike the mismatched later modillions at the added (mid-19th century or later) gable-eave returns.

Another indication that the 2-level portico is a later modification is that the main roof fascia, modillions and frieze continue straight through the intersection with the present portico cornice, and continue under the portico across the front of the house. This makeshift arrangement of the portico cornice butting against the continuous main roof cornice clearly indicates the later addition of the portico second-floor roof.

The Sanborn maps and the brick piers in the basement indicate that there was originally a one-story back verandah which probably extended the full width of the back of the hall and parlor of the original house, a typical configuration of the Federal Period.

The roof cornice of the original house is neatly modillioned in the manner of many Federal Period houses, such as c.1825 "Cedarhurst" and the 1819 Weeden House in Huntsville. This feature was continued on the slightly later Federal Period north-west wing addition on the south cornice facing the side street, but a plain cornice was used on the north "back-yard" side.

The "hall" would typically have been separated from the "parlor" by a normal \pm 3' wide door. The modern trim on the present \pm 12' wide opening indicates that this wide opening is a modern modification for the 20th century library remodeling.

The Victorian 4-panel door leading to the vaguely Italianate one-story north wing addition from the "hall" was accommodated by cutting out the sill and spandrel of the Federal Period north-west window and fitting the door into it. The Federal Period trim (and chopped, paneled dado) remain.

The floors are now covered with modern narrow oak, but the original \pm 6" wide, thick (5/4") wood floors remain under the oak. The oak can, with care, be easily removed if the house is ever restored, to expose the original floors.

The Federal Period ell stair in the "hall" room appears to be completely original, with typical Tuscan colonette newels, thin jigsaw scrolls at the tread end-skirts, slim rectangular balusters, two per tread, and a round slim handrail of about 2 inches diameter. The bottom edge of the skirt-board is beaded. The paneled dado and chair-rail run up the slope of the stair, with parallelogram panels to fit the stair slope. The entire bottom run of the stair has a paneled triangular wall under the skirtboard which encloses a small closet under the stair bottom-run.

The paneled dado (wainscot) which remains in at least the "hall" and the second floor south "parlor-chamber" (couldn't see for bookshelves in the "parlor") are fairly rare survivors. The first floor N.W. Federal Period addition has a simpler flush-board dado below the chair rail. The "hall-chamber" was heavily remodeled and divided as an apartment earlier in this century. Part of the original west second-floor wall was removed, a bathroom was inserted and three other rooms were created. This Federal Period space may also have had the paneled dado.



Some original sashes remain, as attested by their typical Federal Period muntin-profile joints and hand-blown glass, while many are 20th century, as evidenced by their modern muntin profile , and unpegged joints. Many of the sashes retain the wooden turn-latches used to



hold the sliding bottom sash in the "up" position, an item seen in numerous Federal Period houses. While rope-and-weight "hung" sashes existed in c.1830 they were obviously a rarity in Alabama. The top halves of the sashes were typically "fixed" in place, with the bottom sash sliding up against it (no "parting-beads") to provide ventilation. The panes are 10"x12", the most common Federal Period size, with a few being 8"x10" in other houses.

The first floor Federal Period sashes are 9/9, and most of those on the second floor are 9/6 (a few, which are later modifications, are 6/6). There were many combinations in houses of this period. Some others were 12/12, 12/9, 9/12, 6/9, 9/6 and 6/6 etc.

A circa 1930's photograph in the Athens archives (copy attached) shows no windows in the north wall of the second floor "hall chamber", where there are now two 9/6 windows. The frames of these two windows are Federal Period but the sashes are of 20th century details (as are most of the sashes). Therefore these sash frames were apparently relocated from the Federal Period rooms where sashes had been covered by later additions. Similar examples are at the second floor shed-room 20th century addition to the N.W. Federal Period addition, where both south-wall frames are reused Federal, and one of the sashes is Federal as well. Federal sashes and frames are easily distinguished from 20th century examples by their mould shapes, joinery, glass, paint buildup and wear-marks.

The exterior blinds have adjustable blades on their bottom half, and through-mortise-tenon-and-peg joints. They may or may not be the originals, since blinds are subject to strong forces of weathering and thus frequently have been replaced. These blinds are probably at least pre-1860, based on their joinery.

The clapboards on both the Federal Period portions of the house are bottom-beaded, typical of many houses of the period. The exposure is generally 5 to 6 inches and varies \pm 2" in a pleasing casual manner, also typical. The Federal Period framing is about 2 feet on centers (also slightly random) typical of the Federal Period.

All of the window and door frames (interior and exterior) have beaded-edge and backbanded face trims of 5 to 6 inches wide, in the Federal Period manner. Many Federal Period 6-panel doors remain, and at least 2 Federal Period iron and brass rimlocks. Other small rimlocks are Victorian replacements, with the outline traces of the larger Federal Period lock still visible on the door.

The second and present two-level portico roof cornice is modillioned like the main roof. See pages 1 and 2 for notes on this second portico. The narrow (approximately 8 inches wide) bottom of the portico roof architrave (beam) would typically indicate that the top-thickness of the original columns was also about 8 inches, strongly supporting the probability that the present \pm 18 inch square, heavy two-story columns are c.1845 or later modernizations which replaced the previous small two tiers of Federal Period columns. A hallmark of the Federal Period is lightness and delicacy. By the mid 19th century this was out of style and many "old fashioned" Federal Period houses were updated by remodeling or adding heavy classical-revival temple-style porticos. A nearby example, of several in Athens, is the c.1824 Vining-Vasser-Lovvorn House, whose later heavy grand-order temple style portico was an effort to update the delicate Federal Period detailing and proportions of the house. In the case of the Houston House, only the columns were changed to the mid 19th century heavy two-story style.

The portico second level has side balustrades whose balusters are criss-crossing, slight "s", thin sticks. These are not typical for c.1830 and seem more likely to be mid-19th century together with the later heavy wood portico columns. The front balustrade at the portico has turned-wood balusters which have the flavor of a still later c.1890-1900 update.

A few bottom-beaded clapboards have been replaced with square-edge clapboards due to repairs and remodelings, but most remain.

The three exposed end-chimneys on the Federal Period wings appear to be original except for the caps, which may be thin concrete (perhaps stone) instead of the typical Federal Period brick corbeling of 3 to 5 projecting courses in various patterns. The chimney shoulders have two brick courses projecting about 1 inch at the shoulder-bottoms, and the corbeled shoulders slope up at about 60 degrees from the horizontal. The N.E. and S.E. upper flue-stacks stand away from the clapboard gables by about 12 inches, for fire safety. All these features are typical of the early 19th century. The top stack of the N.W. chimney as been rebuilt with clumsy workmanship, and its masonry flue incorrectly rebuilt tight against the gable clapboards, increasing the probability of rot and fires. This should be correctly rebuilt to match the other chimneys, whose stacks stand clear of the gables.

The gables contain modern triangular slatted vents. Attic vents were not needed with wood-shingle roofs, which this house had per the attic evidence, because the wood shingles allowed plenty of air circulation between their uneven surfaces and overlaps.

A few hand-rived and drawknifed wood roof-shingles remain in the attic. A metal roof of perhaps c.1900 is visible in the attic, under the present composition shingles.

The gables also have \pm 12" wide projecting eaves, and wide frieze-boards below the eaves, atypical for the Federal Period. There are horizontal eave-returns of about 3 feet at each gable, another feature not normally seen in the Federal Period. These features are c.1845 or later additions as demonstrated by these items:

- a. The modillions at the returns are slightly larger than those on the front cornice, are cut from two pieces of wood jammed together rather than the one-piece modillions on the front, and lack the small surrounding mould seen at the front modillions.
- b. A joint in the soffit at the corner shows that the original cornice stopped even with the gable, typical of the Federal Period. The cornice and soffit now extend about a foot past the gable.
- c. The gable clapboards, behind the wide gable frieze-board are painted, showing that the frieze-boards were added.
- d. The delicate scroll-sawn frieze present at the front cornice does not wrap around the corner with the "returns", as it would if the returns were original.
- e. The gable frieze-boards are not beaded on the bottom, and simply lap over the clapboard gable in a make-do fashion.

Typical Federal Period practice was "clipped-eave" or "flush eave" gables with no overhang, just a narrow tapered rake-fascia, typically bottom-beaded, running up the slope of the roof and covering the top edges of the gable clapboards.

It seems likely that the added gable vents, extended gable-eaves, wide frieze boards and cornice returns were put on in circa 1845 or later along with the large portico columns, a time when such things were the fashion. However, if these features were added, they were probably added by Governor Houston and should be kept.

The initial suspicion was that the N.W. two story wing, while clearly Federal in its detailing, was an early addition. Clues were the vertical joint in the north wall clapboards between the "hall chamber" north wall and the north wall of the N.W. wing, as well as a step-down from the "hall" room into the N.W. wing. This suspicion was confirmed by a later visit to the attic. Inside the attic, the rafters, roof-deck planks and shingle-nails are still on the west slope of "hall-chamber" roof, inside the attic of the N.W. wing, proving that the attic of the N.W. wing later covered this once-exposed roof.

The N.W. Federal Period addition originally consisted of a large single room on each floor, each about 25x21 feet. The top room was later cut into several spaces in forming part of a 20th century apartment (see plan sketches attached). The Sanborn maps and site clues (brick piers in the basement, exterior joints in clapboards etc.) indicate there was a one story shed, (originally an open porch based on the presence of clapboards and a window-trace now inside the shed) about 10 feet deep along the room's south edge which formed a one-story ell porch with the remnant of the original rear verandah. The floor framing and floor planks under the first floor of this shed are Federal in their dimensions, spacing, and tool marks ($\pm 3"$ thick pit-sawn joists about 2 feet on centers, with some hewn faces, and wide floor planks). The Sanborn maps show (and site clues support) that this south shed of the N.W. wing was one story until 1921 and two-story in 1932. When it was made two-story, the modillioned roof-cornice from the N.W. wing south eave was apparently moved south to form the present cornice of the two-story shed. The present rafters of this roof shed are clearly 20th century in their narrow width and less-aged wood. However the ceiling joists at the roof level are early 19th century per their squarish proportions. Apparently the Federal Period roof-joists were raised up and reused when the shed was made two-story, just as the modillioned cornice was relocated and reused at the new shed-room south wall.

It was not unusual to reuse building components. The writer has restored a c.1810 house in Savannah, Georgia whose framing and flooring were obviously entirely reused from a still-earlier building.

The two south second-floor sash frames in the 1921-1932 shed addition are Federal 9/6, shifted south to the new shed wall from their original location in the south wall of the N.W. Federal Period addition's second floor. The eastern sash of these two is modern, but the frame is Federal Period. The western sash of these two is Federal per its mould profiles, joinery, etc.

On the high west wall of the c.1921-1932 second floor of the shed are some Federal Period beaded clapboards, also presumably reused from the now-enclosed south wall of the Federal Period N.W. wing. The other clapboards on this wall are later square-edged.

The two-story shed has a stair whose detailing is consistent with 1921-1932 which, per the Sanborn maps, is when the second floor shed room was added. The door and window trims here are plain square-edged planks also typical of the 20th century.

While a closer "under the finishes" examination is needed to verify all of the above, this now appears to be the likely sequence.

The Federal Period N.W. wing has a plain roof cornice, on the "back yard" north side, while the south cornice and frieze is nicely modillioned and decorated since it faces the street to the south. This practice of putting the fancy cornices on the public sides and the plain ones in the back yard is common. Another such example is at the 1819 Weeden House in Huntsville.

The 1894 Sanborn map shows three outbuildings to the north and west of the Federal Period house, which may have been Federal Period service buildings (kitchen, servants, carriage house etc.). These disappear on the 1921 map, to be replaced by two different outbuildings, also now gone. The 1932 map shows two more different outbuildings, now gone. Usually, building foundations can be found in the soil, and it would be desirable to see if any of these remain (7 different structures at different times) and what they might reveal. The Huntsville Archaeological Society might be of help. Since this was a governor's house, the state or the University of Alabama archaeologists might be of help. One outbuilding shows in a c.1930's photograph of the house (copy attached).

3. The 1894-1921 Sanborn maps all show a north tee-shaped large one story wing, whose north stem projects about 50 feet into the north yard, beyond the remaining part of this Victorian addition. This long projection disappears between the 1921 and 1932 maps. Surely some photographs or memories of it remain. An effort to recover these clues should be made. A joint in the north wall clapboards of the Victorian wing shows where the long north wing once joined the house.

4. The remnant of the Victorian north wing is of a slight Italianate character except for the low, almost flat roof line necessitated by the adjacent window sills of the Federal Period second floor rooms. It has two bay windows, paired windows of a tall, slender proportion, thick vertical center-muntins and tall glass panes. The doors are 4-paneled Victorian. It appears likely that this pre-1894 (Sanborn map) wing was built circa 1870-85, without a more detailed examination of its framing etc.

5. The 1910 Sanborn map shows the addition of a wrap-around one-story verandah across the front and north end of the original house, flanking the original portico. Such long one story verandahs flanking earlier two-story porticos were a frequent turn-of-the century device. A similar extant one is "Winston Place" in Valley Head, although the flanking verandahs are two-story. This verandah remains on the last Sanborn map of 1932. Traces of it are obvious on the house today: The bottom three clapboards have been replaced where the new verandah floor caused the removal of the Federal Period bottom clapboards. Paint and flashing traces and patches are seen at the portico pilasters where the added verandah roof was joined to the portico second floor.

Since this verandah was there until at least 1932, photographs and memories of it surely are to be found. Two c.1930's photographs are in the Athens archives (copy attached).

6. Between 1910 and 1921, a long, front one-story verandah was added to the Victorian north one-story wing mentioned at 3, and the north ell portion of the verandah described at 5 was removed, per the Sanborn maps. On the 1932 map, both the long north wing and its front verandah have disappeared.

7. The 1894-1905 Sanborn Maps show the S.W. rear Federal Period ell porch as being one-story and (by 1894) enclosed to form shed rooms. That it was originally an open porch is proven by the presence of beaded Federal Period clapboard and two boarded-up window openings inside these shed rooms that originally were the exterior walls of the Federal Period "parlor" (S.E. room) and the N.W. Federal Period addition. That the ell porch was Federal Period is indicated by the Federal Period type framing, saw-marks, flooring, and piers that can be seen in the basement under the ell. The 1910 map throws some confusion on this, but since all the other maps are consistent it appears that the 1910 map is just drawn

somewhat out of scale. The 1910 and 1921 maps appear to show that the previously enclosed N.W. leg of the ell has been reopened as a porch, with the 1921 map indicating a new S.E. leg of the ell as a porch added to the rear of the previously-enclosed S.E. porch leg - a situation seen in other houses such as the 1819 Weeden House in Huntsville where a 20th century rear porch was added onto the then-enclosed Federal Period rear porch.

On the 1932 map the present square S.W. rear porch appears, and the configuration of the house is as it appears in 1994 except that the flanking one-story c.1905-1910 verandahs then remain by the front portico. Between 1921 and 1932 the one-story shed room south of the Federal Period N.W. addition has been made two-story, incorporating the Federal Period reused cornice from the south eave of the Federal Period addition, as well as some reused beaded Federal Period clapboards and ceiling joists from the previously one-story shed below.

8. The most intact room is the original "parlor chamber" (2nd floor S.E. room). This is the only room retaining its Federal Period mantel, as well as most other elements (doors, hardware, paneled dado, trim, Federal Period sash).

9. The "parlor" (first floor S.E. room) contains a beautiful late Victorian cast-iron mantel, perhaps 1870-1885, that still has its painted marbeling and granitizing decoration. This survival is quite rare, since most have been painted-over. This mantel should be kept and protected.

The "hall" contains a Victorian mantel which is fronted by bookshelves and could not be seen except in distant profile.

The N.W. Federal Period rooms have no extant mantels, nor does the "hall chamber". (Second floor north room).

B. TECHNICAL NOTES

1. Soil buildup around the foundation of the house is ponding water (roof runoff and rain) against the foundation, the usual situation in old houses. This trapped water has nowhere to go except into the porous brick of the foundation and chimneys, where it then seeps upward into the wooden main sills, causing serious and costly main-sill-repairs. This situation is easy to correct by lowering the yard around the house so the water runs away from the house on all sides. Caution: Don't take the easy route of filling soil around the base of the house to provide drainage. This visually "lowers" the house even more than 160 plus years of soil buildup has accomplished, and also gives the water a shorter path to reach the main wood sills and clapboards. Typically, a 150 year old house has 6 to 12 inches of later soil buildup around it in the yard. This buildup is due both to decayed vegetation and to added topsoil over the decades.

2. Water is running directly into the basement. A modern unobtrusive, low-sloped scuttle-door (painted like the brick color) would prevent this, in addition to items B/1.

3. The original wooden drip-eave roof cornice moulds have been discarded in order to mount modern flat-backed ogee metal gutters on the cornices, an unfortunate usual modern action. The original cornices should be replicated. "Boston gutters" that mount on top of the roof can be installed to not disturb the lines of the roof cornice (detail attached). The downspouts should be round, with mitered corners, not rectangular with curved "sweeps". For durability, the Boston gutters and round downspouts should be painted copper, not galvanized iron (which now lasts only 6 to 12 years due to thin galvanizing, unless kept painted inside the gutters).

4. The rear and later portions of the house originally sat on brick piers of about 3 feet wide, spaced 6 or 8 feet apart, typical of frame houses of the 19th century. At some point, probably in the 20th century by the appearance and color of the brick as seen on their unpainted faces in the basement, brick infill panels (probably just 1 brick thick) were added between the piers to close in the foundation. Perhaps this was done when the small basement was dug to house the heavy old disused cast-iron boiler. These brick panels have now sagged outward in several locations so that there is a ledge of brick projecting out from the bottom of the clapboards. These ledges catch water and trap it under the clapboards and wood main-sills, causing decay of the sills and clapboards. The brick panels probably have rotated due to either inadequate or no foundations, a typical situation. These water-traps need to be corrected.

The original front part of the house had solid brick foundation walls instead of piers, with \pm 4 foot wide gaps (now bricked-in) for wooden-bar foundation vents (see extant examples at the 1819 Weeden House in Huntsville). Some of these walls are tilted outward and are catching rainwater, and should be corrected.

5. The condition of all exterior wood surfaces, sashes, glazing putty trims, doors, cornices etc. should be checked, repaired, properly prepared for painting, and repainted. See Harvie Jones' notes of August 1994.

6. Roofs were not observed in this brief survey. Check all roofs and flashings and properly repair. Check the near-flat Victorian and 20th century roofs in particular. Remember that most "roof leaks" prove to instead be flashing leaks.

7. The attic contains no insulation. While this is healthy for the wood, the attic is well-ventilated and insulation could be added (vapor barrier on the bottom, not the top) to reduce energy costs without significant moisture danger to the wood.

8. The crawl space also contains no insulation, but the thick wood floors provide all the insulation there that would be cost-effective.

9. The three Federal Period main floor rooms are filled with heavy bookshelves which are greatly over stressing and sagging the floor-joists. This problem needs correction by either reducing the load on the floors, or additional proper support of the floor-joists.

10. The clapboard, stud, wood-lath and plaster exterior walls probably contain no insulation, but none should be installed. "Blown" insulation provides no warm-side vapor barrier, so this method causes winter moisture condensation inside the walls, thus causing increased paint-peeling (when the moisture vaporizes in the spring heat and pushes off the exterior paint) and rotting of the framing and clapboards. Walls are a minor source of heat-loss in a building, compared with roofs and cracks at windows and doors.

11. A state-standard cast metal historic marker should be placed near the street to inform passers-by of the history and importance of this house, both as early architecture and as the house of Governor Houston.

12. It is suggested that the present highly-intrusive handicapped ramp at the portico be relocated to the north door or to the S.W. rear porch where it would be more conveniently located to proposed handicapped parking to be just west of the northwest wing. The Americans With Disabilities Act has provisions for National Register historic buildings that do not demand that such intrusive items be at the

front door, and the north side location would in fact better serve the handicapped by being closer to their proposed parking spaces.

The ramp and railing design should be neat, unobtrusive, and in keeping with the house. Harvie Jones will be happy to review its proposed design.

C. SUMMARY

A sketch of the probable original Federal Period appearance of the porticos and "clipped" gable eaves is attached. It would be interesting to investigate inside one of the later large columns to see what earlier evidences remain of the original small columns. However, since the present columns and extended gable-eaves were probably added by Governor Houston it would be proper to retain them. The 20th century concrete floor and steps at the portico could in good conscience be restored to wide (5/4x6) wood flooring with neat, finished, closed-riser wood steps in the c.1830's (and 1845) manner.

Long-term goals should be set for the preservation and best use of this historic house. At the moment it serves as an ad-hoc library and museum. The ground-floor rooms are completely filled with (and obscured by) book shelves, which are over-stressing and sagging the floors. The second floor rooms remain a makeshift apartment with added walls (and removed original walls). Modern oak flooring conceals the still-in-place early 19th century flooring. The "hall" south wall has been chopped-out to open it into the "parlor", for library purposes.

One long-range plan would be to construct a visually harmonious north wing for the library, and restore the house to its mid-19th century configuration as the museum

While a compatible use for a restored historic house is never easy to devise, the attempt should be made. This house is an important historic asset not only to Athens but to the State of Alabama.

Harvie P. Jones, FAIA

cc: Honorable Dan Williams, Mayor
Mr. Jim Waybright
Mr. Maurice Nichols
Ms. Judy Patton
Mr. Jim Miner
Mrs. Robert V. Dunnivant
Mr. Steve Carter
Mr. Bob Gamble
Dr. Milly Caudle
HJ

Wednesday
Sept 28, 1994

Mr. Harvey Jones
Jones & Herrin
104 Jefferson St.
Huntsville, AL 35801

Dear Mr. Jones,

We are all fascinated by the information on the Houston House that you have turned up. I haven't found anyone who remembers a wing. You have really presented us with quite a few short term and long term goals. I think one of the first we will have to think about is the floor sagging. In any case, we are certainly in your debt for getting us started down a correct path. I know that I speak for many in this town when I say we are all very grateful for your help. Thank you again.

Sincerely,
Judy Patti

Board Members - Houston Library - Athens
Sept.'94

- 1 Mr. Jim Waybright 232-4587
* 105 North Houston St. CEO at Steelcase 232-811.
Athens, AL 35611
- 2 Mr. Maurice Nichols ^{Thurs.} AM 7PM
* 108 Shady Lane Retired 232-6888
Athens, AL 35611
- 3 Mrs. Judy Patton Retired 232-1410
107 North Houston
- 4 Mr. Jim Miner High school teacher
1308 Lisa Lane 232-7977
- 5 Mrs. Robert V. Dunnivant 232-7883
407 North Houston Street
- 6 Mrs. Steve Carter 10 Athens Utilities Gas Dept.
508 S. Jefferson St., Athens, AL 35611
~~233-0071~~ 1 BN 6 months
22044 Huntsville/Brownferry Rd.
Tanner, AL 35671
8 Mayor (see back)
9 Nelly Combs

Here is another member, a black woman, who never attends. My efforts to find more information about her have failed. Dan Williams (Municipal Building, 232-8430) is mayor. ~~over~~

Honorable Dan Williams
Mayor's Office Mayor of Athens

Municipal Bldg

Atheas, Ad. 35611



City of Athens

Incorporated 1818
P.O. Box 1089
Athens, Alabama 35611

January 25, 1995

DAN WILLIAMS
MAYOR
(205) 233-8730

MIGNON BOWERS
CITY CLERK
(205) 233-8720

FAX (205) 233-8721

COUNCIL MEMBERS
DWIGHT BURGREEN
DANNY F. CRAWFORD
JIMMY WAYNE GILL
DAVID R. HARGROVE
ROBERT ALLEN TINNIN

Mr. Harvie P. Jones
Jones and Herrin
104 Jefferson Street
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

Dear Mr. Jones:

I appreciate the time you have taken to work with our Library Board in their efforts to restore the Governor George Smith Houston Home.

I want to ask you to make a recommendation to the Athens City Council, owners of the home and property, as to the form or time period you feel we should use as a goal in restoring this home. I think the Council should decide which form should be restored and then work cooperatively with the Library Board and others in the community to achieve the goal.

Mr. Jones, I know you have contributed much to our community without being compensated for it. I do not want to take advantage of you in our efforts to get something done. Please let me know about your charge for making a recommendation to the Council.

Sincerely,


Dan Williams
Mayor

DW/bh

JONES & HERRIN

Architecture/Interior Design

PLT 205-233-8721
February 6, 1995

Honorable Dan Williams, Mayor
Mayor's Office
Municipal Building
Athens, Alabama 35611

Re: Governor Houston House and Library

Dear Mayor Williams:

I'm happy to hear of Athens' plan to restore the Governor Houston House, and have the following preliminary thoughts about your question as to the appropriate time period of restoration.

