

THE "ARCHER COTTAGE"
COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY REPORT

Prepared June 2, 1958

BY

GEORGE F. BENNETT, ARCHITECT
WILLIAMSBURG

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ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY REPORT

for the

"ARCHER COTTAGE"

RECORD OF APPROVALS

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
143 S. THIRD STREET
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SURVEY REPORT
(Architectural Data)
PREPARED FOR THE REHABILITATION
of the
"ARCHER COTTAGE"
COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

BY
GEORGE F. BENNETT
WILLIAMSBURG

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
EASTERN OFFICE, DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

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FOREWORD

This survey report prepared in accordance with paragraph 3A, memorandum FO-11-56 from Director's Office and dated February 16, 1956. The photography is by Mr. Thomas L. Williams for many years with Colonial Williamsburg, one of the better architectural photographers. The old sketches and photographs were found with the help of Charles E. Hatch, Jr. of Colonial National Historical Park.

The format is the result of following the "Guide for Preparing Architectural Survey Reports" by Charles E. Peterson, Supervising Architect, Historic Structures.

Mr. J. W. Griffin, Regional Archeologist, furnished all information for the "Excavation plot" and other details of belowground items. The "existing condition" drawings and sketches showing proposed work are by the writer. The reprint of mouldings may be helpful and of interest since "late" profiles are shown.

Other than showing the general area, nothing is included about the original "Archer Cottage" save the interior view of stone foundation walls.

It is hoped that the photographs with captions tell a better story than long recital here.

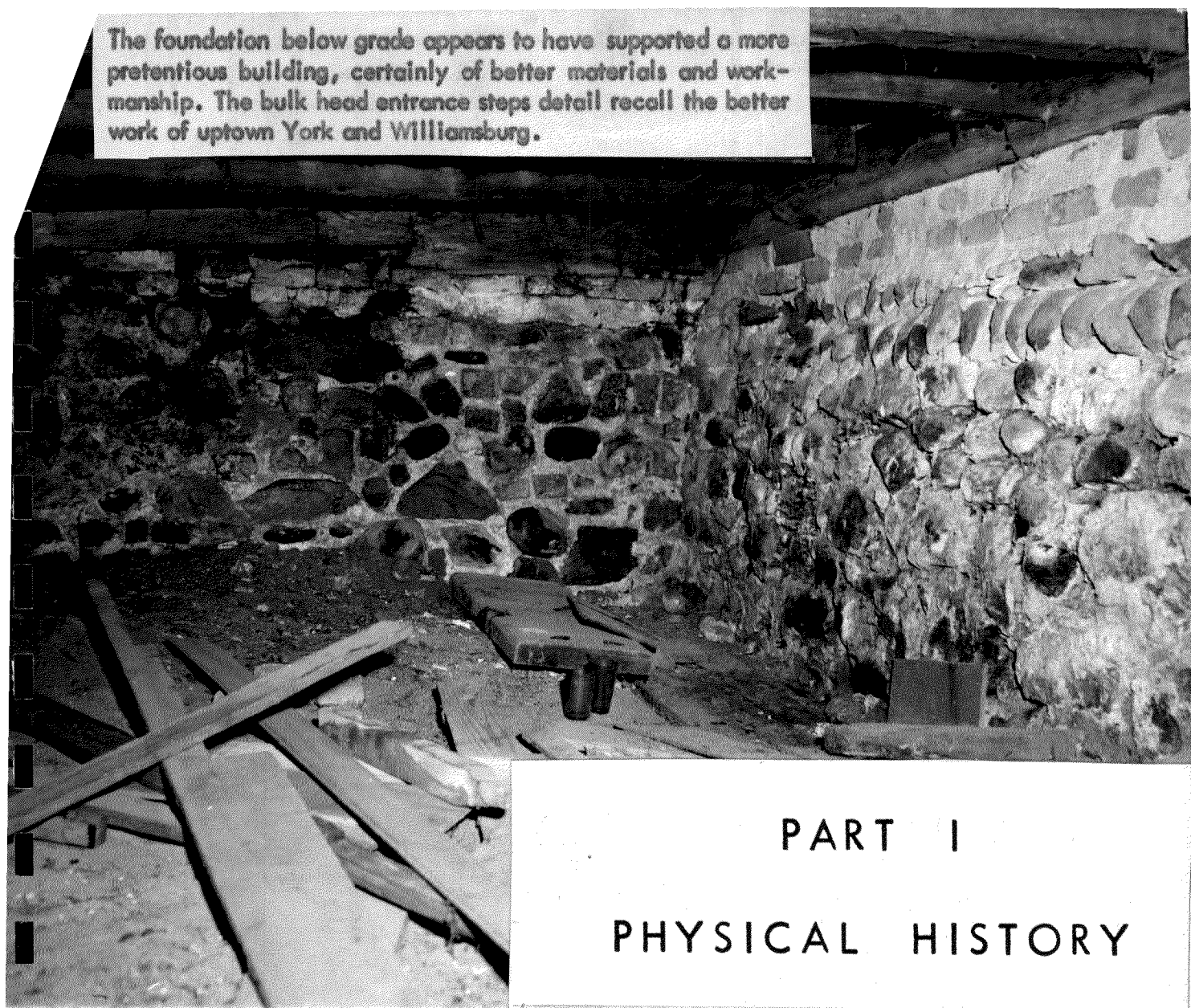
It should be understood that this writer believes this structure was not a dwelling, but rather home and shop as has been pointed out in photograph caption notes and (1) solid shutters toward river, and slit blinds at land end (the original reason for solid panel shutters was protection only, blinds for shading and air circulation) (2) the river end was the shop and (3) the second floor (river end) room was an open loft with floor and handrail about stair, otherwise nothing (4) the land side rooms, both first and second floor, were dwelling spaces.

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The foundation below grade appears to have supported a more pretentious building, certainly of better materials and workmanship. The bulk head entrance steps detail recall the better work of uptown York and Williamsburg.



PART I

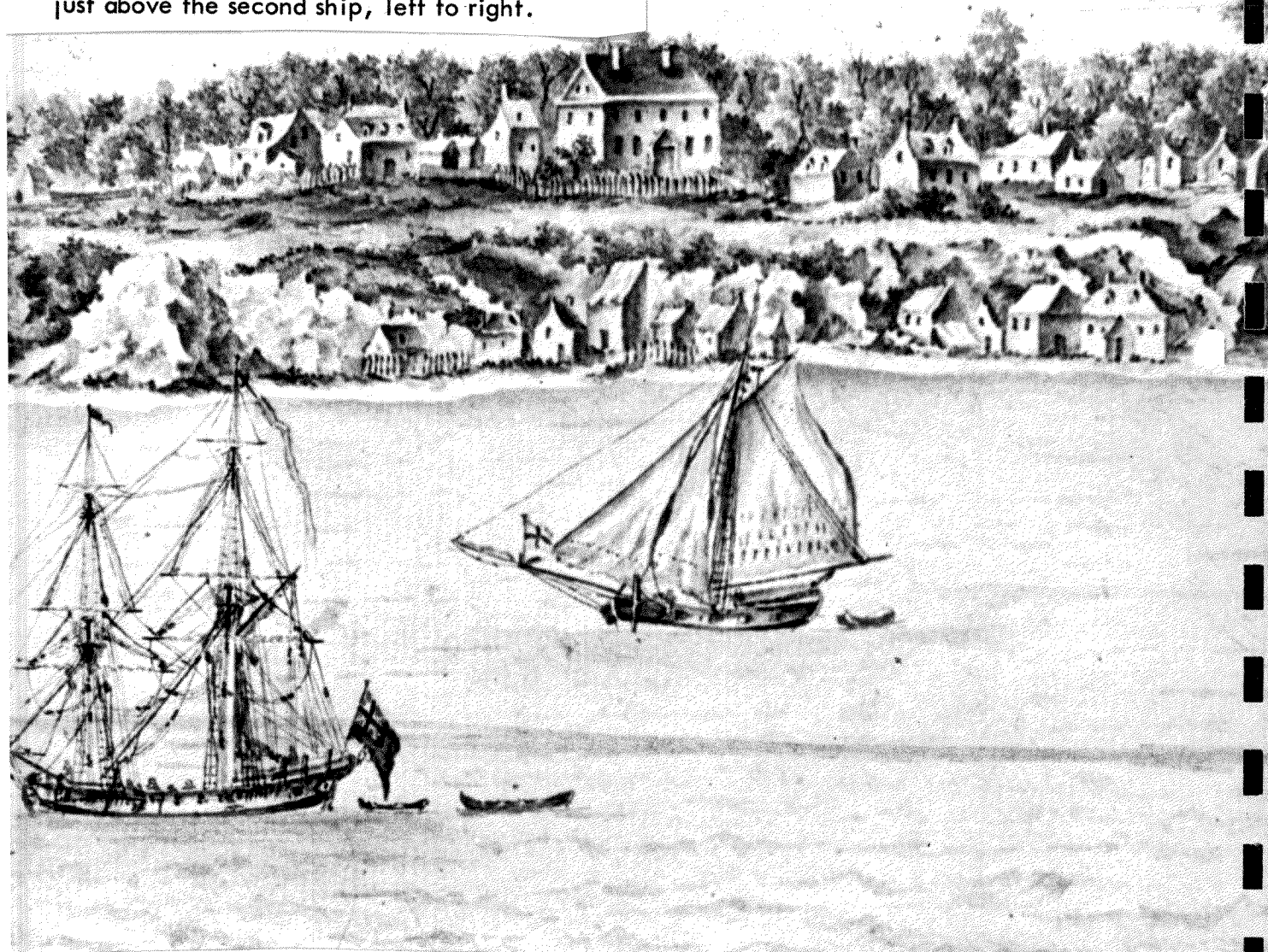
PHYSICAL HISTORY

"THE GREAT FIRE" MARCH 3, 1814

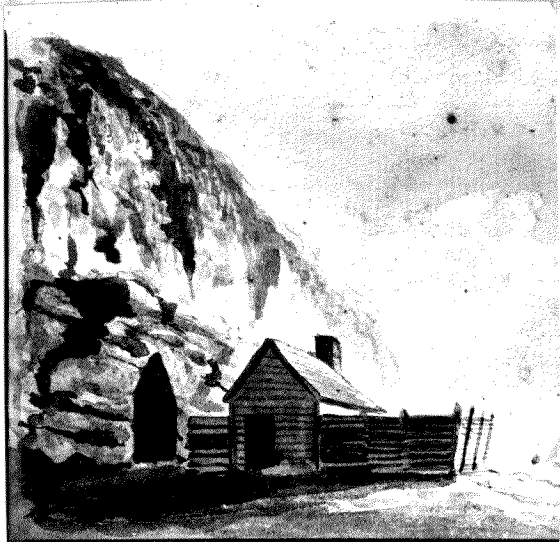
From Richmond "Enquirer" March 9th, 1814. Yesterday about 3 P.M. Mrs. Gibbins' house in this place took fire, and together with the courthouse, the church, etc, the whole of the town below the hill, except Charlton's & Grant's houses, were consumed...The lower town was occupied principally by poor people, who are now thrown upon the world without a shelter or a cent to aid them in procuring one. etc. etc."

