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National Park Service
Southeast Regional Office

SURVEY REPORT FOR RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Hall House
Building or Structure

Prepared by John T. Willett Date November 14, 1956

RECOMMENDED

Property of
National Park Service
Southeast Regional Office

_____ Date _____
Chief, ED&C

_____ Date _____
Regional Director

_____ Date _____
Director

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_____ Date _____
Superintendent

S U R V E Y R E P O R T

R E S T O R A T I O N

of the

W A T T H O U S E

Hanover County

Virginia

November 4, 1956

by

John T. Willett, Historian

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Richmond National Battlefield Park

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FOREWORD

Extending over a considerable period of time, an exhaustive search in and about Richmond for information relating to the history of the Watt House has now been completed. Recognizing the necessity of adequate documentary and photographic evidence in drawing plans for the restoration and stabilization of this historic structure, no energy was spared in the effort. It is regrettable, but we must report at the conclusion of this study that only scant recorded evidence remains to substantiate the readily apparent evolutionary character of this building.

The depositories searched in Richmond included all National Park Service files, the Virginia State Library and Archives (including Dr. Eckenrode's files), the Valentine Museum (including the Cook Collection), the Battle Abbey, the White House of the Confederacy, and the collection of private papers of Mr. J. Ambler Johnston, architect and engineer.

This search extended through such published volumes as Battles and Leaders, Miller's Photographic History of the Civil War, Leslie's Illustrated Newspapers, Harper's Illustrated History of the Civil War, The Soldiers in our Civil War, and all the accessioned photographs in various depositories.

None of the foregoing sources listed produced even slight reference to the Watt farm.

It was thought at the beginning of this project, it would require only normal effort to find a photograph of the important Gaines' Mill Battle which would probably include a picture of the Watt House. Ordinarily, we would expect to find a Brady photograph. There is a direct implication, however, that Brady never saw the Watt House. His biographer, Roy Meredith, says: "For Brady the Seven Days had been a harrowing experience. The night marches and constant fighting of an army pushed by a relentless foe all added to the difficulties of picture-taking. But he was able to obtain scenes of the fortifications at Yorktown, Fair Oaks, Grapevine Bridge, Savage's Station and of Lowe's attempt at aerial observation at Mechanicsville. During the weeks that followed at Harrison's Landing, Brady and Woodbury busied themselves photographing activities at the base." (1) Since Dr. Lowe's aerial station was located on William Gaines' farm, which adjoins the Watt Farm, particular attention was given to this group of photographs, but none revealed landmarks indicating they were taken within sight distance of the Watt House. Since the Confederates relied heavily on sketches in many instances, all available sketches depicting Richmond and its surroundings were studied. This study yielded only the painting by Prince de Joinville[2], which shows the Watt farm and a portion of one of the out-buildings.

Available private letters of soldiers who fought in the Seven Days Battle were read with the hope of finding a written description of the farm, but without definite success.

A title search in the County Court House, Hanover, Virginia, established the fact that all county records, excluding the personal property and real estate tax records, were destroyed by fire in 1865. Many deed descriptions detail considerable structural features of buildings situated on lands covered by a deed. There were no recorded deeds of this property in the court house prior to 1865.

All the known living descendants of Hugh and Sarah B. Watt, the original owners of the houses, were personally contacted and the same negative response was received in each instance. It seemed reasonable to assume that one member of the family would have been interested in keeping a complete family record. All the elder living members of the family had personal family papers, but none had any evidence relating to the Watt House and farm.

Other than age, this structure gained its primary historical significance in a few hours on June 27, 1862, by being the headquarters of a Union Corps Commander in charge of the troops north of the Chickahominy River during the Battle of Gaines' Mill, and its subsequent use as a Field hospital. This was slight cause to accord the house any particular importance at the time since most of the farm buildings in this sparsely settled section of relatively large individual land holdings were used as headquarters for some general commanding or else as hospitals. Indeed, it is safe to assume that most of the structures in the path and wake of the Federal retreat from Mechanicsville to the James River, during the Seven Days Battle, were used as headquarters and/or hospitals.

It was only after a lapse of many years and considerable study that the Battle of Gaines' Mill (Watt Farm) emerged to take its place as one of the pivotal battles of the Peninsular campaign. The local inhabitants barely knew the Federal officer commanding the Peninsular campaign as attested by Mrs. M. J. Haw, "We did not realize until two years later, how blessed we were in having as commander of this invading army a Christian gentleman."[3]

Since this was an obscure and remote farm house with no particular significance or importance attached to it until later years, there was no reason to preserve photographic or archival records concerning its early history. Therefore, the basic information relating to the Watt House provided in this survey will largely depend on one contemporary description of the Watt Farm, before and just after the 1862 battle, found in the May 1910 edition of the Christian Observer, "My Visits With Grandmother," by Mrs. M. J. Haw, grand-daughter of Mrs. Sarah B. Watt; the tax records housed in the State Library Building, personal interviews, and family papers.

At this point the writer concedes, without apology, that he has not had the necessary professional training or experience to make definite determinations regarding the existing structure and recommends that an architect experienced in historic structures should study the building and record his findings.

SURVEY REPORT FOR RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION

OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES

FO-11-56, Plan Procedures, Paragraph 32, February 16, 1956

Administrative Data

1. Building or structure Watt House, Building No. 5.

2. Building Report File No. 5.

3. Photographs and illustrative plans, if possible, of significant features of the building.

   Attached after the narrative description.

4. Narrative statement of the known historical importance or association of the building.

Sufficient documentary evidence remains to firmly establish the historical significance of the Watt House and farm as it relates to the stubborn and bloody opening phase of the Seven Days Battles.

Just after first Manassas, President Lincoln called Gen. George B. McClellan to take command of the Army of the Potomac. When he took control of the army, it was a great disorganized mob, untrained and discouraged. In four months McClellan had established organization, trained and disciplined the men, and opened dependable channels of supply. On November 1, 1861, the aged Gen. Winfield Scott was retired and McClellan was made commander-in-chief of all the armies of the United States. McClellan postponed the impending peninsular campaign until spring. The members of the administration in Washington became

thoroughly dissatisfied with McClellan's operation and he was reduced to the command of only the Army of the Potomac. Finally, in April, 1862, the Federal army commenced the slow and laborious march from Fortress Monroe toward Richmond up the peninsula formed by the James and York Rivers. This peninsular campaign culminated in the Seven Days Battles of June and July.

The Federal troops had marched to a point within six miles of Richmond before they halted. The Confederate Army with its back to Richmond was commanded by Gen. Joseph E. Johnston.

McClellan's campaign strategy was developed on the premise that Maj. Gen. I. McDowell's First Corps, encamped at Fredericksburg, would be sent to join him before Richmond. Therefore, as he advanced up the peninsula, he shifted the weight of his force to the right, both to cover his base at the White House on the Pamunkey River and to enable him to join McDowell who was to move overland from Fredericksburg.

The Chickahominy River cuts the peninsula on a bias, from the northwest to the southeast. It heads up not far from the Pamunkey, on which McClellan was based; passes a few miles east of Richmond and then flows southeastward into the James. Because of Maj. Gen. T. J. Jackson's frightening strokes in the Shenandoah Valley, McDowell's orders to join McClellan were cancelled. Johnston, not knowing this, made plans to attack the Federal forces before re-enforcements could come up. McClellan's five corps were divided: three corps stretching along the

north bank of the Chickahominy from Mechanicsville to the Grapevine Bridge where the line crossed the river and the remaining two corps deployed southward to the White Oak Swamp.

Johnston's plan was to crush the Federal forces south of the river. The first battle on the outskirts of the capital was fought May 31, 1862, and is known as Fair Oaks or Seven Pines. In this battle, Johnston was severely wounded and the command of the Army of Northern Virginia passed into the hands of Gen. R. E. Lee.

McClellan, after Seven Pines, shifted all his army except the corps of Maj. Gen. Fitz-John Porter south of the Chickahominy and entrenched.

Lee dispatched Gen. J. E. B. Stuart's cavalry to determine McClellan's relative position. After receiving Stuart's report, he decided on a swift secret concentration of almost his entire army on the north bank of the Chickahominy to crush Porter. Jackson received orders to leave the Shenandoah Valley, approach from the northwest and strike the Union's right flank on June 26, thereby clearing the north bank of the Chickahominy. The main Confederate force, commanded by Lee, stretching along the south bank of the Chickahominy was to cross the river at Mechanicsville when the front was cleared. The command signal to open the battle became confused, allowing the Federals time to clear Mechanicsville after a brief skirmish and to occupy a strong position behind Beaverdam Creek, a small stream that flows into the

Chickahominy and here the Union forces made a determined stand. That night, Jackson, moving down from the north, passed beyond the Union right flank and Porter fell back to a second prepared position on a curving ridge east of Powhite Creek. There, on the twenty-seventh, was fought the second of the Seven Days Battles, known as Gaines' Mill.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon before the Confederate attack began. At that hour, A. P. Hill's division desperately assaulted Porter's center and left flank for two hours and was repulsed. At four, Longstreet to his right and closer to the river, went in to relieve the pressure on Hill and turned his feint into a real attack. This left half of the Federal line extended across the Watt Farm with the Watt House situated almost in the center of the entire Union line. D. H. Hill joined Jackson and they marched down from the north over woods roads so winding that much time was lost getting into the battle on Porter's right. When they did join the fray, their forces were badly scattered. In the meantime, Porter had received a few re-enforcements from the main body across the river.

Shortly before dark, Porter's line broke near the Watt House and the Union forces retreated through the woods, crossed the Chickahominy, and joined the main Federal army in a general retreat which ultimately ended on the James River, near Harrison's Landing.[4]

Porter's statement established the Watt House as the command headquarters during this battle; "I fixed my headquarters at first at

the Adams House, but early in the battle that locality became a hospital, and I advanced to the Watt House, on more elevated ground. ...."[5]

After the battle scene shifted across the Chickahominy, a tremendous number of casualties were left in the wake of the armies. The Watt House was taken over as a hospital. "(Watt House). . . had been the scene of the fiercest fighting of the day, and was a total wreck. It was now being used as a hospital, and every building on the place was crowded with the enemy's wounded."[6]

5. What is the proposed use of the Historic Structure?

After being restored, it is proposed that this building be used for NPS employee quarters.

Land holdings administered by the Richmond National Battlefield Park, north of the James River, include six widely separated parcels on a periphery spanning northeast Richmond. A distance of twenty-five miles separates the northernmost section (Cold Harbor area) and the southernmost section (Fort Harrison area) where the superintendent's residence is located. At the present time, the Cold Harbor area is undeveloped and lacks adequate facilities and personnel for administration, protection, and interpretation. Rental housing in the rural section of Cold Harbor is at a premium since the population is made up of small homes, privately owned.

The MISSION 66 program proposes the location of a new Visitor Center in the vicinity of Mechanicsville near the beginning of the park

tour. The restored Watt House will provide housing for the ranger-historian assigned to this section of the park. This arrangement will provide better protection, administration, and interpretation for this section of the park with no additional cost to the government.

6. If the Building is to be refurnished and exhibited as a Historic House Museum, what funds are programmed for the refurnishing or what cooperative agreements have been executed or proposed for furnishing and operating the house?

Since the building is proposed to be used as employee housing, no funds have been appropriated for this purpose nor has there been serious consideration given to this possible usage.

ARCHITECTURAL DATA

1-2. Name of first owner and date of construction.

Hugh Watt from Flenairn, Antrim County, Ireland, married Margaret Mills. They had two sons, George and Hugh Watt. The widow and her two sons emigrated from Ireland to Richmond, Virginia, in 1790. George Watt was a merchant and his younger brother, Hugh, clerked in his store. George was a charter member and elder of the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond. He married Margaret Dunn and had six daughters and two sons.

Hugh Watt, the elder Hugh Watt's younger son and brother of George, married Sarah Bohannon Kidd on April 5, 1801. She was the daughter of Pittman Kidd and his wife Mary Austin, daughter of John

Austin to whom the Crown made some very extensive grants of land principally in Hanover County. Sarah B. Kidd inherited from her father, Pittman Kidd, the farm called "Springdale" in Hanover about thirteen miles from Richmond. This was the Watt farm on which they lived with their five children.

George Watt, the son of Hugh and Sarah, acquired the farm in 1865. The youngest of five children, he was born August 11, 1815, at "Springfield", Hanover County, Virginia, the battleground of June 27, 1862. "At the age of fifteen, he was taken from school and put with William Smythe, dealer in chinaware, Richmond. He did not like this vocation and for five years worked with his brother-in-law, John Haw, maker of all kinds of machinery. He moved West, then went South where he engaged in business with his brother. In 1840 he began manufacturing plows. In 1843 he moved from Alabama and went into business with his brother-in-law, John Haw, making plows and machinery. In 1846 he moved to Richmond where he was in business at the Watt Plow Company."[7]

A careful review of George Watt's business activities seems to prove that he never lived on the Watt Farm after reaching adulthood. It appears that his primary interest in the farm was simply keeping the old home place in the family. By virtue of the difficulty of travel, he could not have lived on the farm and conducted a business in Richmond. Since he owned the farm until his death in Richmond in the year 1885, the farm undoubtedly was worked and the building occupied by tenant farmers.[8]

In 1832, Sarah B. Watt inherited this property (360 acres in one tract and 171 acres in another) from her family; and in 1833, she

had Hugh Watt, her husband, declared for all legal purposes, as joint owner of the property. Evidently, they had lived on the farm for a number of years prior to ownership because the family records listed George Watt as having been born at "Springfield," August 11, 1815.[9] Also, they must have lived in a less pretentious dwelling than the Watt House before 1836 since the assessed value for tax purposes against the buildings on this tract was only $150.00. It seems reasonable to assume that after they acquired fee simple title they constructed a more comfortable home because the assessed value for tax purposes against the buildings on the 360-acre tract was advanced in 1836 from $150.00 to $928.90. There were no buildings listed on the 171 acres. The assessed value for tax purposes against the buildings never exceeded $1,000.00. This fact is accepted as proof that the Watt House was constructed between 1833 to 1836.[10]

3-4. Name of architect and document narrative of the construction.

Mr. J. Ambler Johnston, noted architect and engineer of Richmond, Virginia, stated his opinion relative to the Watt House as follows: "All through the Tidewater region, and, I suppose other sections as well, most farm houses were constructed by local labor. There was in most every community a skilled craftsman in the building trade. It was customary, when constructing a farm home, to employ a man of this type and detail to him an idea as to the desired size and shape of the home one wished to build, plus the kind of material to be used. After recruiting local labor, the contractor would begin

construction. I don't believe it would be unreasonable to say that many of the builders of that day, working on this type structure, could not even read blueprints, much less realize the reliance some of the outstanding contemporary builders placed on them.

"I have not personally studied the details of this building to approximate its age other than to determine the fact it was standing intact during the Gaines' Mill Battle. Sometimes, a study of this sort is misleading. Usually, a country contractor would inherit his profession from his father. It would then seem reasonable that he would be using building techniques that would have been in common usage a number of years.

"I think the Watt House was contracted by a local contractor and that he employed local neighborhood labor. If all the family records were preserved, I doubt they would reveal more construction data than material and labor cost."[11]

This interview, plus the research effort, tends to indicate no construction information is preserved regarding the Watt House.

5. Changes and Additions since construction, with documentation.

Evidence from interviews and scant documentation lends support to the belief that no major additions or changes have occurred affecting or altering the present day appearance of this structure. The passing years and total neglect have obliterated all the outbuildings.

The first record of need for major repairs is noted soon after the 1862 Gaines' Mill Battle. The condition of the building was aptly described as "a wreck!" by Mrs. M. J. Haw. She further stated that,

"The walls and roof were torn by shot and shell, the weather-boarding honeycombed by minie balls, and every pane of glass shattered."[12]

This article by Mrs. Haw also stated that a cannon ball "tore through the roof of the stable, and another knocked off the top of the kitchen chimney."[13]

Mrs. Haw was writing for public consumption and it may well be that she was carried away with emotion. But, even so, her account does not seem to indicate the building was in need of major alterations nor was any section of the house totally destroyed.

Possibly some of the material in the framework of the building will show evidence during restoration and stabilization indicating the extent of damage and of repairs immediately following the battle.

A near-vacuum exists in relevant information from the date of the narrative description written by Mrs. Haw until the year 1901, with this one notable exception: Mr. Wm. Hubbard, a local resident, who is ninety-two years of age, states: "To my knowledge, the exterior appearance of this building has not been changed during my lifetime. Had there been major alterations to the size and shape of the building, I would certainly have noticed. The place had what outbuildings that were necessary for an ordinary farm house. These buildings gradually disappeared through a lack of upkeep. I would not attempt to point out their locations."[14]

As previously stated, during the years after the battle until 1907 when the Watt farm left the ownership of the Watt family, in all

likelihood the house was occupied by a tenant farmer. This being true, only very simple and economical repairs were made to the building.

Additional reliable evidence of the building's condition was recently uncovered as the result of a feature article published in a local newspaper. After reading the story, three people who had rented and lived in this house in the early 1900's came forward with firsthand information on the subject. They are: Mrs. W. R. Martin, 22 W. Rose Avenue, Highland Springs, Virginia (1901-1902); Mrs. Carl Campbell Walker, Route 1, Box 55, Richmond, Virginia (1904); and Mrs. Sarah Caulding, 1902 West Nine Mile Road, Highland Springs, Virginia (1905-1912). After a conducted tour through the house, they all agreed that the structure still stands as it did at the turn of the century. They were all saddened by the very poor condition of the building, particularly the interior.

One statement in which they all concurred is worth mentioning, "People were prone to visit their neighbors on Sunday and many of the oldtimers had known the house during the Civil War. This was always a general topic of conversation back in those days in this part of the country more than it is today. We used to discuss the Watt House and its use as a hospital. No one ever suggested it was any different than it is today. There might have been a few minor repairs, but none of them altered the overall appearance of the house enough to be noticeable. Houses back then were made of good material and made to last."

The first recorded account of actual repairs to the house occurred in 1935 after it had been purchased by the Battlefield Park Corporation and deeded to the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission. The Commission turned the recently acquired park properties over to the National Park Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps to develop, reserving, however, the Watt House. The administration of this building remained under the Conservation and Development Commission until title to all Richmond National Battlefield Park property was accepted by the Federal government on July 11, 1944. The reason for this reservation was to have a caretaker living near the other transferred lands to keep the commission informed as to the protection being given their investment. "The Watt House remained under the supervision of the chairman of the Conservation Commission and a local man who had lived on the property for several years was employed as caretaker."[15]

The CCC workers never repaired this building. The work in 1935 was done by, "Our mutual friend, Mr. Henry Taylor of Claiborne and Taylor, Inc."[16]

The files of Claiborne and Taylor, Inc., Richmond contractors, contain no mention of the repairs since the job, except for material costs, was donated. Mr. Johnston, who employed the contractors, said, "This work consisted of strictly emergency repairs. We were trying to keep the building standing until it could be transferred to Federal ownership. Front and back entrance steps were constructed, rotten

siding replaced, a few fallen bricks replaced, and a slate roof was taken from a razed building in town and placed over a tarpaper roof that was on the building.

"The total cost of the repairs was $209.00. I might add here that my earliest recollection of the building in 1915 was that it had a wood shingle roof."[17]

In 1942 the building was in dire need of repair. Dr. Eckenrode that year informed Mr. Johnston "I wrote Freeman in regards to the Watt House [It] seems to me to be greatly in need of repair. I think that unless something is done pretty soon the building will become generally dilapidated."[18] The repairs, however, were not made and the property was transferred to Federal ownership on July 1, 1944. The caretaker continued to live in the building until 1947.

The first repairs by the National Park Service were made November, 1945, and consisted of replacing seven windows.[19]

The house, unoccupied, was neglected until 1954 when an allotment of $1,500 was made available for emergency repairs, and work began with re-setting the buckling foundation walls and replacing some of the framing and sheathing.[20] In May, 1955, an additional $325.00 was appropriated to provide sufficient labor for replacing the old slate roof with treated cedar shingles and new flashings which were already on hand.[21]

$18,020.00 was allocated in 1956 for restoration. Work will commence some time during the 1957 fiscal year.

6. List of comparable structures in vicinity or elsewhere.

All of the counties on the north and south side of the James River contiguous to Richmond, and the city, were visited in an attempt to locate a house of comparable architectural detail and design, but none was found. It is the assumption that none exists in the vicinity of the Watt House.

7. Recommendation as to the period to which structure is to be restored and description of conditions at that period.

It is recommended by the park staff that the building be restored to the Civil War period, principally 1862 during the Seven Days Battle, when this building achieved historical importance and significance.

The first recorded account concerning the appearance of the house prior to and during the battle of 1862 was as follows: "As we came in sight, how cosy and home-like the old square, gray farm house looked . ...."[22] This is precisely the impression one gets today when emerging from the Boatswain Creek bottom, suggesting that there were never large porches spanning the front and rear of the building since they would have distorted the "old square" impression. This statement certainly eliminates speculation concerning the color.