It is likely that Governor Houston added the large columns at the present portico, and this change is very well done. The present configuration of the portico is probably about 150 years old, excepting the concrete floor and the Victorian balustrade at the front of the upper floor. Therefore the present design of the portico should be retained, with the lower floor being changed to 5/4 inch x 6 inch heavy wood, with wood steps, as mid-19th century porticos were typically built. I will be happy to furnish the details for this. The handicapped ramp should be moved to the north side to be most readily accessible from the handicapped parking area that is to be northwest of the house. The level 2 front Victorian balustrade should be revised to match the Greek-Revival balustrades that are on the sides of level 2.

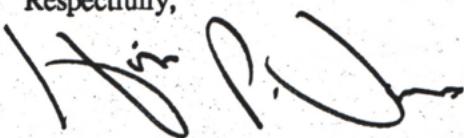
While the north wing and southwest porch are later, they do the house no harm and should be retained for practical purposes for library functions.

If possible, it would greatly improve the tourism appeal of the house to get the book stacks out of the historic rooms and restore these rooms as a house museum of Governor Houston's time. This can be done by rebuilding the now-lost long one-story north wing shown on the 1894-1905 Sanborn maps. The library function could be housed in the two north wings, leaving the historic house furnished as a memorial to Governor Houston. The rebuilt north wing would be modern on the inside and on the outside would match the present north wing.

I would not rebuild the one-story veranda shown on the 1910-1932 Sanborn maps since this would greatly increase cost and maintenance and would detract from the historic house.

Please feel free to call or write if you have questions. If it would help for me to meet with the Council I would be happy to do so.

Respectfully,



Harvie P. Jones, FAIA
HPJ/tm

copy: HJ

attachments

MESSAGE CONFIRMATION

02/27/95 13:29

ID=JONES & HERRIN ARCHITECTURE

NO.	MODE	BOX	GROUP
316	TX		

DATE/TIME	TIME	DISTANT STATION ID	PAGES	RESULT	ERROR PAGES	S.CODE
02/27 13:28	00'52"	2052338721	001/001	OK		0000

Registered by
Wayne in
Wayne Kunkel III

JONES & HERRIN

Architecture/Interior Design

Feburary 27, 1995

Honorable Dan Williams, Mayor
City of Athens
Mayor's Office
Municipal Building
Athens, Alabama 35611

Re: Governor Houston House & Library

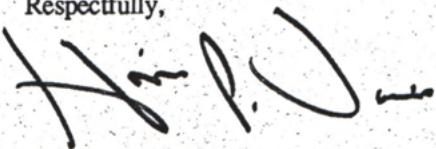
Dear Mayor Williams:

The following appears to be the most desirable method of preserving and improving the Governor Houston House and Library:

1. Restore the main two-story house to the time of Governor Houston as a house-museum to improve tourism for the City and to commemorate Governor Houston.
2. Accommodate the Library in the late 1800's one-story north wing, and reconstruct the now-missing north-west wing that is shown on the 1894-1921 Sanborn map to provide ample space for the Library. The reconstructed wing would be historically correct on the exterior, but of normal construction for library purposes on the interior.
3. Provide a handicapped entry to the Library and Houston House Museum at the west side of the house that will be close to the new proposed handicapped parking spaces west of the house.

Please let me know if further information is needed.

Respectfully,

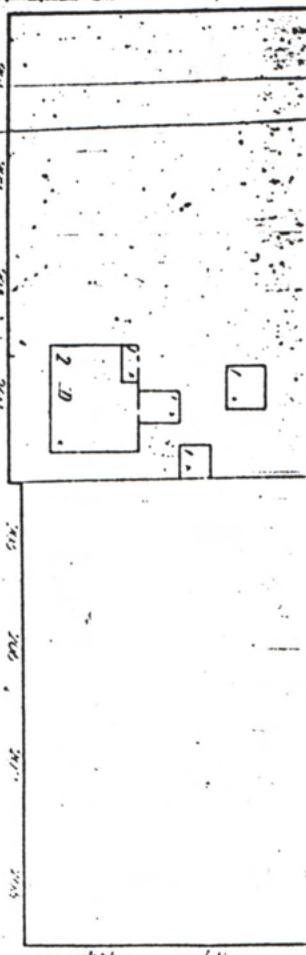


Harvie P. Jones, FAIA
HPJ/tm

copy: **HJ**
file

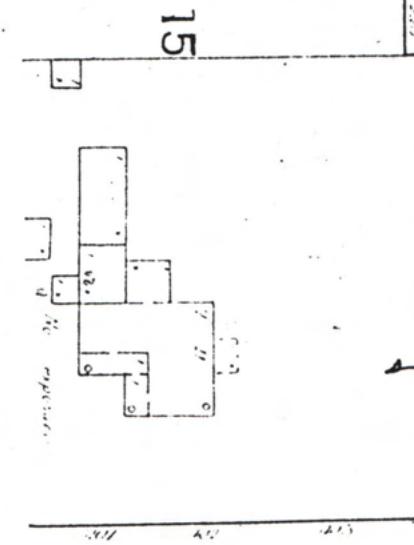
PS Dec '91. [unclear]
No progress. I read they have
inappropriately boxed in the
book porch. The old house is
still loaded w/ heavy bookshelves.
the rooms filled w/ shelves.

No.

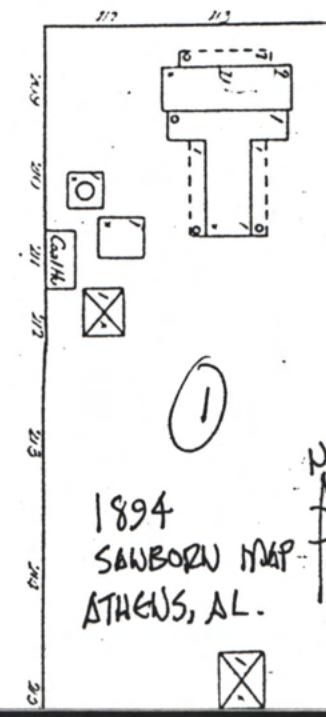
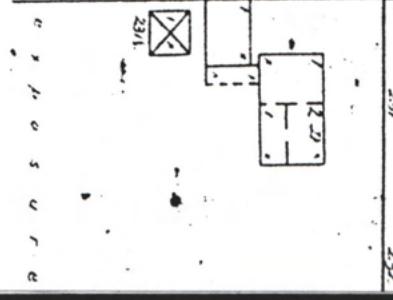
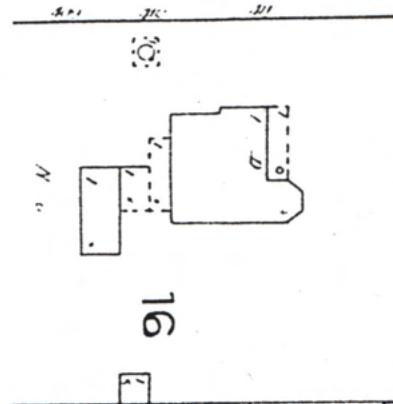


MARKET ST

HOUSTON
HSE

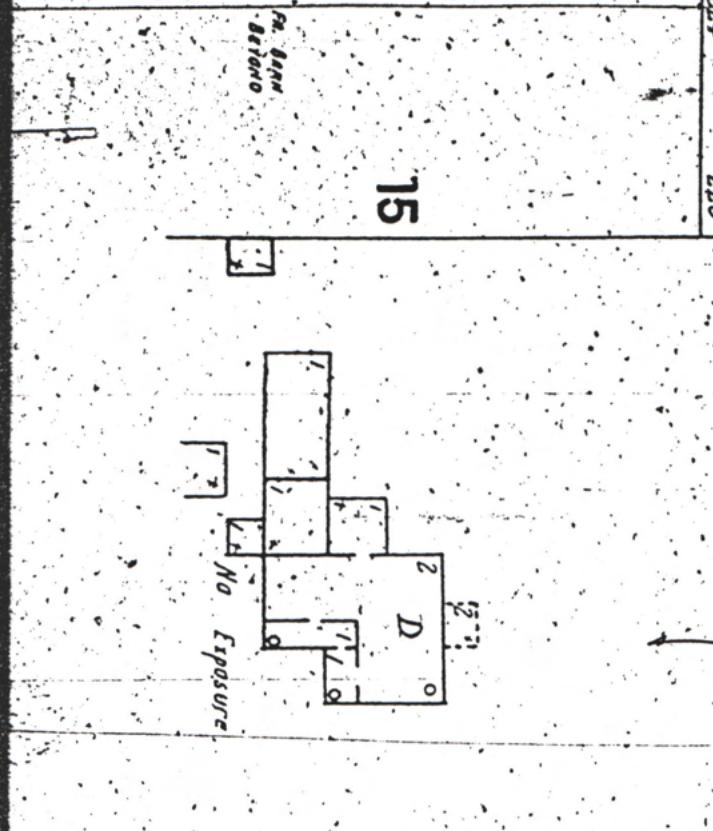


WEST



1894
SANBORN MAP
ATHENS, AL.

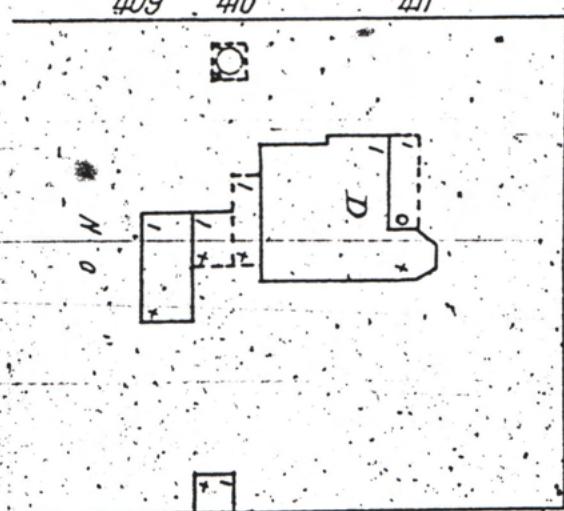




401 402 403

409 410 411

32'



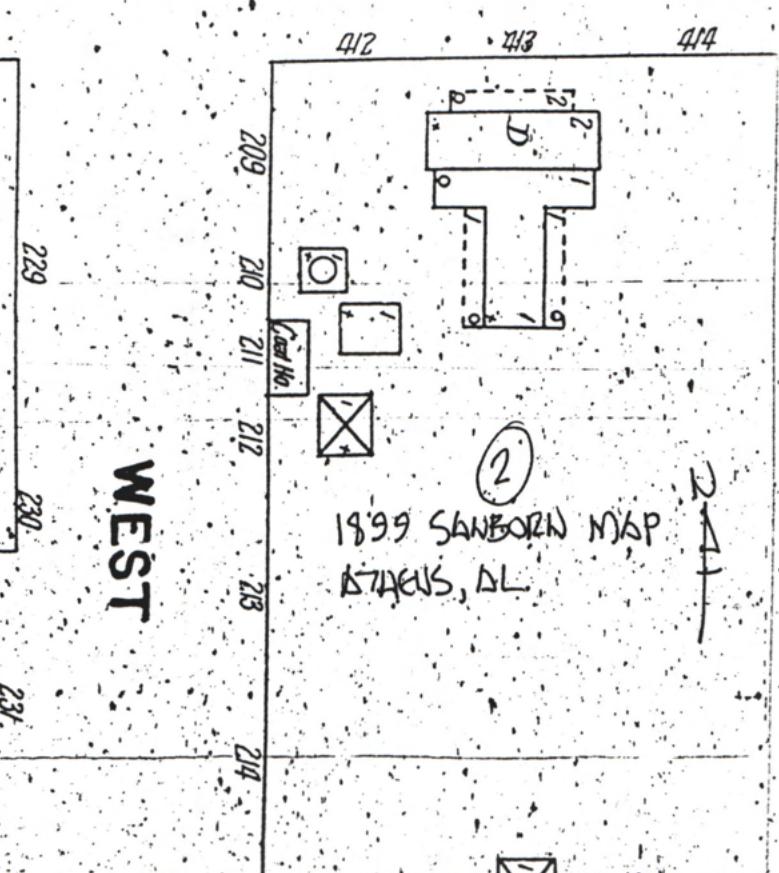
16

E. & P.O. 8-4-5

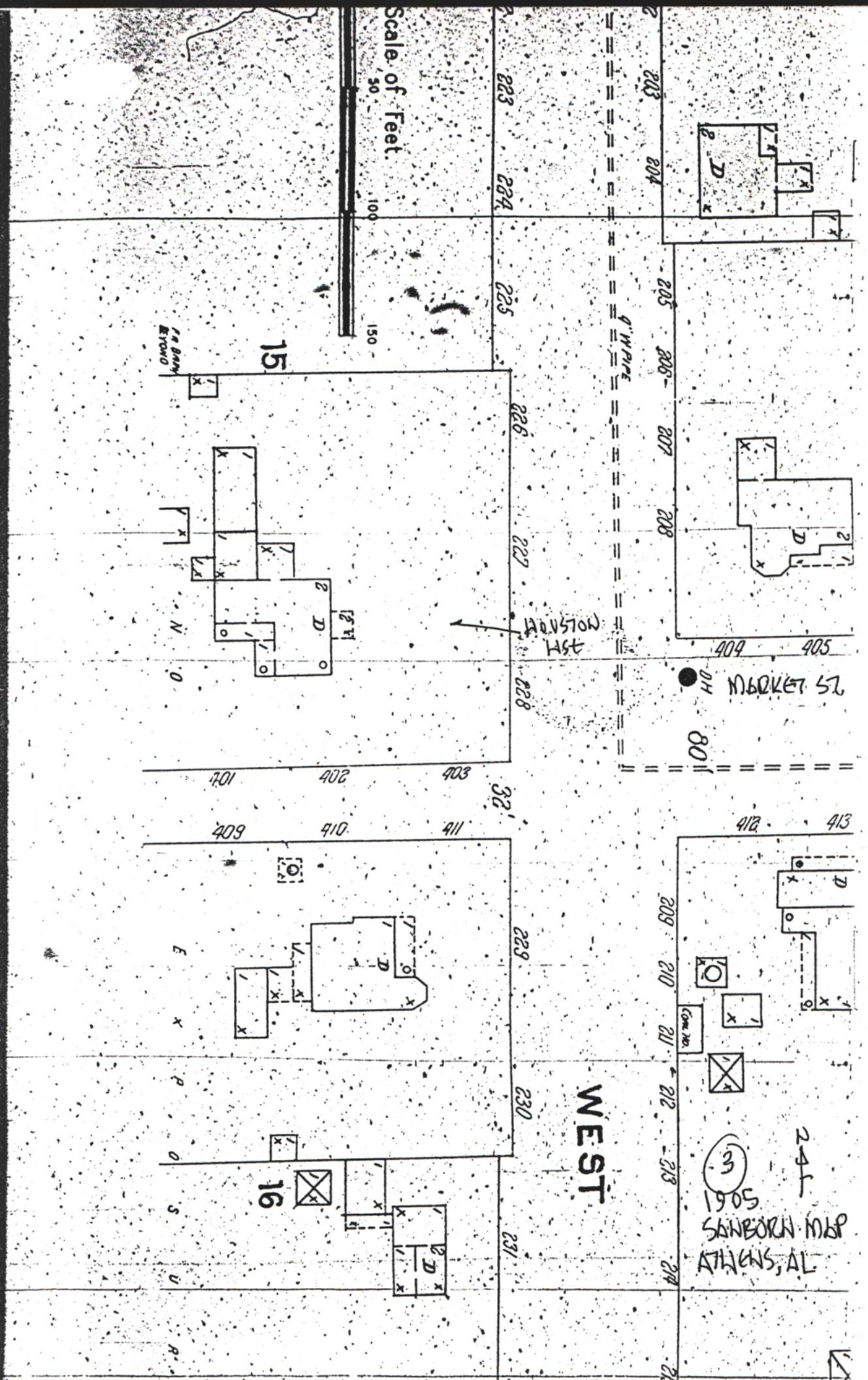


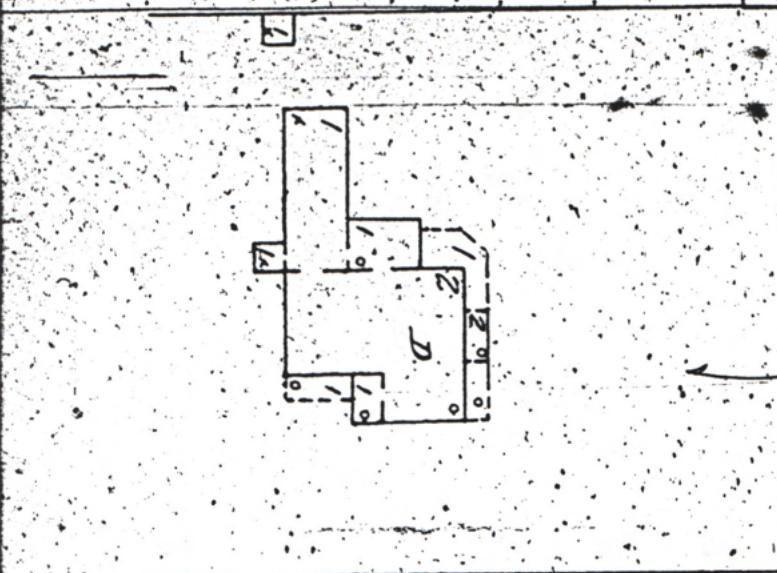
80'

Market St.

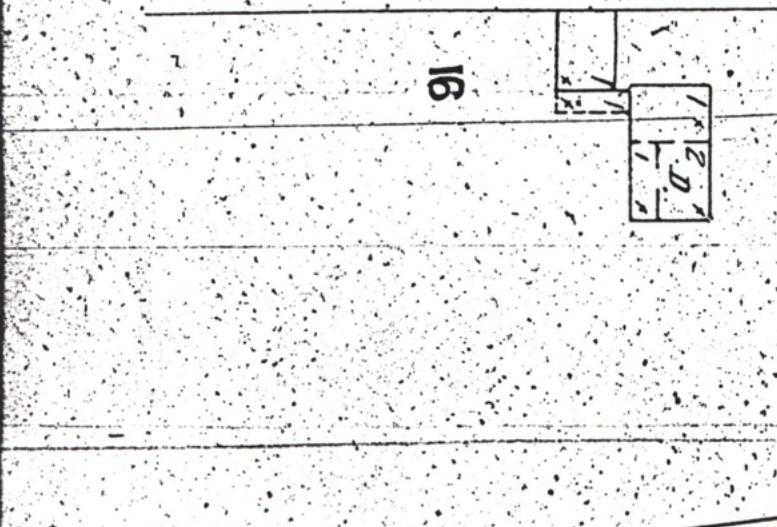
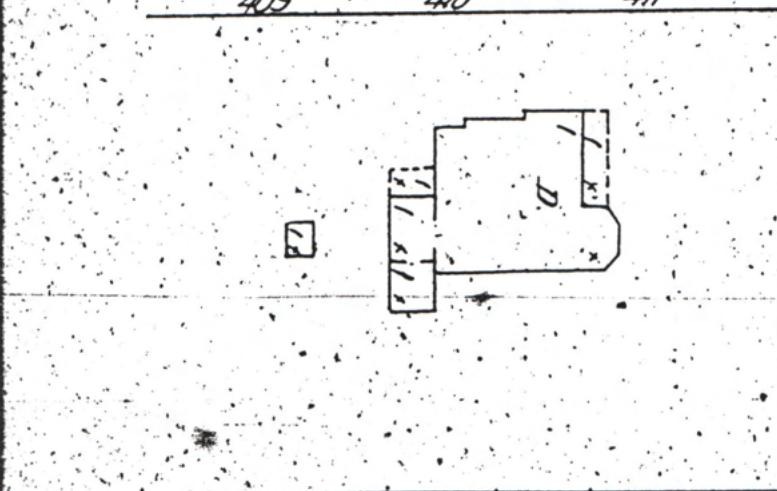


244



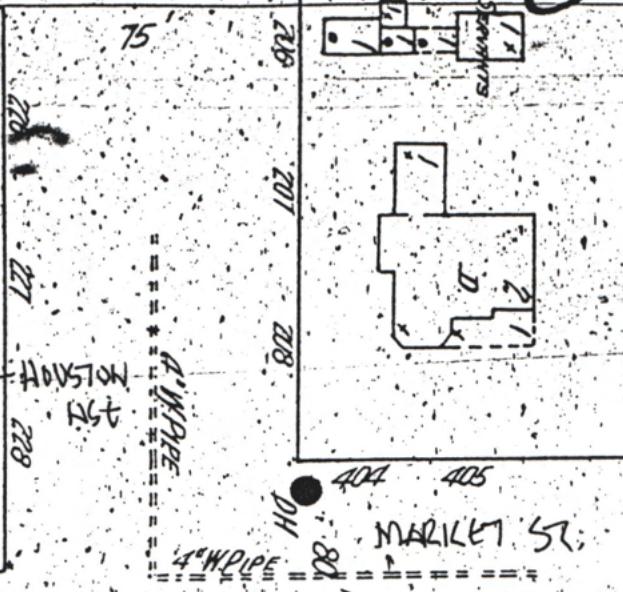


BUCK STAND R'D.

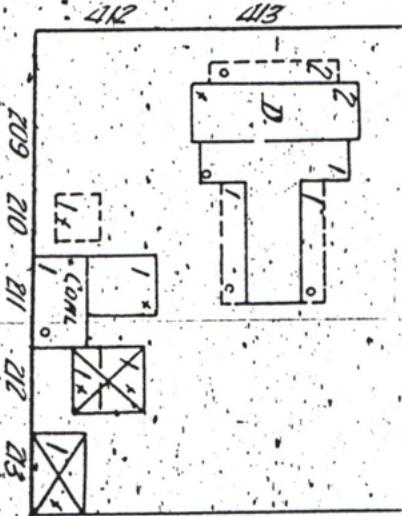


-WEST-

214
215
216
217

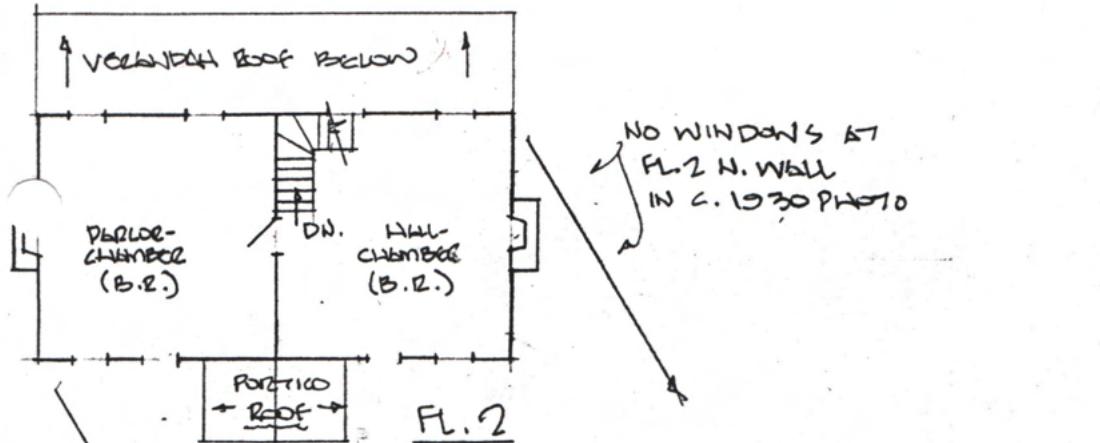


MARKET ST.