A view of Yorktown in 1755 (by John Gauntlett of HMS Norwich, Courtesy of the Mariners Museum) The "Archer Cottage" site is in the area just above the second ship, left to right.

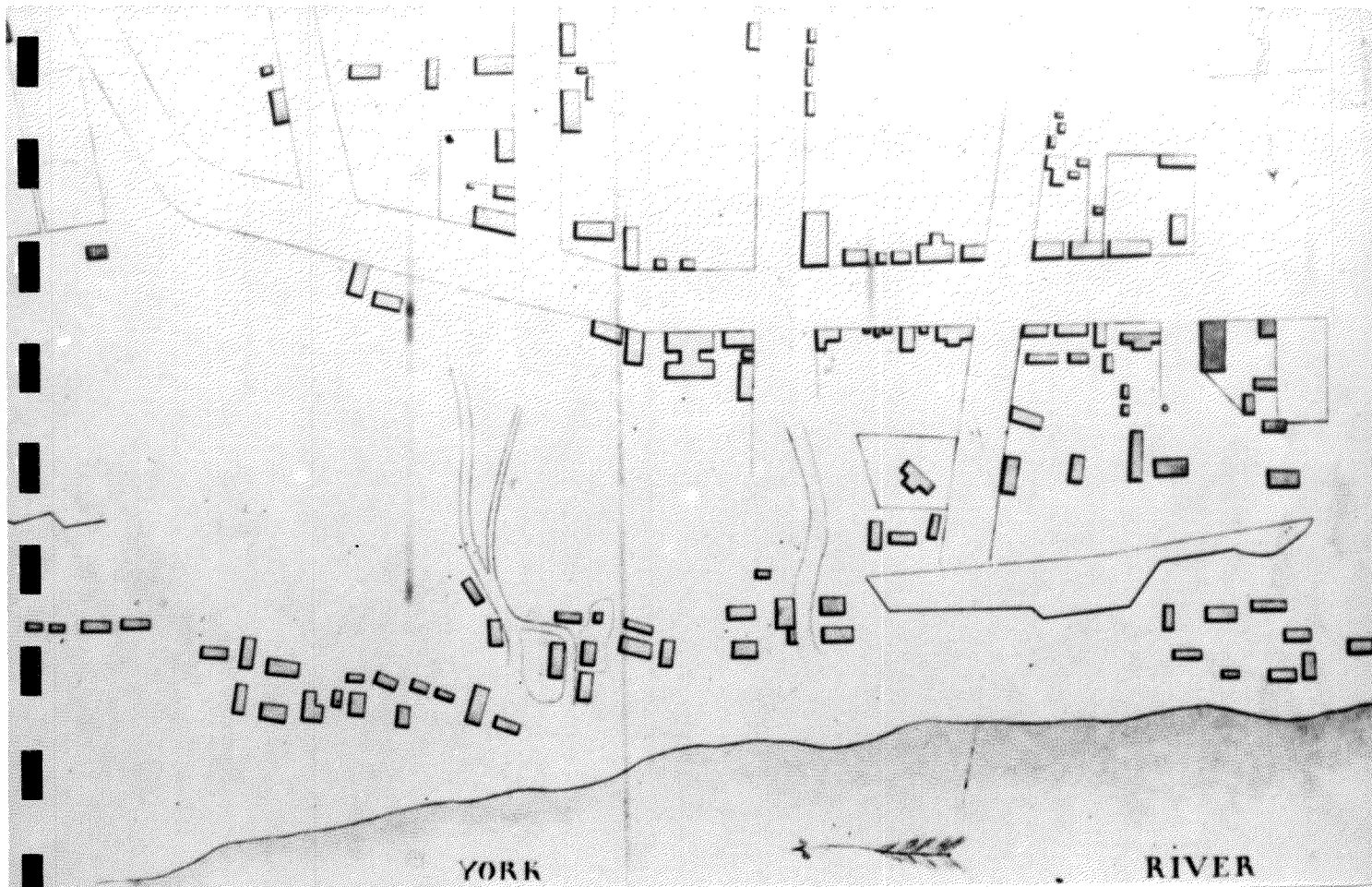
B



These sketches deal with the same area of shore line, and it appears a small building or shed stands at the mouth of the cave, not on the foundation as found to be the "Archer Cottage" site.



BENJAMIN LATROBE'S SKETCH OF CORNWALLIS' CAVE
(circa 1797)



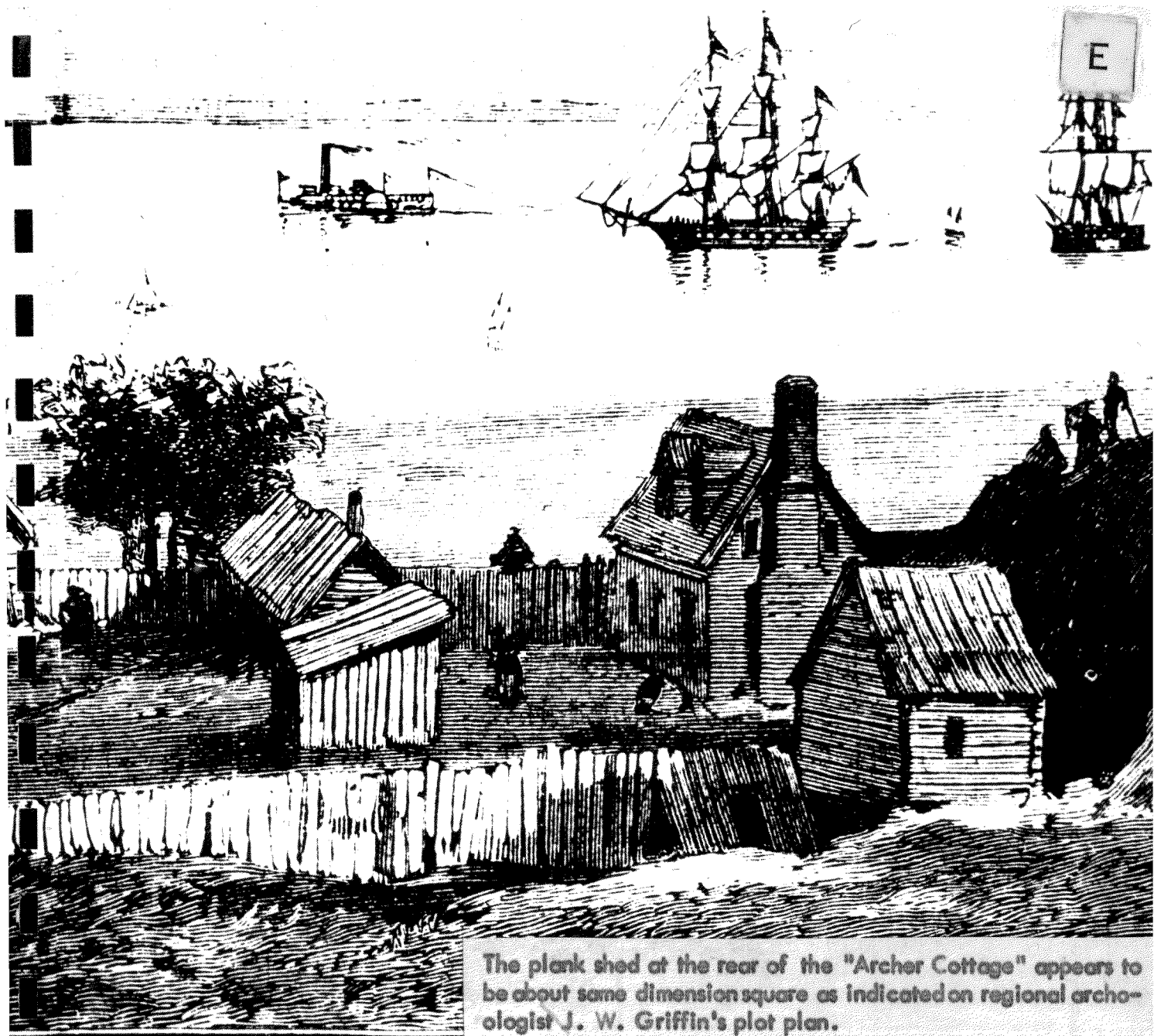
CAPTAIN LOUIS ALEXANDRE BERTHIER'S
"PLAN d'YORKTOWN" - 1781

Alexandre Berthier who prepared a billeting plan for the French soldiers who quartered here in the winter of 1781-1782, showed 46 buildings on the waterfront. Since his chief interest was in potential housing for soldiers, it can be assumed, perhaps, that he was interested in showing only serviceable houses that survived after the destructive force of the Siege had spent itself. Of this total of 46, some 32 were clustered in the zone from Read Street to the line of the later Comte de Grasse Street. It may be well to note that in all of Yorktown above the hill he showed only 80. This means that in point of the number of structures, 25 percent of the available housing in Yorktown late in 1781 was in this small waterside area in, and around, the river end of the "Great Valley". *

*From "An Historical Report on 'Archer Cottage' and the Yorktown Waterfront". By Charles E. Hatch, Jr.



The door at left of chimney in photograph does not show in the Davidson drawing.



The plank shed at the rear of the "Archer Cottage" appears to be about same dimension square as indicated on regional archaeologist J. W. Griffin's plot plan.

Notice the three sheds appear in the 1881 sketch and in the circa 1900 photograph opposite.