Since there are front and rear entrances with the bottom of the framing about 5 feet from the ground, there must have been steps with perhaps small platforms at both entrances. These entrances are connected with a hall extending the full length of the building. Another

door leading off the southeast first floor room must have had steps. It is believed that this entry, plus the basement entrance, was used by the domestic help. Probably the front and rear steps were of similar construction and the side entrance, if used by the domestic help, was less conspicuous.

The kitchen appears to have been in the front room of the basement. In her description of the 1862 battle, Mrs. Haw stated: ".... cannon balls knocked off the top of the kitchen chimney." This was apparently the rear or south chimney of the house since it is considerably shorter than the one on the north. Although the large basement fireplace is in the front chimney, if it was not used for cooking it is difficult to explain its presence. Mrs. Haw was writing many years after her experience and could have been mistaken about the particular chimney. Since this is evidence that there was no outside kitchen, it does not appear likely that she would have mentioned the chimney of an outside kitchen and omitted mentioning one of the two chimneys of the main house which had been one-third demolished.

Mrs. Haw continues with her description of the house, "As soon as the greetings were over .... one of the first places to be visited was a brick floored basement room where we always found a row of long, smooth, dark green Jackson watermelons flanked by piles of greenish yellow musk-melons; cantaloupes had not then come into fashion." This suggests that the back room of the basement was a root cellar.

"Another object of interest was the old fashioned corner cupboard, where we displayed the blue and white dinner set of the Chinese Willow pattern, the dainty gilt-bordered tea set, and on the top shelf a collection of toy mugs and pitchers .... ." Assuming that Mrs. Haw was still on the subject of the basement, since the quote follows the one concerning the root cellar, this suggests that the dining room was located there.

Speaking of Aunt Phyllis, a former slave, Mrs. Haw quoted her grandmother as saying, "I sent her meals from the table .... ." Had there been eating facilities in the slave quarters, it would hardly be deemed necessary to send food from the main house, and it is reasonable to assume that all were fed from the same kitchen. "At noon the cook would blow the horn to call Uncle Peter and the hands from the field; and soon after this, dinner would be served .... ."

No additional known recorded information is preserved concerning the structure itself.

The only visible evidence of the outside facilities remaining today is the well shaft. It has been capped with concrete and a hand pump installed at a date not yet determined.

Mrs. Haw made no mention of any of the outbuildings, but did offer a few helpful hints about the landscape . . . "And when we turned off from the highway into a private road, which led through a strip of woods and an open field to the house a quarter of a mile

away. As we came in sight . . . the farm house looked embowered in venerable locusts, at whose feet spread a smooth, green turf . . . The althea hedge, which screened the kitchen from the back yard, was in full bloom; and the hedge of scotch roses bordering the opposite end of the yard was full of pale pink, waxlike blossoms.

"Soon after dinner the servants would pile armfuls of melons under a table standing beneath a big tree in the back yard.

"Sometimes we would sit on the grass in the back yard . . .

"The season advanced, the turf was like emerald, the roses bloomed, and the old locusts with their small, pale green leaves and showers of snowy blossoms .... ."

A peach and apple orchard bordered the approach road since Mrs. Haw stated: "As we passed the orchard on our right, the breeze wafted to us the fragrance of ripe apples and peaches."

The peach trees must have been along the road and in front of the house since she mentioned, "Frequently, one or two of us . . . would adjourn with plates and knives to the peach orchard temptingly in sight."

Evidently the apple trees grew along the plateau downstream of Boatswain Creek from Hood's breakthrough, "Here had been the fiercest fighting of the day, when Hood's Texans charged . . . where the peach orchard joined the apple orchard .... ."

All the information concerning the location of the outbuildings was gleaned from interviews with persons who had knowledge of the farm

from 1900 to 1912. The following diagram shows graphically the approximate sites of the building. The three persons interviewed were agreed on the location of these sites.

It would seem quite possible to definitely locate the foundations and to get an idea of the dimensions of the buildings by excavating the area indicated on the diagram. Also, a few artifacts might be uncovered indicating the use of each of the buildings.

Included in the group were certainly a smoke house, privy, and probably a chicken house.

8. Statement of work to be undertaken and illustrative plans of restoration and rehabilitation within the limits of available information.

This statement should be written by an architect of historic structures.

All the evidence uncovered in this study indicates that the building, interior and exterior, remains essentially the same as it did in 1862. The only exceptions are the three entrance ways which will have to be restored. The general structural condition of the building is terribly weak and deteriorated.

The major problems in rehabilitation will be to make the building structurally sound. In renovating this structure, it seems reasonable to assume that all usable woodwork and hardware, if original, will be salvaged and where replacements are necessary, they will follow the existing pattern used in the building.

A - Corner of carriage house as remembered by Mrs. Martin

B - " " " " " " " Mrs Walker and Mrs Beasley

A I agreed on form of carriage house which was :

As for illustrative plans, the measured drawings for the building are attached, following the photographic section. There might be certain minor alterations necessary after an historical architect has made a detailed study of the structure.

A tentative list of jobs that seem necessary in making the structure sound and appropriate for employee housing will be detailed. The cost of doing these itemized jobs could perhaps best be estimated by the EODC. So far as is known, this project must stay within the available $18,020.00 appropriated.

1. Point up brick and repair foundation walls.
2. Repoint chimneys, restore chimney, and install flue lining for furnace.
3. The roof repair will require additional study and perhaps minor alterations.
4. Replace and/or repair exterior sash, doors, framing, etc.
5. Painting of the exterior.
6. New entrance steps and platforms.
7. Grading, seeding, and planting.
8. Replace laths and plaster.
9. Repair and refinish wood floors, install additional supports, linoleum (kitchen and bath).
10. Replace the basement flooring.
11. Replace all necessary hardware.
12. Painting of the interior.
13. Repair and/or replace interior doors and framing.
14. Install a new electric system and fixtures.

15. Install plumbing and fixtures.

16. Install a central heating system.

17. Install kitchen equipment.

18. Insulation.

19. Electric service and connection.

20. Water system -- well, pump, pressure tank, and connections.

21. Septic tank and tile drainage field.

9. Statement of how use will affect provision for electric wiring, plumbing, heating, and visitor facilities.

Since the plans call for using this building for employee housing, utilities will be essential.

Electricity and telephone lines are readily available from power lines approximately 150 yards in rear of the house. It would be practical for this short distance to use underground conduit, which would assist in preserving the historical setting. All electrical wiring and outlets should be as inconspicuously placed as possible.

A central auxiliary heating plant will be necessary to supplement the fireplaces during extremely cold weather. An effort should be made to place the registers in the least noticeable places and yet retain the maximum utility of the heating system. The possibility of using radiant heat should be thoroughly investigated.

Plumbing will be necessary regardless of the purpose for which the building is used. In order to have a sufficient supply of water, it will be necessary to dig a well and, at the same time, provide a drainage field.

Rooms will have to be selected in which to install bathroom equipment and kitchen fixtures.

FOOTNOTES

1. Roy Meredith, Mr. Lincoln's Camera Man (New York, 1946), 111.

2. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (4 vols. New York, 1887), II, 335.

3. Mrs. M. J. Haw, "My Visits with Grandmother," Christian Observer (Louisville, Ky.), XCVIII (May 18, 1910), "Grandmother" is not identified in the article, but family records verify that she was Sarah B. Watt.

4. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (130 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. XI, Pts. I-III, passim.

5. Battles and Leaders, 335.

6. Haw, loc. cit.

7. Family records of Mr. Joseph B. Call, 1910 Hanover Avenue, Richmond, Virginia; direct descendant of George Watt.

8. Land Tax and Personal Property Records, State Archives and Library, Richmond, Virginia, 1885.

9. Ibid., 1833.

10. Ibid., 1833-1907.

11. Mr. J. Ambler Johnston, a noted engineer and architect, Atlantic Life Building, Richmond, Virginia, was one of the three men originally instrumental in founding the Richmond Battlefield Park Corporation in 1927. Mr. Johnston was born 78 years ago in one of the counties adjoining Richmond and has been recognized as one of the outstanding historical architects in Richmond up to the present time. He was a member of the committee which recommended the selection and acquisition of the Watt House, or "Springfield" with the hope of eventually donating it to the National Park Service.

12. Haw, loc. cit.

13. Ibid.

14. Mr. William Hubbard, Ellerson's Mill, Virginia, was born within 2 miles of the "Watt House". He is ninety-two years of age and has lived his entire life almost within sight of that structure. When interviewed, he seemed in good health and quite lucid, despite his advanced years.

15. Dr. H. J. Eckenrode to Dr. D. S. Freeman, March 24, 1942, Dr. Eckenrode's private file, State Archives and Library, Richmond, Virginia.

16. J. Ambler Johnston to Dr. H. J. Eckenrode, April 12, 1942, Eckenrode File, loc. cit.

17. Mr. J. Ambler Johnston was secretary-treasurer of the Richmond Battlefield Park Corporation in 1935 when the repairs were made.

18. Dr. H. J. Eckenrode to J. Ambler Johnston, March 16, 1942, Eckenrode File, loc. cit.

19. Superintendent's monthly narrative report, Richmond National Battlefield Park, May, 1955.

20. Ibid., February, 1954.

21. Ibid., May, 1955.

22. Haw, loc. cit.

23. Personal interviews with Mmes. Martin, Walker, and Goulding as detailed on page 15 of manuscript.

Appendix I

I L L U S T R A T I O N S

in

Chronological Sequence

1930 - 1956

Illustration 1

The Watt House in 1930. This is the earliest known view of the structure. The negative photograph is in the Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia

(Front View)

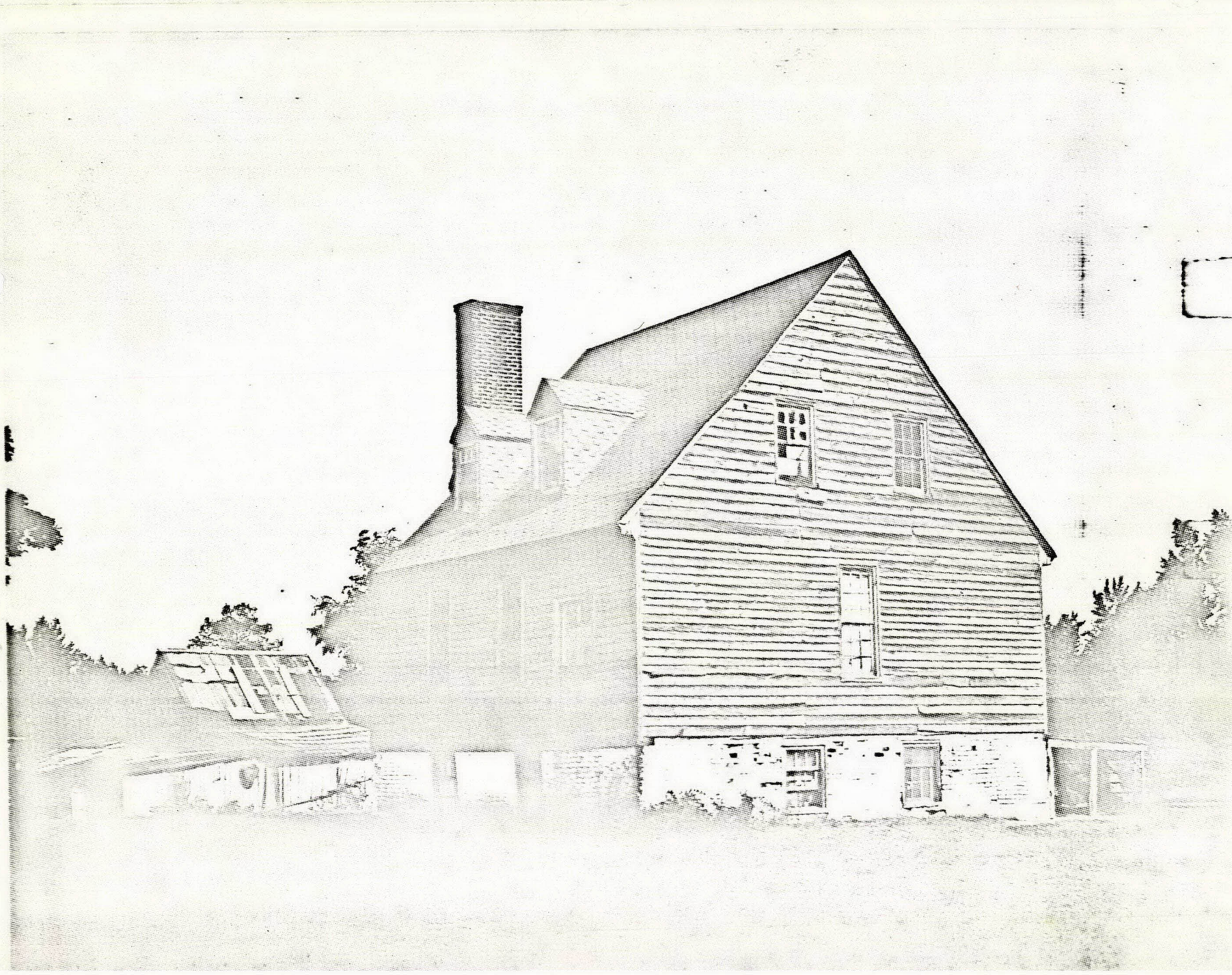


Illustration 2

The Watt House in 1930. This is the earliest known view of the structure. The negative photograph is in the Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

(Rear View)

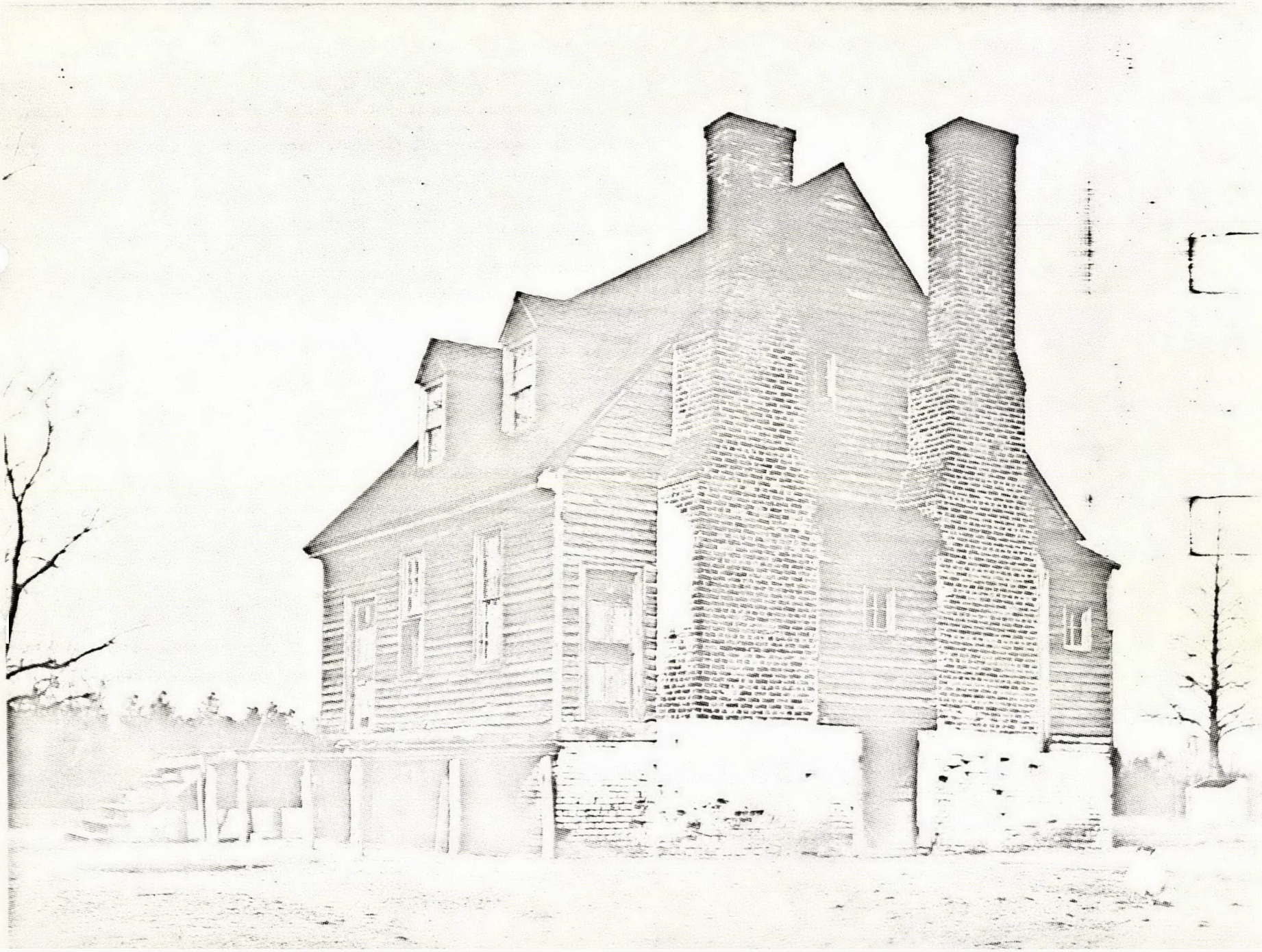


Illustration 3

The Watt House in 1930. This is the earliest known view of the structure. The negative photograph is in the Virginia State Library and Archives, Richmond, Virginia.

(Front View)

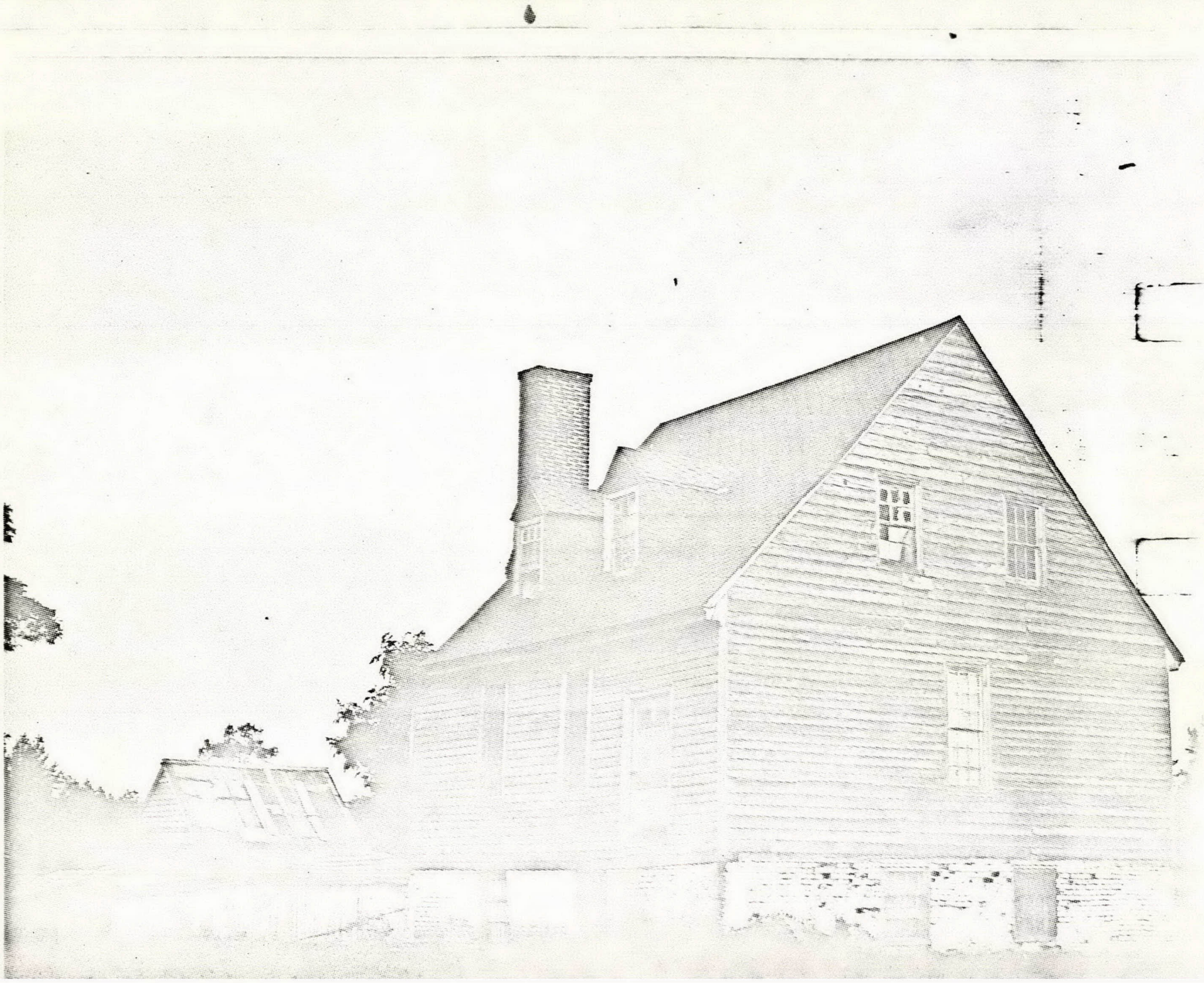


Illustration 4

This photograph appeared in the Times Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, June 22, 1932. This view was taken before the building was repaired by the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission in 1935.