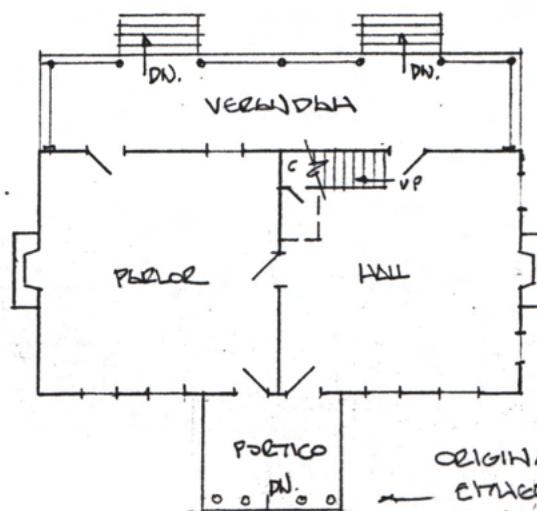
1910
SONBORN MFG
ATHENS, AL

SD1 SD2



SCEN.
BLDG.
ON
1894
SANBORN
MAP

MAIN ATTIC ORIG. "SLBS" PLANK ROOF DECK BOARDS
ON FRONT ROOF SLOP HAVE SHINGLE NAILS WHICH
PORCICO ROOF ATTIC OCCURS, PROVING THAT THE
2ND FL. PORCICO ROOF IS A LATER (BUT FED) ADDITION



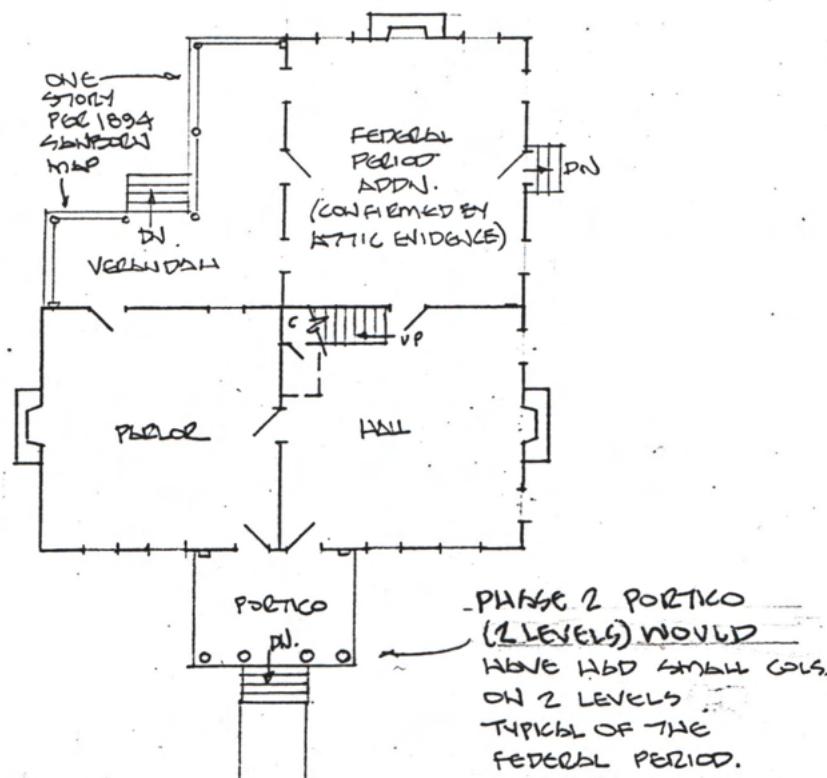
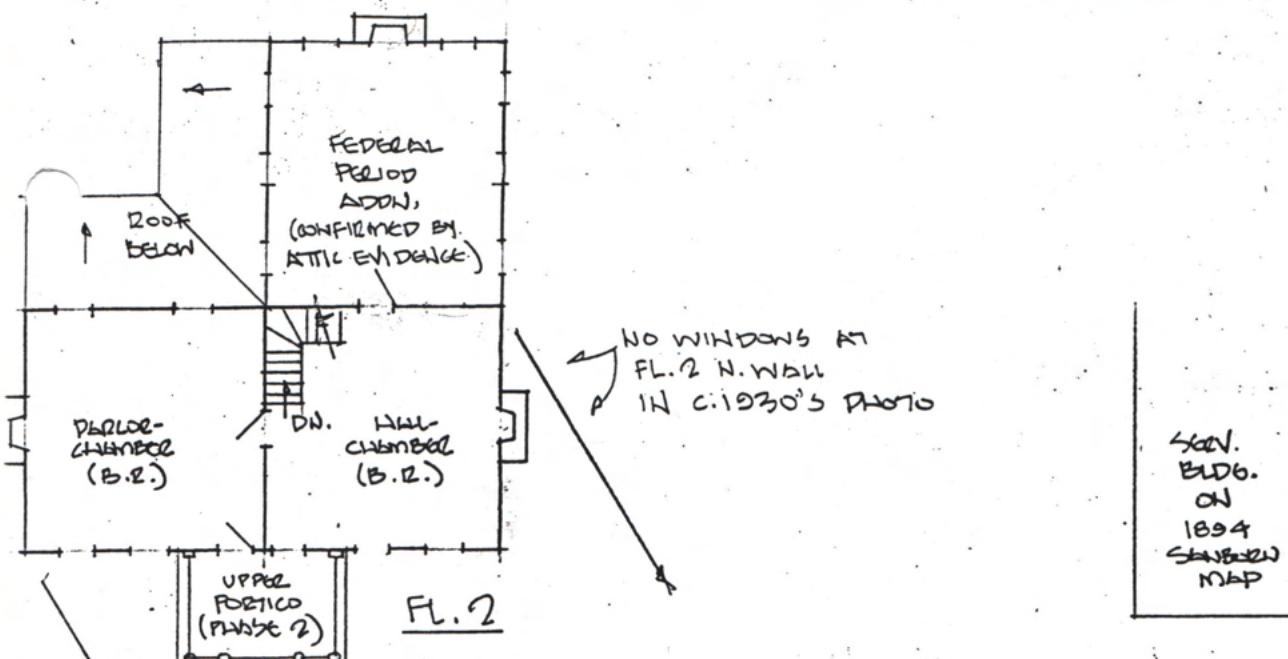
ORIGINALLY (Parcile 1)
either no porcico or
a one-story, small
detached porcico.
See Attic for proof that
2-sty. porcico is later.

① C. 1830 (?) HOUSTON HOUSE, ETHNS, A
CONJECTURAL ORIGINAL PLAN
BASED ON SITE EVIDENCES
APPROX. 1" = 16'

— N —

20 AUG. '94 WALTER P. JONES, F.A.I.A.

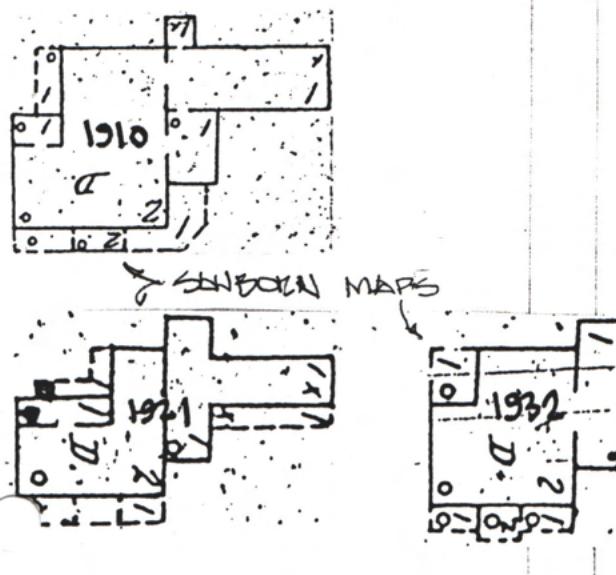
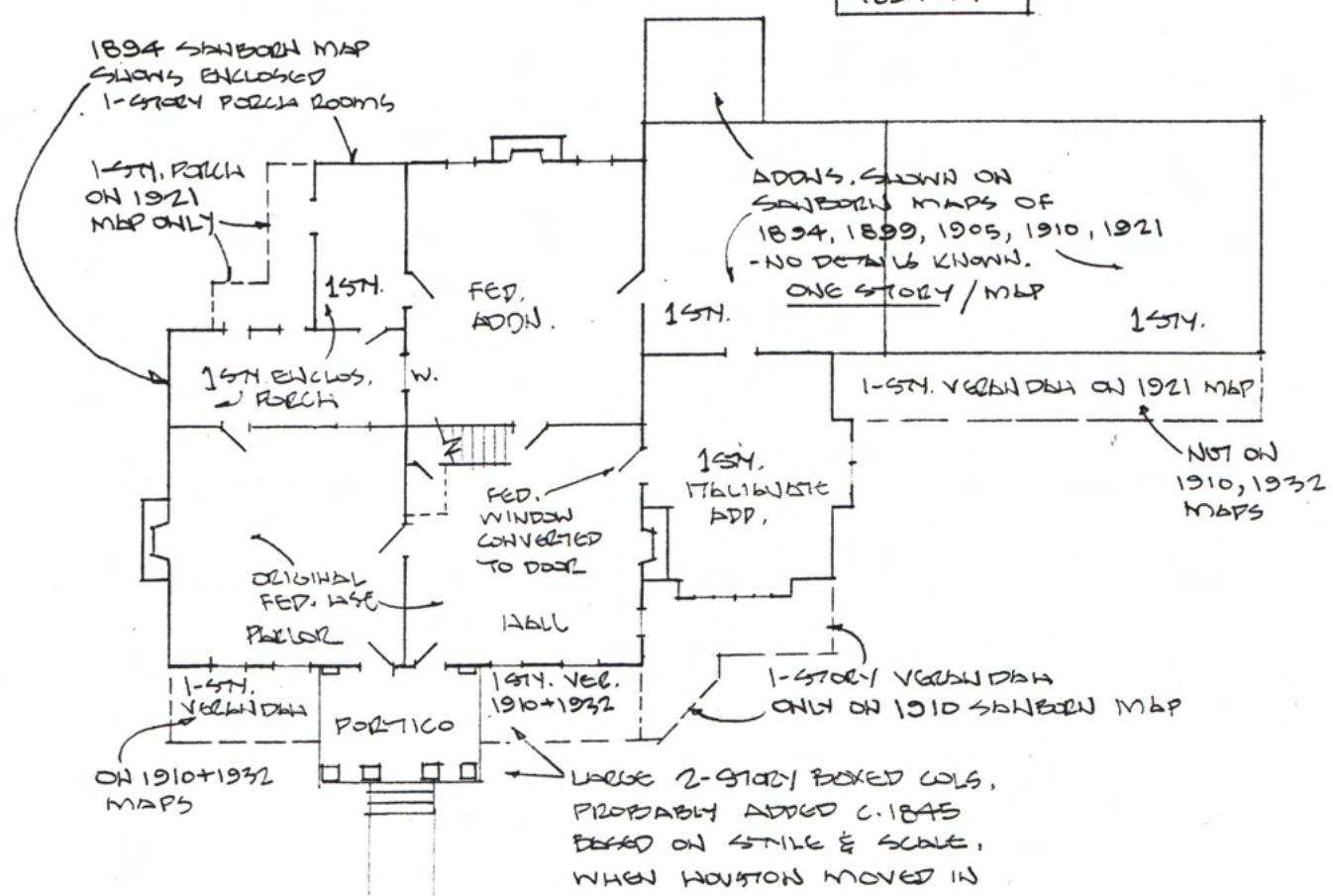
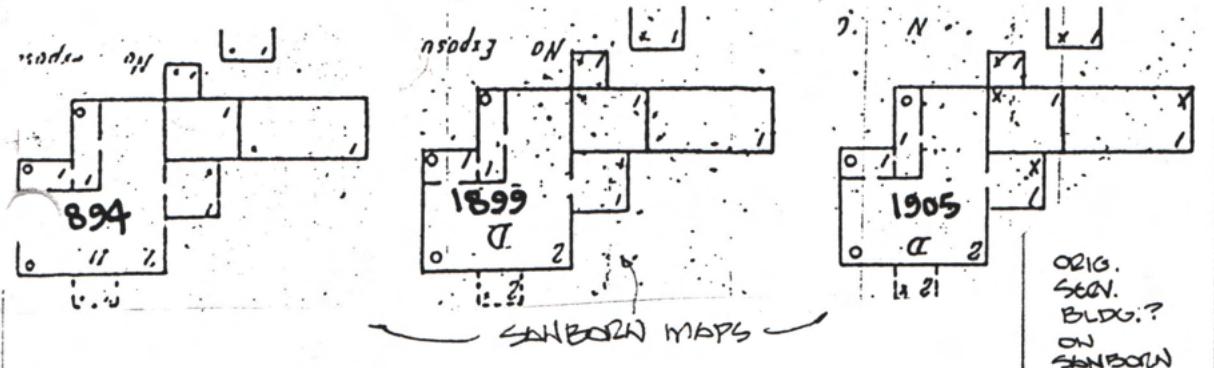
WEST ST. (L-162 = HOUSTON ST.)



② C.1830 (?) HOUSTON HOUSE, ATHENS, AL
CONJECTURAL PHASE 2 PLAN
BASED ON SITE EVIDENCES
(ADDED 2-LEVEL PORTICO → N
& N.W. WIND)

20 AUG. 1994 LARENIE P. JONES, P.A.I.A.
1" = 16'

WEST ST. (HOUSTON ST.)

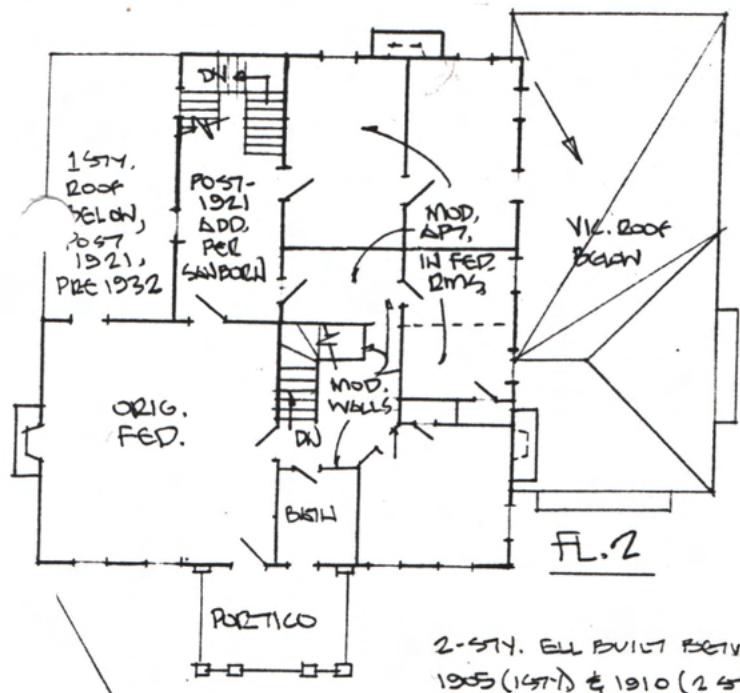


(3) C. 1830 (?) HOUSTON HOUSE, ATHENS, AL.
1894-1921 PLN
PER SANBORN MAPS

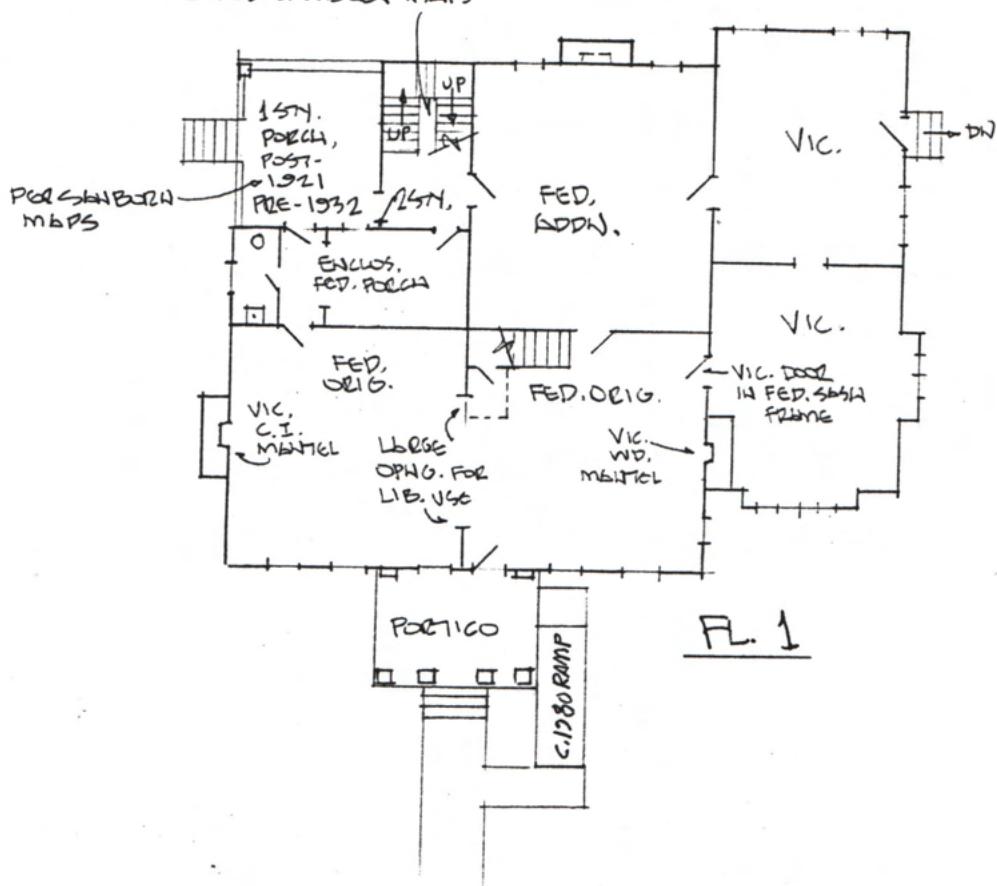
APPROX. 1" = 16'

20 AUG. 1994 HARVEY P. JONES, F.B.I.B.

MARSH ST. (LATER HOUSTON ST.)



2-STY. ELL BUILT BETWEEN
1905 (1STY.) & 1910 (2 STY.)
PER SANBORN MAPS



4 C.1830 (?) HOUSTON HOUSE, ATHENS, AL.
1994 PLAN

APPROX. 1" = 16'

N

20 AUG. 1994 HERVIE P. JONES, F.A.I.B.

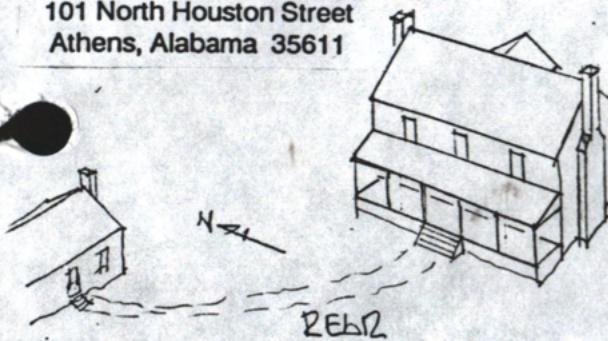


Houston St.

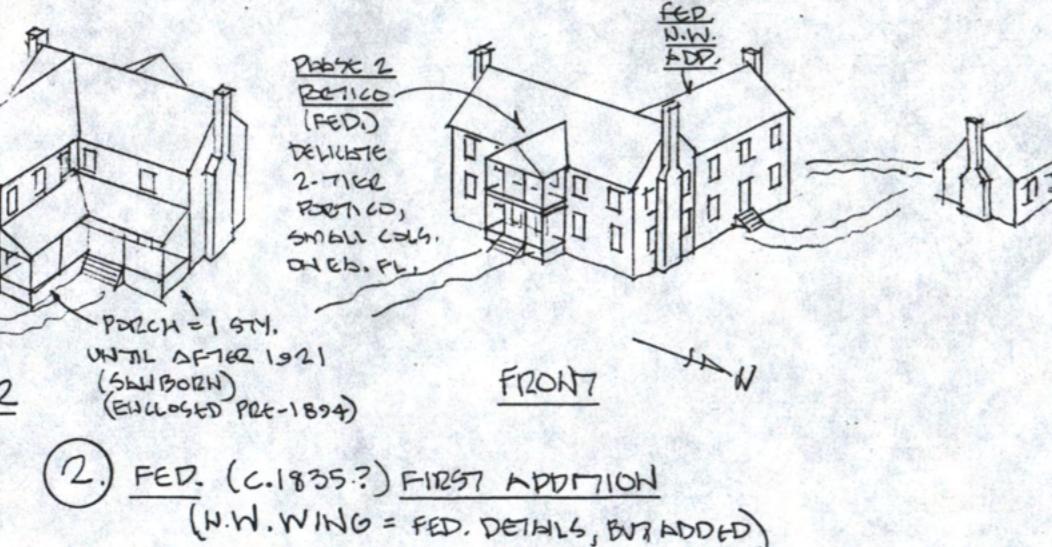
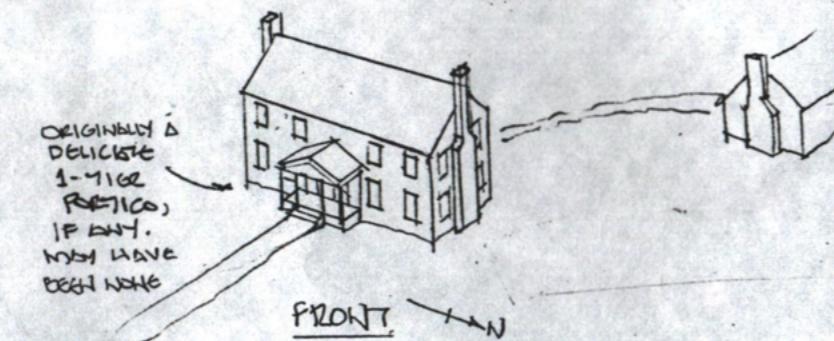
APPARENT CONFIGURATION CHANGES, C. 1830 - 1994, PER SANBORN MAPS & PRELIMINARY SITE OBSERVATIONS

MARIE P. JONES, F.A.I.A. - SEPT. 1994

Houston House and Library
101 North Houston Street
Athens, Alabama 35611



① c. 1830 (?) ORIGINAL FEDERAL PERIOD CONFIGURATION



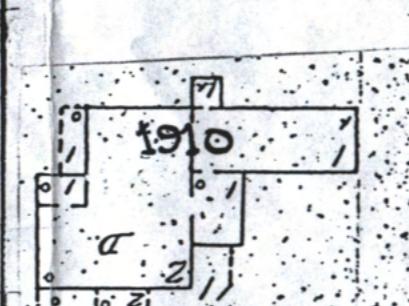
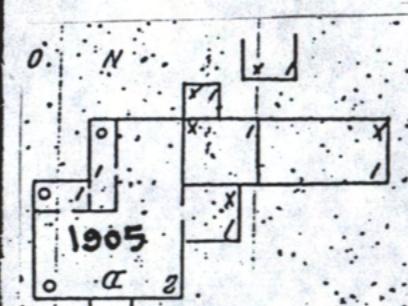
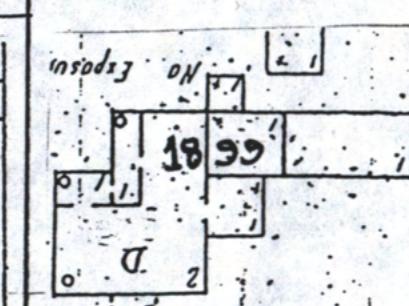
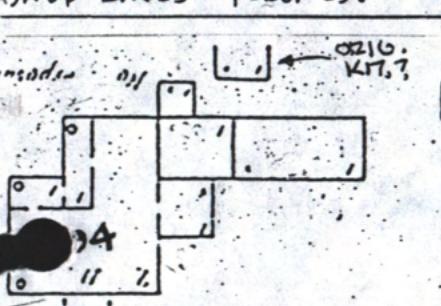
② FED. (C. 1835?) FIRST ADDITION
(N.W. WING = FED. DETAILS, BUT ADDED)

REAR FRONT N

FRONT N

SANBORN CO. MAPS

"1" OR "2" DENOTES NO. OF STORIES.
DASHED LINES = PORCHES.