VIEW FROM "YORKTOWN HEIGHTS"
by J. O. Davidson from Harper's Weekly, p. 908, 1881

The waterfront probably saw more change than did the area above the hill since it was subjected to perilous damage from flooding from the river. The "great storm of 1933," which many still remember, was not the first severe tide and wind storm to lay havoc here. Such has been going on for centuries. One of the most severe, perhaps, was that in the fall of 1769. It was described at the time as "such a Storm as the oldest Man cannot remember its Equal", and was reported in some detail in the Virginia Gazette on September 14, 1769.*



THE "ARCHER COTTAGE" AND "CORNWALLIS' CAVE"

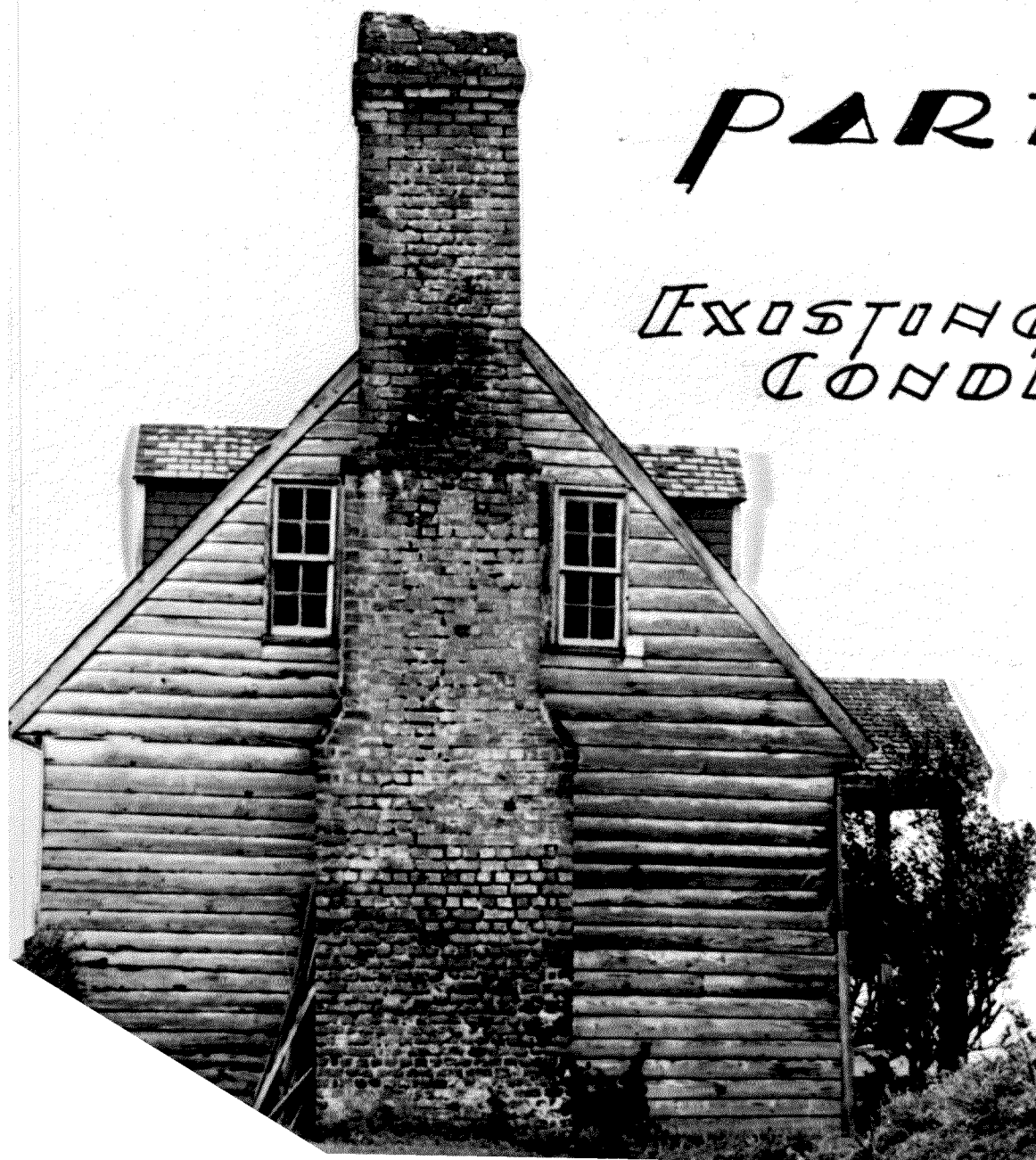
from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, October 1, 1881, p. 76

The Yorktown waterfront was a busy place of merchants, seafaring men, customers and workmen. It sometimes generated a rough and vigorous manner that lacked in the more settled and cultivated ways. Its taverns and grog shops were well attended and the stories, perhaps, were a little more spicy. Business was good and operators were not afraid and thought it reasonable, at least in 1759, to give "Credit to seafaring Men and Travelers" in excess of 20 shillings a year. There was, it can be assumed, a difference, at least in degree, between the manners, life and morals of Yorktown "under the Hill" and Yorktown on the bluffs.

SURVEY REPORT
ARCHITECTURAL DATA

PART II

*EXISTING
CONDITIONS*



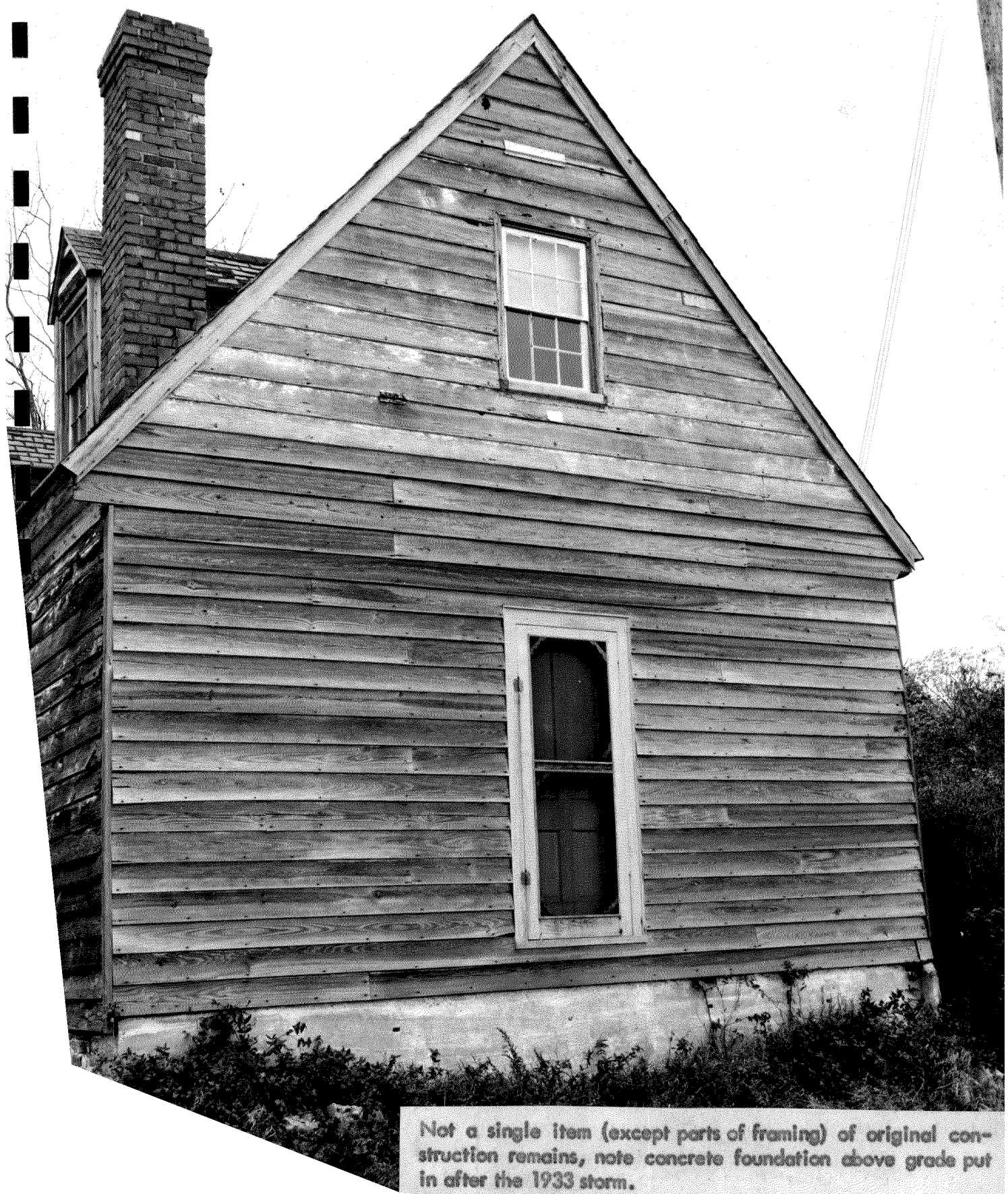
"ARCHER
COTTAGE"



The west end and north front elevations present a pleasing composition typical of the small house dating from late 18th century to first quarter of the 19th century. The historical records and architectural research indicates the whole structure above ground was built after the fire of 1814 on an earlier foundation of about same dimensions.