(Front View)

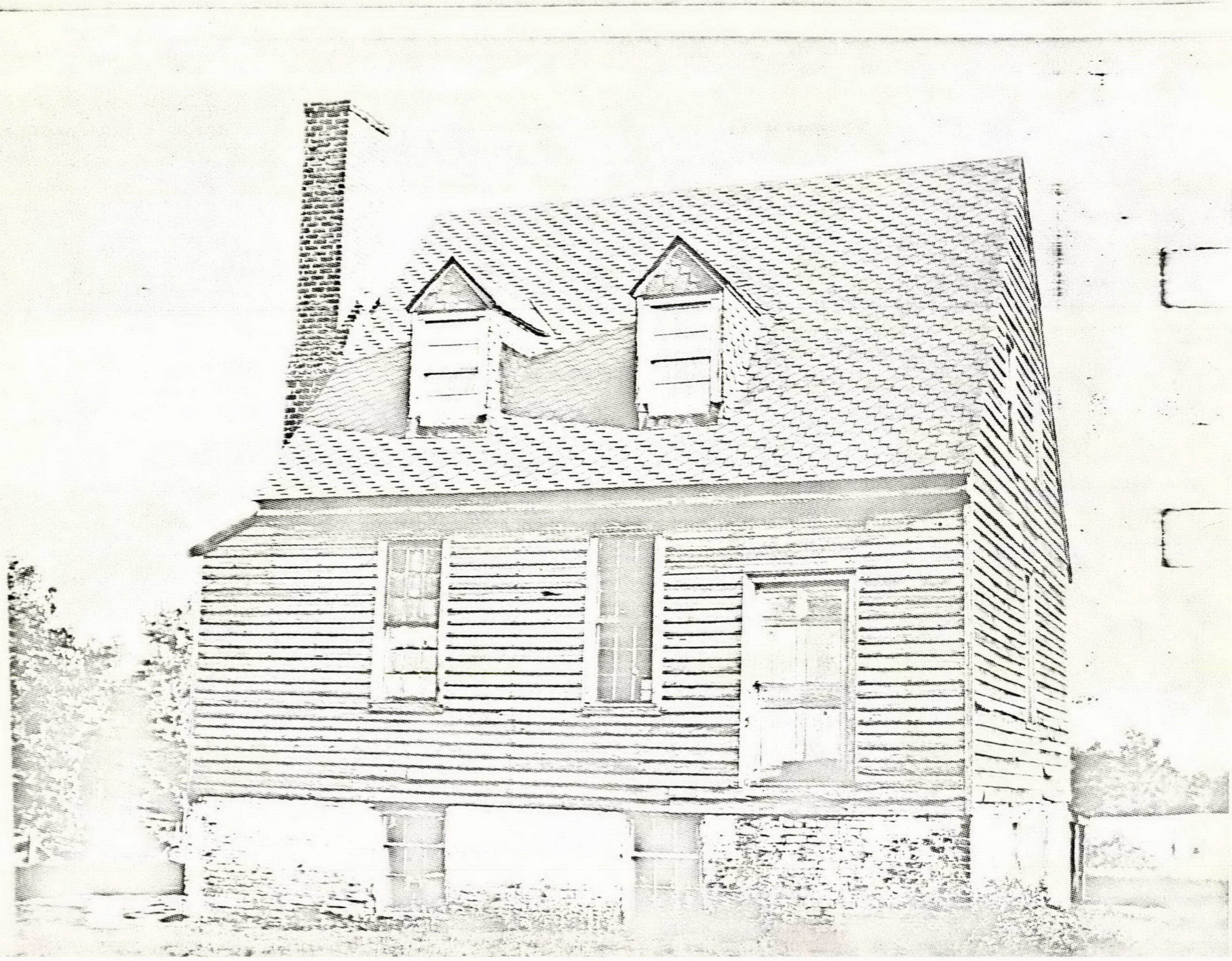


Illustration 5

This photograph was acquired from Gary H. Banks, 1 North Confederate Avenue, Sandston, Virginia, photographer, who took the shot in 1936 just after the building was repaired by the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission.

(Front View)

Illustration 6

Richmond National Battlefield Park file. The date of this view is unknown. It is suspected that the view was taken after the building was repaired by the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission in 1935 since the front and rear entrance steps favorably compare to the restored steps of that date.

(East Side View)

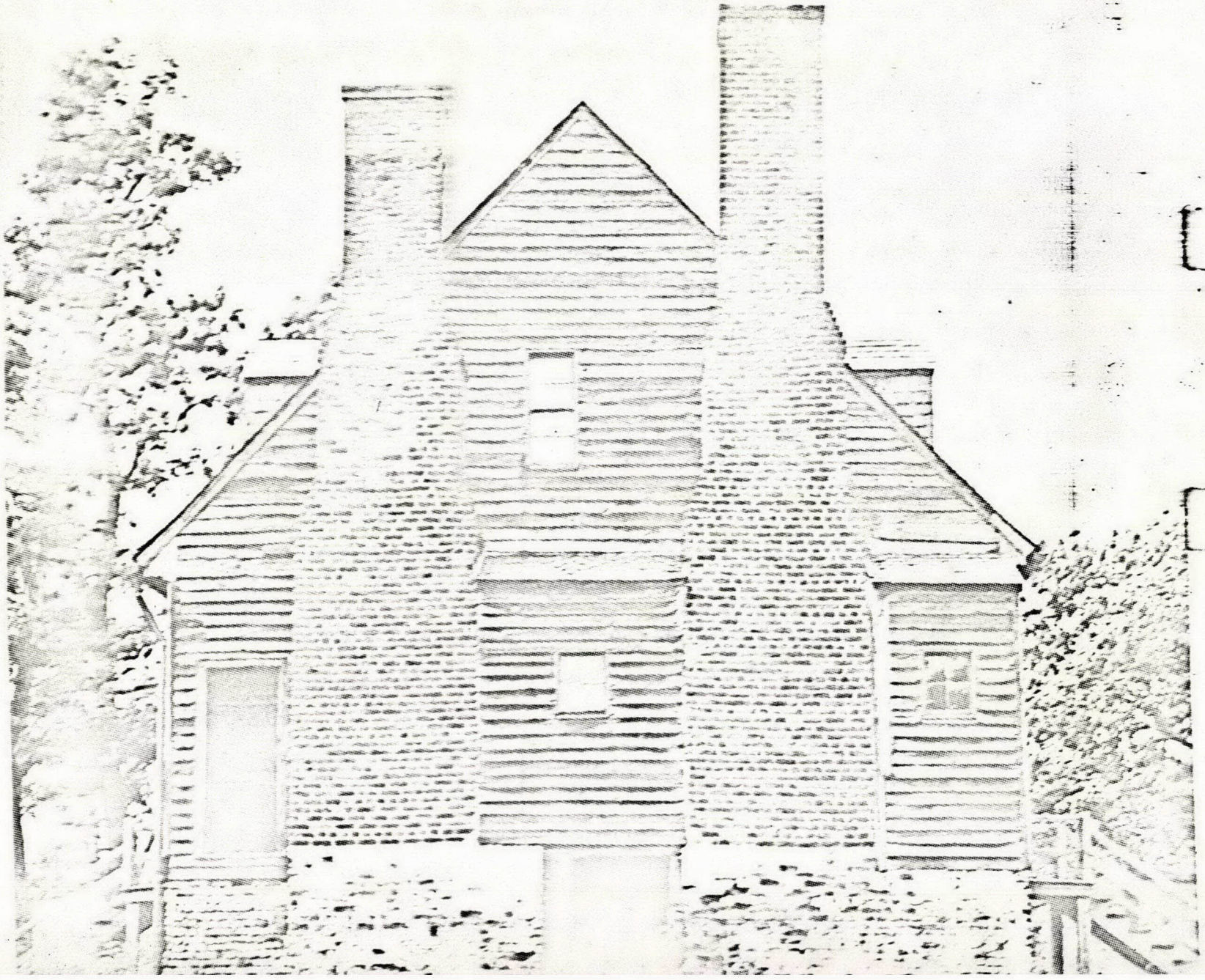


Illustration 7

The date of this photograph, located in the Richmond National Battlefield Park files, is unknown. It must have been taken after 1932, when the sign in the foreground was erected, and before 1947 when the house was vacated. It is believed that the view was recorded after the house was repaired by the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission in 1935 and before the house was vacated for the last time in 1947.

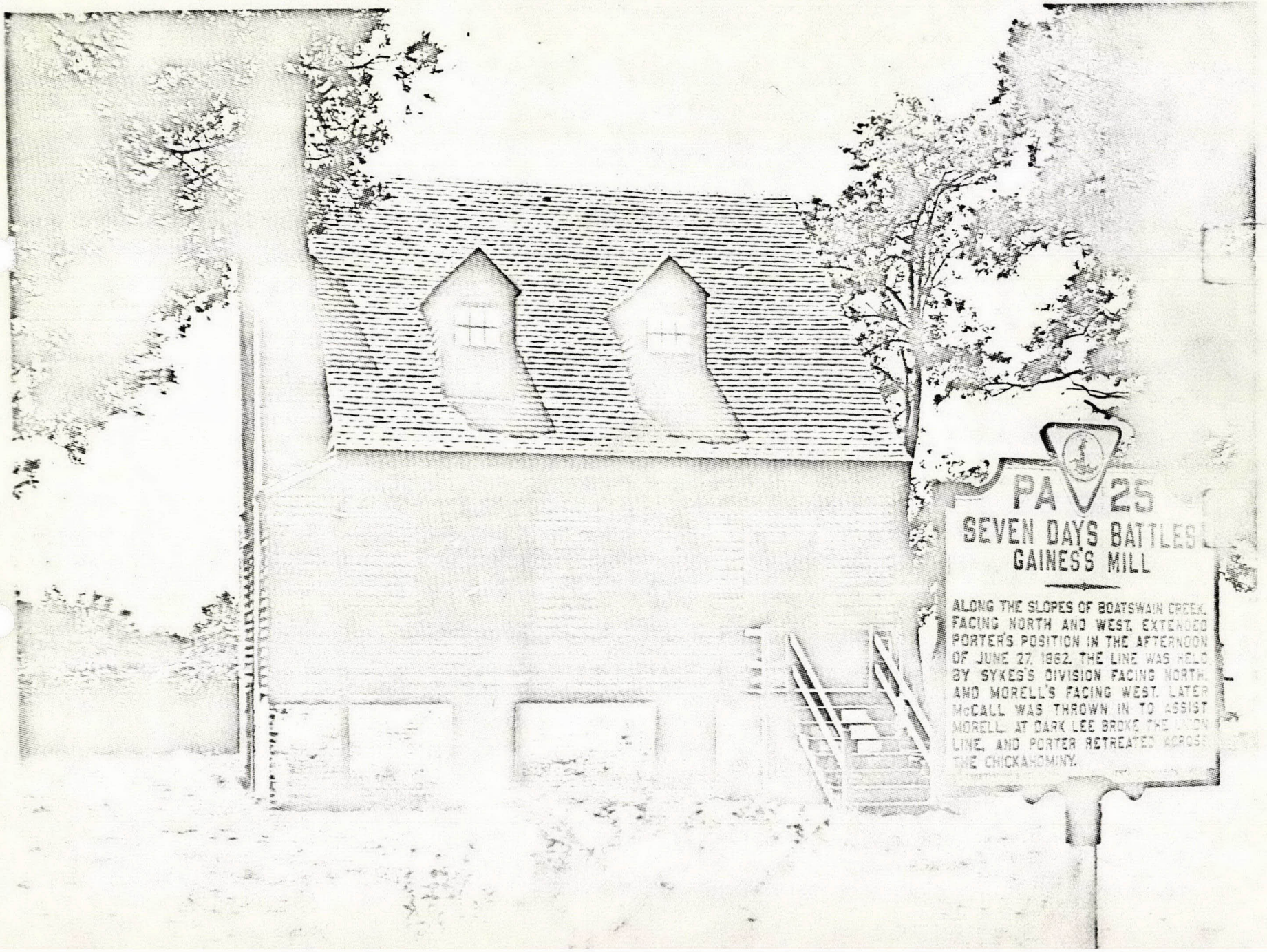

PA 25
SEVEN DAYS BATTLES
GAINES'S MILL
ALONG THE SLOPES OF BOATSWAIN CREEK, FACING NORTH AND WEST, EXTENDED PORTER'S POSITION IN THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 27, 1862. THE LINE WAS HELD BY SYKES'S DIVISION FACING NORTH, AND MORELL'S FACING WEST. LATER McCALL WAS THROWN IN TO ASSIST MORELL. AT DARK LEE BROKE THE UNION LINE, AND PORTER RETREATED ACROSS THE CHICKAHOMINY.

Illustration 8

This negative, in the Richmond National Battlefield Park files, is undated. It appears to have been taken after the house was vacated under Park Service custodianship. Note the small protection sign on the front door.

Appendix II

INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR

PRE-RESTORATION RECORD

November, 1956

Illustration 2

North basement room looking east (see pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 1, 6, and 11).

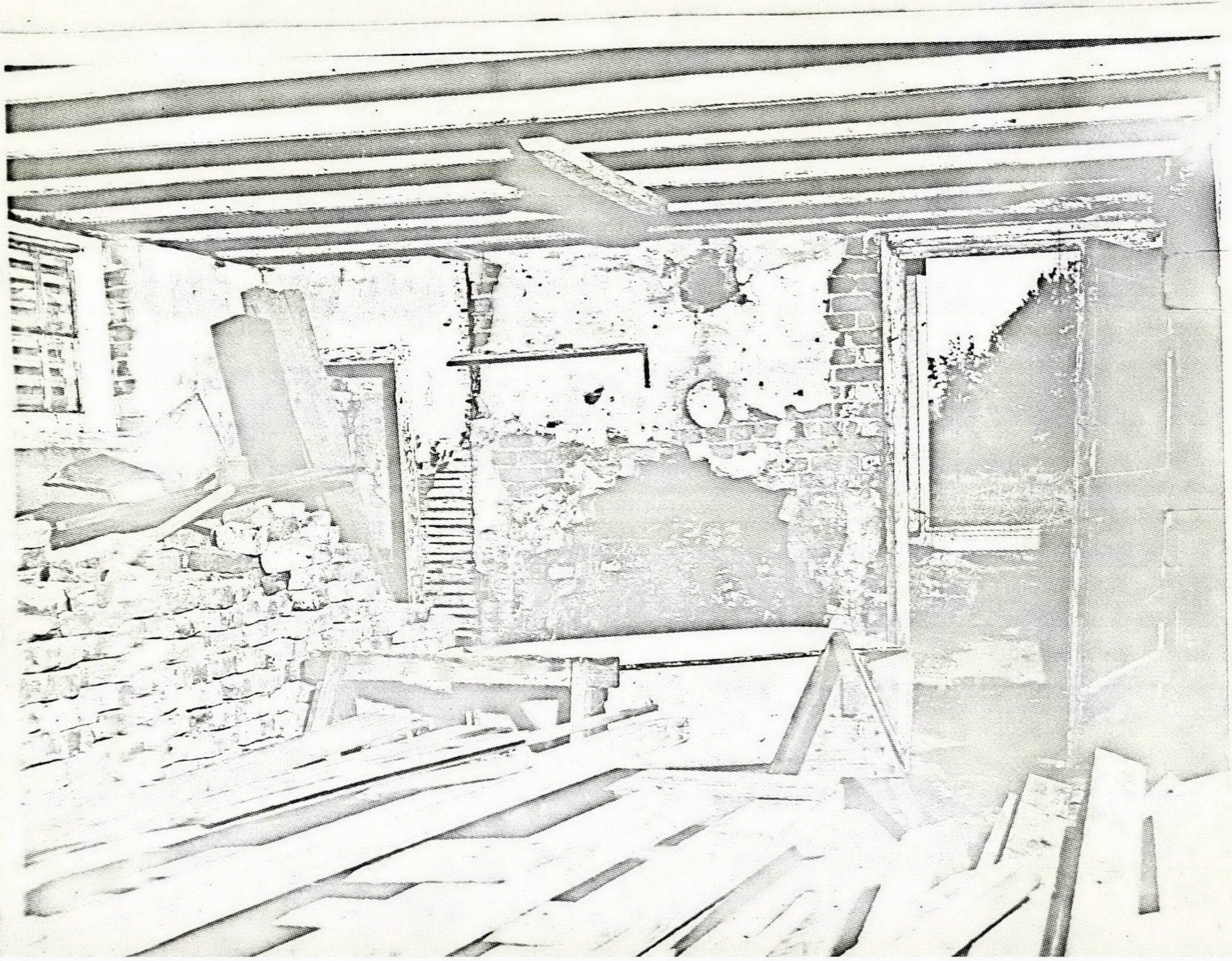


Illustration 10

North basement room looking west. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 1 and 6).

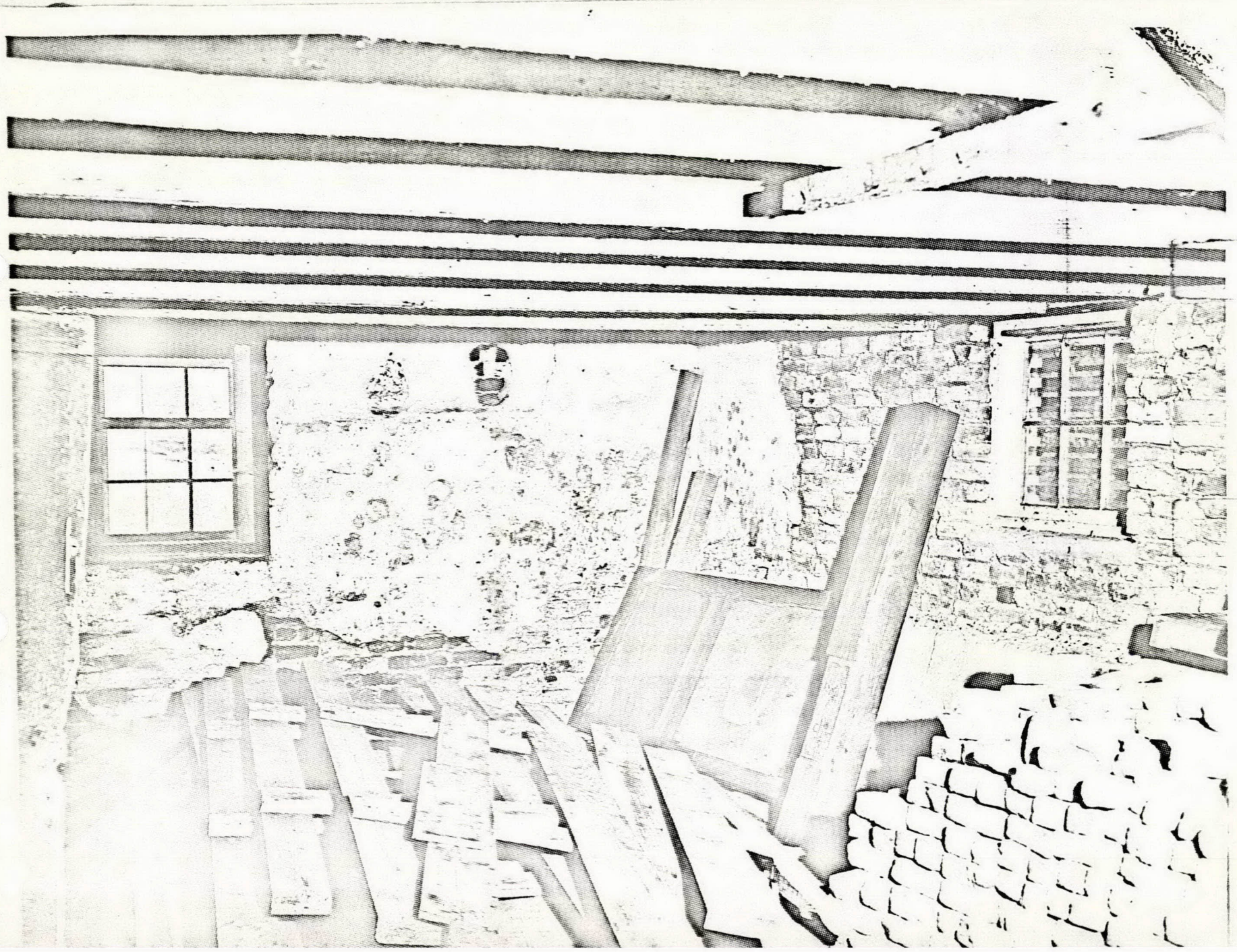


Illustration 11

South basement room looking east. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheet 6).