1894

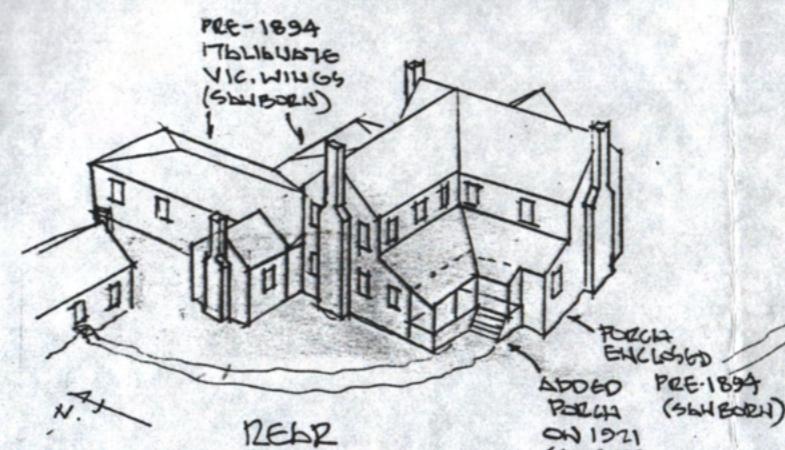
1899

1905

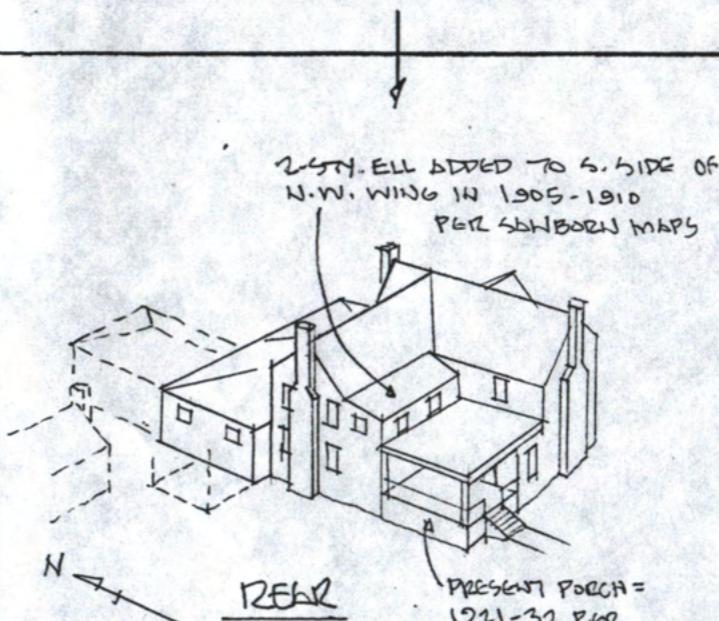
1910

1921

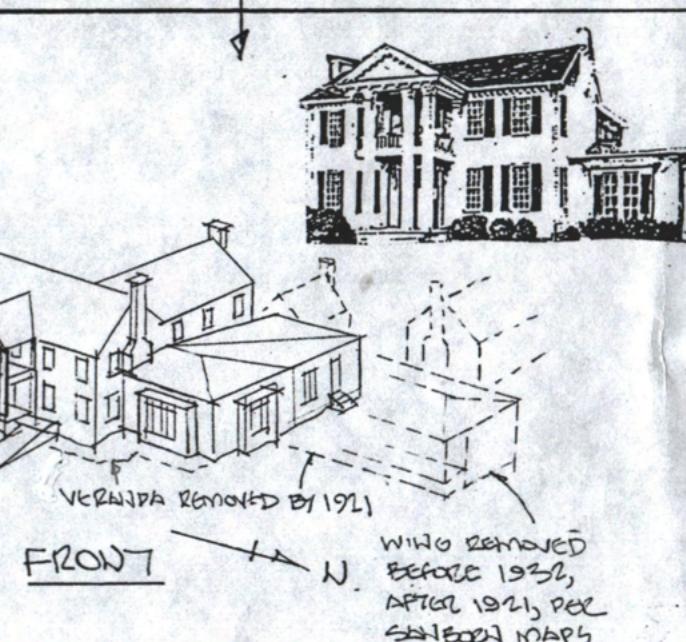
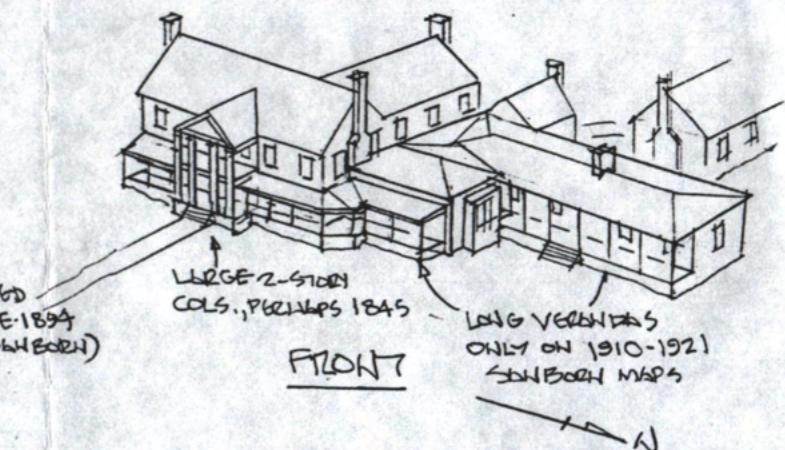
1932

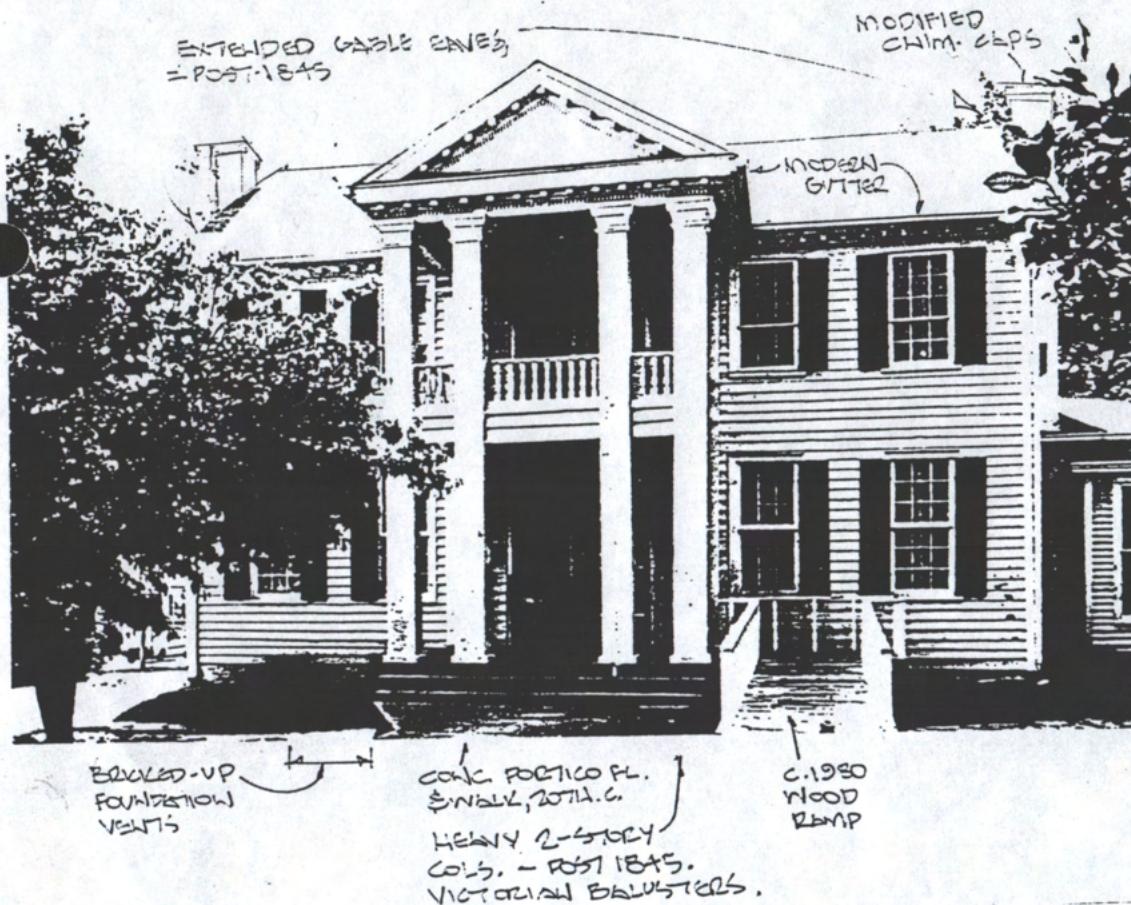


③ c. 1894-1921 PLAN, PER SANBORN MAPS

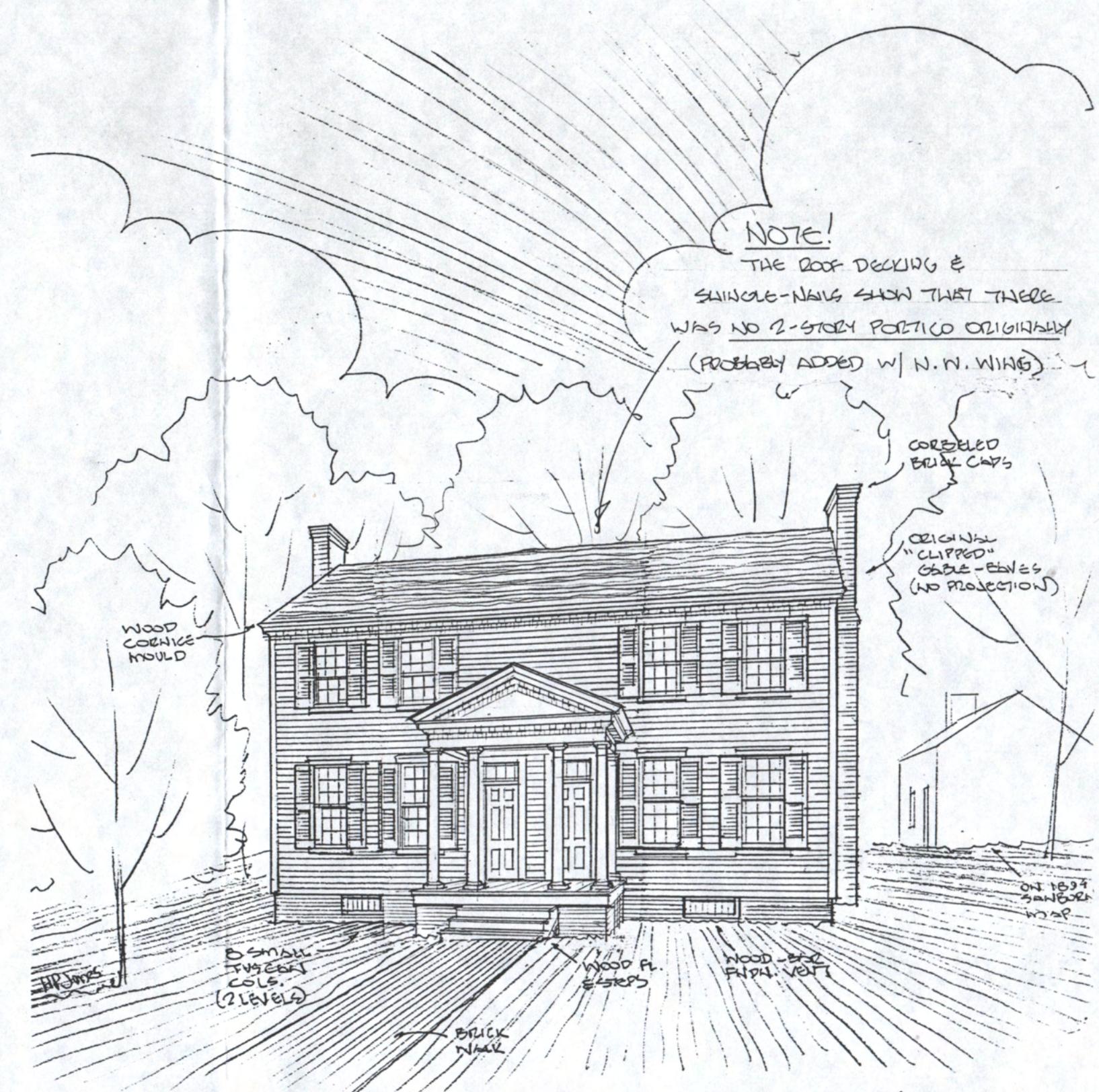


1921 CONFIGURATION





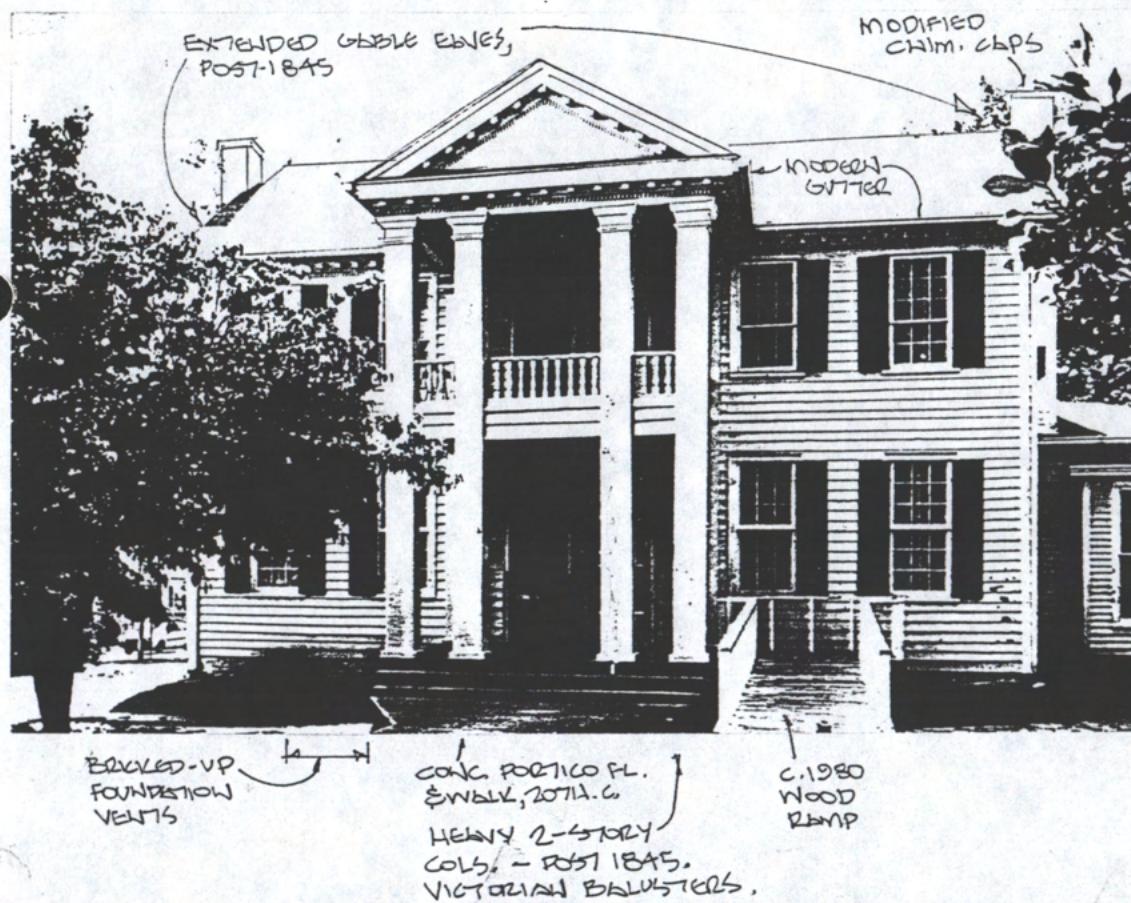
PRESENT CONFIGURATION
WITH MID & LATERAL 19TH C.
MODIFICATIONS
(LARGE COLS.,
GABLE-EAVE EXTENSIONS,
BALUSTERS, N. ADDN. ETC.)



NOTE: FOR ACCURACY,
THIS DRAWING IS
TRACED OVER THE
1994 PHOTO AT LEFT

CIRCA 1830 HOUSTON HOUSE, ATHENS, AL.
CONJECTURAL ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION (PLATE 1)
BASED ON SITE EVIDENCES (NO 2-STY. PORTICO ORIG.)
(NO N.W. FED. WING)

HARVIE P. JONES, F.A.I.A., HUNTSVILLE



PRESENT CONFIGURATION
WITH MID & LITTLE 19TH C.
MODIFICATIONS
(LARGE COLS.,
GABLE-EAVE EXTENSIONS,
BALUSTERS, N. ADDN. ETC.)



NOTE: FOR ACCURACY,
THIS DRAWING IS
TRACED OVER THE
1994 PHOTO AT LEFT

CIRCA 1830 HOUSTON HOUSE, ATHENS, AL.
CONJECTURAL PHASE 2 FEDERAL CONFIGURATION
(C. 1830'S - ADN. OF N.W. WING & 2-STY. PORTICO)

HARVIE P. JONES, F.A.I.A., HUNTSVILLE



Historic American Buildings Survey
W.N. Manning, Photographer, March 31st, 1934.

FRONT VIEW.

Governor(Geo. S.) Houston House
Athens, Alabama.

1934 W.H.B.S. Photo
Print from microfilm

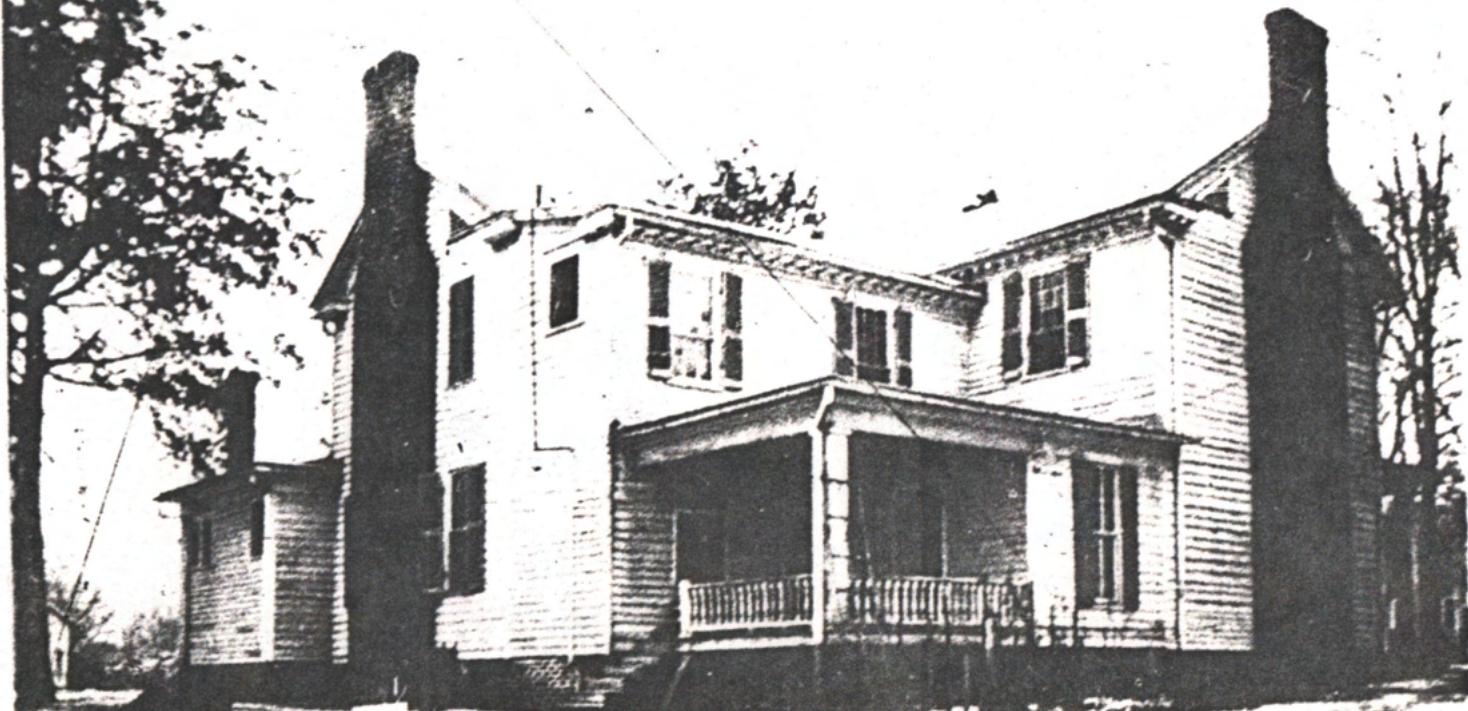
HABS No. ALA-341
HABS
ALA
W.H.B.S.

1934
W.H.B.S.

Governor
Geo. S. Houston Home
Athens,
Alabama.

HABS No. ALA-341

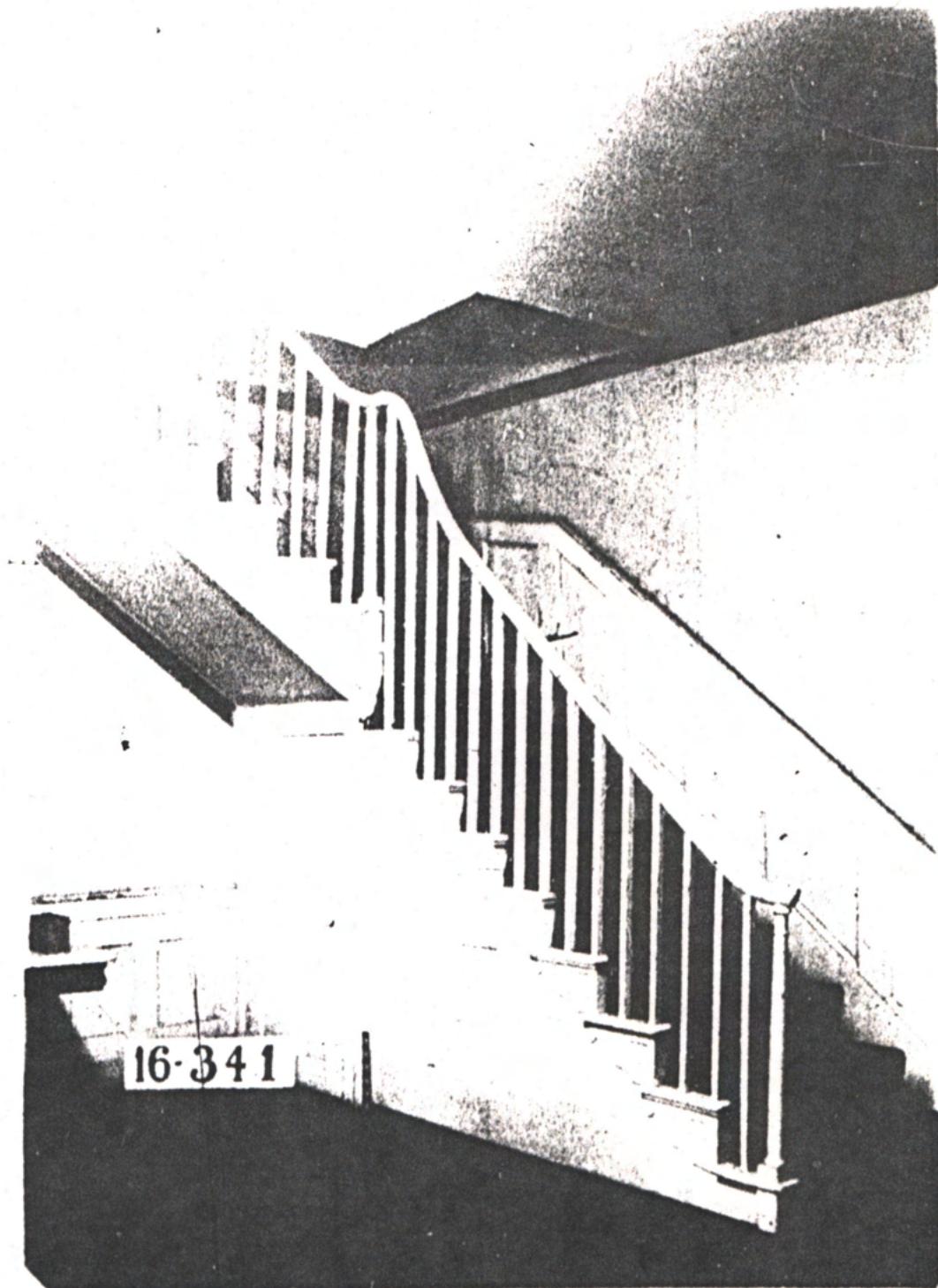
ALA
HAB
42-A
6-2



Historic American Buildings Survey
W.N. Manning, Photographer, March 31st, 1934.

Governor Geo. S. Houston Home.
Athens, Alabama.