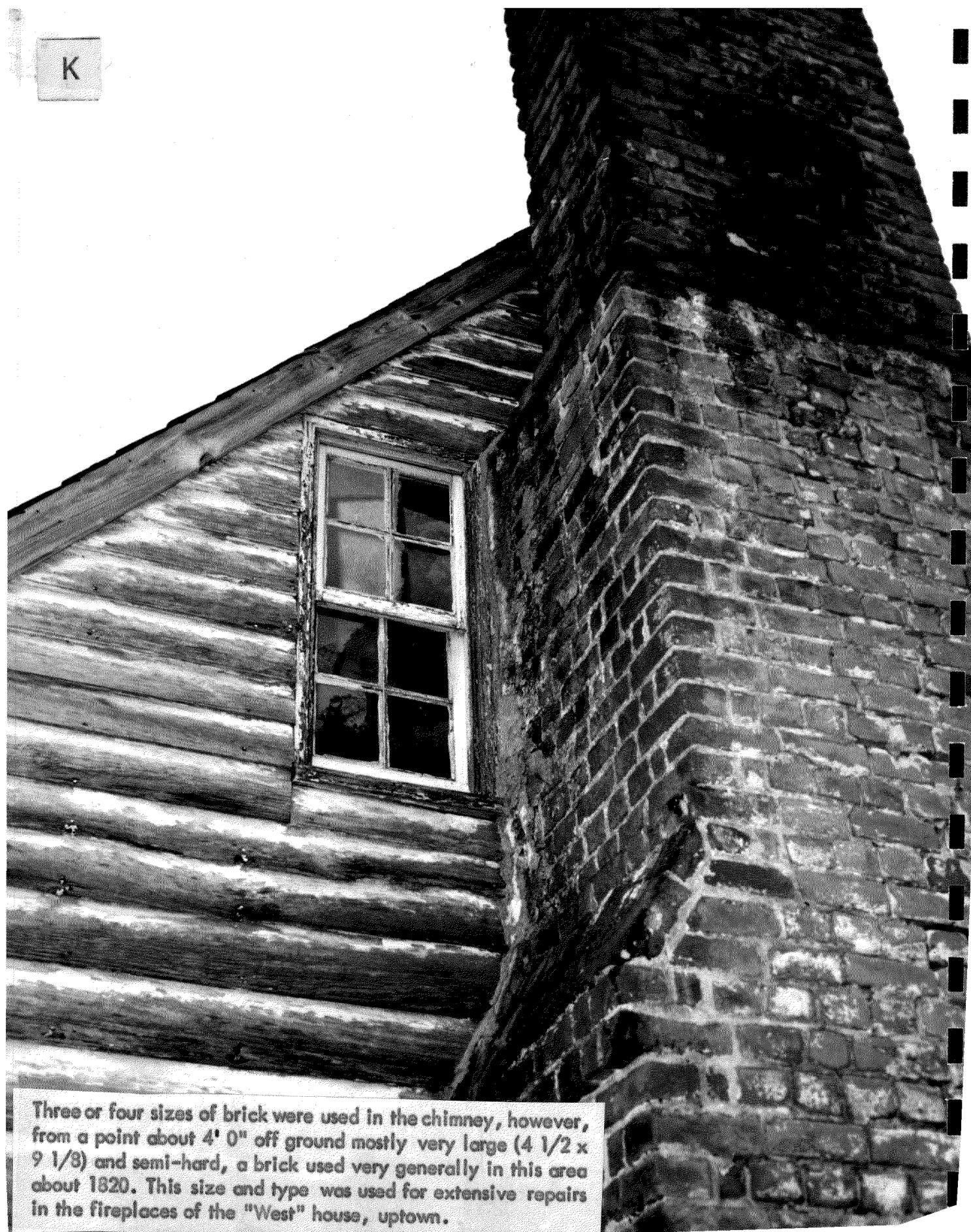


The south front elevation may have been the "entrance" since the door opening on north front appears to have been added, at least it is not framed like the above. The "modern" porch and riverside chimney were removed during the architectural investigation (middle of April 1958).



Not a single item (except parts of framing) of original construction remains, note concrete foundation above grade put in after the 1933 storm.

K



Three or four sizes of brick were used in the chimney, however, from a point about 4' 0" off ground mostly very large ($4\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$) and semi-hard, a brick used very generally in this area about 1820. This size and type was used for extensive repairs in the fireplaces of the "West" house, uptown.

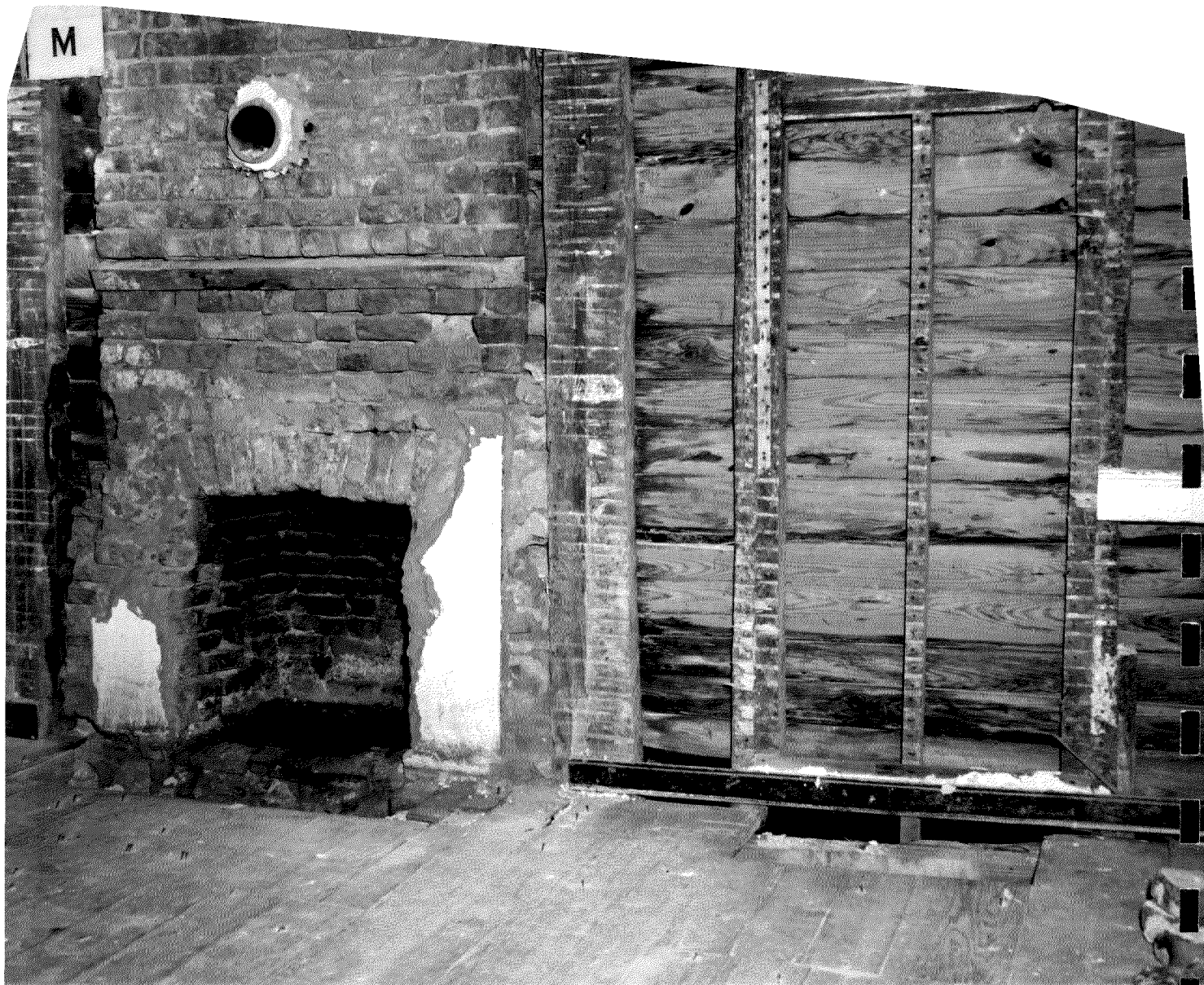


FIRST FLOOR

Originally a window had been at door location, and the window at right is right for location but was not "trimmed". This room was ceiled with beaded boards about 1913 (removed April 1958). For a long time this room may have been a store or shop since all the timbers are smoked and aged, also only one set of nail hobs remain after removal of beaded siding.

The large brick as mentioned appears to have been new at the time of construction, the other sizes, however, are reused brick and had been in fire, and at lower levels are mixed with the larger "new" brick thus indicating a rebuilding after a fire (the writer thinks the fire of 1814).

M



FIRST FLOOR

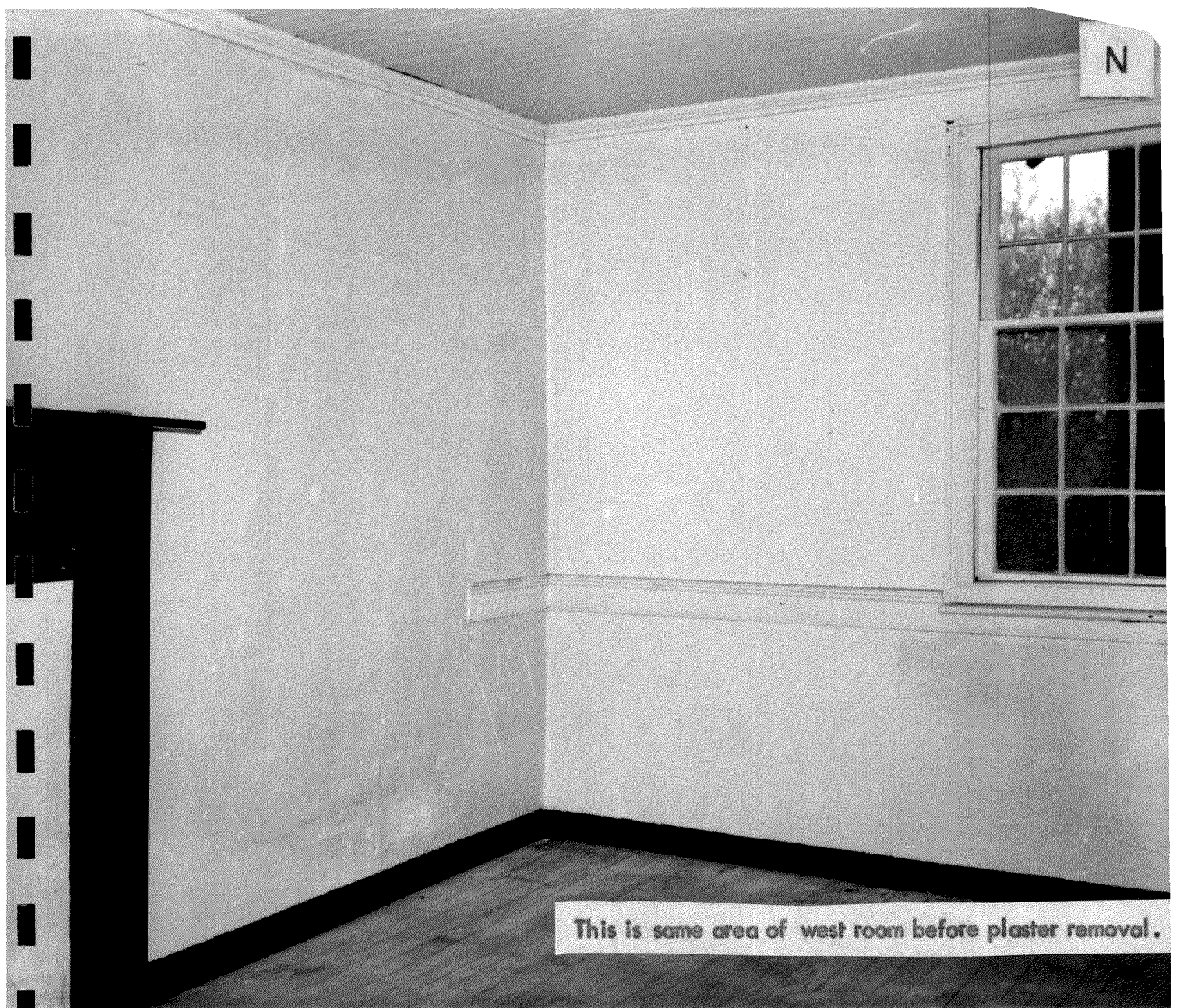
WEST ROOM

The main posts at side of chimney are salvaged timbers as are all structural members except rafters. The studs and headers show two sets of lath nails, indicating plaster replacement, that is, side walls only. The ceiling has been plastered once and more recently "ceiled" with beaded boards. The poplar nailing block strip over fireplace opening has one set of nail holes matching a very late type mouth which means that for a long time no mouth was used.