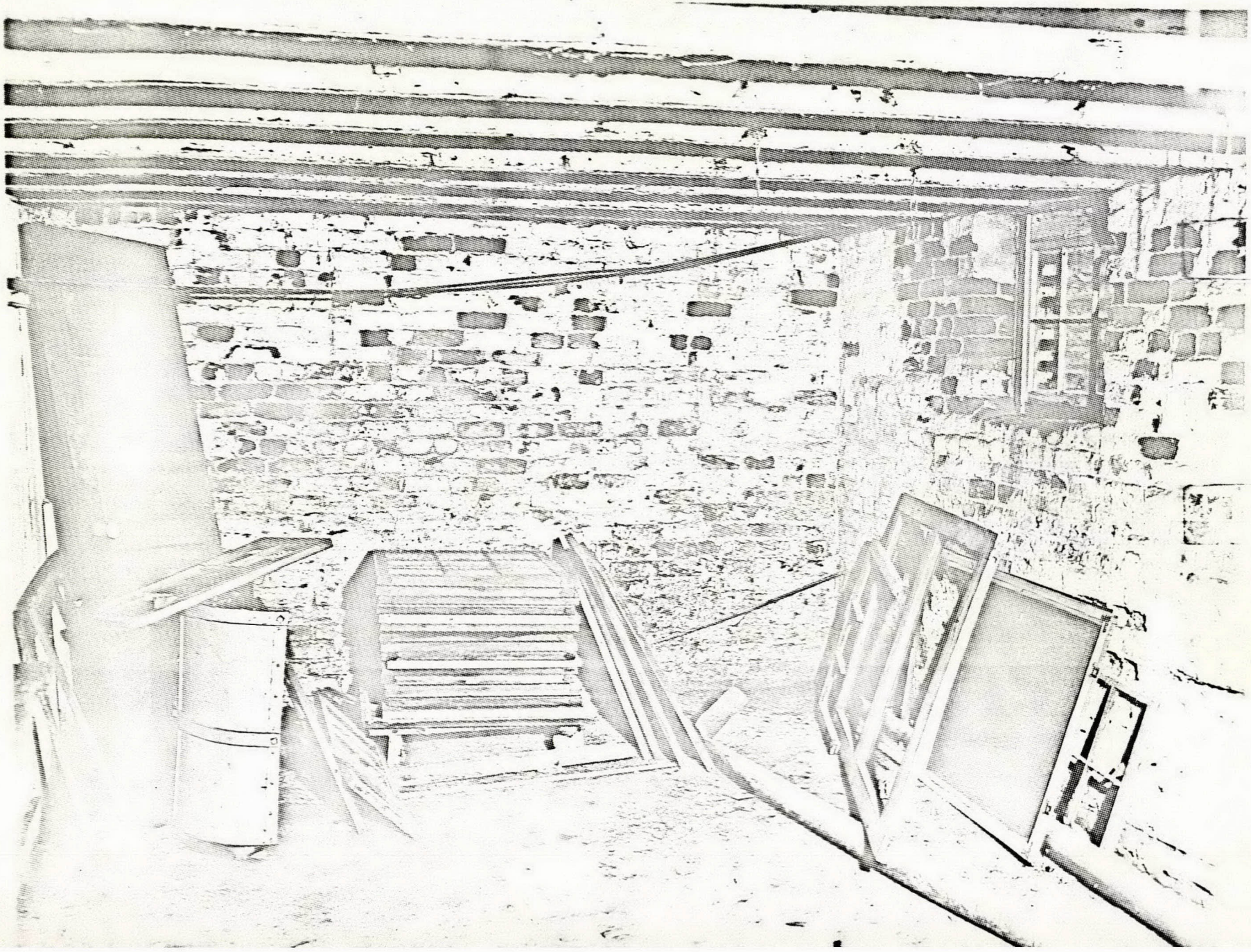


Illustration 12

South basement room looking ~~east~~ west. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 1 and 6).

Illustration 13

Steps leading to basement on the west side of the house. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 2 and 6).

Illustration 13

Steps leading to basement on the west side of the house. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 2 and 6).

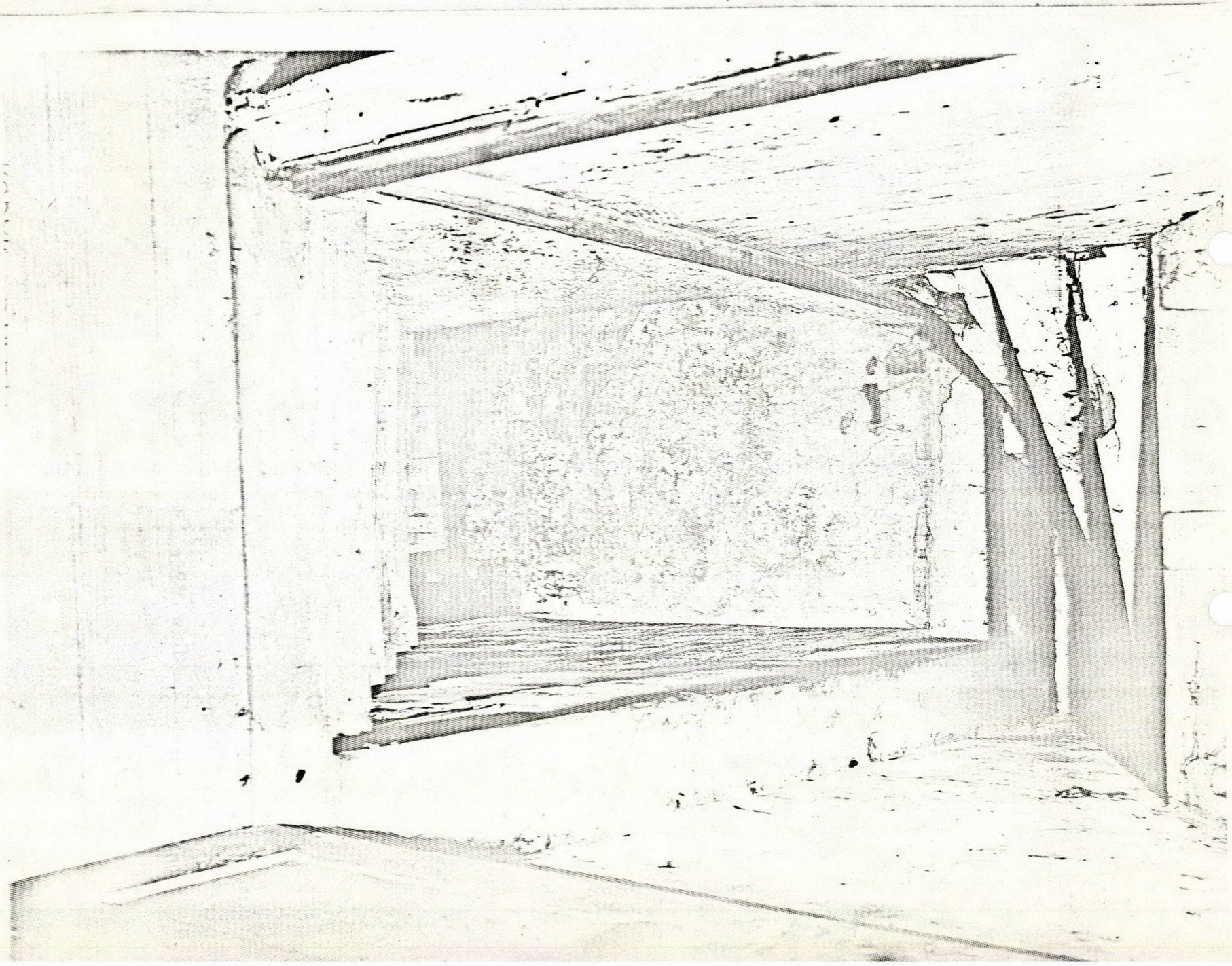


Illustration 14

First floor north room looking east. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 2 and 7).

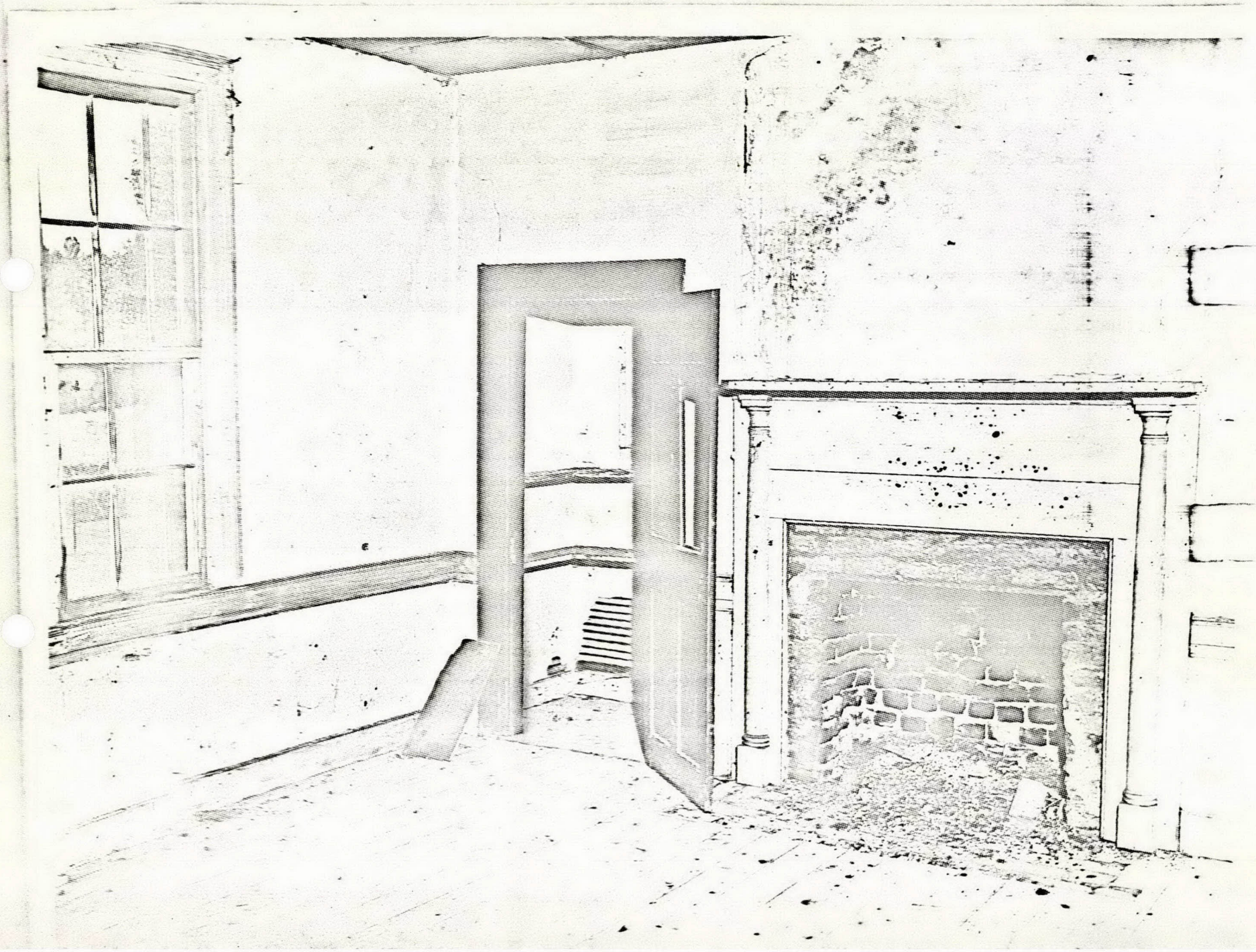


Illustration 15

First floor north room looking west.

(See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 2 and 10).

Illustration 16

First floor south room looking west.

(See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 2 and 10).

Illustration 17

First floor south looking east.

(See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 2, 7, and 10).

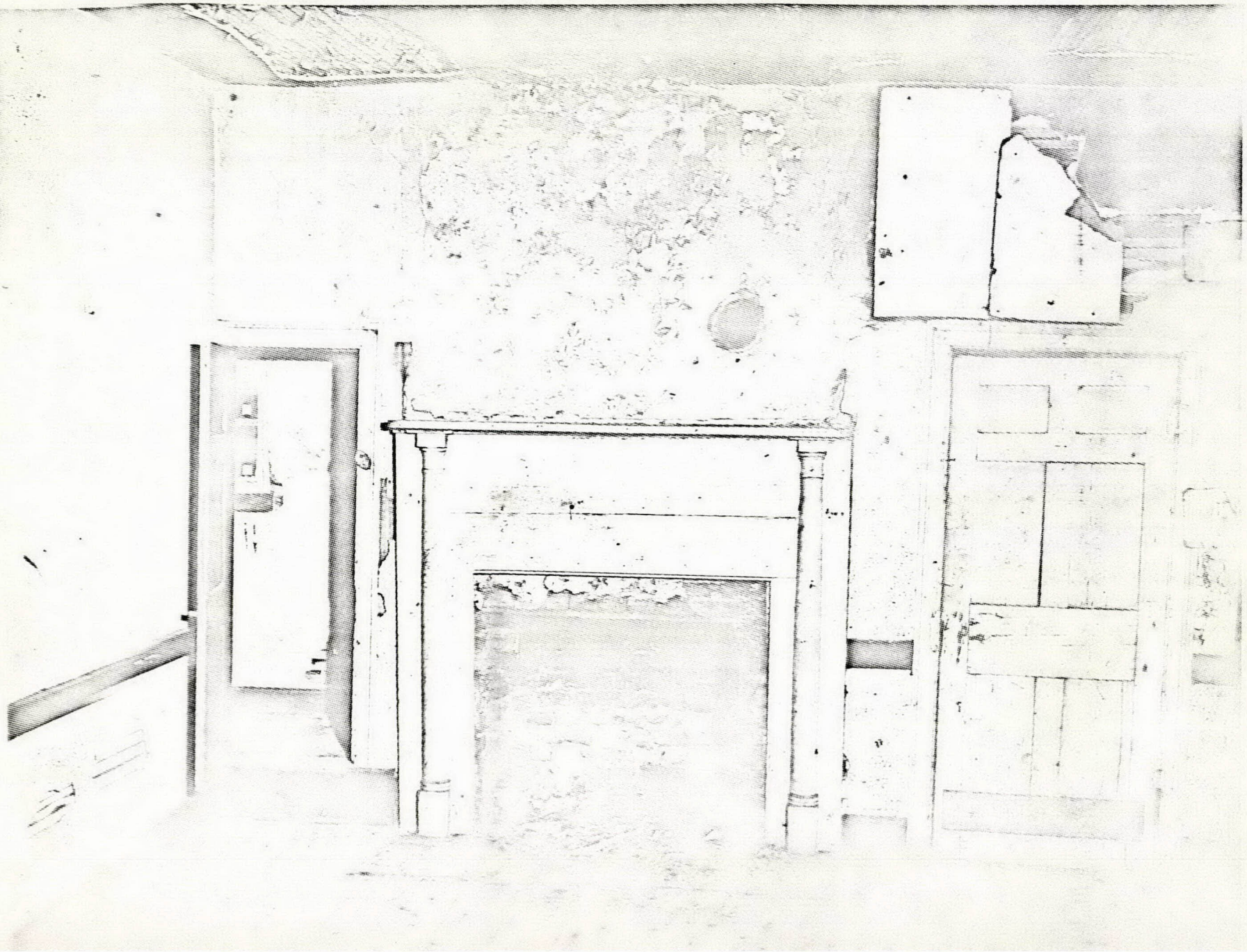


Illustration 18

First floor hall looking north.
(See pre-restoration drawing,
sheets 6 and 10).

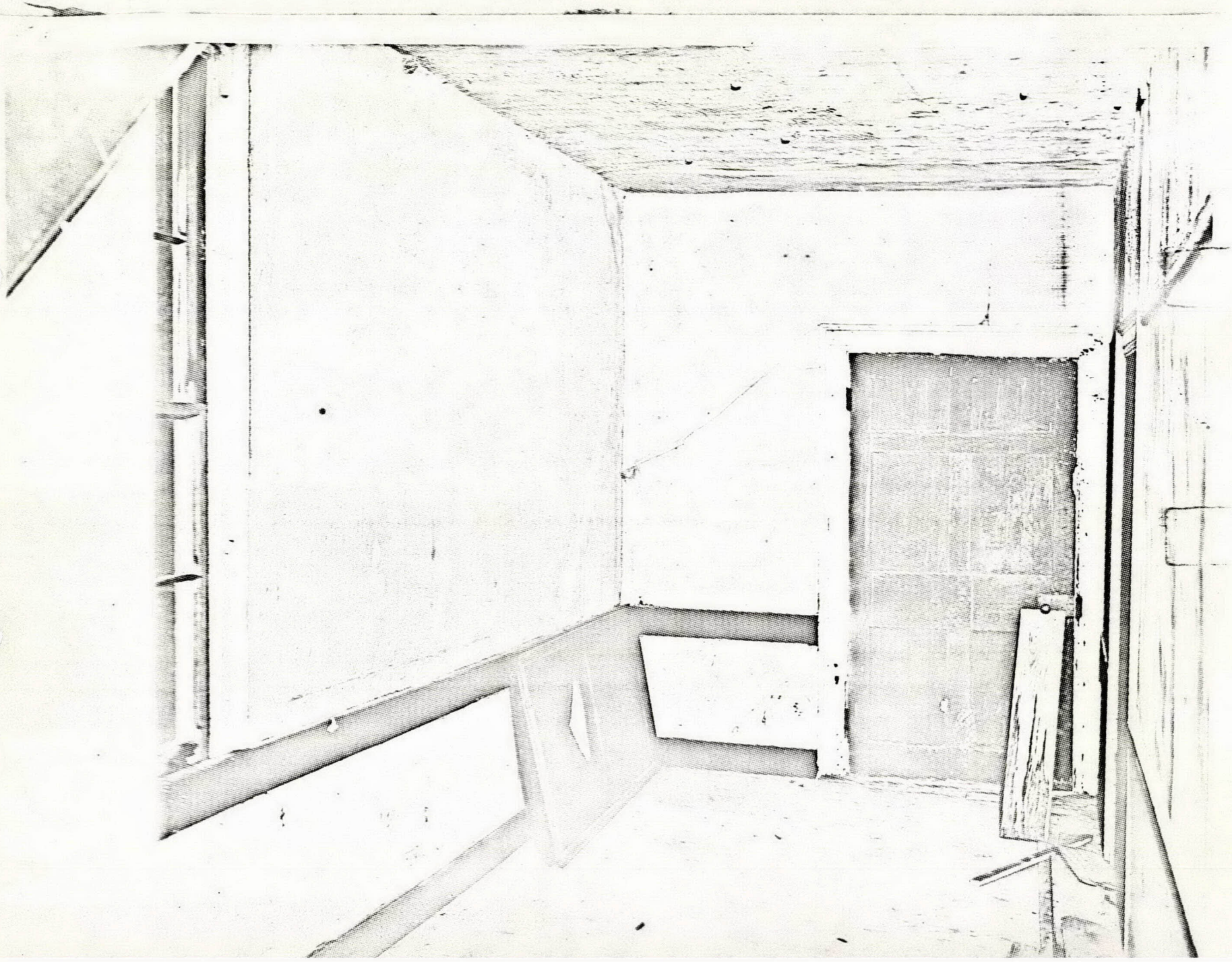


Illustration 19

First floor stairs leading down from second floor. (See pre-restoration drawing, sheets 2, 6, and 10).

Illustration 20

Second floor hall looking south.

(See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 2 and 6).

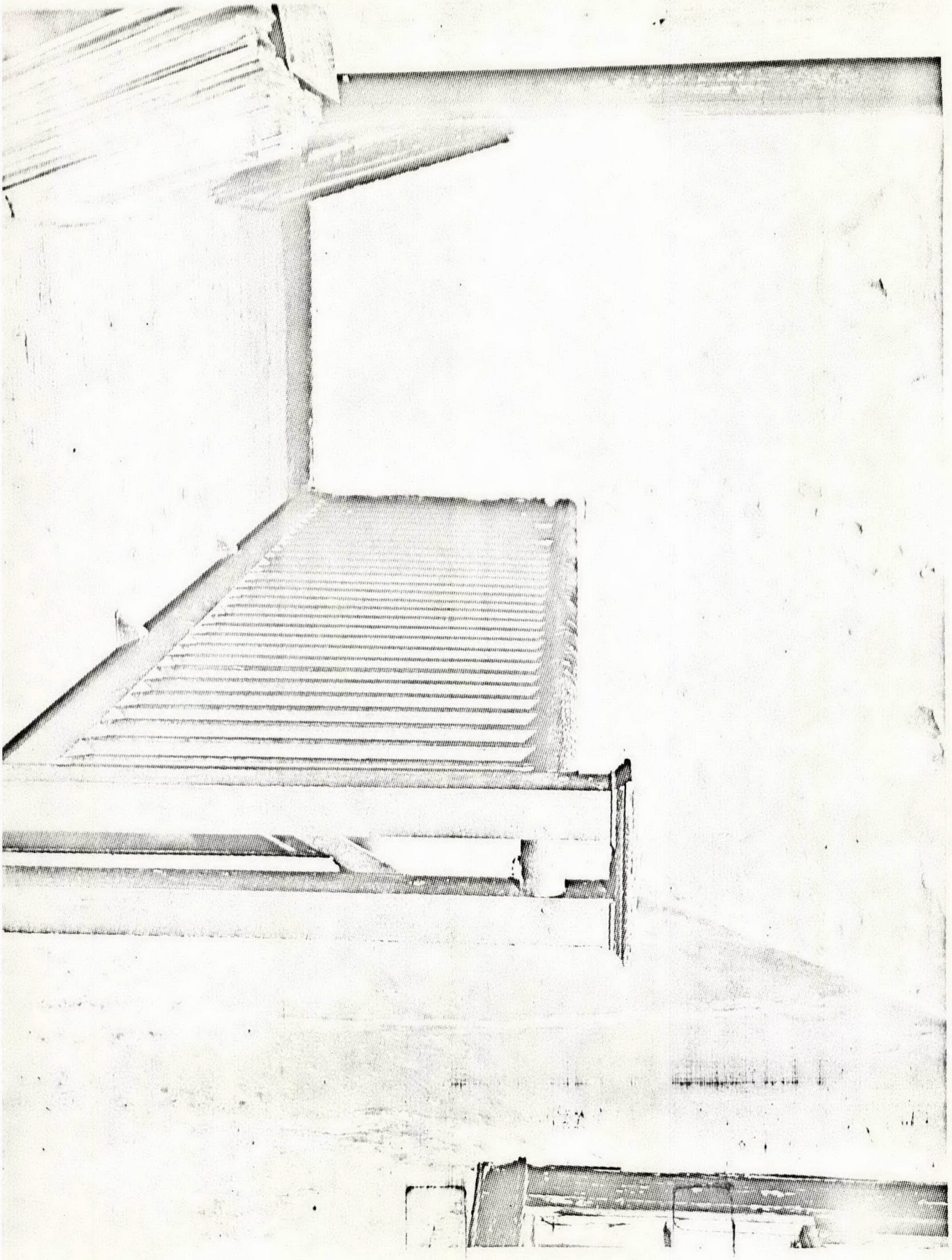


Illustration 21

Second floor hall and west room entrance. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 3, 6, and 10).