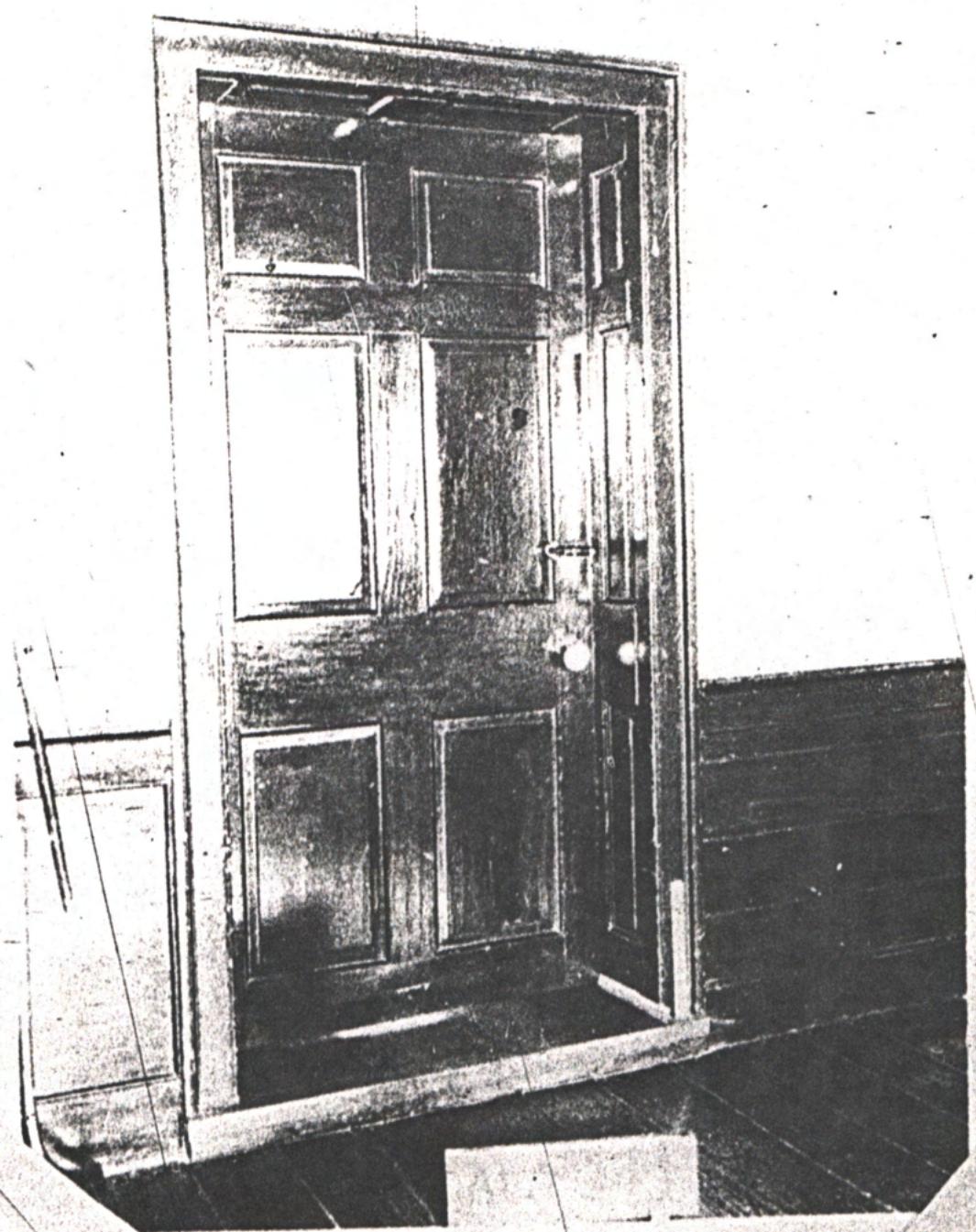
ALA
HABS No. H-341.



Gov. George S. Houston, House
West Front on Houston Street
Mobile, Alabama

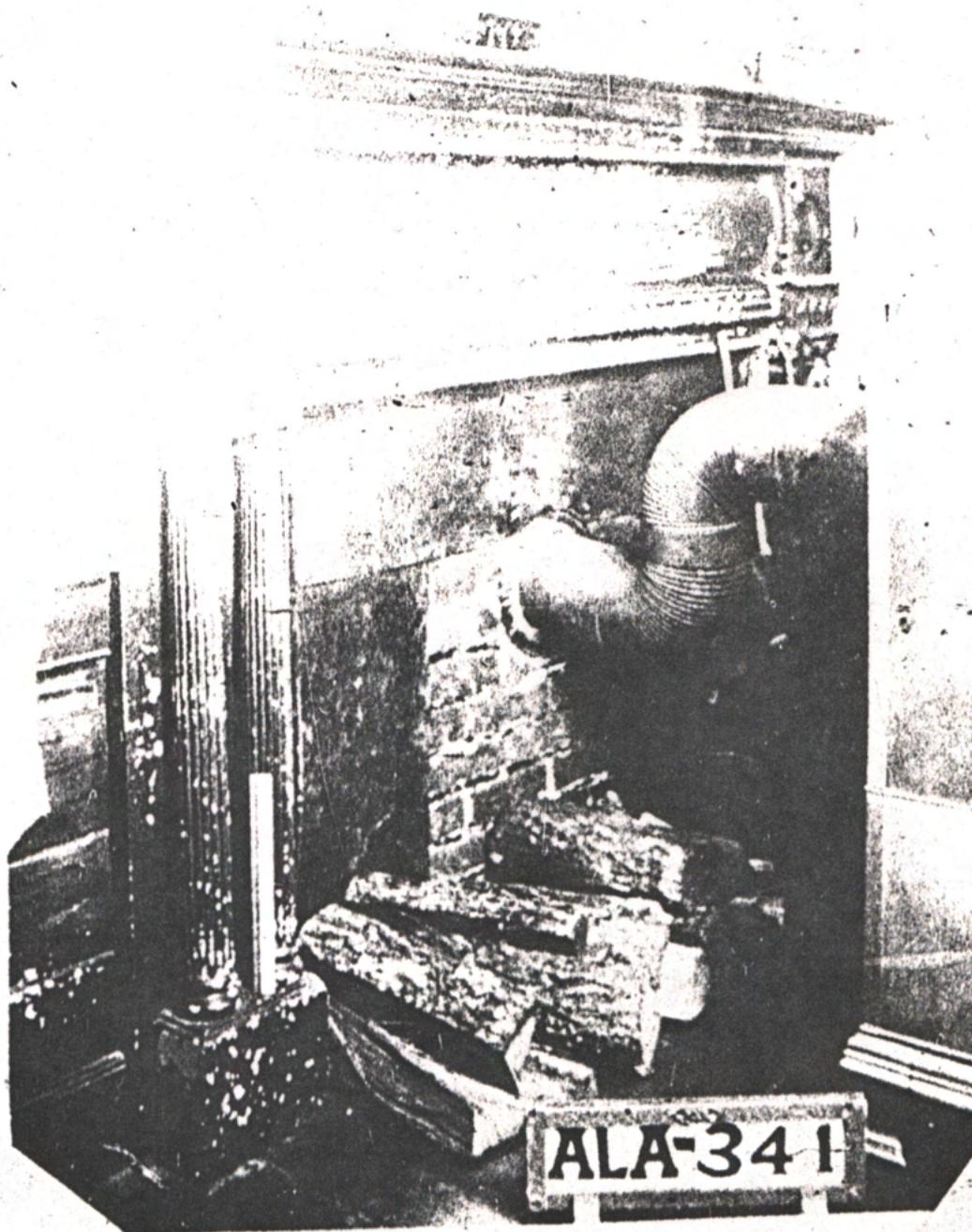
HABS No. ALA-242

HABS
ALA
42 ATH
6-4



Go. John C. Martin, Inc.
1000 Spring Street, Birmingham, Alabama

ALA.
42-ATH
6-5



Feb.
Period
Month
now you



HOME OF SENATOR GEORGE S. HOUSTON ATHENS, ALA.

1909 POSTMARK
FROM RALPH & LINDA ALLEN
COLLECTION

Athen's

II. George (Mar. 1, 1860-?) md. Lena Kelly (May 5, 1866-May 11, 1903), daughter of Joshua and Sallie (Strong) Kelly, whose home still stands at Jeff in Madison County, Ala. George served as probate judge of Limestone County from 1905-1927.

III. Anna md. Fayette Chew and lived in Little Rock, Ark. They had Fayette, Jr. (1889-1919).

IV. Henry Booth (Sept. 4, 1868-1937) md. Nannie Kelly, sister of Lena. Their romance blossomed at the Wooley Springs Hotel, and they were married on Dec. 12, 1896. Their children were:

(1) Sallie Booth md. Horace Leeper and had (A) James Malone md. Marilyn DeJean and had William, Elizabeth, and James; (B) Nancy Elizabeth md. Paul Seitz and had Paul, Etha, Fred, Nancy, John, and Marie.

(2) Rebecca md. George Harsh, Jr. of Memphis and had (A) Nancy Barry md. John French and had Belinda md. John Schmitz, Martha, and Phillip. John French's family owns the largest clipping company in the world, having absorbed the Luce Press Bureau into its already extensive operations. Among customers of the company have been Billy Graham, Howard Hughes, and the Sears Roebuck Corporation.

(3) Nancy md. George Johnson, who was serving as District Attorney for the 8th Judicial District when he was asked to take charge of the prosecution at the time of the Phoenix City scandal that rocked the state some years ago. George was highly commended for his actions at that time, and was later appointed judge of the State Court of Appeals. Nancy and George were parents of (A) Sarah McFerrin md. Richard Martin (see *Coffman House*) and had Lee Malone, Alice Temple, and Richard Wilkes, Jr.; (B) Alice Kelly md. John S. Crutcher III (see *Belue-Crutcher House*) and had Nancy Kelly and John Sims IV; (C) Nancy Clyde md. Kent Lee Holloway of Huntsville.

Henry Booth Malone, who served as mayor of Athens for three terms between 1893 and 1904, inherited the house and had it extensively remodeled in 1916. Interior stairs were moved from the front hallway and the living room was extended. Windows were added at that time on either side of the living room fireplace; and the porch columns were removed.

To the rear of the house is the old kitchen, which was later converted into a residence for Ed, the black farmer and handy man who lived there for many years. Ed was the envy of the neighborhood because of the tremendous yield he could force from an acre of cotton. "Ed's house" has been a play and club house for two generations of Malone descendants, and the grandchildren of the present owner, Nancy (Malone) Johnson, consider it their special property.

George Johnson was descended from Nathaniel Castleberry (?) Johnson, who came first to Jackson County, Ala., from Georgia, and then to Limestone County, where he owned extensive acreage in the northeast section. George Johnson's parents, George William and Beulah (McFerrin) Johnson, had four children: (1) Alice md. Burt Stanford and had Burt, Jr. (deceased); (2) George (see above); (3) Ina md. Henry L. Kennedy; and (4) William Herman (deceased) md. Lucille Gann and had Mary Ina. Mary Ina studied at the University of Clermont-Ferrand in

France, and graduated magna cum laude in 1977 from the University of Alabama, where she was a Phi Beta Kappa. She was married to Warner Stahler Heath, of Scottsboro, on June 4, 1977.

HOUSTON (ca. 1830?)

38.



"Oh! What a lucky thing for me
I never joined the U.D.C.
It never came unto its E A R
That on the records of the D.A.R.
My father's father's mother's aunt
Was mother-in-law of U. S. Grant."

This whimsical rhyme was written a few years ago by Pollie Irvine, a descendant of James and Emily Wrenshall (Boggs) Irvine, of Florence. Had a daughter of George and Ellen (Irvine) Houston written it, she could have quite decimated the meter by saying: "My mother's mother's aunt, etc.,," for Ellen's mother was a first cousin of Julia Dent, wife of Ulysses S. Grant. Ellen had five brothers to serve in the Confederate States Army, so this is yet another example of the consanguinity of civil war. And after the war, who picks up the pieces? In Alabama's case, it was Ellen (Irvine) Houston's husband who did more, perhaps, than any other to place the state upon the path to a real reconstruction.

Never has there been a time of rejoicing in Athens like that on election night in 1874 when Houston, "the bald eagle of the mountains," won the governor's race by a large majority over the Republican candidate, David P. Lewis. It was the first break from Republican rule in the near decade since the war's end, and the significance of a return to home rule was almost overwhelming.

ATHENS

Life & Lore of Limestone (Co., AL) Edwards Oxford,

Pittsboro Press
1978

The town was blazing with lights, and the courthouse (recently rebuilt after heavy war damage) was filled with people. The shooting of anvils and firearms continued through the night, long after the people had escorted the Governor-elect back to this house at the corner of West and Market Streets.

It was a triumphant moment for the man who had been in politics since the age of twenty-one. George Smith Houston (Jan. 17, 1811-Dec. 31, 1879) was born in Williamson County, Tenn., to David and Hannah Pugh (Reagan) Houston. The Houston family moved to Lauderdale County, Ala., in 1821; and eleven years later George Smith Houston began his long political career by representing that county in the state legislature. He moved to Athens in 1834 and married Mary Jackson Beaty (see *Beaty-Mason House*) on Nov. 14, 1835. The Houstons lived in the Beaty house until the marriage of Mary's sister, Glorvina, in 1845. At that time the Houstons bought a house and seven acres of land on the western edge of town.

The land upon which the house stands was first entered by Arthur Henderson of Huntsville in 1818. It was purchased by John McKinley and John Martin in 1829 and was then sold to Phillip and Drucilla Blessing in 1833. The tailoring shop of Phillip Blessing stood on the Athens square; and above the shop A. A. McCartney printed the town's first newspaper, *The Athenian*, about 1825. The Blessings kept the property only a short time before selling it to Micajah Thomas about 1834. If there was a house of log there at that time, it was vastly improved and enlarged by Micajah Thomas, who may well have added the fine Federal style woodwork.

Micajah Thomas owned the only closed carriage in the town for many years and was a man of considerable wealth. He married Louisa Keyes (see *Keyes-Featherston-Country Club*), and it is interesting to note that both were descendants of shipwreck victims—Louisa of Humphrey Keyes (see *Stagecoach Inn*) and Micajah of John Thomas, who left England in 1608 to come to Virginia aboard the *Sea Venture*. The vessel wrecked near the Bermuda Islands, but in the space of two years the survivors had built two small boats and in 1610 sailed up the James River. Micajah (May 26, 1785-Sept. 13, 1840), son of Theophilus and Mary (Rogers) Thomas, came from Albemarle County, N. C., with his brother, Theophilus, to Limestone County before 1820. Theophilus later moved to Greene County, Ala.

Micajah and Louisa (Keyes) Thomas had (1) Cornelius Ann, (2) Elizabeth, (3) Eliza Hill (1833-1905) md. John Wesley Cooper and among their eight children were (A) Joseph E. md. first Joneline Winter and had Nona Winter md. Isaac Curd Yarbrough and had Winona md. J. Burton Stroupe and had John Burton, and (B) Cornelius md. David Clompton Adams and had Aileen, Malcolm (see *Jones-Donnell House*, "Druid's Grove"), John Cooper, and David Clompton, Jr. (4) Joseph van Buren, and (5) Micajah, Jr. (1840-1841). After the death of Micajah Louisa married Larkin Bradford (on Sept. 19, 1843) and moved to Denver, Col. At least one of her children, Eliza Hill Cooper, also went to Denver.

George Houston was serving in the U. S. Congress from

this district when he purchased the property in 1845. Houston remained in Congress for twenty years; and would have served longer had he not been chosen to lead the Alabama delegation in presenting notification of the state's withdrawal from the United States Congress in 1861.

The Houstons probably used the log house to the rear of the house as a kitchen or as servants' quarters. It was apparently standing into the present century, for Jack Tanner recalls that a black man named Sam Irvin lived in a little house behind the Houston place when he was a boy. As an employee of the funeral director, N. S. Hollan, one of Sam's jobs was to take funeral notices from door to door through the town. He often drove the funeral hearses which were pulled by a pair of fine black horses. There was a white hearse for children, a purple one for the middle-aged, and a black one for the old. Perhaps it was Sam's connection with the funeral parlor which caused youngsters to quicken their steps when they passed by the little log house, for every one knew that it was "haunted!"

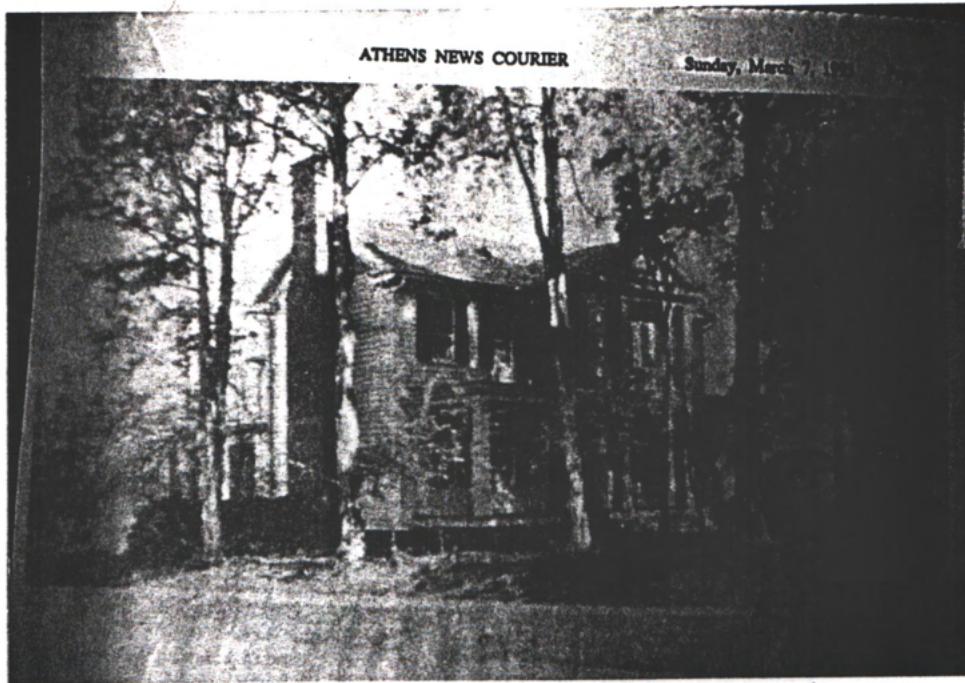
Children of George and Mary (Beaty) Houston were:

- I. David (Nov. 6, 1836-Sept. 8, 1880) who raised Co. H. of the 9th Ala. Inf., and later fought under Gen. Phillip Dale Roddy.
- II. Robert Beaty (Jan. 13, 1839-Mar. 29, 1840).
- III. George Smith, Jr. (ca. 1842-Oct. 30, 1934) md. Margaret Irvine (?-Jan. 9, 1929). Margaret was the daughter of James and Emily (Boggs) Irvine, and sister of George's step-mother, Ellen (Irvine) Houston. George and Margaret built a house at Belle Mina which still stands; although it is the unfortunate victim of an entailment and is rapidly deteriorating.
- IV. Mary Ida (1848-1850).
- V. John Pugh (1850-Apr. 23, 1926) was an attorney in Memphis for over fifty years, died unm.
- VI. Mary Ella (1854-Dec. 21, 1944) was an accomplished musician. After her graduation from Athens College she studied in Virginia. Mary Ella lived with her half-sister, Emma, in Birmingham.
- VII. Ross Jones (b. & d. 1855).

After the death of Mary (Beaty) Houston in 1856 George married Ellen Irvine in April 1861, and had:

- I. Maggie Lou (1867-1877).
- II. Emma md. Darlyn McDonald Drennen of Birmingham. They had twin sons, George Smith and Charles Edward, both of whom died unm. A daughter, Ellen, died in infancy. After Emma (Houston) Drennen's death in the early 1960s, the beautiful Drennen house on Highland Avenue in Birmingham was torn down.

As governor of the state of Alabama George Smith Houston left an excellent record. When he assumed the office the state debt was higher than ever in its history; and by the time he left the office at the end of his second term the debt was greatly reduced; and the state's penitentiary system was on a self-sustaining basis. Houston was elected U.S. Senator in 1879, but died before he could assume the office. The name of the street running in front



PRE-1932 PHOTO
P&C SANBORN MAPS

CHANGED ON 1931 MAP,
NOT ON 1921 MAP



POST-1932 PHOTO
P&C SANBORN MAPS

1-STY. VERANDA ADDED
1921-1932 FOR
SANBORN MAPS

NOTE NO
WINDOWS ET
FL. 2 GABLE
(SEE THIS MAP)

▲-NOTE 2
WINDOWS ET
N.W. WING -- /
FL. 2
(SEE 3 NON)
--- F --- - - - -
WING REMOVED
BETWEEN
1921-1932
(SANBORN)

C. 1830 FRENCH KISS, ATHENS, AL.
2 PLACES IN ATHENS ARE THESE

PROBABLE PROTOTYPE FOR THE PRE-1910
WELL-AROUND VERANDAH ADDED BESIDE
THE GRAND-ORDER PORTICO OF THE C.1830
HOUSTON HOUSE IN ATHENS, ALABAMA

NOTE THE 1-STORY
WELL-AROUND
VERANDAH
FLANKING THE
GRAND-ORDER
PORTICO



FIGURE 3.28: Many buildings at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair were designed in what came to be called the Southern Colonial Revival style. The archetype was the Connecticut Building

The Chicago World's Fair also contributed to what came to be known as the generic type of Southern Colonial Revival, the giant-columned and porticoed two-story house that can be seen throughout the South and is well represented in Virginia. One example is H. H. Huggins's Mountain View, the Fishburn house (SURVEY NO. 69) in Roanoke. Several of the state buildings at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 were identified as "Southern," apparently because of their porticos and columns.⁶⁵ The house that provided the specific model, however, was the Connecticut State Building, by Warren R. Briggs of Bridgeport. Briggs's imaginary confection had a projecting portico supported by paired columns of the colossal order, and behind it a single-story columned porch (FIGURE 3.28). This motif had no basis in Connecticut Colonial-style architecture, and was actually more reflective of French Beaux-Arts design. Paradoxically, and certainly because of the popular view of the South as the home of large-columned houses, the giant-columned portico became Southern in the popular mind. George Barber (1854–1915), the Nashville mail-order architect, picked up the motif and replicated it widely.⁶⁶

Background

George S. Houston was born in Franklin, Tennessee, January 17, 1811. He attended elementary school at an academy in Lauderdale County in Alabama, studied law under Judge Coalter in Florence, Alabama, and completed his study of law at Judge Boyle's law school in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. After being admitted to the bar in 1831, he began practicing law in Florence.

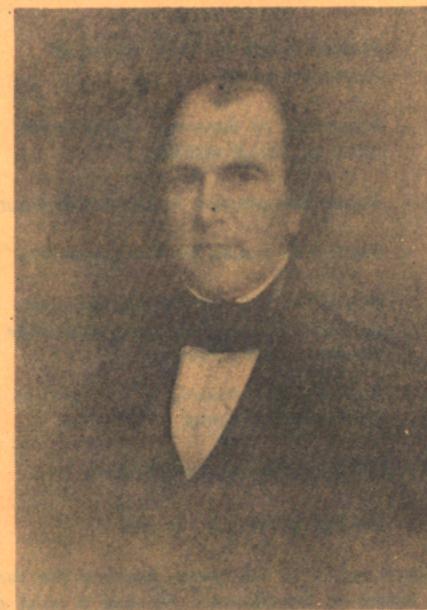
In 1834, Houston moved to Limestone County and married Mary I. Beaty in 1835, daughter of Robert Beaty, one of the chief founders of Athens. This marriage produced eight children. Mary Beaty Houston died in 1856. In 1861, he married Ellen Irvine of Florence and had two more children.

In 1845, Houston moved into the house at 101 North Houston Street. On December 31, 1879, George S. Houston died at home - what is now The Houston House and the Houston Memorial Library. George Smith Houston's remains were interred in the Athens City Cemetery.

In 1905, the state of Alabama named the last county created in the state for George S. Houston. George S. Houston's descendants donated the Houston home located at 101 North Houston Street in Athens to the city as a museum and public library.

On May 15, 1986, the Houston House was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Houston House and Library
101 North Houston Street
Athens, Alabama 35611

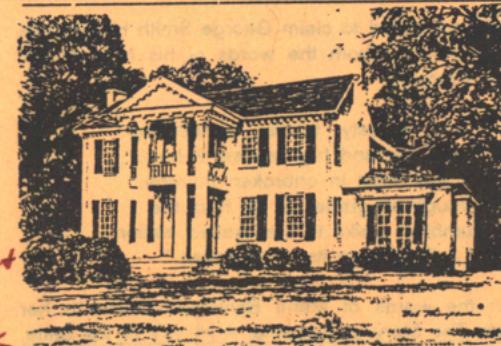


George Smith Houston

The Houston House and the Houston Memorial Library are especially grateful to Faye Axford, historian, and Philip Reyer, archivist, for supplying the historical information included in this brochure. Special thanks also to Jacqueline Garner, writer, for compiling the information, and to Bob Thompson, artist, for creating the drawing of the Houston House.

Light Writing (205) 233-1862

George Smith Houston House and Library



1845

The Houston House and Houston Memorial Library are a lasting tribute to one of our most illustrious and caring citizens. George S. Houston was a prominent local attorney as well as a member of the United States Senate and Governor of Alabama twice.

He was such a good governor that in 1876, when he ran for U.S. Senate, he was forced to withdraw his name because the people of Alabama did not want to give him up as Governor. After serving a second term, Alabamians agreed to release him to serve in the Senate. Because of illness, his term was curtailed but what he accomplished historically for Alabama and the United States will cause him to be remembered and his works and possessions preserved for many years.

The city of Athens will always be greatly indebted to the descendants of George S. Houston for donating his house to us. It is now our responsibility to care for it and restore it as it was many, many years ago, when Mr. Houston called it home.

George S. Houston

We are proud to claim George Smith Houston as an Athenian. From the words of his law partner, Luke Pryor,

...with honesty, fidelity, unswerving principles, and high sense of honor, he ascended in unbroken triumph through all grades of life from the humblest walks to the exalted station of a Senator in its truest sense."