MANTLE

The framing for "late" door opening mentioned elsewhere is plainly shown.

N



This is same area of west room before plaster removal.

FIRST FLOOR

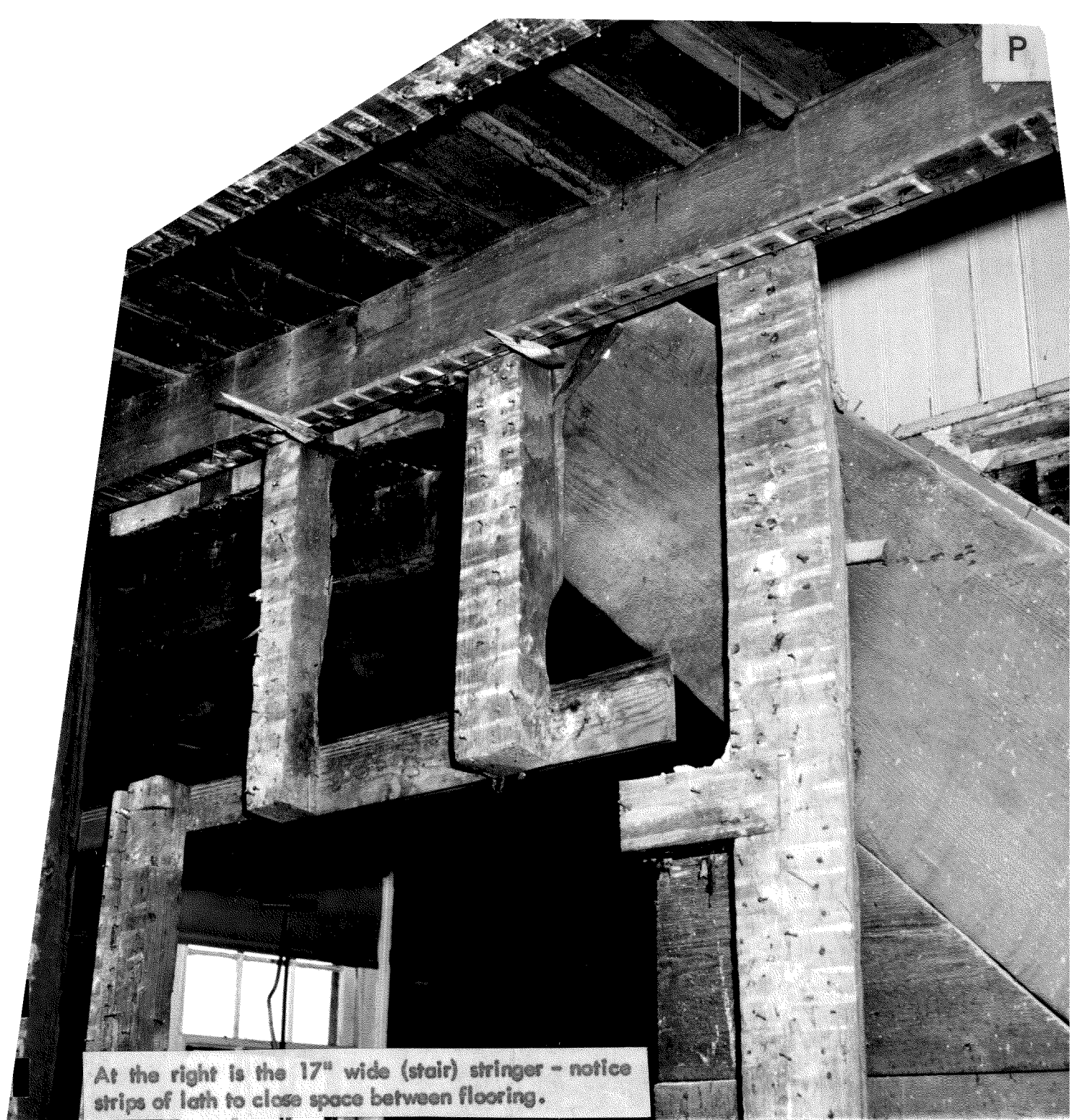
The glass is 8 x 10, some sash are replacement and mutins and rails shapes and dimensions vary.

O



FIRST FLOOR

This detail shows framing and chair board running in-
to window sill. The brick and stone fragments - from
the foundation wall shown here indicate typical fire
damage to material reused in this structure.



At the right is the 17" wide (stair) stringer - notice strips of lath to close space between flooring.

FIRST FLOOR

WEST ROOM, LOOKING EAST

At the right, part of freader is still in place, it has been removed at left, but the stud is a continuation of the piece to its left, this of course determines the door framing width.

Q



West room, looking toward entrance door, the partition and door at left are of the 1913 remodelling.

FIRST FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

EAST ROOM LOOKING WEST

This room was the store or shop. The far door is same as shown here then later boarded in as shown by several pieces left for the illustration.

The far partition is part of the 1913 remodelling.

S

The stair entrance is at the front door, and another door to stair from store or shop is shown landing at the third winder step.

FIRST FLOOR



At left evidence remains of the original "hand rail."

SECOND FLOOR

At the right the "pointed" studs allowed the use of short nails for fastening. Some wood parts were white washed risers painted.

The old lath shown at head of stairs was at first misleading because upon close inspection it was found they were salvage material and applied with early nineteenth century semi-steel nails.

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

Notice change in floor plank width, the east or far "room" in photo, boards are all the same, about 12" while in the near room, random width.

W



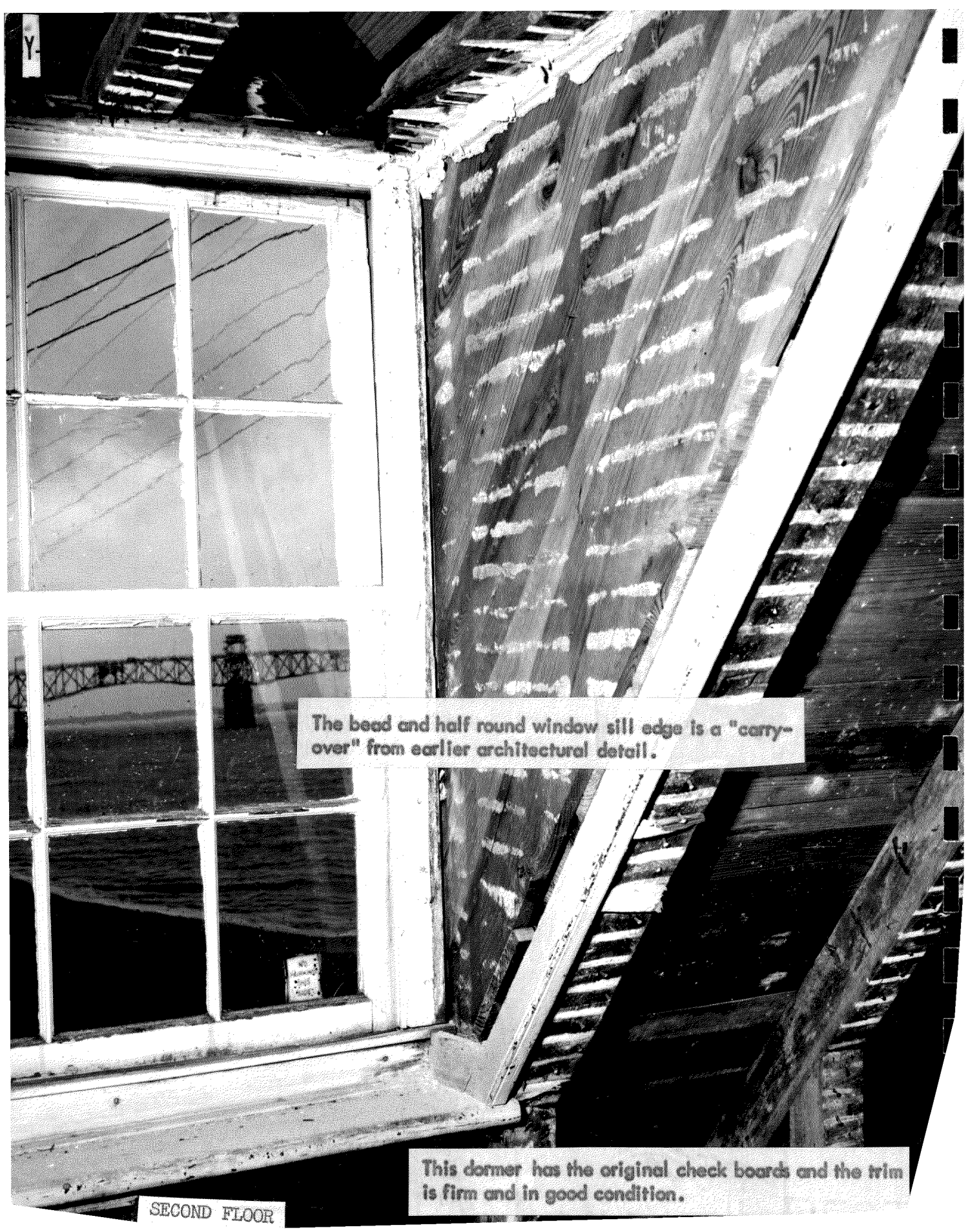
SECOND FLOOR

The fireplace opening would be about 20" wide x 30" high as indicated by brick fragments and workings. The cast iron fire back shown on sheet 3 of the measured drawings was found in this fireplace, not fastened to wall but buried 5" deep and 3" from back of opening.



SECOND FLOOR

Same room before plaster removal, the fireplace plastered over as shown. The window and door trim has the profile shown in sheet 3 of the measured drawings.



Y-

The bead and half round window sill edge is a "carry-over" from earlier architectural detail.

This dormer has the original check boards and the trim is firm and in good condition.

SECOND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

THE "NEW AND THE OLD"

The lower cord of the "new" rafter truss is the ceiling, however, at the dormer points they have used (old rafters) salvage material to catch or support lath.

Another guess would be that the second floor walls did not have plastering from the beginning as witness the poor workmanship at all points other than rafters.