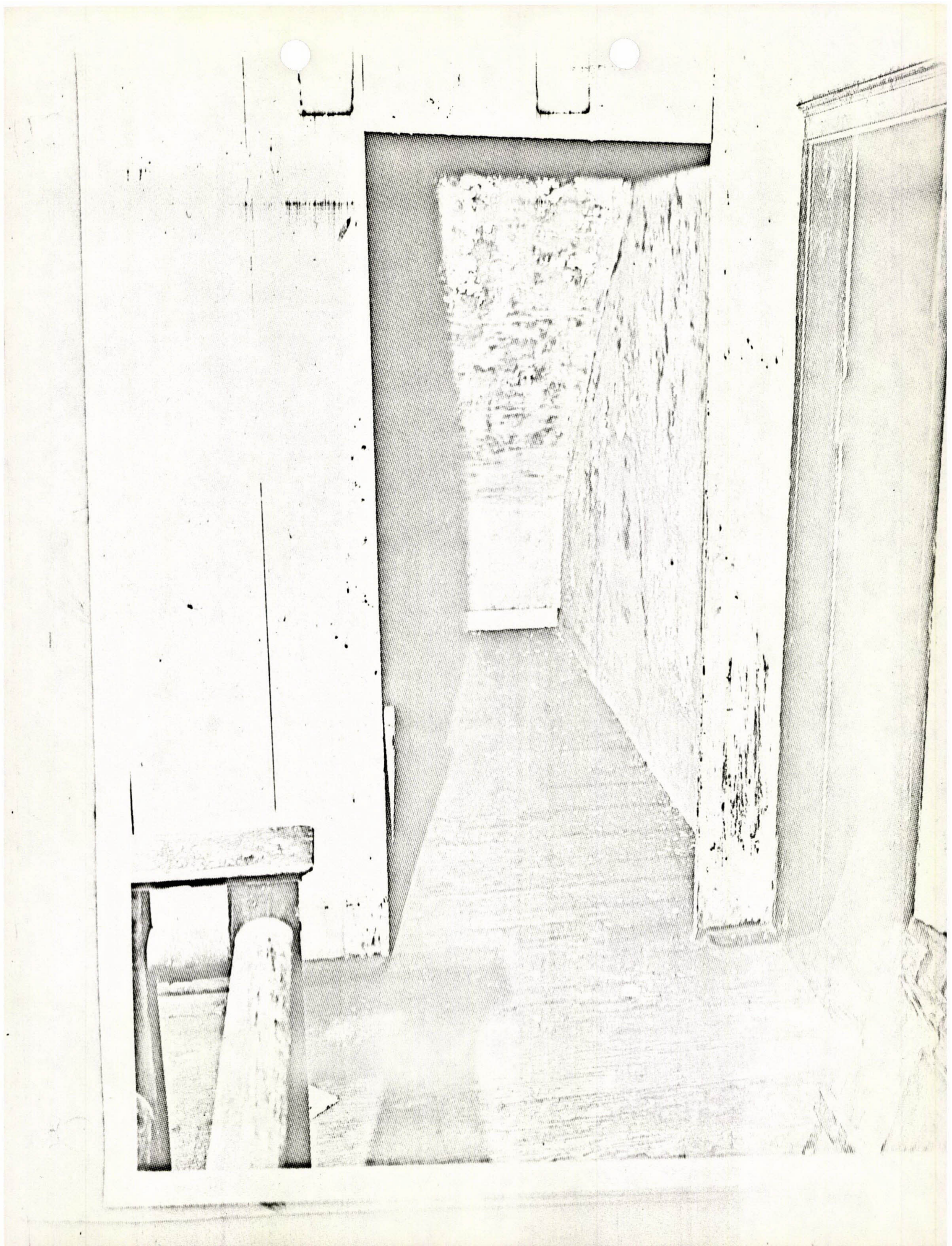


Illustration 22

Second floor north room looking east. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 3, 7, and 10).

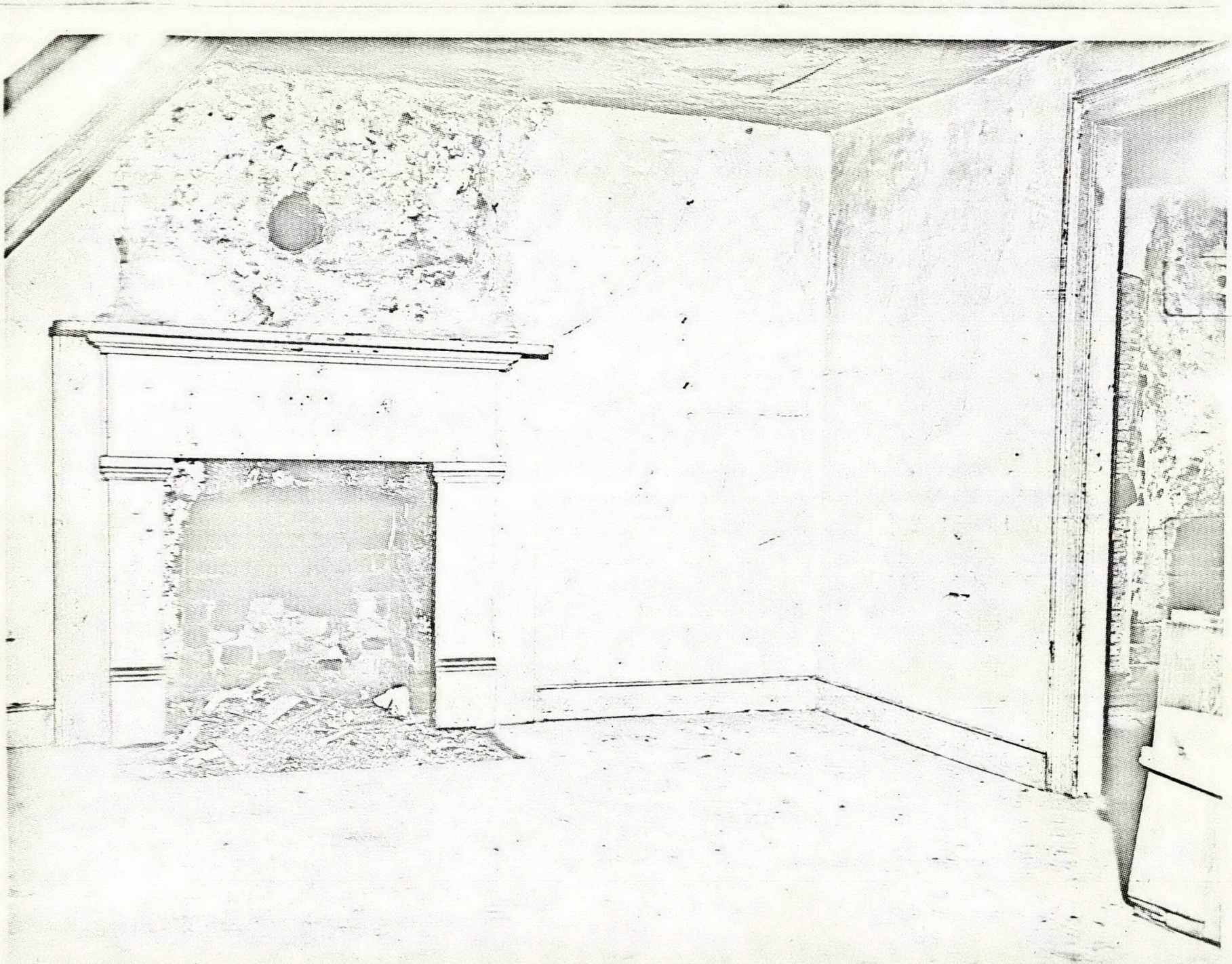


Illustration 23

Second floor north room looking northwest. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheet 3).

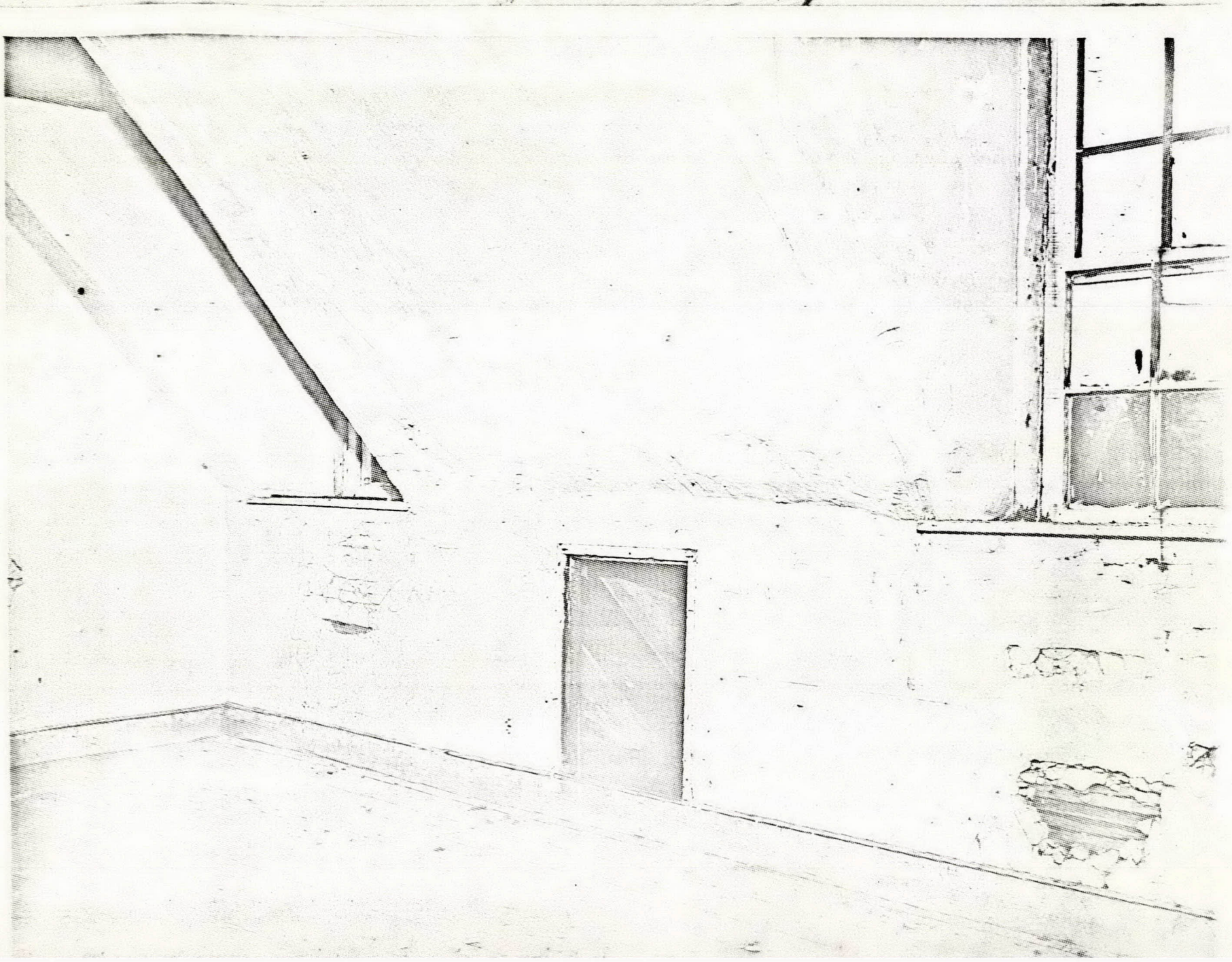


Illustration 24

Second floor south room looking east. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 3 and 7).

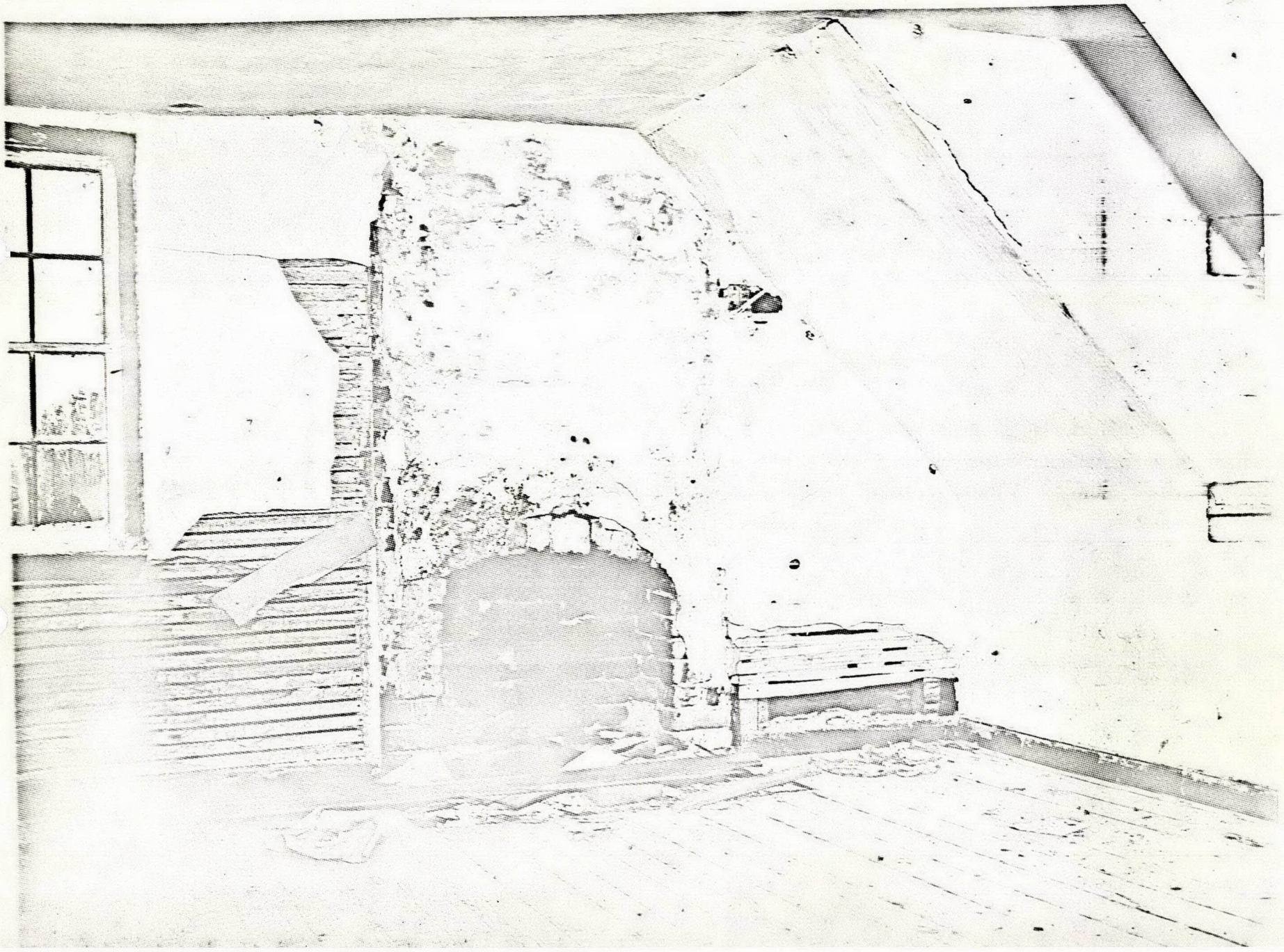


Illustration 25

Second floor south room looking west. (See pre-restoration measured drawing sheets 2, 3, and 10).

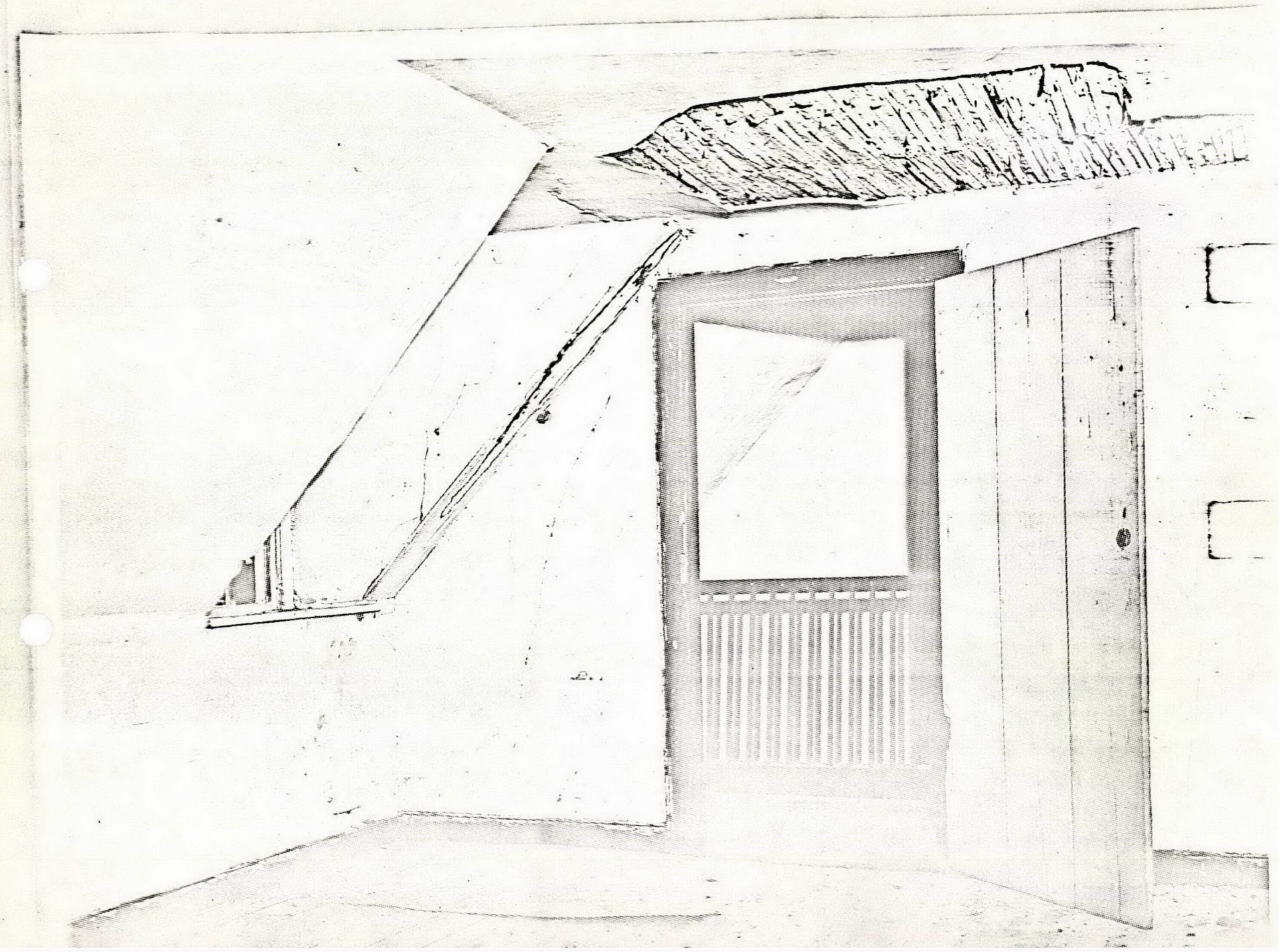


Illustration 26

Attic looking east. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheet 6).