In the words of Marie Bankhead Owen in her book, The Story of Alabama, A History of the State, Personal and Family History,

"To the people of Alabama, Governor Houston's most enduring and outstanding service was not in the United States Senate or in the House of Representatives, but as Governor of the state."

Just as representative from our Federal and State governments were present at Houston's memorial service, so were masses of "common folk" who held Houston with much respect also. Upon the death of George S. Houston, Rufus Cobb, then Governor of Alabama, issued the following proclamation:

"...It is ordered that the public offices be closed on the day of his burial, and that the capital be draped in mourning for thirty days."

Such a man as George S. Houston is an Athens native, yet, many in our city and county do not realize just how fortunate we are to be able to claim him as our own.

It is especially memorable and very fortunate for us that his family donated his house on Houston Street in Athens - the house in which he reared his ten children and also the house where he died - to the city of Athens to be preserved as a museum as well as a public library. There is such warmth in the house that upon walking in, one is immediately surrounded with the Houston regime all over again. The rich heritage of it all is apparent with its tall ceilings, wooden, creaking floors, and appointments from the period when it was a dwelling.

Political Career

- 1832 - Elected to the Alabama House of Representatives
- 1834 - Appointed by Governor Gayle to the office of circuit solicitor
- 1834 - Began law practice in Limestone County
- 1841 - Elected to House of Representatives
- 1865 - Elected to U.S. Senate (denied seat by Radical Congress along with other Southern Congressmen)
- 1866 - Represented Alabama as delegate to Democratic National Convention
- 1874 - Elected Governor of Alabama
- 1878 - Elected to the U.S. Senate

Houston, while in Congress, became the recognized leader of the House. He was a strict constructionist of the constitution and a state's rights Democrat in his political philosophy. He believed that legislation should be left to the states. He was opposed to protective tariffs and legislation favoring land speculators. His nickname was the "Watchdog of the Treasury" because of his shrewd economics and continuous concern for public funds. Some historical accounts report that Houston was particularly influential with Presidents Pierce and Polk.

He was placed on three of the most important committees in Congress - Military Affairs, Ways and Means, and Judiciary - and served as chairman of all three.

Houston's rule restored Democratic rule to Alabama and ended Radical Reconstruction in the state. His program was to "restore credit, cut expenses, correct abuses in government, preserve states' rights, develop mining, advance manufacturing, invite immigration and capital into the state, and encourage education for children. His name, "Watchdog of the Treasury", again rang 'true to form' for his Governorship in Alabama because he restored the budget to a reasonable amount, and cut expenses and dead wood from state government.

George Houston:

the South and Secession

Houston was ardently opposed to secession. In 1850, he was elected to the House as a Unionist candidate vowing that secession was unconstitutional. As early as 1849, Houston refused to sign John C. Calhoun's "South Carolina Exposition and Protest," denouncing it as constitutionally wrong. In 1860, he stumped the state campaigning for Stephen A. Douglas for President in hopes that he could keep the nation together. When it appeared that secession was unavoidable, he became a member of the congressional committee of 33 to plan some way to save the union.

However, when Alabama seceded from the Union, he cast his lot and loyalty to his home state. Ironically, Houston, the Unionist, drafted and delivered to the Speaker of the House on January 21, 1861, the resignation of the Alabama Congressmen from the House. It is as follows:

"The causes which, in the judgement of our State, rendered this action necessary, we need not relate. It is sufficient to say that duty requires our obedience to her sovereign will, and that we shall return to our homes, sustain her action, and share the fortunes of her people."

The Civil War ended the first chapter of Houston's life. Although he did not fight in the Confederate armies because of bad health, he contributed to the financial support of the Confederacy and exemplified his loyalty to the Confederacy by refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance. He resigned from Congress and returned to Athens from Washington to practice law with his partner, Luke Pryor.

NPS Survey of AL (Cont'd)

Limestone County

LIMESTONE COUNTY

Athens

Pencil sketch, mostly. J.J.H. - ca. 1980

Beatty-Mason House (J. G. and Mary Mason House) (AL-306), 211 S. Beatty St. (NE corner S. Beatty and Green sts.). Brick (façade stuccoed), main block 55' 0" (3-bay front) X 23' 1" with low ell (18' 4" X 35' 2") at NE rear, 2 stories, gable roof, 2 exterior end chimneys (main block), full-height pedimented tetrastyle entrance portico composed of 2 Ionic columns flanked by 2 antae, balcony over doorway, triple windows to either side, 2-tiered L-shaped porch at rear; center-hall plan. Semidetached brick 1-story kitchen separated from ell by segmentally arched passage. Built 1826 for Robert Beatty. Façade remodeled 1845 in Greek Revival style for Beatty's son-in-law, Capt. John Mason: Hiram H. Higgins, architect for renovation; again renovated 1960 (including removal of original stairway) as official residence for Athens College president. 7 1/2 sheets (1934, including plot plan, plans, elevations, section, details); 2 ext. photos (1934), 5 int. photos (1934); 2 data pages (1936).

Slave Quarters, SE (rear) of house. Log (V-notch construction) partially covered with clapboard, 29' 10" (2-bay front) X 18' 1" plus porch and lean-to addition, gable roof, central chimney. Built ca. 1826; renovated 1960. Rare example in Alabama of saddlebag style log house. 1/2 sheet (1934, including plan, elevations, section).

Wellhouse, NE (rear) of house. Latticed, rectangular, gable roof. Demolished. 1 ext. photo (1934).

Office (unrecorded), moved to rear from front lawn. Frame, octagonal with pyramidal roof and finial, arched doorway and windows. Mid-19th C.

See also FBJ (J7-ALA-1084 through 1087).

Cedars, The (AL-368), N side of E. Pryor St., approx. 0.3 mi. W of intersection with U.S. 31 (approx. 0.5 mi. W of Swan Creek). Frame with clapboarding, rectangular (3-bay front) with ell, 2 stories, gable-and-hipped roof, main block has 2 exterior end chimneys, full-height pedimented tetrastyle portico composed of 2 pairs of square columns supporting upper gallery, flanking triple windows; center-hall plan. Built ca. 1846 for James Henry Malone; demolished late 1940s. 4 ext. photos (1935, partially defective), 6 int. photos (1935).

Coman Hall. *See Jones-Coman-Westmoreland House* (AL-338), 517 S. Clinton St.

Complete Restor.
(Donnell, "Father" Robert, House. See Pleasant Hill (AL-338), 601 S. Clinton St.

Renov. bldg.
Founders Hall, Athens College (AL-301), E side Beatty St., between Pryor and Bryan sts. Brick, 102' 5" (7-bay front) X 52' 6", 2 stories, unusual tetrastyle-in-antis Ionic portico (originally pedimented) with full-length balcony enclosed by picket-balustrade, portico flanked by large triple windows above and below, full entablature, molded brick watertable, corners pilastered; H-shaped interior plan (central block contains central assembly rooms upstairs and down with through hallways to either side), Greek Revival interior trim. Built

ca. 1843-45 as Athens Female College of the Tennessee Methodist Conference; Hiram H. Higgins, architect; James M. Brundidge, master mason; Ira E. Hobbs, woodwork. Roof altered to mansard style ca. 1890; subsequent additions to S side and rear. 10 sheets (1934, including plans, elevations, section, details); 1 ext. photo (1934), 1 int. photo (1934); 2 data pages (1936).

hot analysis (don't say) 1924

Houston, Gov. George S., House (AL-341), 101 Houston St. (NW corner S. Houston and W. Market sts.). Frame with clapboarding over log construction, rectangular (6-bay front) with ell, 2 stories, gable roof, main block has 2 exterior end chimneys, modillioned cornice, full-height pedimented tetrastyle entrance portico composed of 2 pairs of square columns supporting gallery at second floor, double entrances above and below, originally 2-tiered porch on ell; 2 room plan (without hall), paneled dado, Adam-esque mantels. Latticed wellhouse. Nucleus of structure is early-19th-C. log house reputedly built for Micajah Thomas; covered with clapboarding and embellished by Federal period detail ca. 1835. Home from 1845 to 1879 of George Smith Houston, governor of Alabama 1874-78. 3 ext. photos (1934-35, including wellhouse), 3 int. photos (1934-35); 2 data pages (1937).

Jones-Coman-Westmoreland House (Coman Hall, Westmoreland House) (AL-338), 517 S. Clinton St. Brick, approx. 64' (5-bay front) X 55', 2 stories over raised basement, hipped roof with cupola, bracketed cornice, full-height tetrastyle portico across front with square wooden columns, recessed 2-story corner

Progress inching along at Houston Memorial Library

By Karen Middleton
Staff Writer

ATHENS — Patrons of the Houston Memorial Library have shelved plans for a Christmas open house. Restoration work is behind schedule and they say it will be summer before the stately structure is ready to show off.

"Hopefully, it will be in good shape by then," said Patrons member Marjorie Dunnivant.

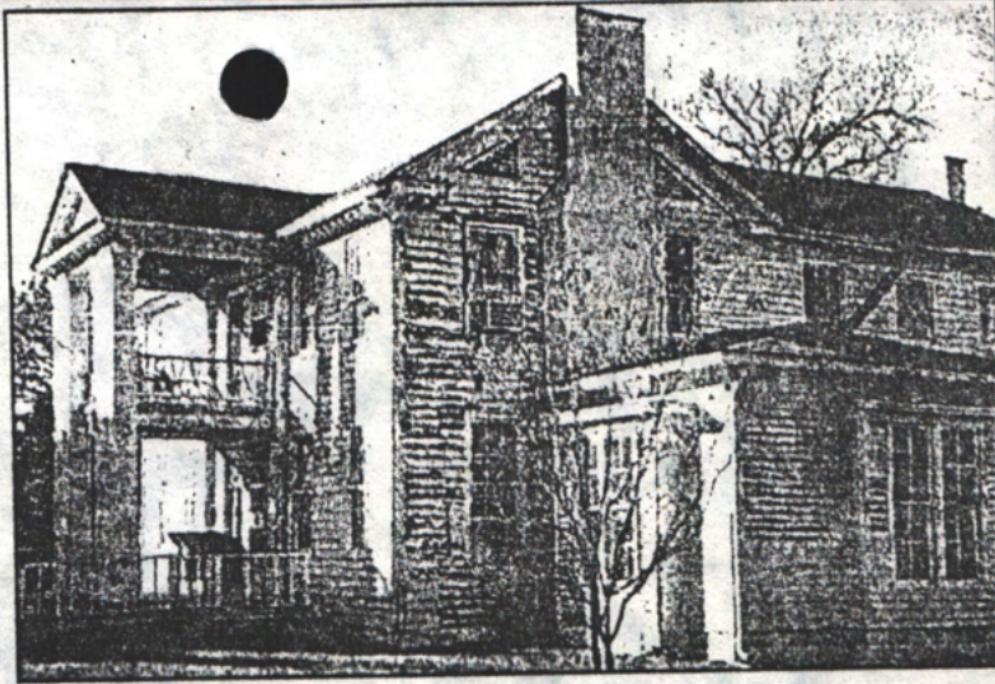
The building was the home of George S. Houston, who served as Alabama's governor in the 1870s. He deeded his home to Athens for use as a library after it was no longer inhabited by his heirs. The

Houston Memorial Library was established in 1937 and maintenance has often been piecemeal since. Much of the wood has rotted away.

Last summer, the library received an annual appropriation of \$30,000 through the state Historical Commission. But officials recently learned that their application for a Department of Transportation nonhighway grant, like the one received for the Stage Coach Inn historic renovation in Mooresville, was turned down.

Mrs. Dunnivant said the Patrons are furnishing funds for

Please see **Library**, page B3



DAILY Photo by Karen Middleton

Workers have scraped most of the paint from the Houston Memorial Library in Athens. The facility is getting a new coat of paint and repairs as part of a facelift funded by local supporters and the state Historical Commission.

DECKENR Daily - Dec 3, 1995

**Houston House**

This photo of the Governor Houston mansion was donated to the Limestone County Archives by June Hillis Morris of Huntsville. The inscription on the back of the picture says, "The old Governor Houston Mansion: This picture was in The Birmingham News Sunday July 6, 1924. There was an entire page dedicated to Athens. My dad, Culver Marcus Holliis (postmaster), C.W. Sarver, mayor, and Col. C.W. Clements' pictures were on the page. Green School, a boys' school that was known as a university at that time; Houston House, now a library; Courthouse Square; Athens College Agricultural School, known as the Aggies; one of Athens' busiest streets across from the courthouse, and pictures of Swan Creek [also appeared on the page]. Athens was a wonderful place to live. It is twenty-five miles from Huntsville, fifteen miles from Decatur, and about one hundred miles from Birmingham and about one hundred miles from Nashville, Tenn. Come see the house."

PL6 1932 photo per Sanborn
map (outbuilding at right is
on 1921 map, gone in 1932 map)



c. 1830 Houston 1/2m.
Athens, AL.
2 photos in
Athens Dixie
Caption Sept '98 ADJWS

N

Note 2 windows at fl. 2 NW wing (one 3 in 1994) ↗

Note No windows in
west fl. 2 gable.
Two there in 1992
(relate. fed. frames, most.
shutters)

Post 1921 photo per
Sanborn map

(1 story verandah is
present) Some say
verandah removed in 1970's (?)

This is 1930's WABS photo

N



10F
28



Notes
Originally
the portico
(if any)
was 1 level.

See proof
in other
photos

See Simburn Maps
& Hist. Note at
end of photo
section



Typical of 1830
would be
"dipped" eaves at
gables, & small
Tuscan cols on
2 levels at portico.
All this looks
c. 1845 or later (?)

Chimney range is c. 1970's

c. 1830 Houston Ave., Houston & Market St.
Athens, AL. Photo by Eddie P. Jones, Aug. 6, 1994

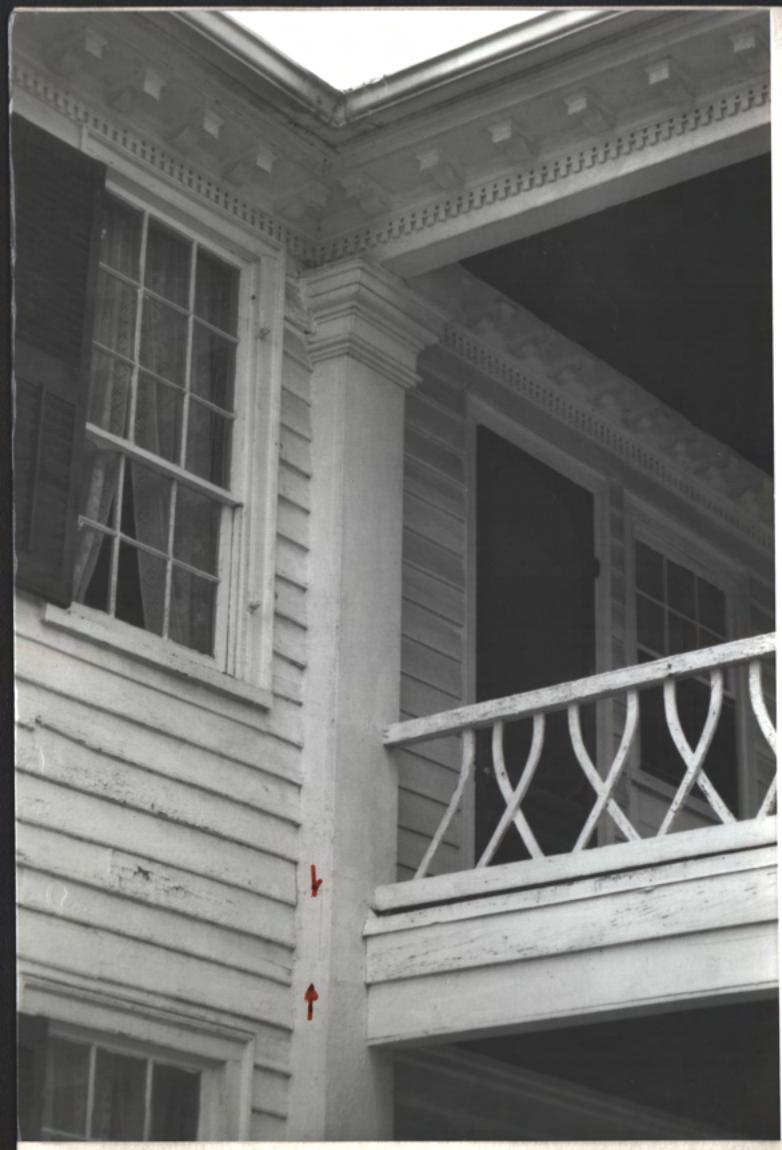
Portico is probably c. 1845 after Houston
moved in.

Modified cornice & extended eaves at gables
may be c. 1845. Need info on chimney.



front balcony balustrade (not like sides) → H

Houston
LSC-Athens



Modern
Ogee gables.
gutter.
Original
wood cornice
was removed
to put on.



Sides of balcony balustrade

→ N
These heavy pilasters
are more typical
c. 1845 than 1830

↑ Shows traces of c. 1900 side verandahs



41
S.S. portico

photo is
blended out.
Neg. shows
traces of
removed
turns - of cent.
1-f. side
removed



bunked up at
front vent

E. Wall
S. of portico

To bunked up
front vent

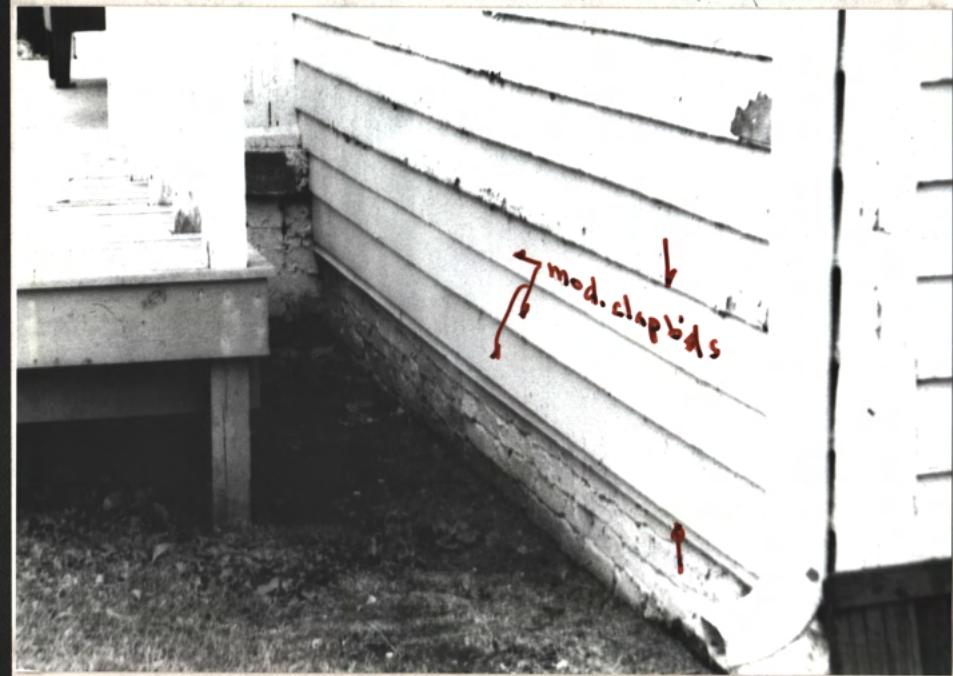
42



↑ = traces & pictures of removed c. 1900 side verandahs
post - 1932



N.E. corner



N.E. corner

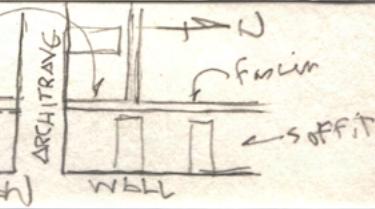
modern (or Xic)
dbl. - board 1x4 T&G
soffit

note what fascia
continues here

PORTICO
ROOF



continuation of fascia
may indicate portico is
later. Upper
row of windows
may be later (?)





E.WALL, N.1/2 bldf (Cramp rail)

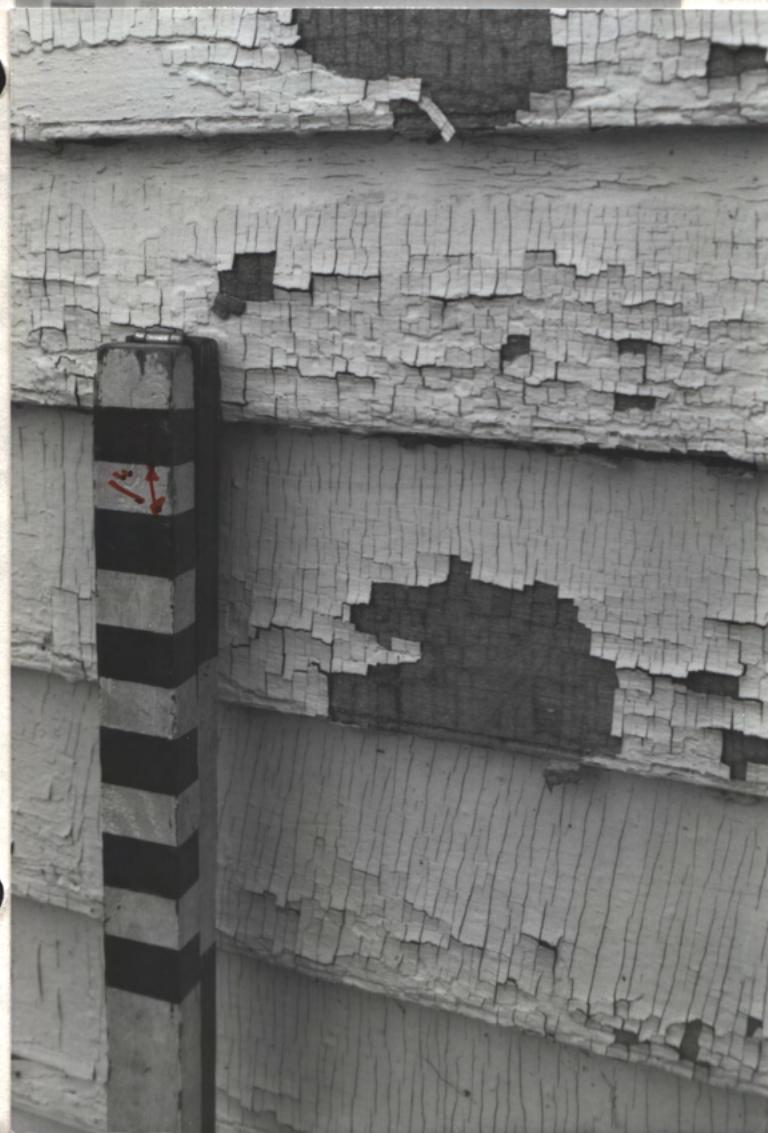
Wood Pegs
hold open turn-latch



JAMB (fed.)

10" x 12" panes
= typical c. 1830 (not 1845)





note bends
(all sides)
Fwd. all (new)

→ N



POORH = POST 1921
PRE 1931 (SUN BORN)

VIC. GABLES OF P.D. PORCH, ENCLOS. PER 1894 SUN BORN



12 courses project $\pm 10^\circ$ at shoulder
= typical of 1800-1850



EXTENDED GABLE
EAVES ARE ADDED.
SEE S.W. 6A, 6B

S.E. corner
Main Roof

S.W.B.L.

VENT
PROBABLY
MODERN

N
↑



Note irregular shaped spring N.A.
at upper-left photo =
typical of Federal Period

64



S.W. CORNER



NOTE

Cornice returns of
gables - some
extns. added
perhaps 1845 or
later

- ① Molding on ends are
2 bds, 1 unmittelb.
(not 1 gr.)
- ② Frieze does
not extend →
on returns

S.E.
CORNER

- ③ Returns
moldings
bigger than
front ones

- ④ Jt. im.
orig. facin,
even with
gable

S.E. GABLE

EVIDENCES
OF ADDED
EAVE-REURNS



N.E. corner



7242

20th c.
gab.
grate
(not orig.)
from mould
to install grate



gap between fire & gab =
typical for wood beds.
(fire safety)

S.Wall



S. Wall. (common bond = typical)



FED. ADD.
VIC. ADD.

P.S.W. CORNER
porch = post 1921, pre 1932 (Sandsburg Maps)



post-1921 ADD. →
TO N.W. FED. ELL

FED.
S.R.M.S.

W.S.