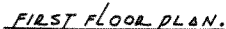
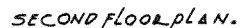
A

A

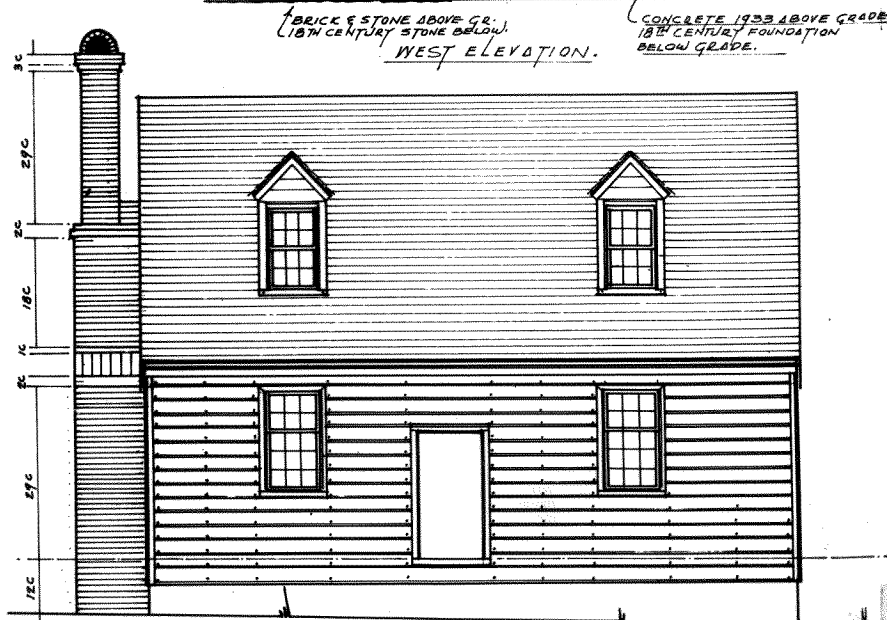
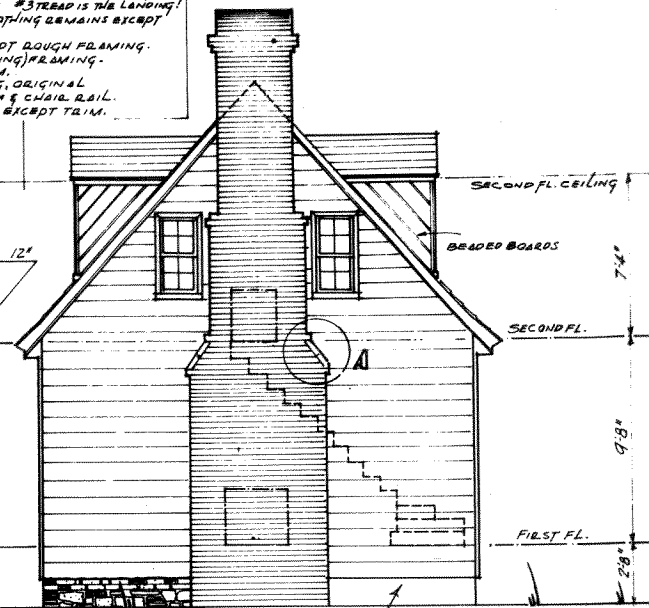
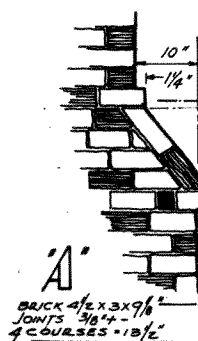


SECOND FLOOR

The rafters appear to be the only building parts which can be reused without repair, additions, or alteration, simply because they were made for the building while all other timbers are salvage parts and difficult to repair.

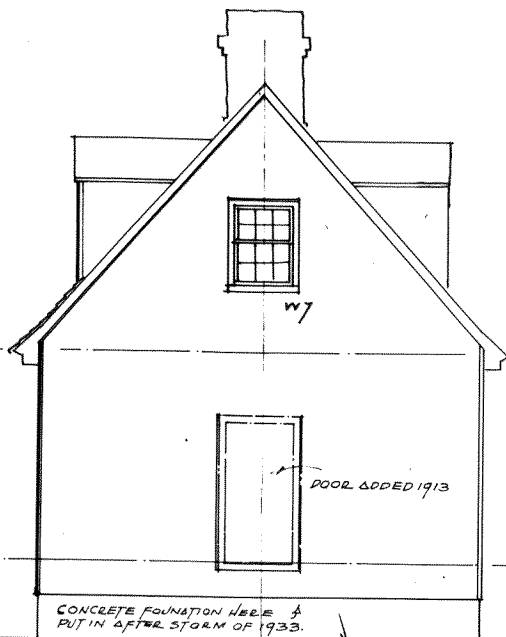


D1	ORIGINAL FRAME & TRIM - DOOR MISSING
D2	" " #3 TRAP IS THE LAMING?
D3	" " OPENING BUT NOTHING REMAINS EXCEPT ROUGH FRAME.
D4	NOTHING REMAINS EXCEPT ROUGH FRAMING.
D5	ORIGINAL DOOR (OPENING) FRAMING.
D6	ORIGINAL FRAME TRIM.
M1	TRIM & CASED OPENING, ORIGINAL
M2	ORIGINAL WINDOW, TRIM & CHAIR RAIL.
W3	" " WIND. NO FINISH EXCEPT TRIM.
W4	OPENING ONLY.
W5	" " SASH & TRIM.
W6	" " "
W7	" " "
W8	" " "
W9	" " "
W10	" " "
W11	" " "

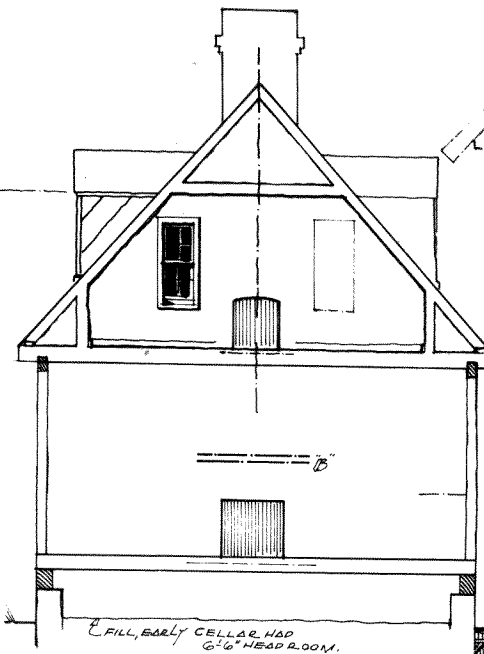


SOUTH FRONT ELEVATION.

NORTH ELEVATION SAME OPP. HAND.



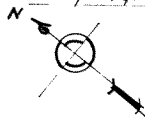
7'-4"
SECOND FLOOR
9'-8"
FIRST FLOOR



ORIGINAL MOULDING
SEE SHEET 3 FOR
TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

EAST ELEVATION.

NOTHING ORIGINAL REMAINS EXCEPT WINDOW W7

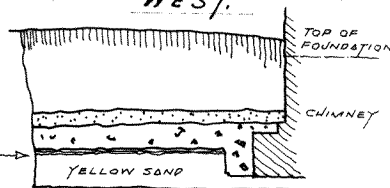


GROUND LEVEL
MUSIC STAINED

SANDY SOIL
CRUSHED MARL
CHARCOAL AND
DEBRIS.

BASE OF EXCAVATION

PROFILE A



ABOVE GRADE STRUCTURE CIRCA 1820.

FIRST FL.

19TH CENT. CHIMNEY

18TH CENT. CHIMNEY
FOUNDATION.

BRICK WORK IN
PLACE AS ORIGINAL
CONSTRUCTION.

WOOD NOSING

SECTION THRU BULKHEAD
OF 18TH CENT. FOUNDATION.
NOT PART OF EXISTING BUILDING.

'b' TO 'c' ONLY PARTLY EXISTING.

TREADS BRICK WITH
CEDAR WOOD NOSINGS.

(ORIGINAL WOOD NOSINGS a' & a' 2 FOUND IN PLACE.)

5 FEET

INITIAL
TRENCH

CHIMNEY CIRCA 1820
ON 18TH CENTURY FOUNDATION

PROFILE B.

BRICK PAVEMENT
CIRCA 1880

EXCAVATION PLAT. *

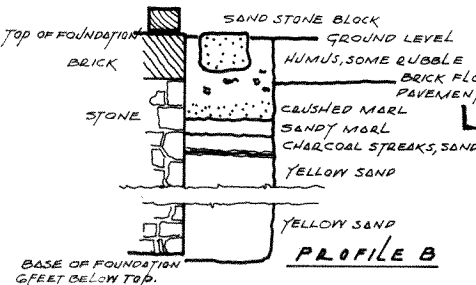
* BY MR. J. H. GRIFFIN, REGIONAL ARCHEOLOGIST.

PORCH AREA

LIMITS OF
EXCAVATION

BRICK STEPS
CIRCA 1750

PROFILE A



PROFILE B

0 1 2 3

MEASURED & DRAWN BY G. F. BENNETT, (EXCEPT AS NOTED)

EXISTING CONDITIONS Apr. 1958.