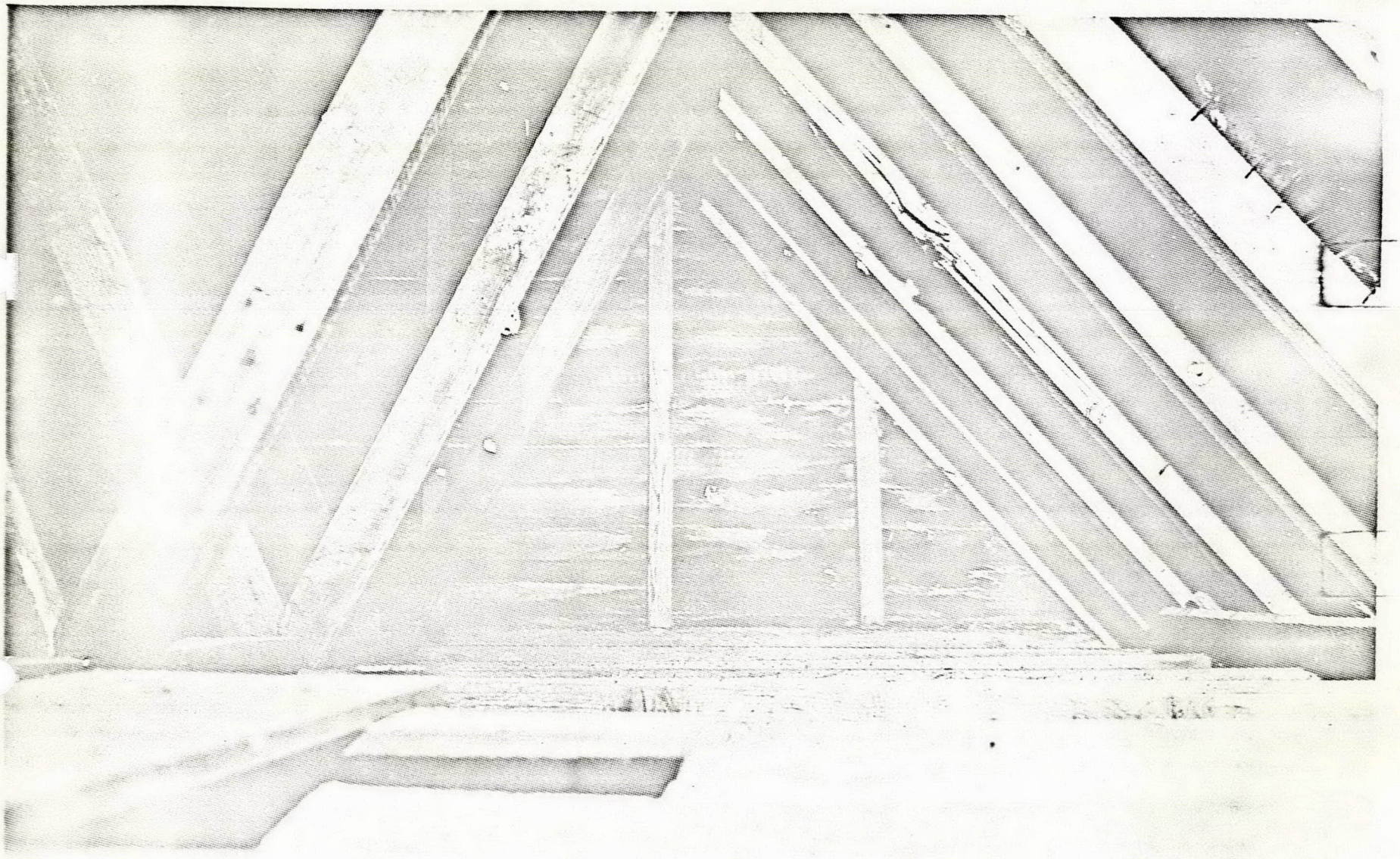


Illustration 27

Attic looking northeast. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheet 6).

Illustration 28

Exterior west side view. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 4 and 9).

Illustration 29

Exterior east side view. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 5 and 9).

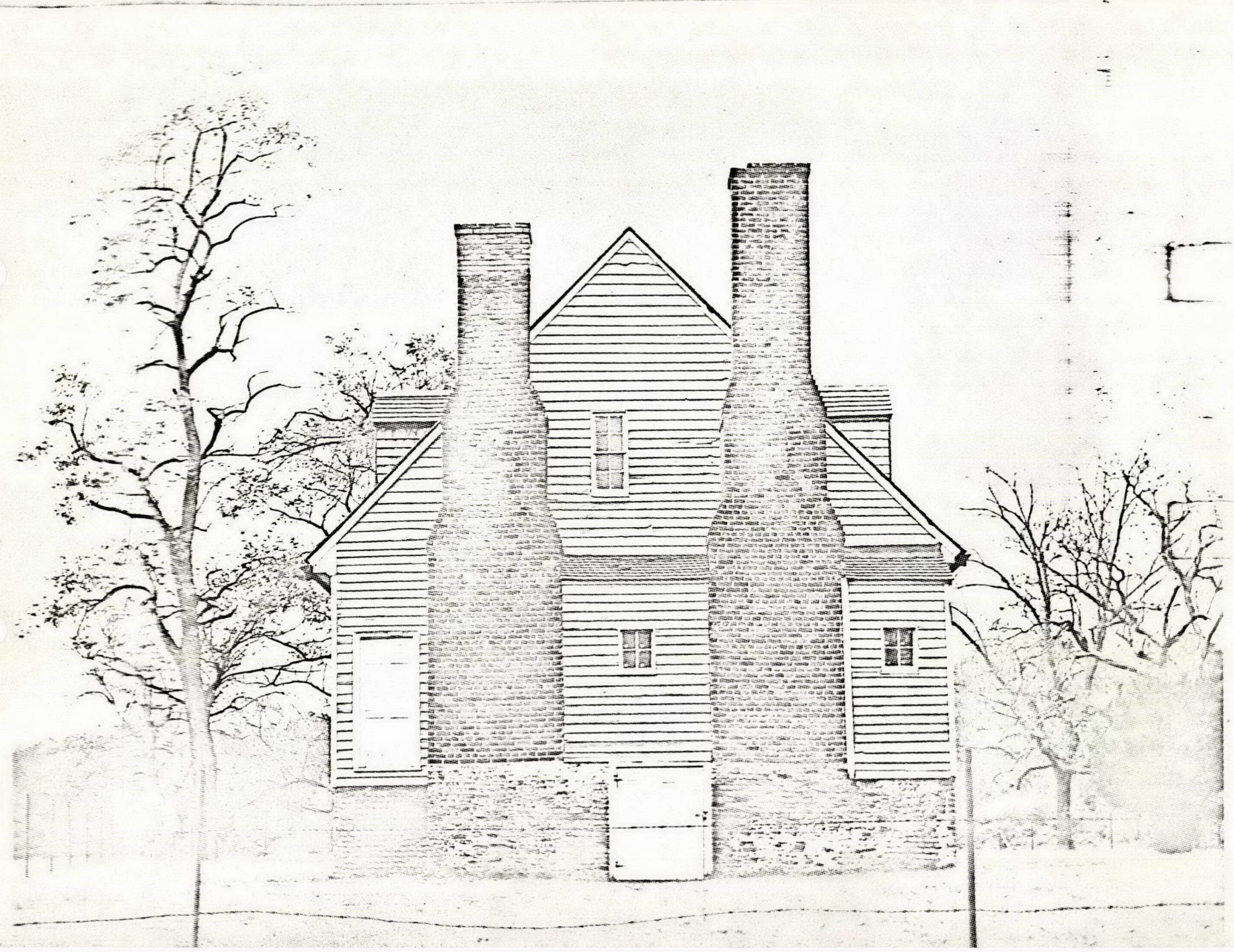


Illustration 30

Exterior north front view. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 4 and 9).

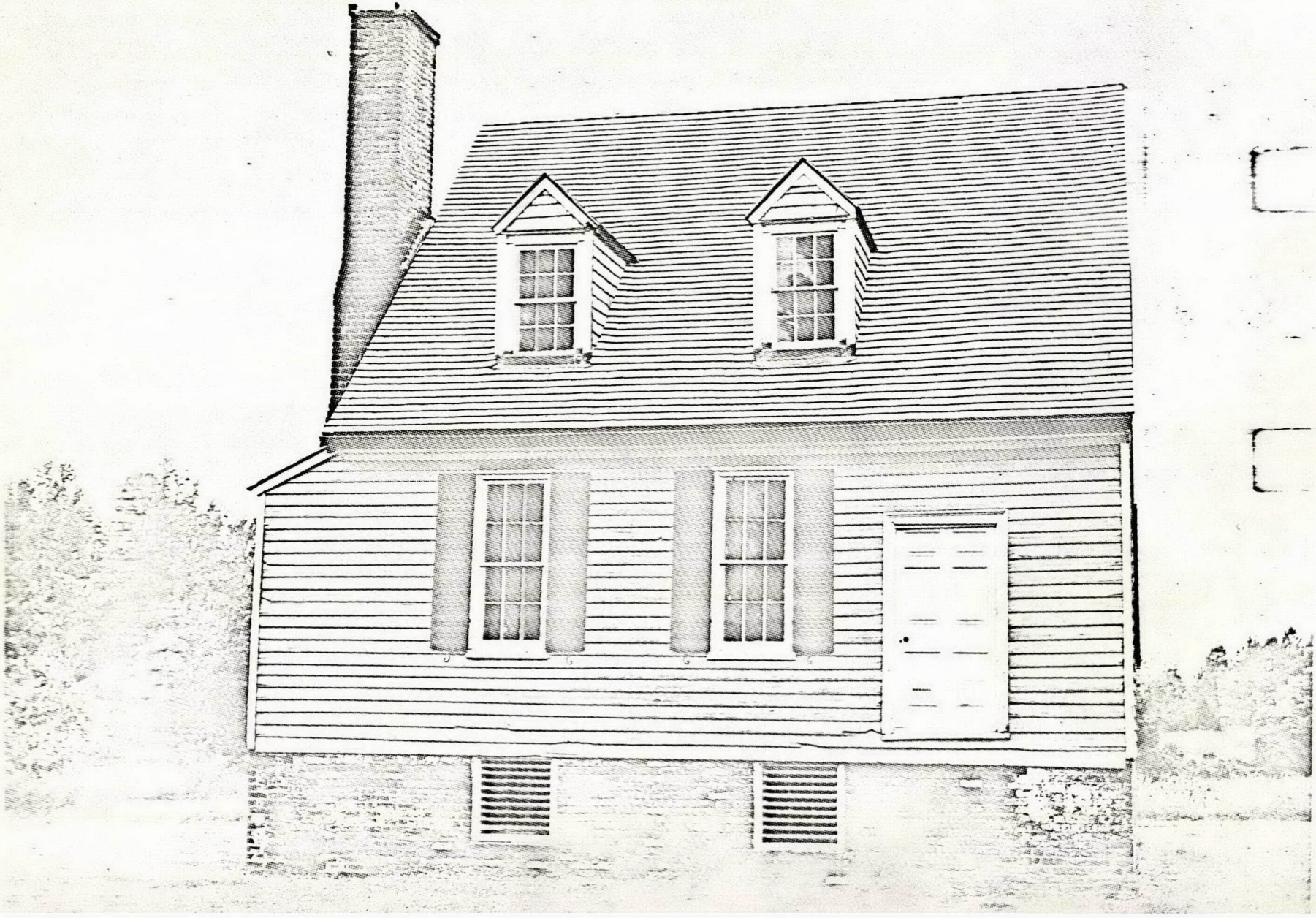


Illustration 31

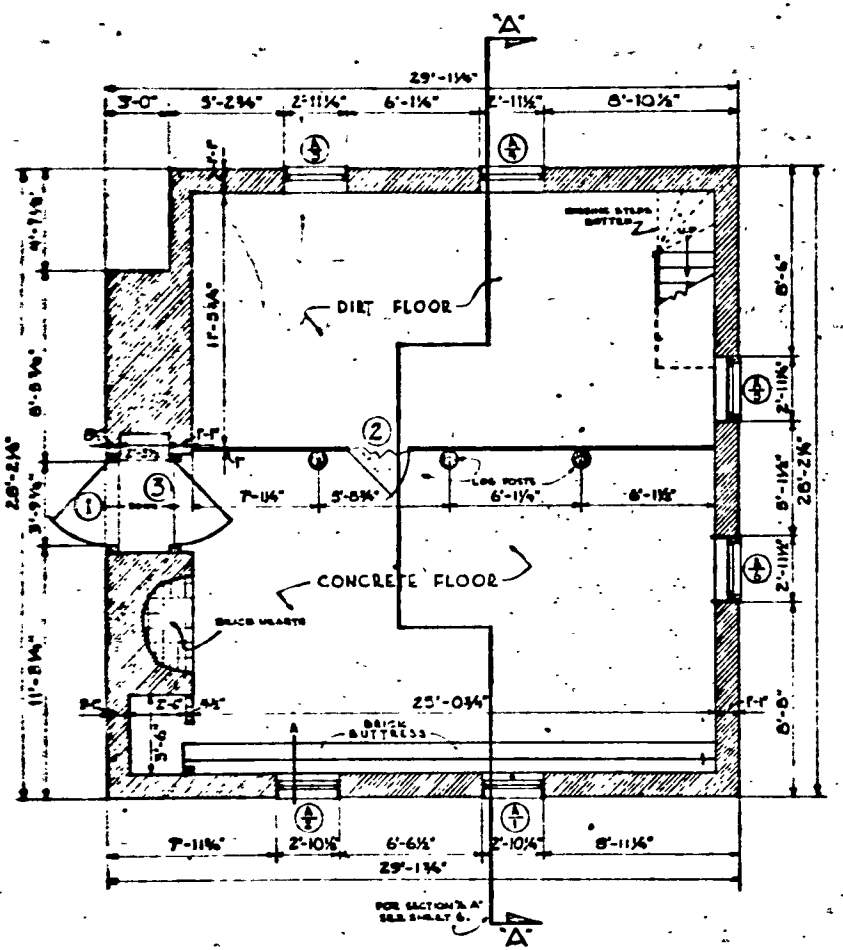
Exterior south ~~front~~ Rear view. (See pre-restoration measured drawing, sheets 5 and 9).

Appendix III

P R E - R E S T O R A T I O N

M E A S U R E D D R A W I N G S

November, 1956



Basement Plan

1/8" = 1'-0"

Door Schedule

NO.	WIDTH	HEIGHT	THICK
1	3'-9⅞"	4'-11"	1⅜"
2	2'-11¼"	5'-9¼"	1¾"
3	3'-7¾"	6'-3⅛"	1¾"
101	3'-9⅛"	6'-4½"	1⅜"
102	2'-6⅛"	5'-11⅛"	1¼"
103	3'-4¼"	6'-5⅛"	1¼"
104	2'-10¾"	6'-4¼"	1¼"
105	2'-11½"	6'-4⅛"	1¾"
106	2'-11"	6'-4¾"	1¼"
107	2'-8⅜"	5'-11⅛"	1⅜"
108	2'-5¾"	5'-11¼"	1¼"
109	1'-9⅛"	5'-11¼"	1¾"
201	2'-3¾"	5'-10¾"	1¾"
202	2'-9¾"	5'-10⅛"	1¾"

Window Schedule

NO.	WIDTH	HEIGHT	
1	2'-6¼"	2'-5"	6
2	2'-6¾"	2'-5"	6
3	2'-4¼"	1'-11"	6
4	2'-4¼"	1'-11"	6
5	2'-4½"	2'-11"	9
6	2'-4¾"	2'-11¼"	9
7	2'-4¾"	5'-7¼"	12
8	2'-4¾"	5'-7¼"	12
9	1'-8½"	1'-11¾"	4
10	1'-8⅜"	1'-11¾"	4
11	2'-4"	5'-6¾"	12
12	2'-4"	5'-6¾"	12
13	2'-4⅛"	5'-6⅞"	12
14	2'-4¼"	3'-10⅛"	12
15	2'-4¼"	3'-10⅛"	12
16	1'-8"	3'-10⅜"	8
17	2'-4½"	3'-11¼"	12
18	2'-4⅜"	3'-9¾"	12
19	2'-4½"	3'-9⅛"	12
20	2'-4¾"	3'-10⅜"	12

Note

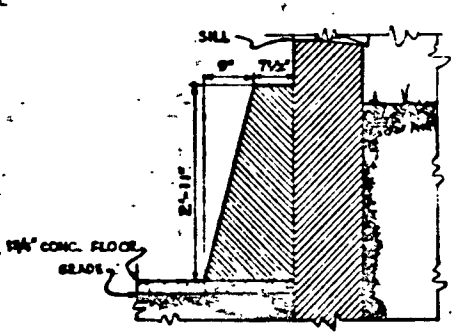
In an account by M. J. Haw in the May 18, 1910 "Christian Observer" a "brick floored basement room" is mentioned as existing prior to the Civil War. No evidence of this exists now.

Scales

ONE-QUARTER INCH

THREE-QUARTER INCH

METRIC



Section "A"

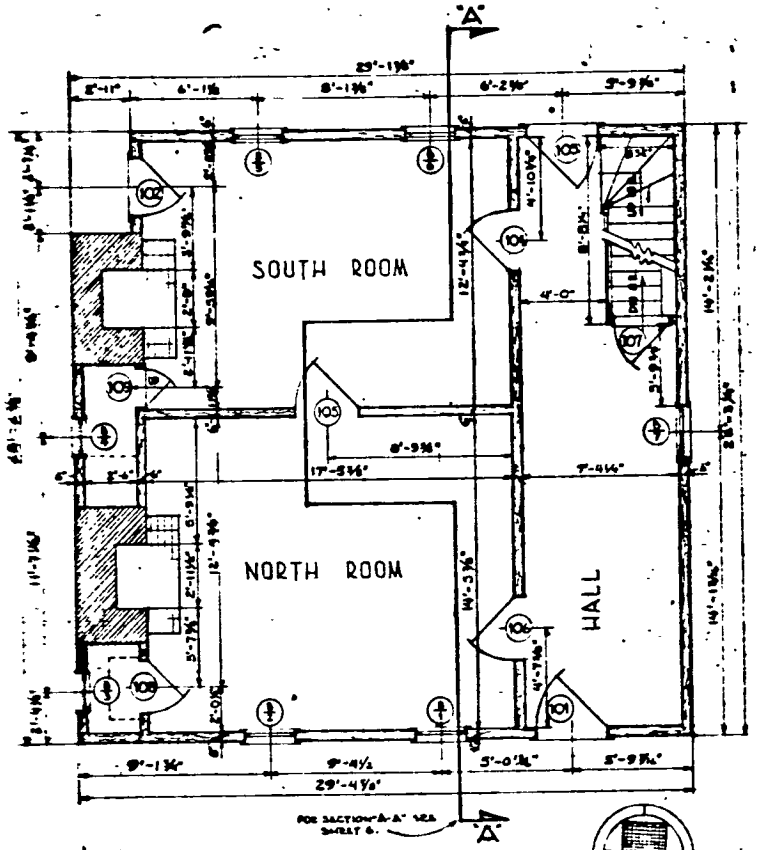
(THROUGH BUTTRESS)

3/4" = 1'-0"

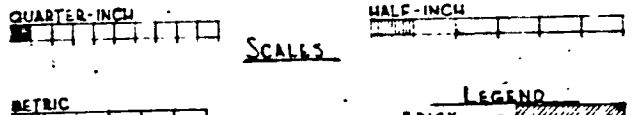
Legend

BRICK

FRAME

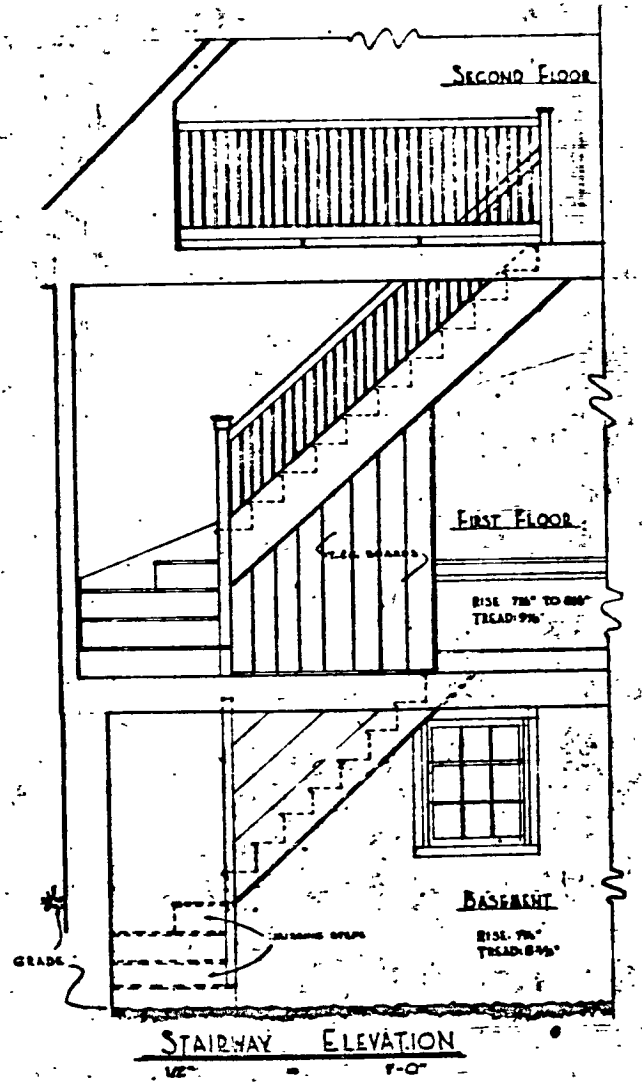


FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



SCALES

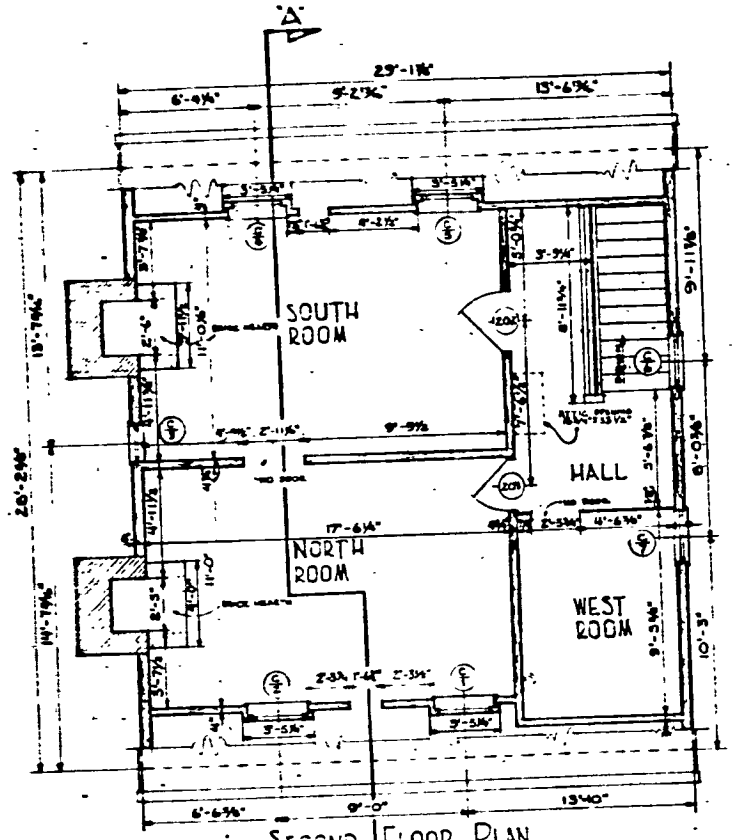
LEGEND
BRICK
FRAME



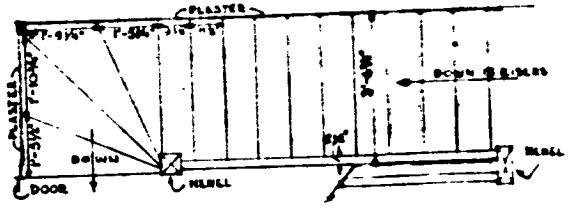
STAIRWAY ELEVATION
1/2" = 1'-0"

NAME OF STRUCTURE
WATT HOUSE
RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK, VIRGINIA.