Vic. endos. of
FED. porches (enclosed in 1894 Sandsburg

→ Note patches of post 1921 crown



CHIM. LOOKS
REBUILT
(SLOPPY, NOT
SEP. FROM
WOOD)



Sandsburg maps show this was 1 STORY in 1921.
Appears reused Fed. cornice & gables, moved
south upon post 1921 addition

2	2
1	2
1	2

FED

2	2
2	2
1	1

POST 1921

Not
FED.
N.W. ELL.
ADDN.
post 1921
per Sandsburg

DT
106

FED VIC.

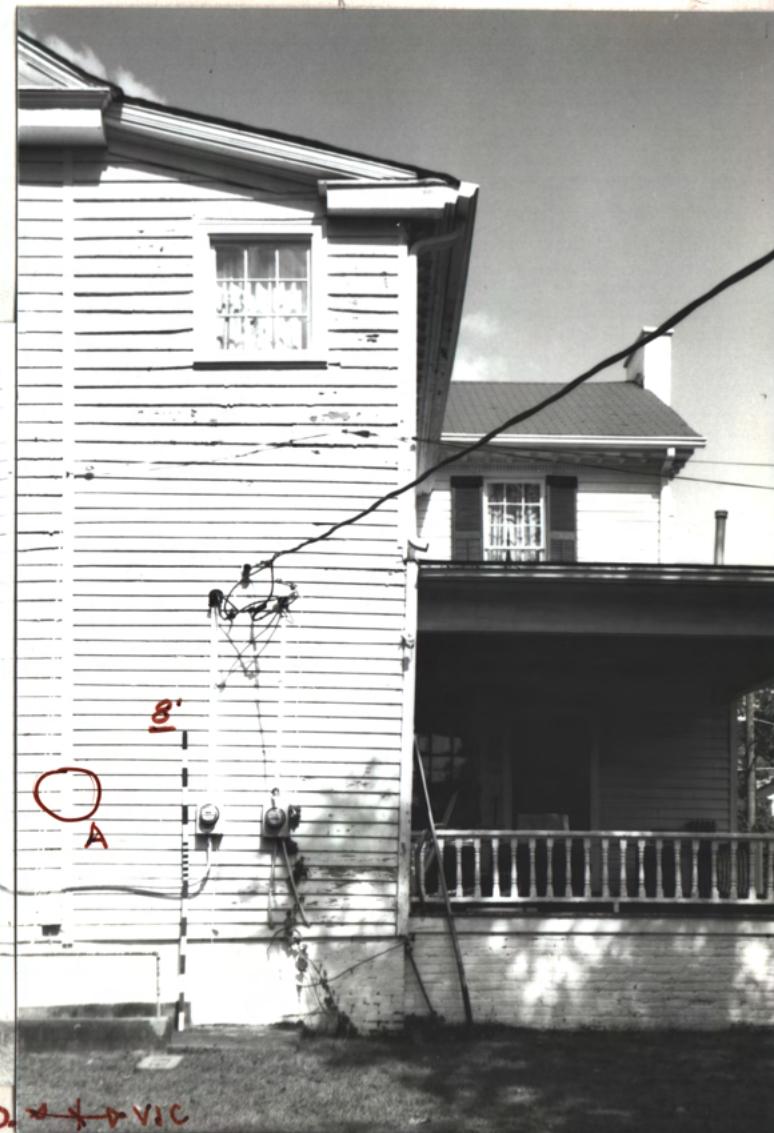


bended Fed
period 1894
Detail "A"



VIC., ON 1894 Sanborn → FED APP.

FED VIC. } 1 stg. ell porch
FED west fl.
2 stg addition by 1894
per Sanborn map





W651 W652
S652 B7
FED. ADD.
S. OF CHIM.
FL. 1

Shind does not
fit well.
Not orig. to
here

N. FED. SASH
(N.E. part of
fl. 1 N. Rm.)

A



NORTH
WALL

→ VIC. ADD. ON 1894
SCHBORN MAP

→ SEE 1894 TO
1932 SCHBORN
MAPS



B

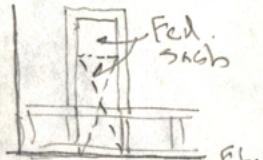
Note joint
in wall indicates N.W. wing = ADD.

110428

Vic. mantel
beyond



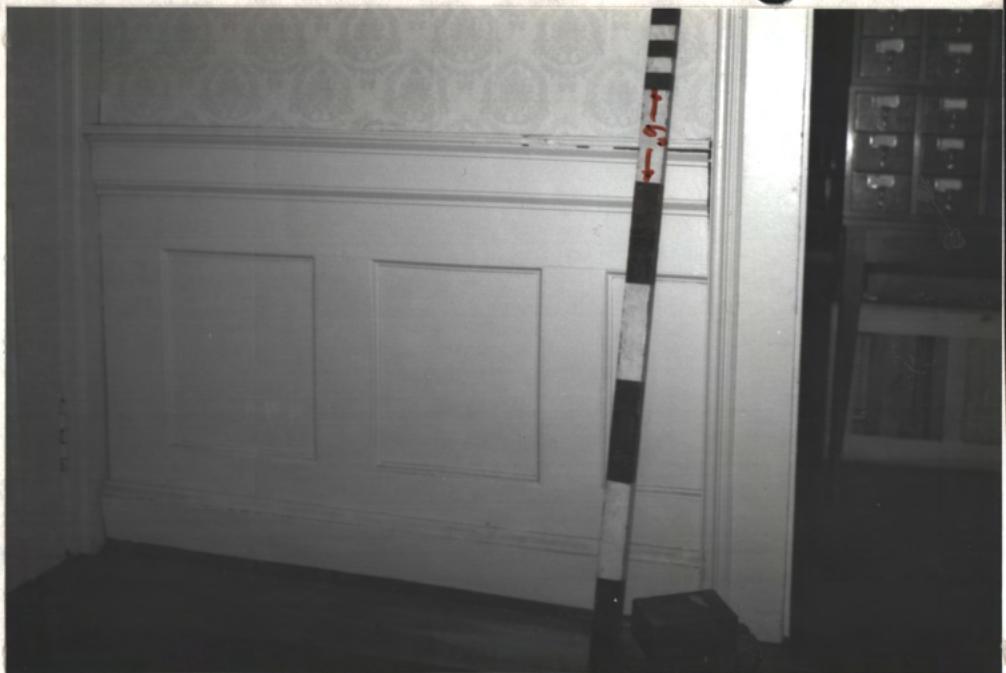
chopped N.W.
sash sill to
make door to
Vic. N. wing



Locks
N.W. Vic.
door



N.
door to
porch



A Fed. wainscot
FED. FL. 1 N.E. RM.

Vic. or later
wide cased prg.
chopped
wainscot panel



8'



N →

Door to portico from
Fed. N.E. Rm

N
↓
↓

FED.
Entry
from portico
to N. E.
Fed. Rm

8'



N →

Fed. door & transom, to portico

-7'



ENV. LOCK

-6'-6"



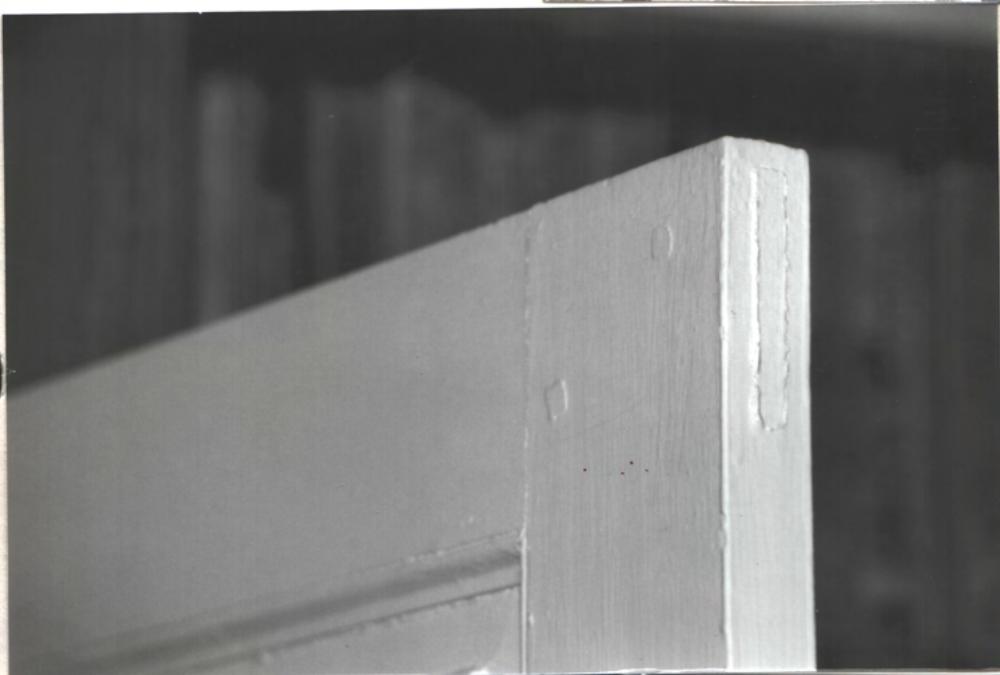
Fed. door at stairs, W. side of Fed. N.C. Rm

N →

Jamb + head panels
correspond to door
panels, typical.



N
→



→ FED. WEST DOOR
← FED. N.C. PL. I RM

← Note
x paneling thru muntins
J5

Note how panels are
"x panel" on both faces
= unusual.



N
→



FED. class. door

H

FED.
5761R
in fl. 1 N.E. rm.

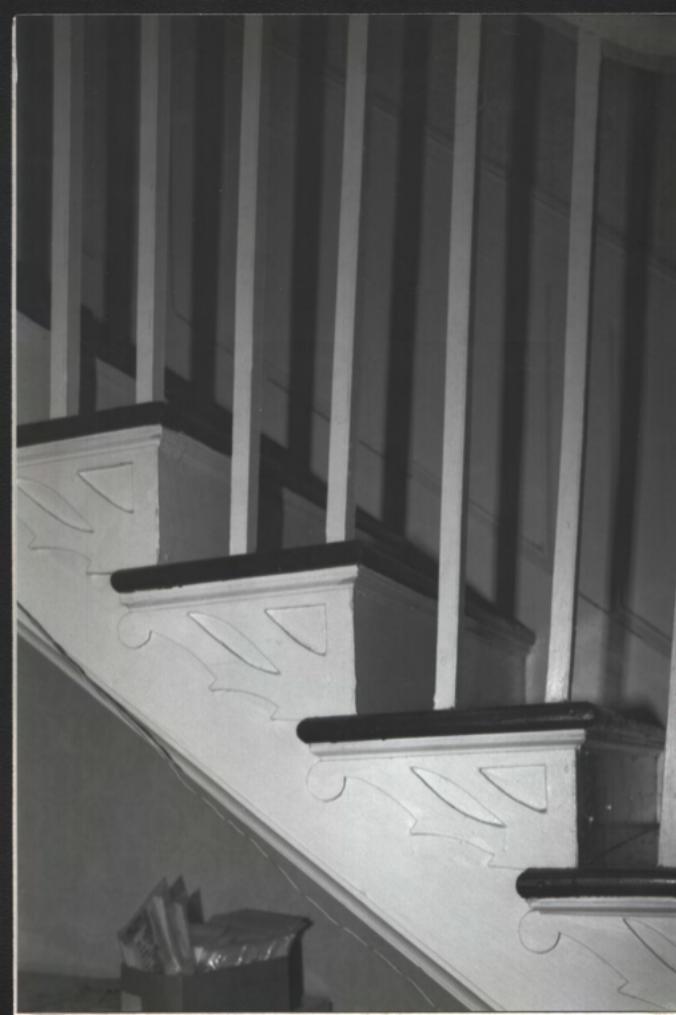




FED ST bin in
Fl. I H.C. Rm

→ N



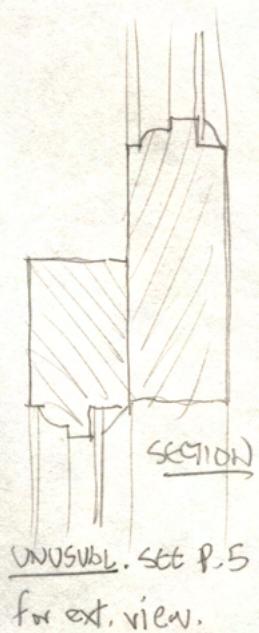
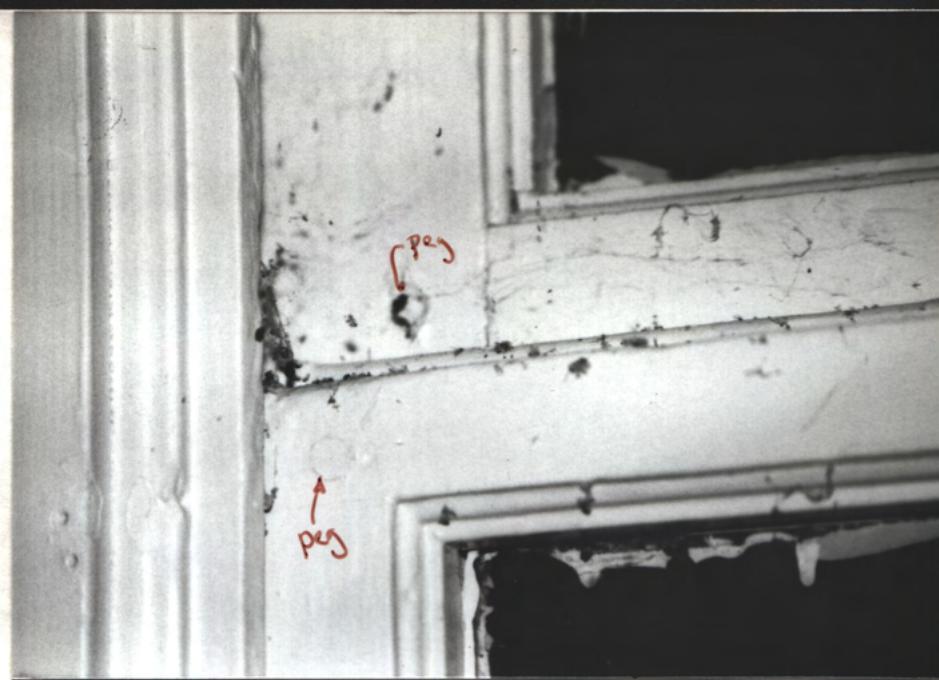


Fed. class. door

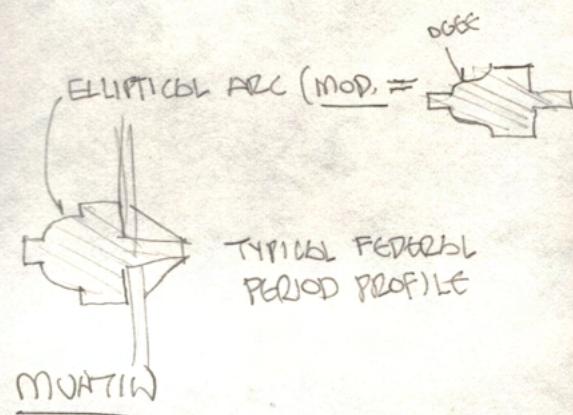
Jamb

16

MEETING
RDLH



UNUSUAL. SEE P. 5
for ext. view.



FED. PERIOD SASH
FL. I, N. RM., E. SASH,
N. END OF E. WALL

SILL

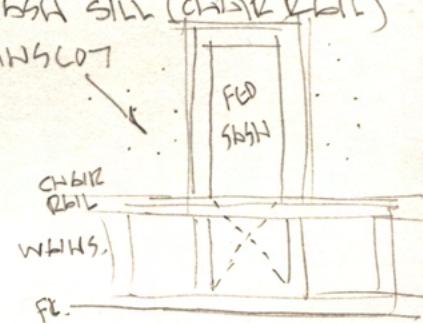




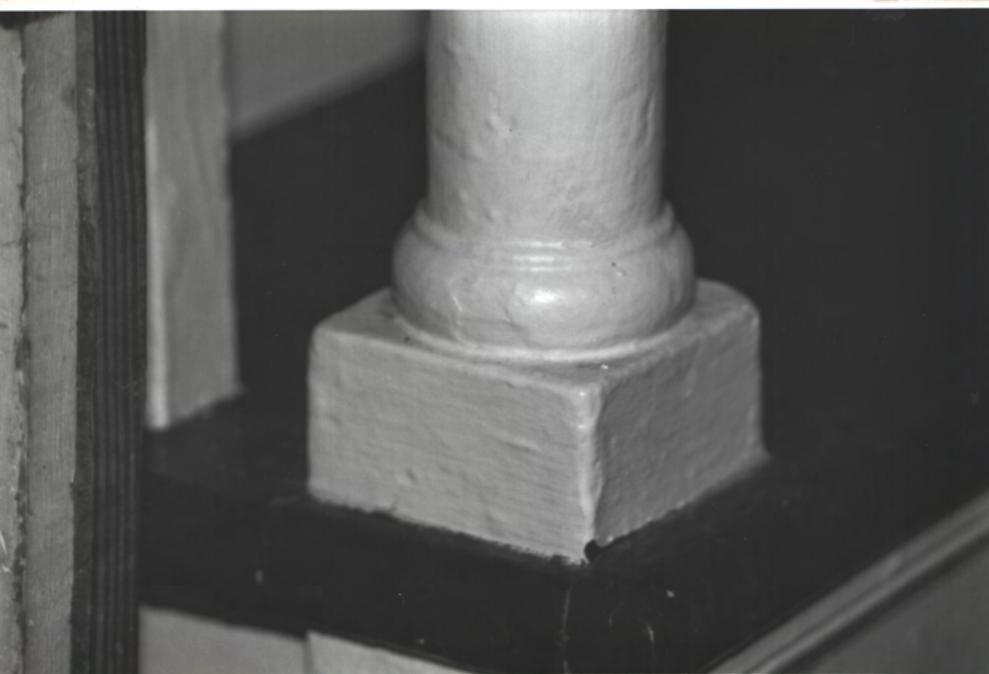
FED. NEWEL

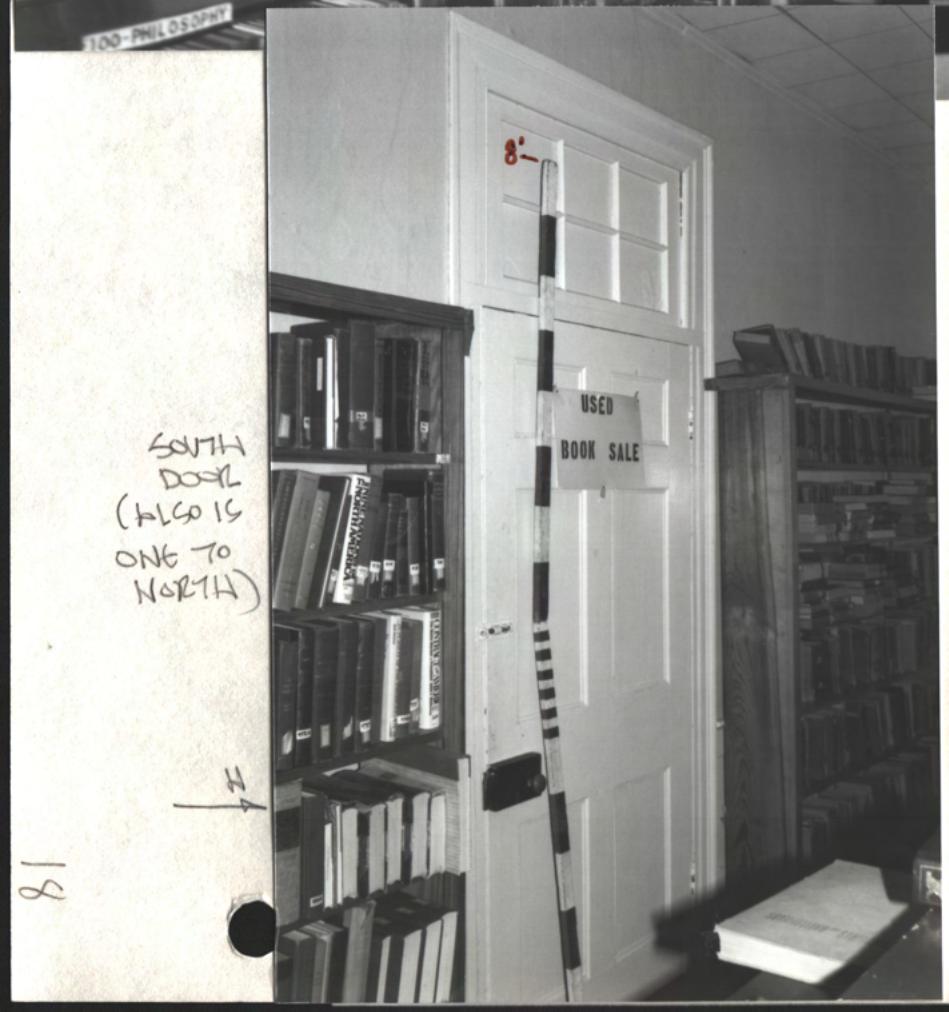


FED. N.E. "WINDOW"
CONVERTED TO VIC. DOOR TO
VIC. N. WING BY CHOPPING
OUT SASH SILL (CHAIR RAIL)
& WHINSCOT



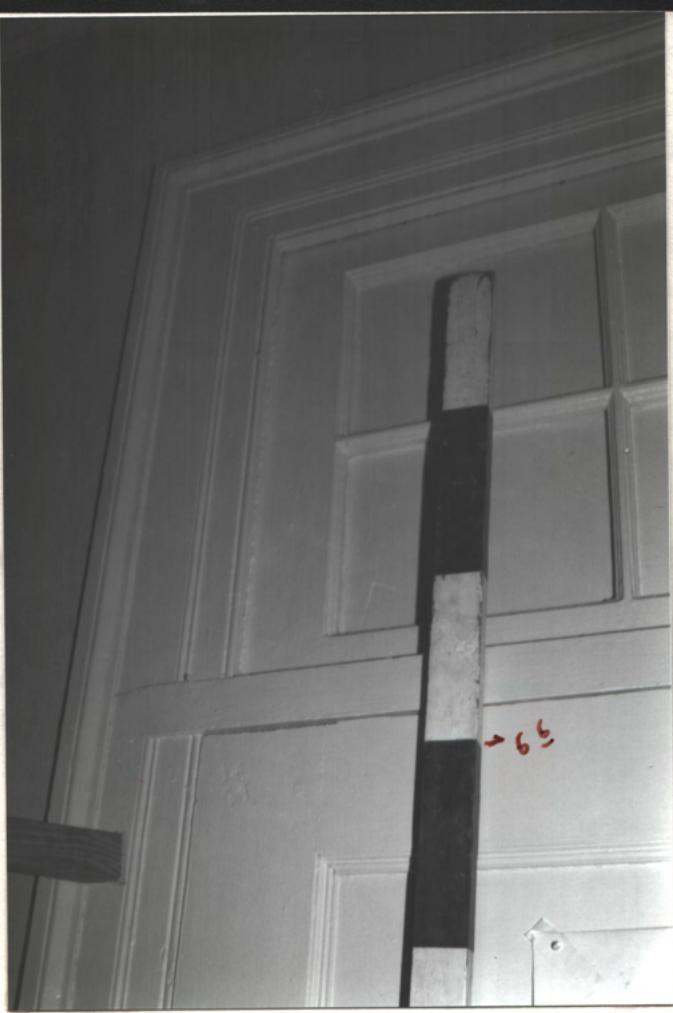
ELEV





FED. ADDN. - N.W. 2 ST. ELL





↗ printed glass

↗ 6 1/2



→ Note plain plank wainscot.
Is panelled in N.E. Fed. room

↗



note wood turn-latch
holders

L.W. Shsh (FED) IH
Fl. 1 N.W. FED. ADD. RM.
(This sash is modern replacement)

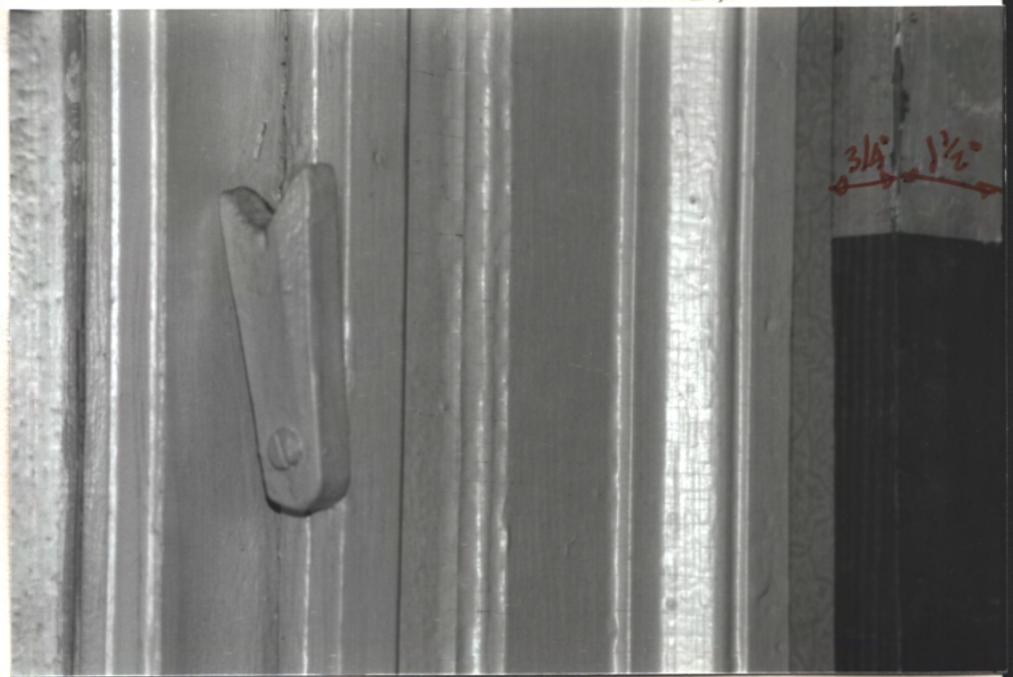


FED.
FRgmt



FED.