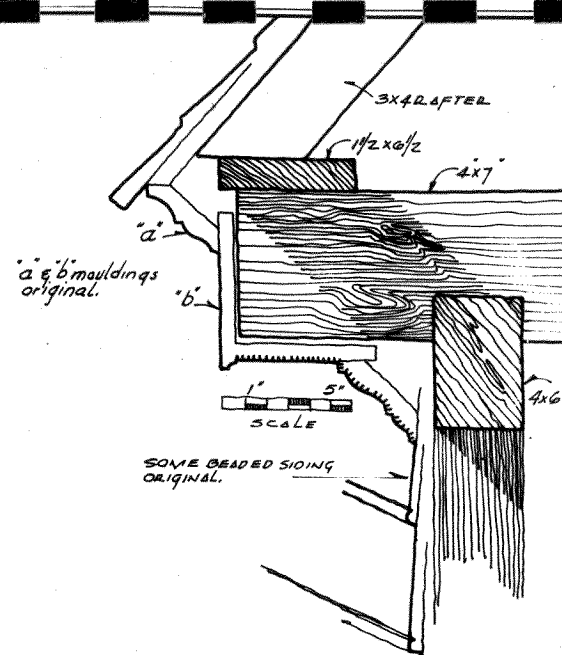
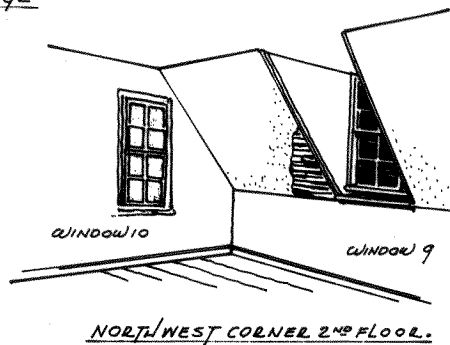
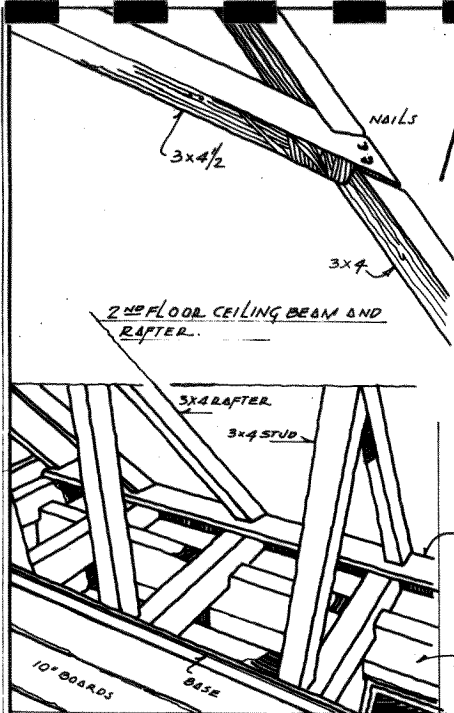
SECTION OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BRANCH OF THE STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C.

NAME OF STRUCTURE
ARCHER COTTAGE. WATER ST.
CIVIL ENGINEER, TORONTO, CANADA

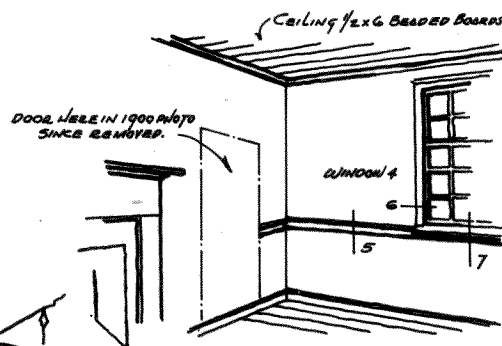
SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 1 OF 3 SHEETS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
HALL NUMBER

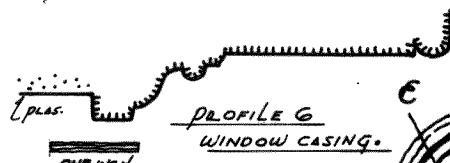


FRAMING
NORTH/WEST CORNER 2ND FLOOR



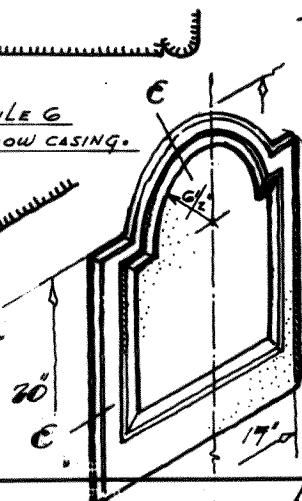
PROFILE 5
CHAM. BOARD AND CAP
MOULDING.

ONE INCH



SECTION E

ONE INCH



NORTH/WEST CORNER FIRST FLOOR.
PLASTER EXCEPT CEILING.

CAST IRON FIRE BACK

MUCH OLDER THAN 2ND FLOOR
FIRE PLACE WHERE FOUND.

PROFILE 7
WINDOW SILL

ONE INCH

MEASURED & DRAWN BY G. F. BENNETT
EXISTING CONDITIONS APR. 50.

UNDER DIRECTION OF UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

NAME OF STRUCTURE
**ARCHER COTTAGE, WATER ST.
YORKTOWN, VA.**
COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN
BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 3 OF 3 SHEETS

SURVEY REPORT
ARCHITECTURAL DATA

PART III

• PROPOSED WORK.

"ARCHER COTTAGE"

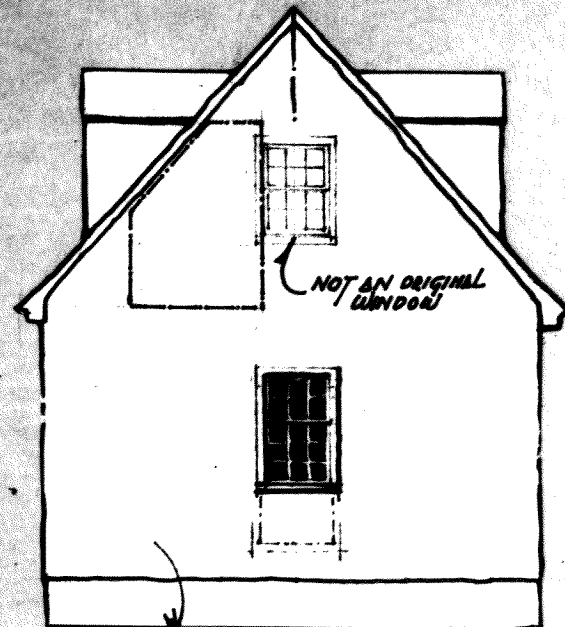
It is generally agreed that all work contributing to the rehabilitation of this structure would be properly done and in so far as possible the exterior kept as near its original simple "Cottage" appearance as practical. These sketches indicating new exterior planning suggest minimum requirements for employee quarters.

Some thought should be given to the single door arrangement made necessary by architectural findings, namely that the north wall had no entrance to "living" room. The 18th century cellar should have no part in this rehabilitation except its use as foundation for new brick facing grade to wood sills of structure, in fact some fill seems necessary for damp control. The crawl space would be used for piping, etc., only, since it is suggested a heat pump will be used which needs no chimney connection nor high crawl space.

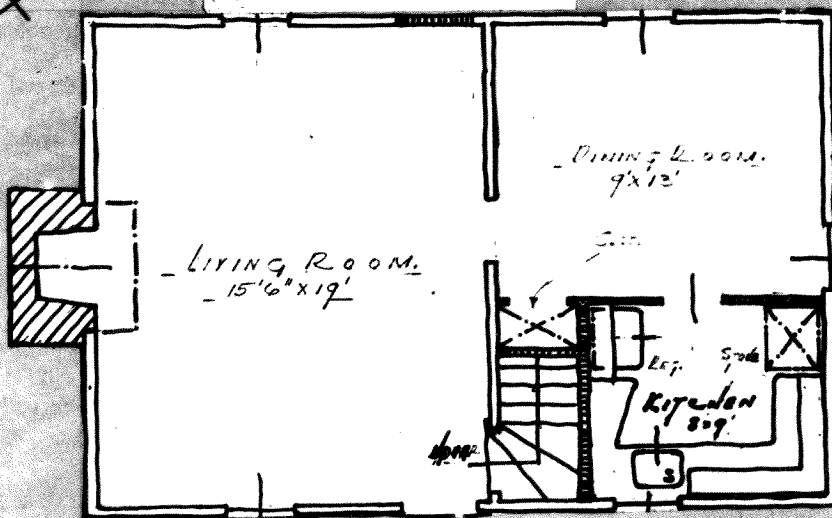
E
E



FRONT ELEV..



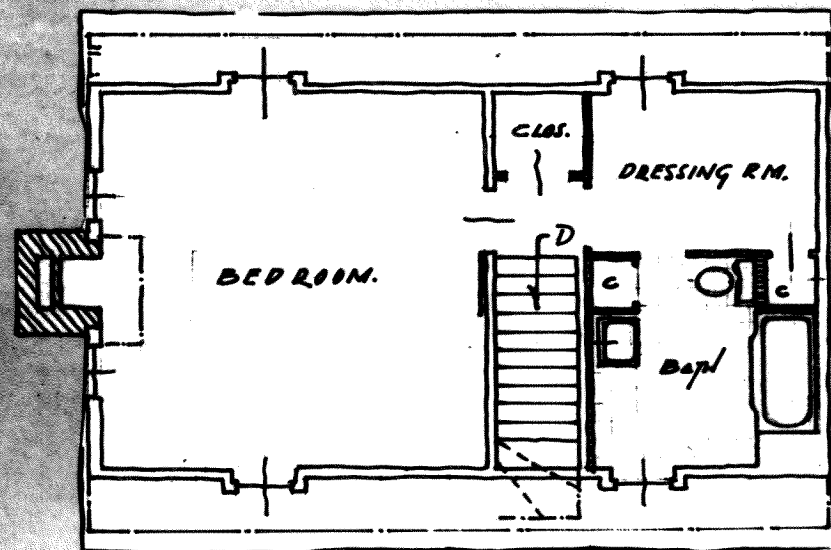
RIVER SIDE.



LIVING ROOM.
15'6" x 19'

DINING ROOM.
9' x 12'

KITCHEN
8' x 9'



BED ROOM.

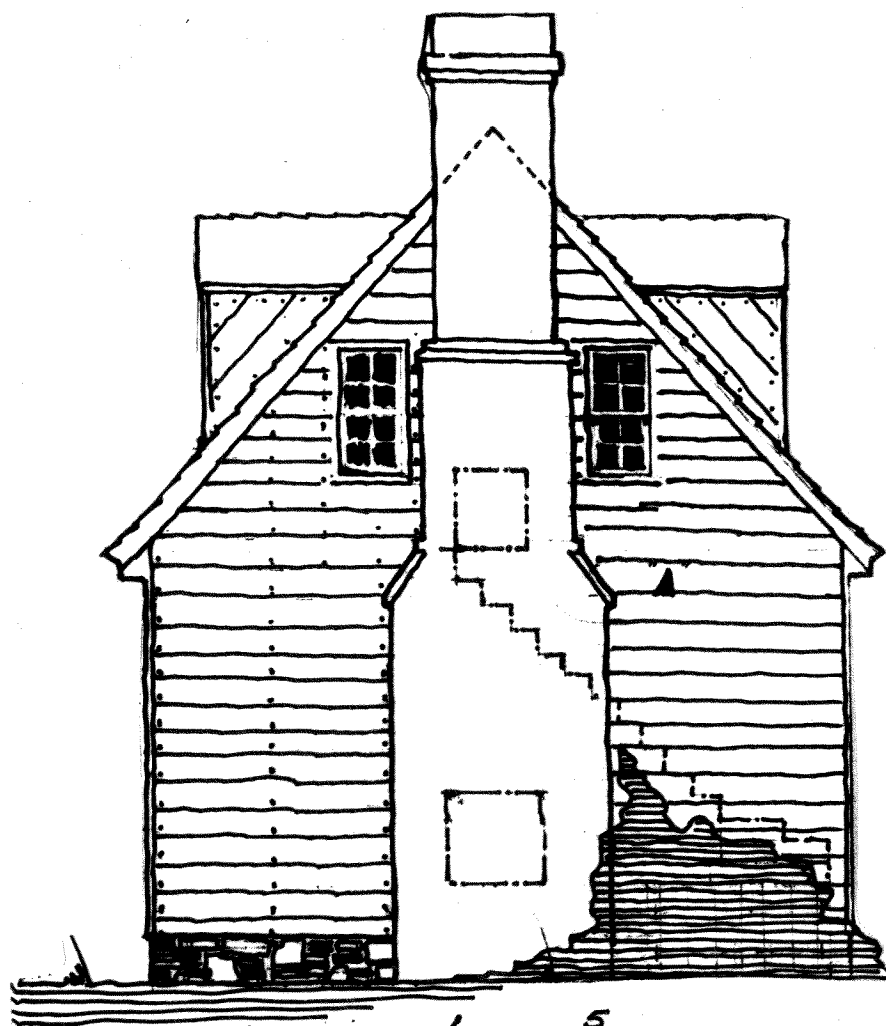
CLAS.