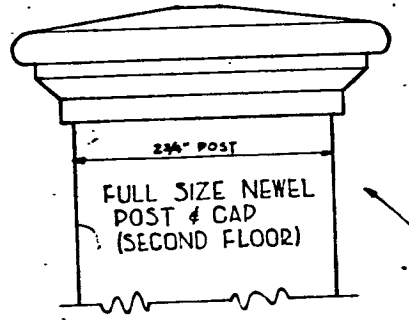
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 2 OF 11 SHEETS

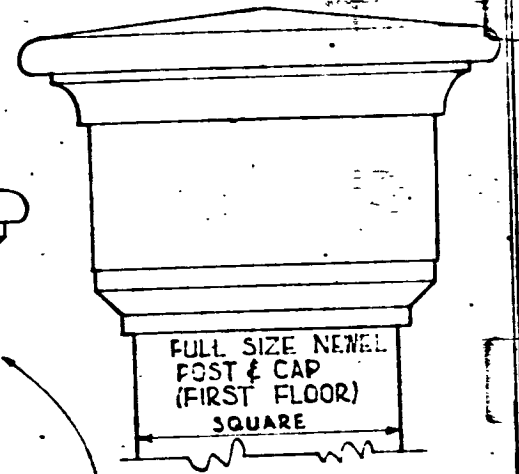


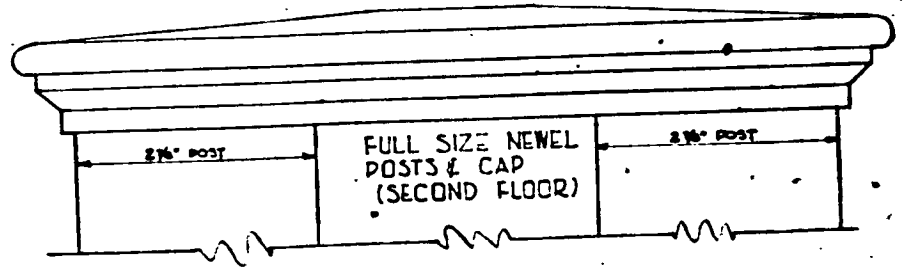
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"



PLAN MAIN STAIRWAY
1/2" = 1'-0"







SCALES

LEGEND
BRICK
FRAME

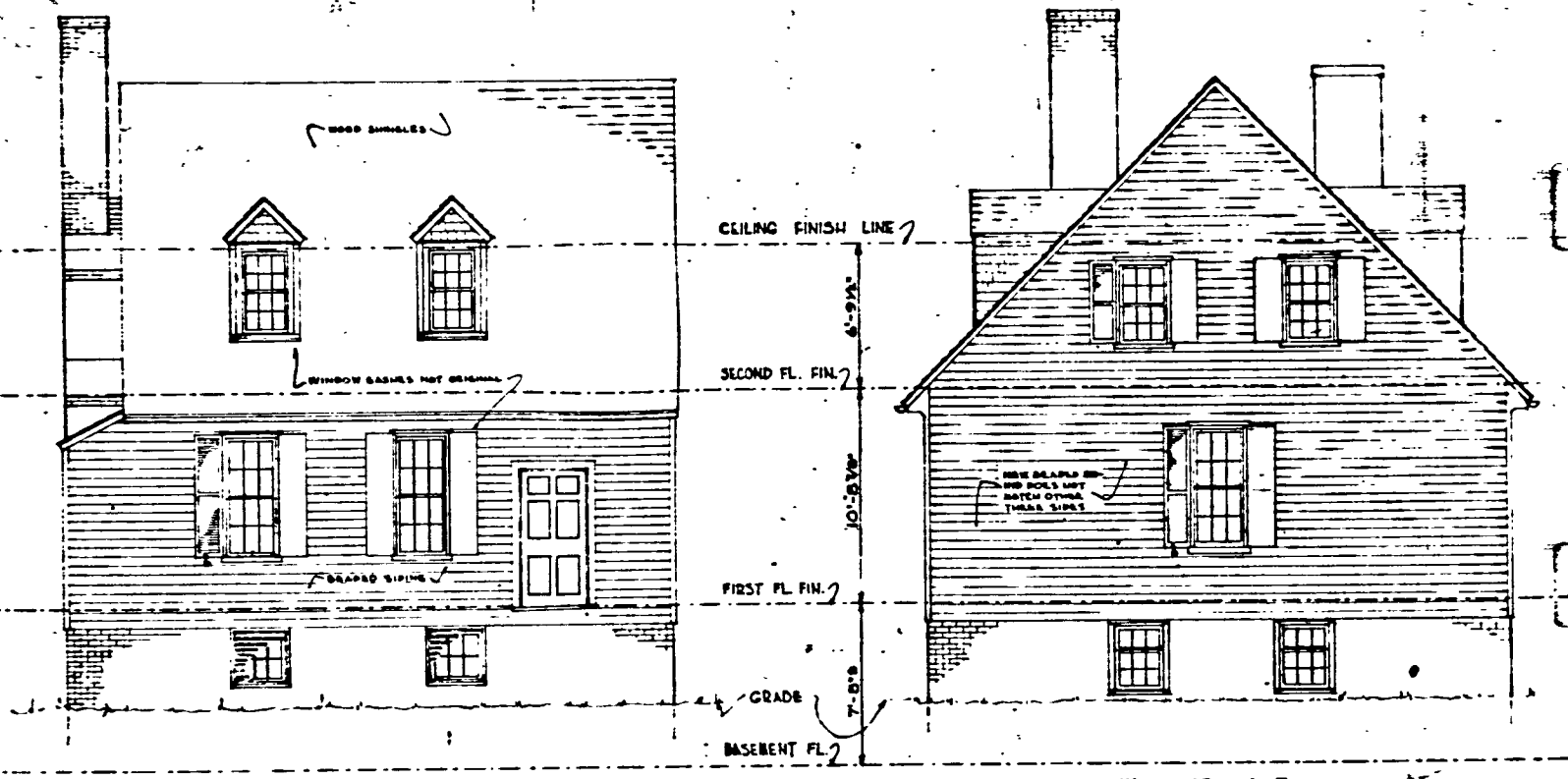
E. M. KIDD, DEL.

NAME OF STRUCTURE
WATT HOUSE
RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK, VIRGINIA.

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 3 OF 11 SHEETS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO NO.



NORTH (FRONT) ELEVATION

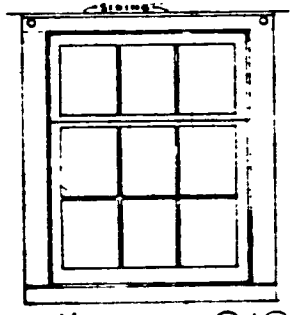
WEST (SIDE) ELEVATION

SCALES

ONE-QUARTER INCH

ONE INCH

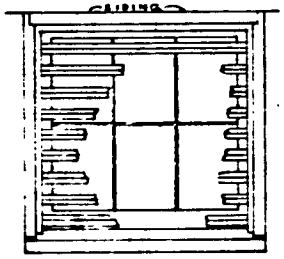
METRIC



WINDOWS NO. ④ & ⑤

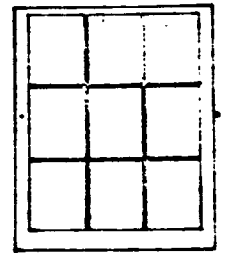
NOTE

Much of the siding has been replaced and at one time it was covered with asbestos siding. It is not known whether there was a front porch originally or earlier but it is thought that there was one.



WINDOWS NO. ④ ⑤

SCALES: 1" = 1'-0"

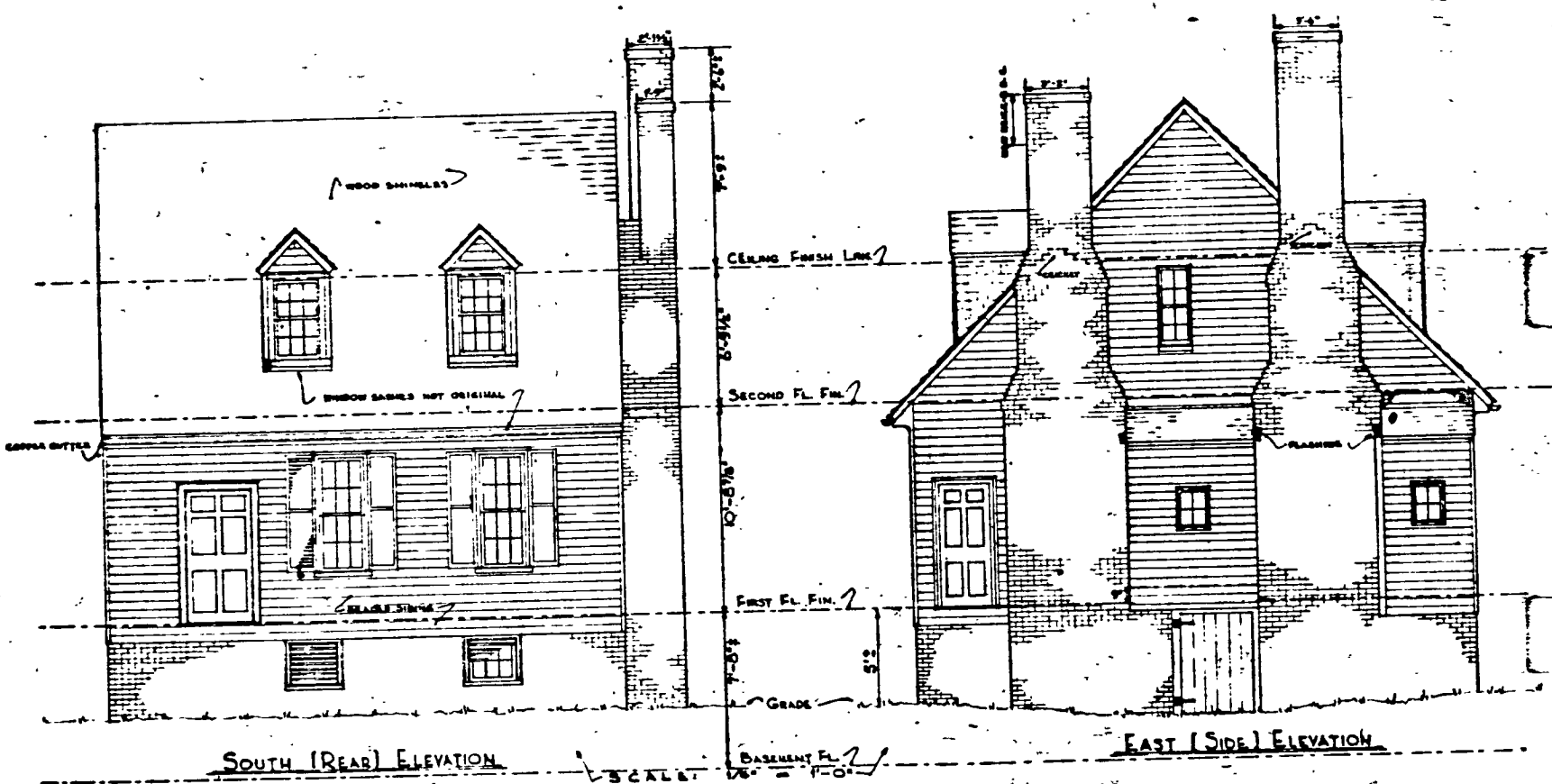


DISMANTLED SASH
(FOUND IN BASEMENT)

E. M. KIDD, DEL.

NAME OF STRUCTURE

HISTORIC AMERICAN

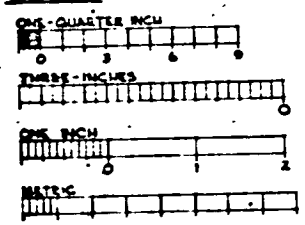


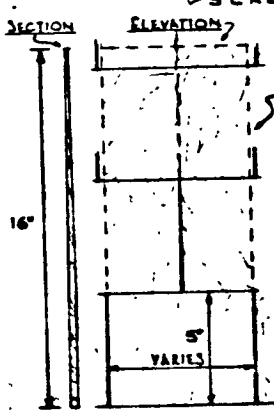
SOUTH (REAR) ELEVATION

SCALE: ⅛" = 1'-0"

EAST (SIDE) ELEVATION

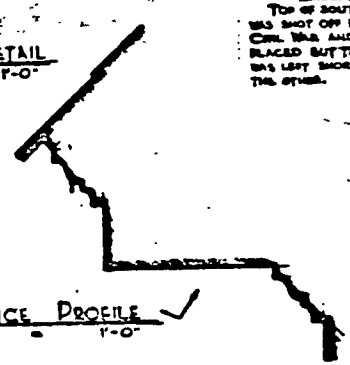
SCALES:





SHINGLE DETAIL

3" = 1'-0"

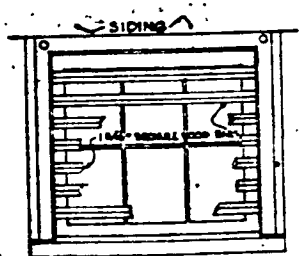


CORNICE PROFILE

3" = 1'-0"

NOTE

TOP OF SOUTH CHIMNEY WAS SHOT OFF DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND LATER REPLACED BUT THIS CHIMNEY WAS LEFT SHORTER THAN THE OTHER.



WINDOW NO. ④ & ⑤

1" = 1'-0"

E. M. KIDD, DEL.

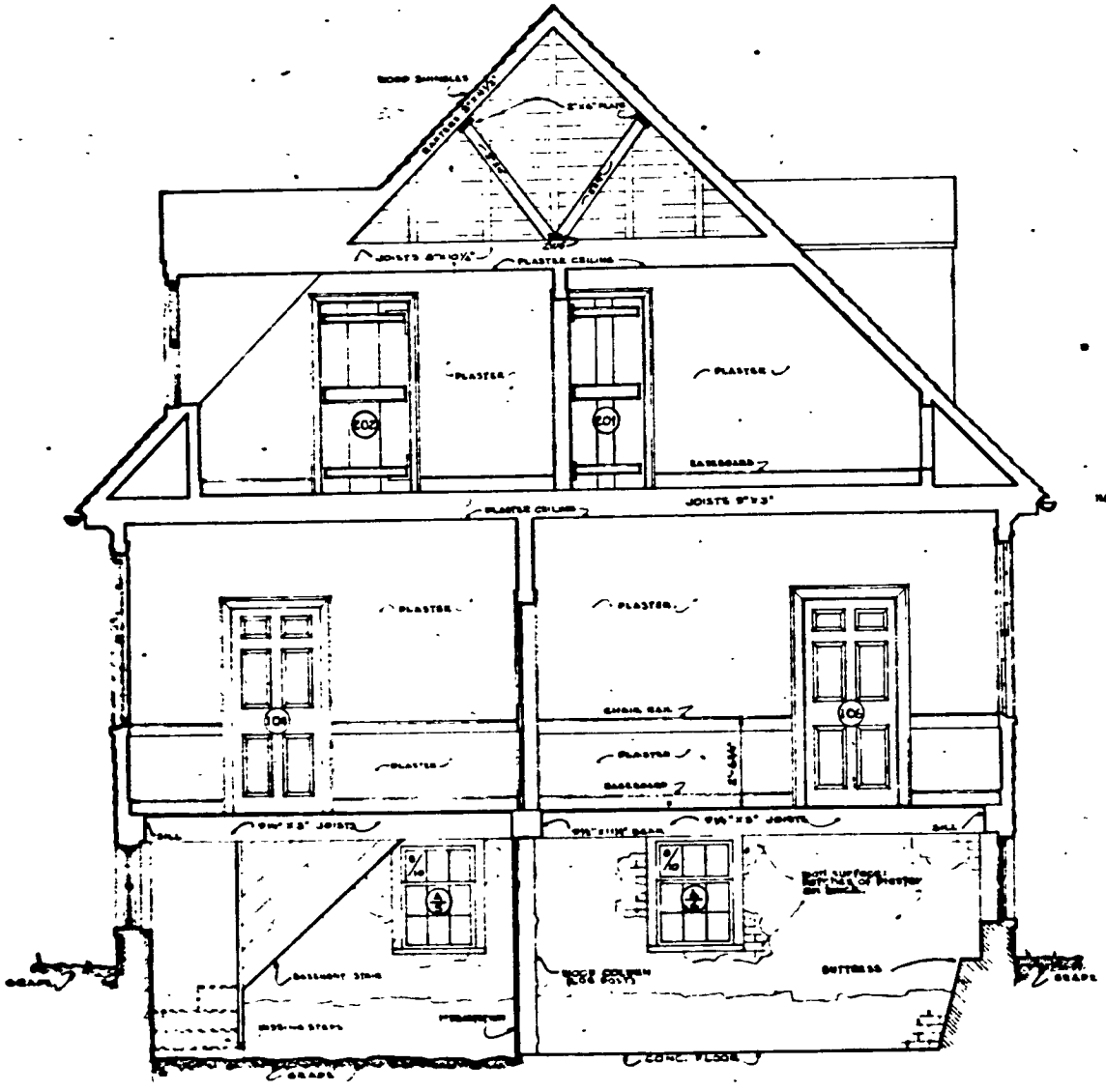
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HEIGHT OF STRUCTURE

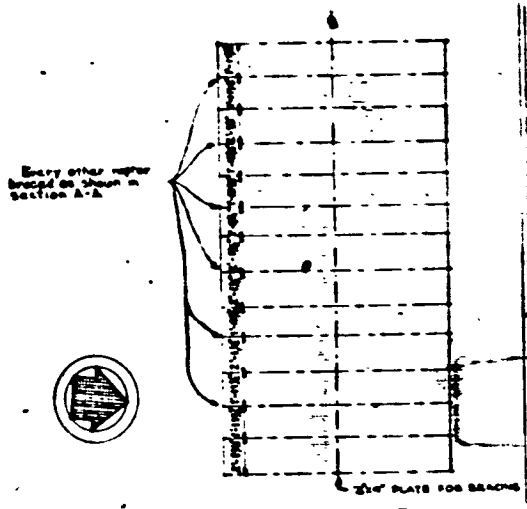
WATT HOUSE

SHEET NO.