Fed. wood
turn-latch
holder



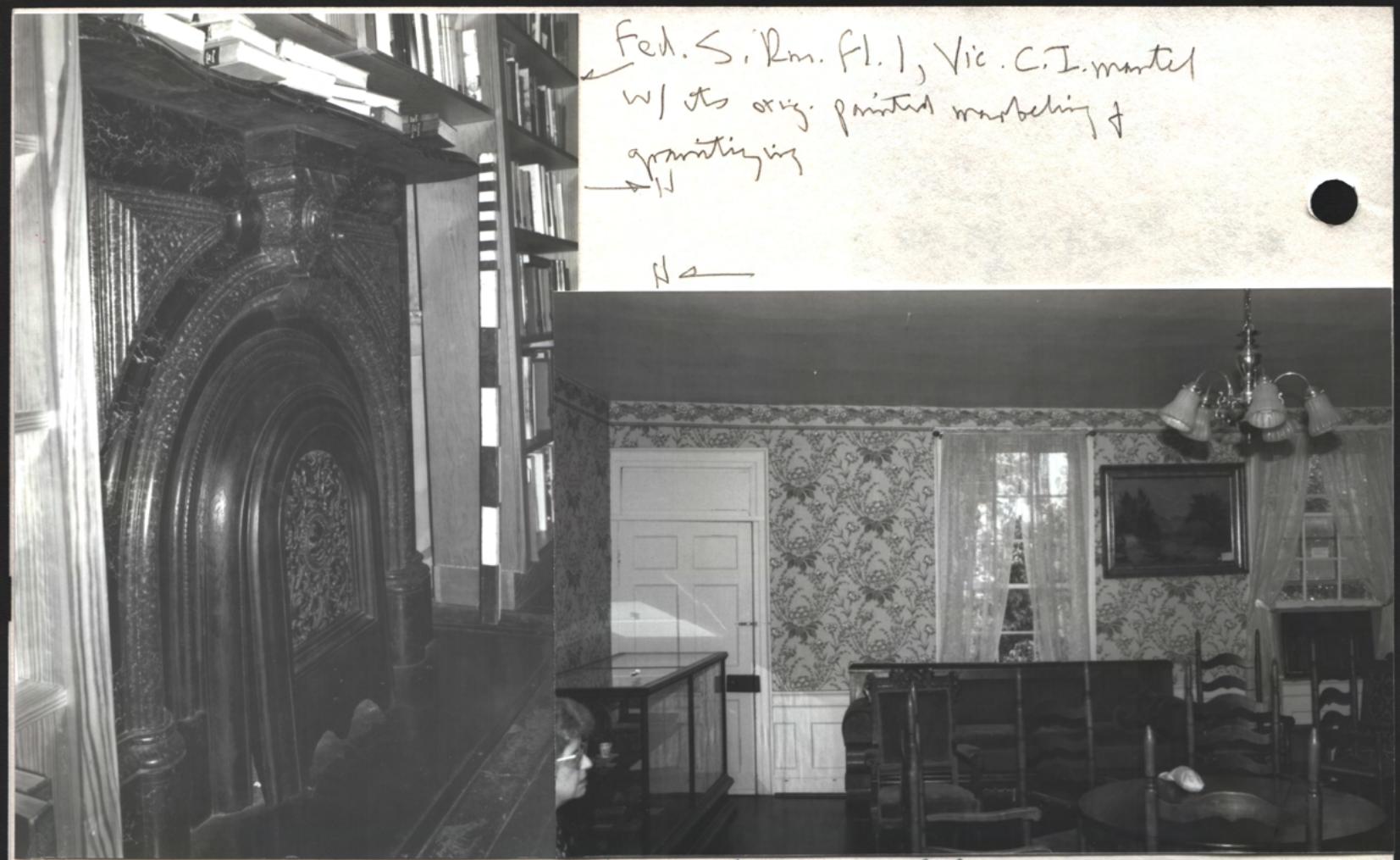
3 1/4 1 1/2

Mod.
Sash

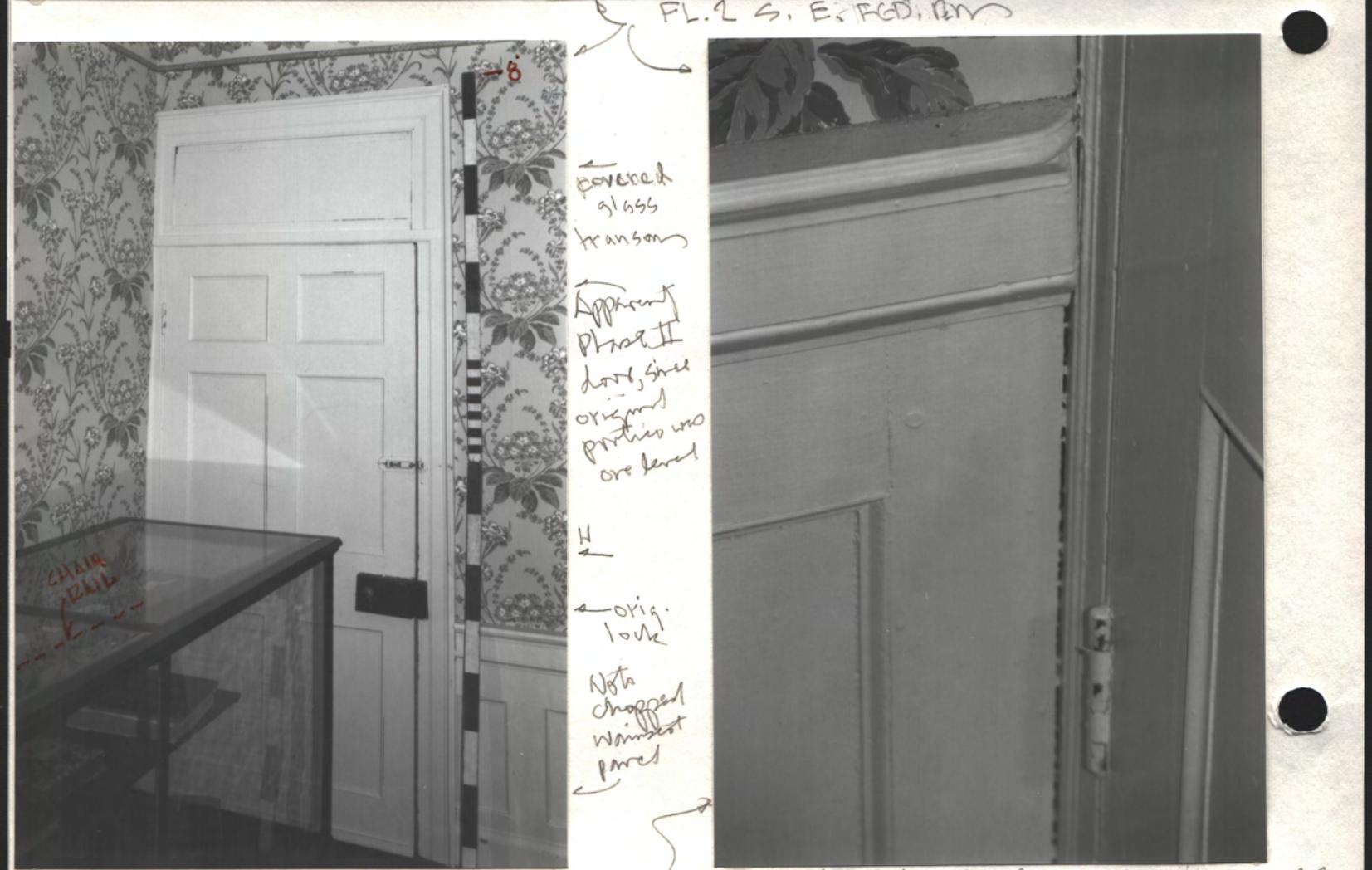
Fed. chair rail
+ flush-vn.
wainscot



21 of 28



N.S.



Illusion due to reflection. Window is off this wall

N. Smith of door at left

transom head

H.s

Covered glass transom



H.s

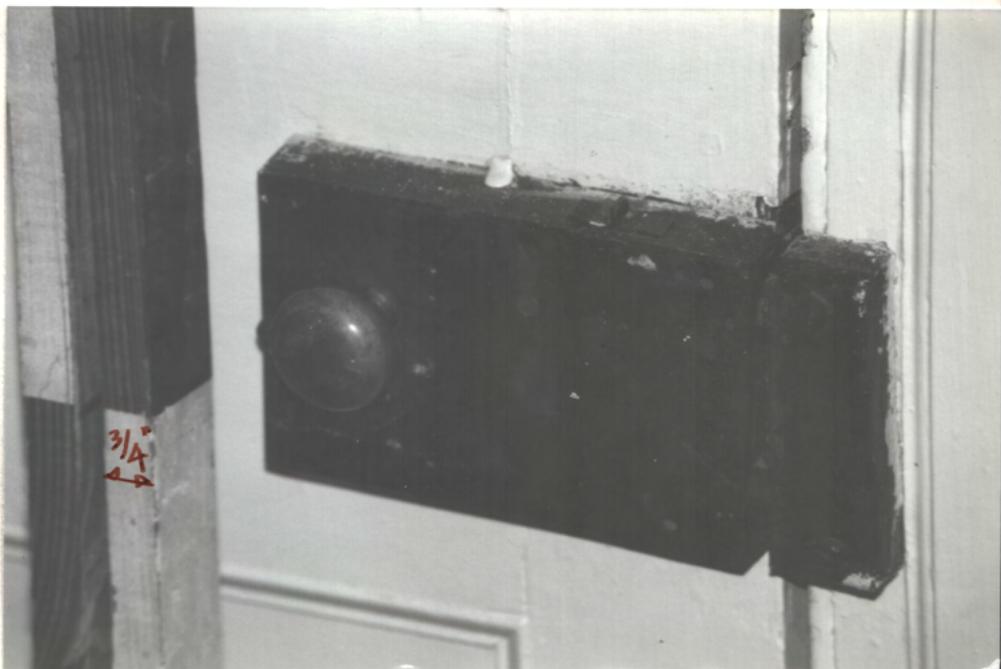
door head



H.s

orig. lock & keeper

3 1/4"



23 o P28



VIC. C.I COBL GRANITE

FL. 2 S.E. FED RM., FED. MANTLE, S.WALL





FL. 2 S.E. FED RM,
FED MANTLE
SWELL

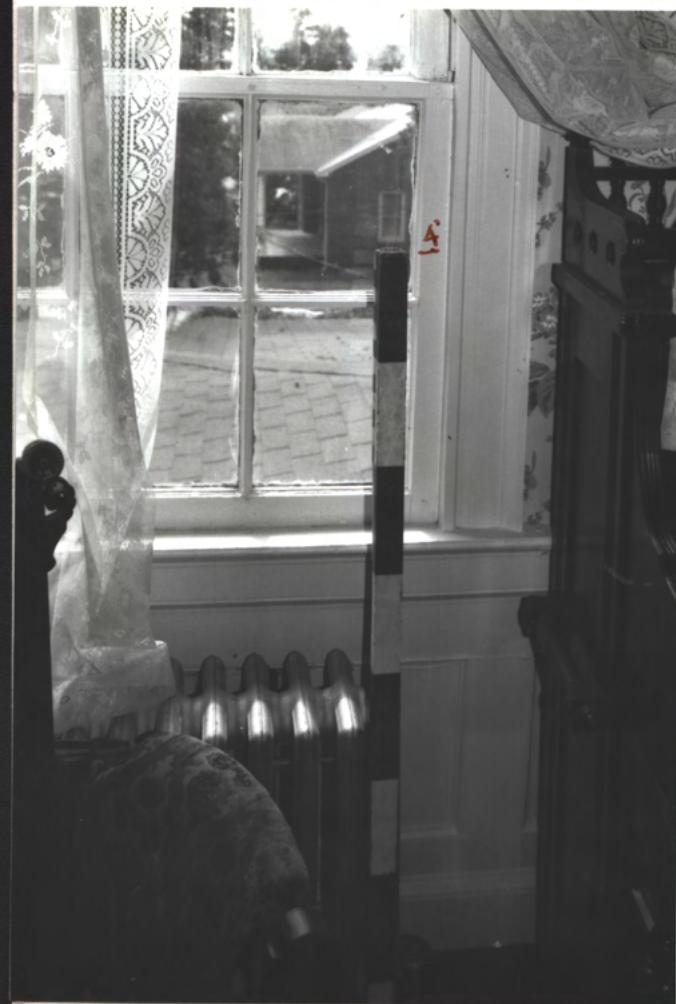


FL. 2 S.E. FED. RM., Inter Vic. door
chopped into window to go to
pre 1994 adm. to S. Y N.W. FED. WING



FL. 2 S.E. FED. RM., W. FED. SASH.

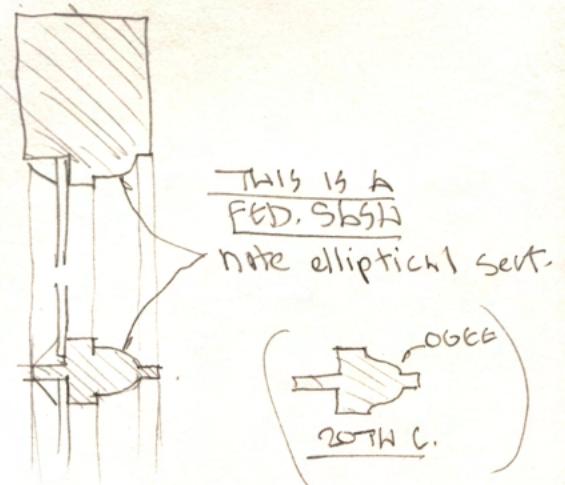
→ H
→ N



↑
note
pegger
jars



FL. 2 S.E. FED. SBSP BY FED. RM



270F28



→ 20th c. SAS
plank frame

→ to N.W. FED. ADD., FL. 2

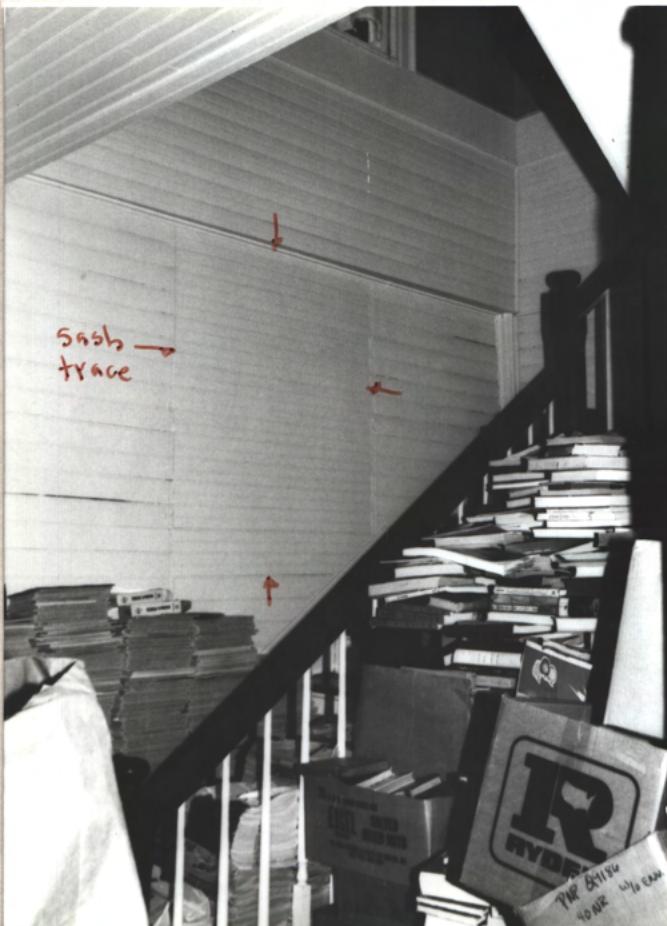
→ N

Renewed Fed
frame, 20th c. sash
Renewed Fed
frame & sash
20th c. sash
stair down

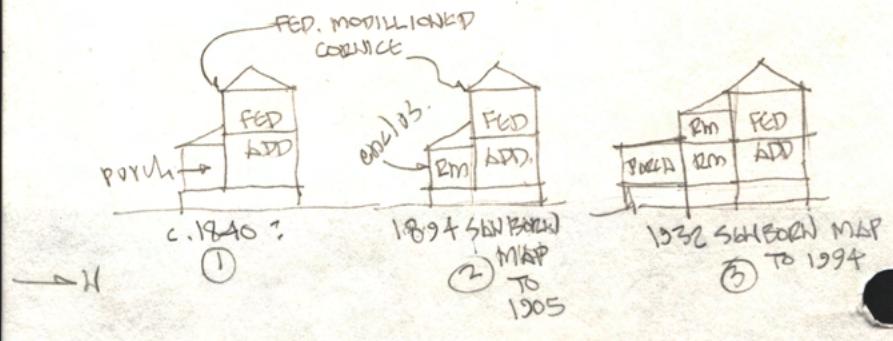
This was south ext. wall of NW fed. add'n
FED → 20th cent sash



S. 20th c. shed rm.
2-fl. Admin. to
N.W. FED. 2fl. Add.



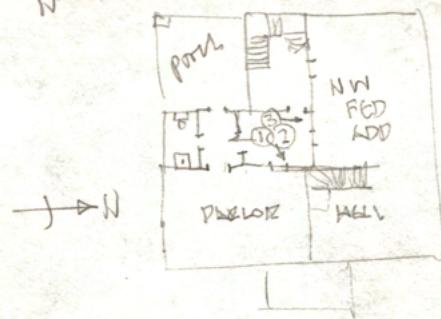
20th c. sash frame



20th c. stairs



① NW

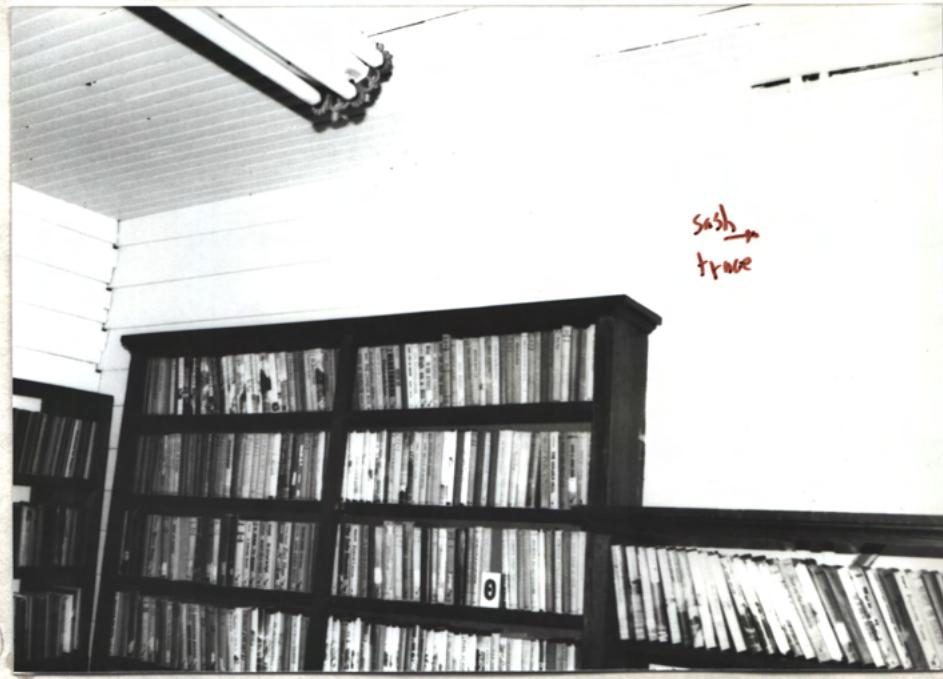


S.W. RM.
(enclined porch)

mod. door frame



②



sash
trace



→ sash trace

} beaded fed. Period dryboard
w. wall of "proto"

→ far wall = beaded
fed. period drywall
NW. Fed. addn



N.W.
1st access hole to
main attic, made
when N.W. wing built
pit-saw marks

↔ *heav faces*
(most =
pit-sawn)
ORIG. LIST
Roof deck
Note shingle
nails, prove
that the
N.W. wing is
an addition



N.W.
split lath & plaster ceiling



N.W.
pit-saw
marks on
deck - bld.
Main face
of west
slope



N.
Main face roof
w. slope ✓



FCD, N.W. WING ADDN. ATTIC



pit saw marks on rafter

↑ pit-saw marks
on dark-bds
+ rafters



ceil. joists at 20th c. shed
look toward c. 1840 in signif. proportion of age

Looking into
20th c. attic
of shed rm.
addn.
S. of NW wing



N

*shed rafters = 20th c. in
proportion & color.

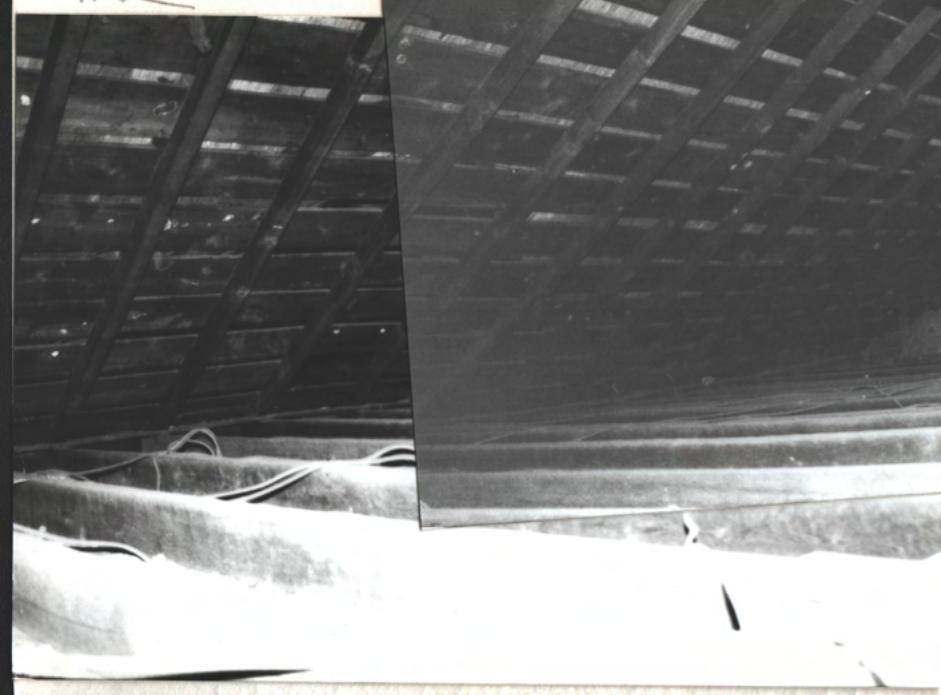


N

N. Gable, Orig. 1781 attic

W

35



E. slope of roof in orig. c.1830 attic, at portico location



Original 1/2 Attic
(lower east rooms)
Look S.E.

Note:

These unusual pit-saw marks are like those at F.C. N.W. added wing, indicating that the 2-level portico was done when N.W. wing added



MINIASE
ROOF DECK
W/SHINGLE NAILS!

NR



Note unusual pt-saw markings ($\pm 1"$ o.c.)
not seen in any other bldg. recalled.
Same marks in NW. attics + add'l 2-level portion attics.



Note hewn "sill",
mortise & tenon gts.



BSM#7
B7 FED,
N.W. WING
ATTS. S.W.,
PORCH (now
enclosed)

N

at
marker no