DRESSING RM.

BATH

FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR



WEST END.

COSTS ESTIMATE

Excavation - for footings - drainage, etc. *
Demolition (including work for architectural investigation)
Water, drainage, etc. * *
Septic tank and field
Shoring and leveling floors, etc.
Foundation repairs and new walls
Chimney, fireplace, etc., repairs
Heavy timber repairs and replacement
New exterior millwork and light framing
Repair existing door windows and frames
Four dormers - rebuilding
All exterior trim and siding replaced, includes rental
of scaffolding
Insulation
Flashing and counter flashing - caulking
Roofing
Painting - exterior and interior
Glass as required
Stairs - all complete replacement except stringers
Flooring
Hardware - rough and finish
Plaster
Repair and replace all interior trim
Bath and kitchen finishes
Kitchen cabinet
Floor repairs, finishing and kitchen and bath floors
Screens, shades, etc.
Gutters and drains
Brushes, paint remover, double X, etc.

\$9,758.00

Heat pump
Plumbing
Wiring

\$3,950.00

Electric Refrigerator
Electric Range, includes wiring

\$ 397.00

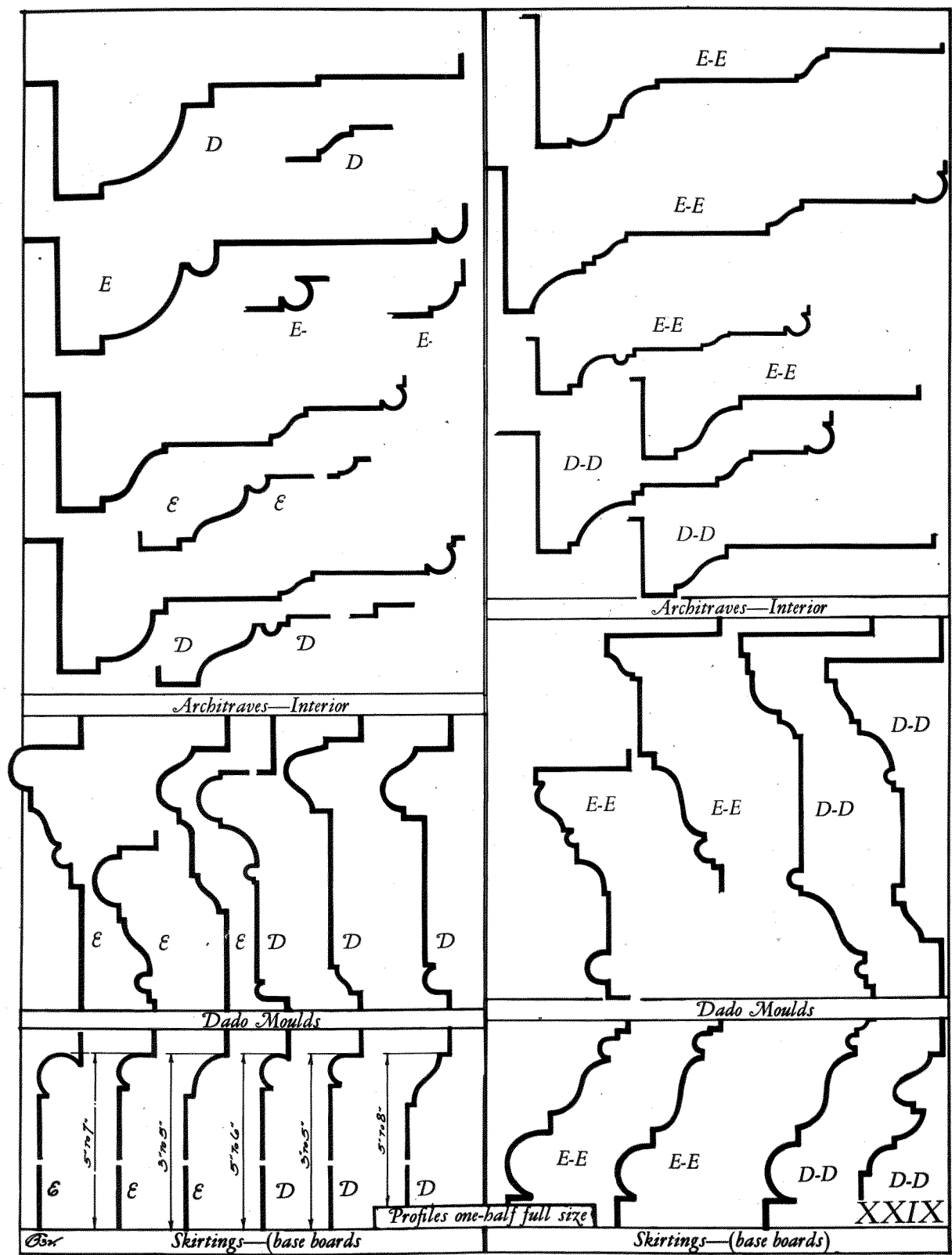
TOTAL

\$ 14,105.00

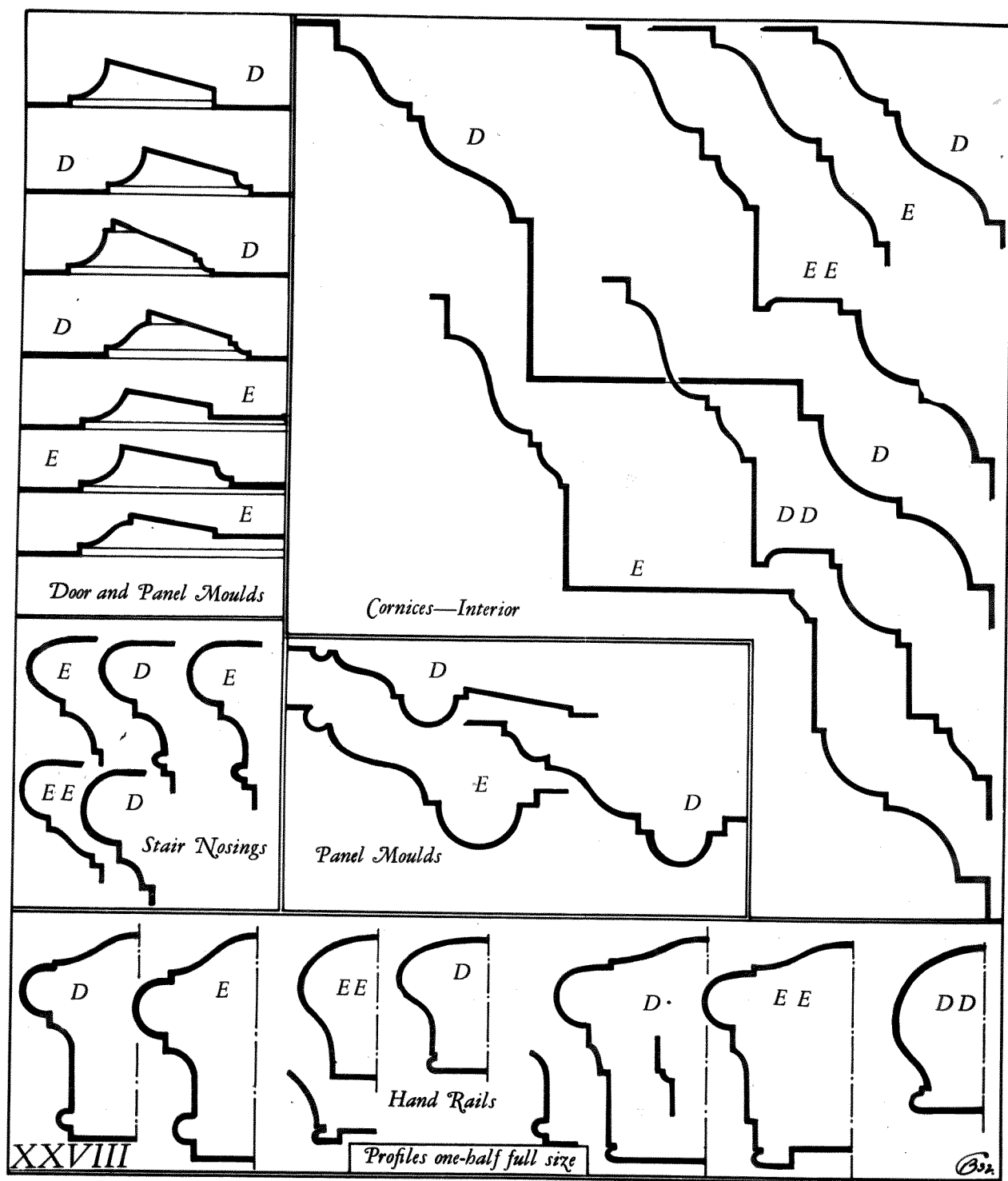
*does not include water line recently installed

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National Park Service
Southeast Regional Office

EARLY ARCHITECTURE OF DELAWARE



EARLY ARCHITECTURE OF DELAWARE



"E" = Wren and Early Georgian Periods in England

"E-E" = Georgian Period in England

"D" = Pre-Revolutionary Period in Delaware

"D-D" = 1775 to 1800 Period in Delaware