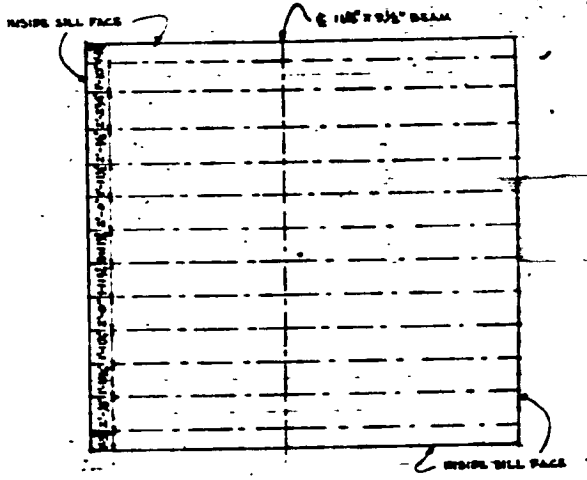
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS INDEX NO.



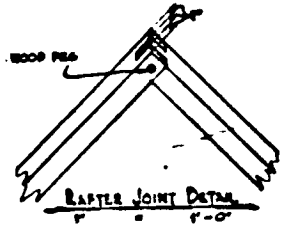
SECTION A-A
3/8" = 1'-0"



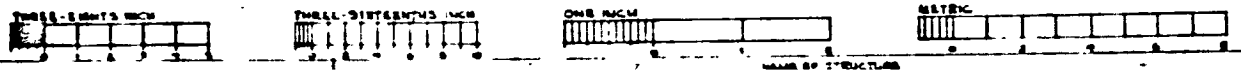
SECOND FLOOR CEILING JOIST PLAN
(MEASUREMENTS TAKEN O.C.)
3/16" = 1'-0"



FIRST FLOOR JOIST PLAN
(MEASUREMENTS TAKEN O.C.)
3/16" = 1'-0"

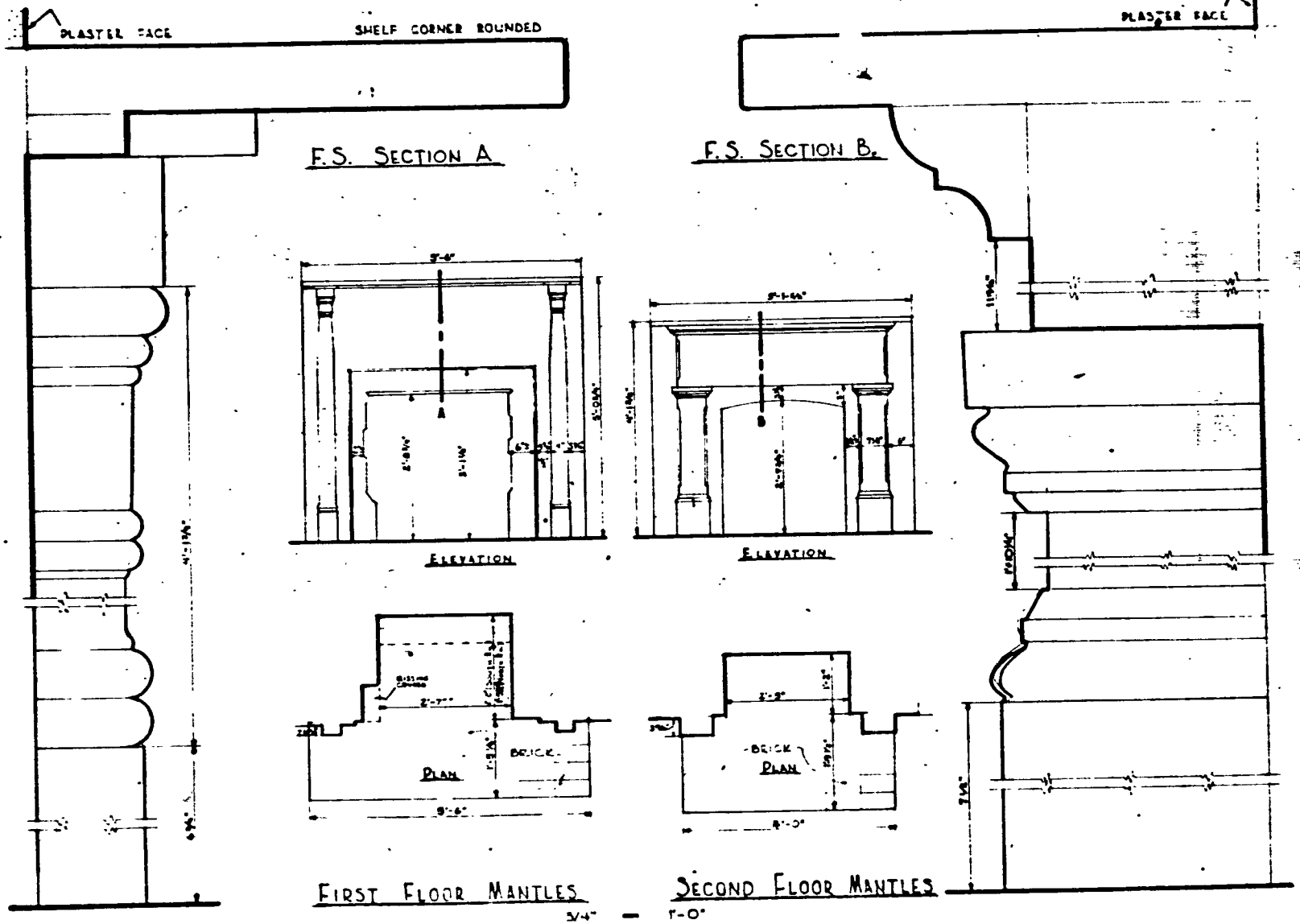


RAFTER JOINT DETAIL
1" = 1'-0"



E.M. KIDD, DEL.

HISTORIC AMERICAN



ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO MANTLE ON THE SECOND FLOOR SOUTH ROOM FIREPLACE IT IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE SAME AS IN THE NORTH ROOM

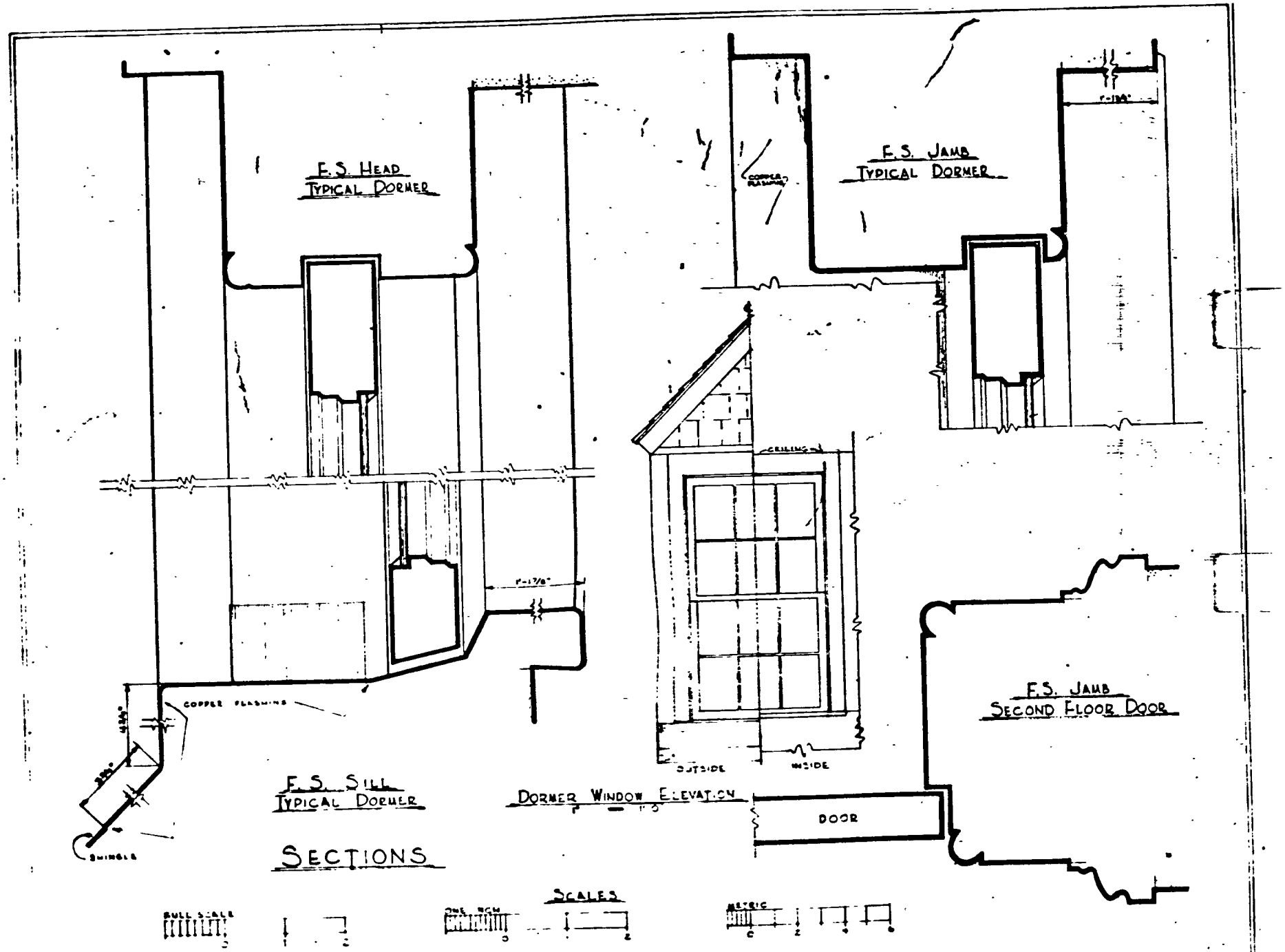
E. M. KIDD, DEL.

NAME OF STRUCTURE
WATT HOUSE
RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK, VIRGINIA

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 7 OF 12 SHEETS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS NO.



E.M. KIDD, DEL.

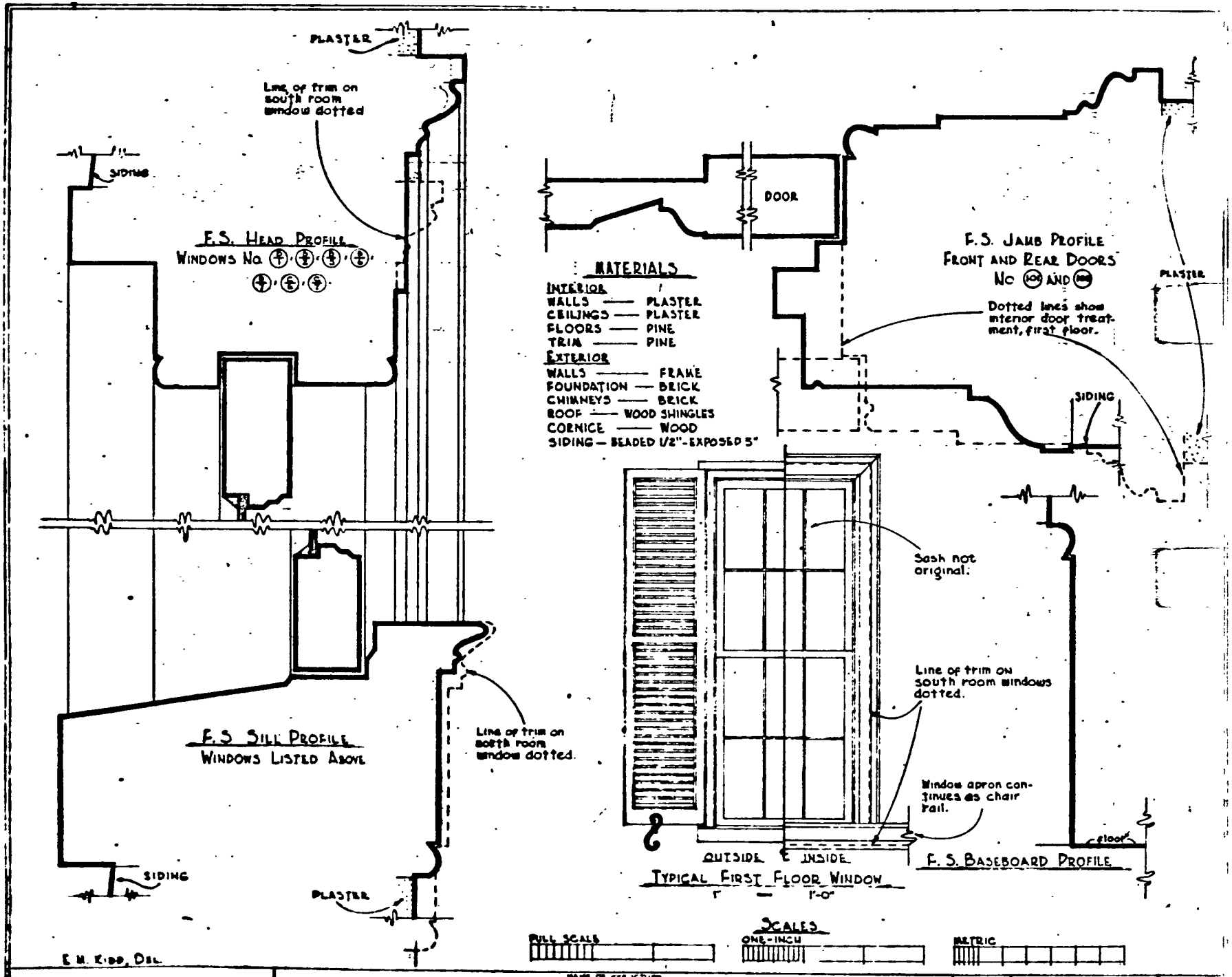
NAME OF STRUCTURE

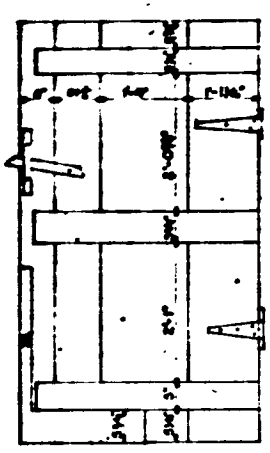
WATT HOUSE

SURVEY NO.

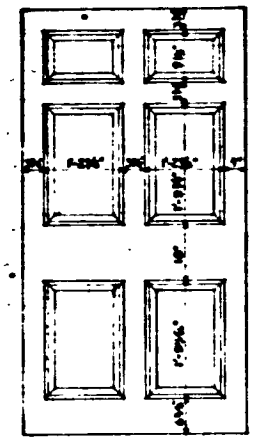
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS NO.


PLASTER
Line of trim on south room window dotted
SIDING
F.S. HEAD PROFILE
WINDOWS No. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨
F.S SILL PROFILE
WINDOWS LISTED ABOVE
Line of trim on south room window dotted.
SIDING
PLASTER
DOOR
F.S. JAMB PROFILE
FRONT AND REAR DOORS
No 10 AND 11
PLASTER
Dotted lines show interior door treatment, first floor.
SIDING
MATERIALS
INTERIOR
WALLS — PLASTER
CEILINGS — PLASTER
FLOORS — PINE
TRIM — PINE
EXTERIOR
WALLS — FRAME
FOUNDATION — BRICK
CHIMNEYS — BRICK
ROOF — WOOD SHINGLES
CORNICE — WOOD
SIDING — BEADED 1/2"-EXPOSED 5"
Sash not original.
Line of trim on south room windows dotted.
Window apron continues as chair rail.
floor
OUTSIDE
INSIDE
TYPICAL FIRST FLOOR WINDOW
F. S. BASEBOARD PROFILE
SCALES
FULL SCALE
ONE-INCH
METRIC
E. M. KIDD, DEL.
NAME OF STRUCTURE
WATT HOUSE
SURVEY NO.
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS &c.



No. 3



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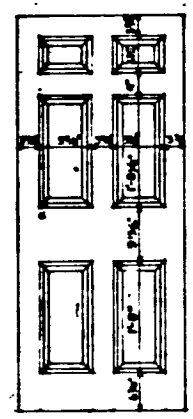
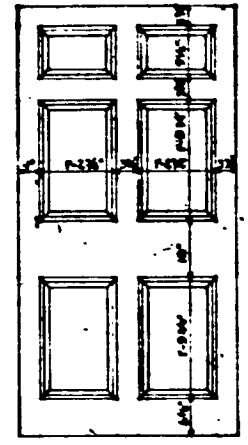
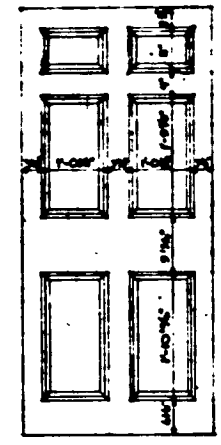


No. 102



No. 103



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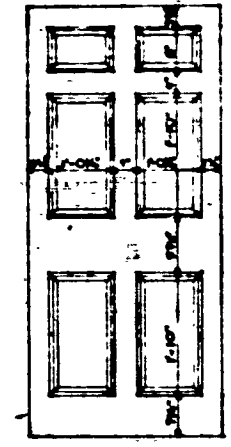
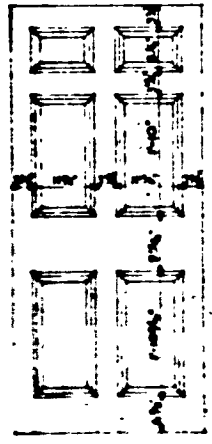


No. 105

DOORS

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"



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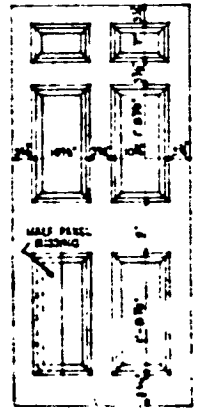
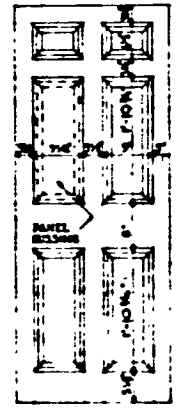
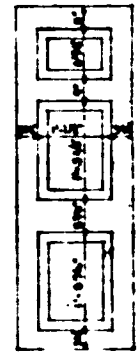


No. 107



No. 108



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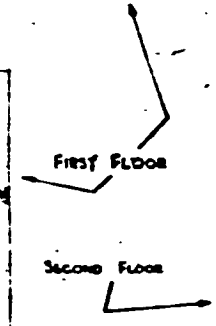
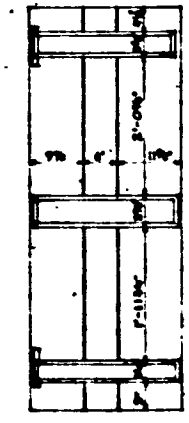
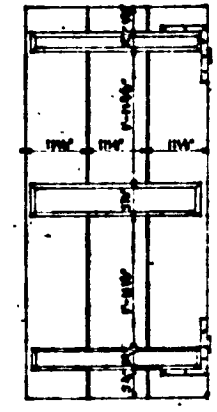




No. 201



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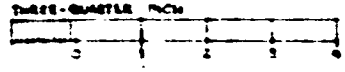
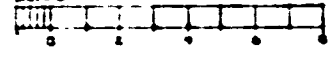
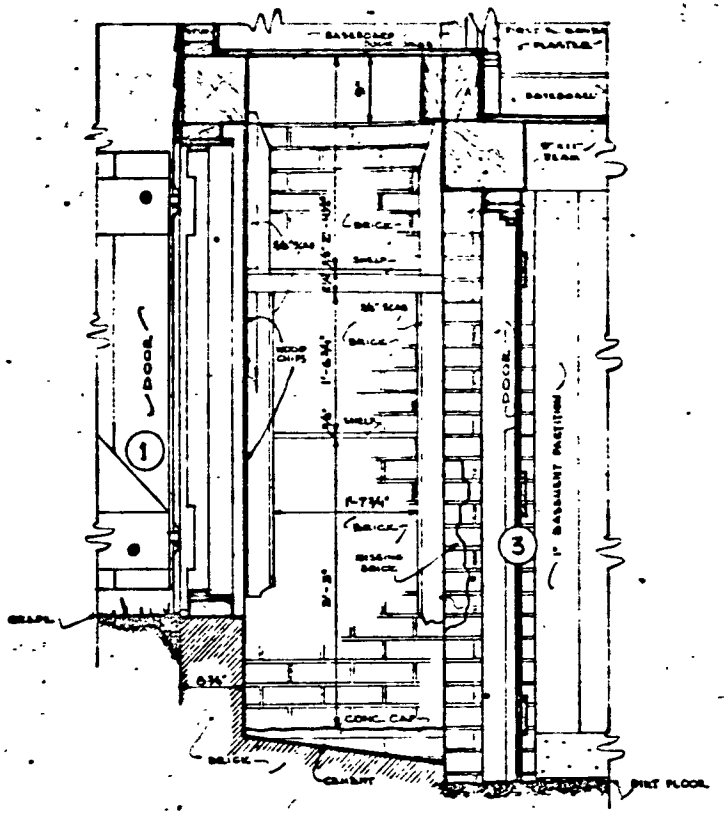




E. M. KIDD, DEL

WATT HOUSE

HISTORIC AMERICAN



SECTION
THROUGH BASEMENT DOORWAYS (1) AND (3)

B.W. 2109, Sh.

NAME OF STRUCTURE
WATT HOUSE
RICHMOND NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK, VIRGINIA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SHEET 11 OF 11 SHEETS