

# Mt. Pleasant Farmhouse

*at the Howard County Conservancy*



*Original painting by Alice Webb - 2011*



Howard  
County  
Conservancy

*connecting people to nature*

10520 Old Frederick Road, PO BOX 175  
Woodstock, MD 21163  
[www.hccconservancy.org](http://www.hccconservancy.org)  
410-465-8877

*The mission of the Howard County Conservancy is to educate children and adults about our natural world, preserve the land and its legacy for future generations and model responsible stewardship of our environment.*

Published August 2015

# Preface

## ***Welcome to the home of the Brown(e) family.***

A dedicated group of volunteers, members of the Howard County Conservancy History Committee, have worked tirelessly to create a pictorial tour of this very unique home. There has been no documentation found regarding the early construction of the house. The committee hopes you find the information about the farmhouse interesting and informative as you view the areas that were enjoyed by the Brown family since the late 1700s. Each addition to the house shows building materials and designs relevant to a particular time period. The house is a journey through time that has culminated with this book showing pictures from log walls to modern conveniences.



## ***Many thanks to the Conservancy History Committee who created this book.***

Jean Bicknell, Joye Carneal, Tabby Fique, Carol Filipczak, Chris Garbart, John Gowans, Jill Leiberg, Louise McLaughlin (Photographer and Book Designer), Woody Merkle, Blaine Milner, Judy Morgan, Fran Reardon, Romayne Smith and Debbie West.

# Timeline of the Farmhouse

It is believed that the farmhouse, as it stands today, was constructed or renovated over at least six time periods. With the exception of the most recent renovations in 2012-13, all of the dates are the committee's best estimates based on available information. (See References)

**Circa 1775** A one-room log cabin was built. There is much debate about this date. We know that Thomas Browne was commissioned by the Governors of Anne Arundel County in 1692 to serve as a Ranger. He was given the land grant for Ranter's Ridge (now Mt. Pleasant) in 1703. He undoubtedly constructed some type of temporary shelter or "settler's hut" on the property. However, notes describing recollections by Ruth Brown indicate that the one-room log cabin, which is now part of the farmhouse, was not built until in the mid 1770s.

The first floor of the log cabin was used as a dining room after the 1865 addition was built. It is now used as the living room for the caretaker.

**Early 1800s** A second floor was added to the log cabin as a bedroom. A rear wing was added to the house to serve as a kitchen.

**Circa 1865** The front of the current house was added, creating a hallway connecting the new front addition to the rear log cabin. This addition included a formal parlor and two upstairs bedrooms. These areas are now used as office and meeting spaces. The rear of the house is now living quarters for the caretaker.

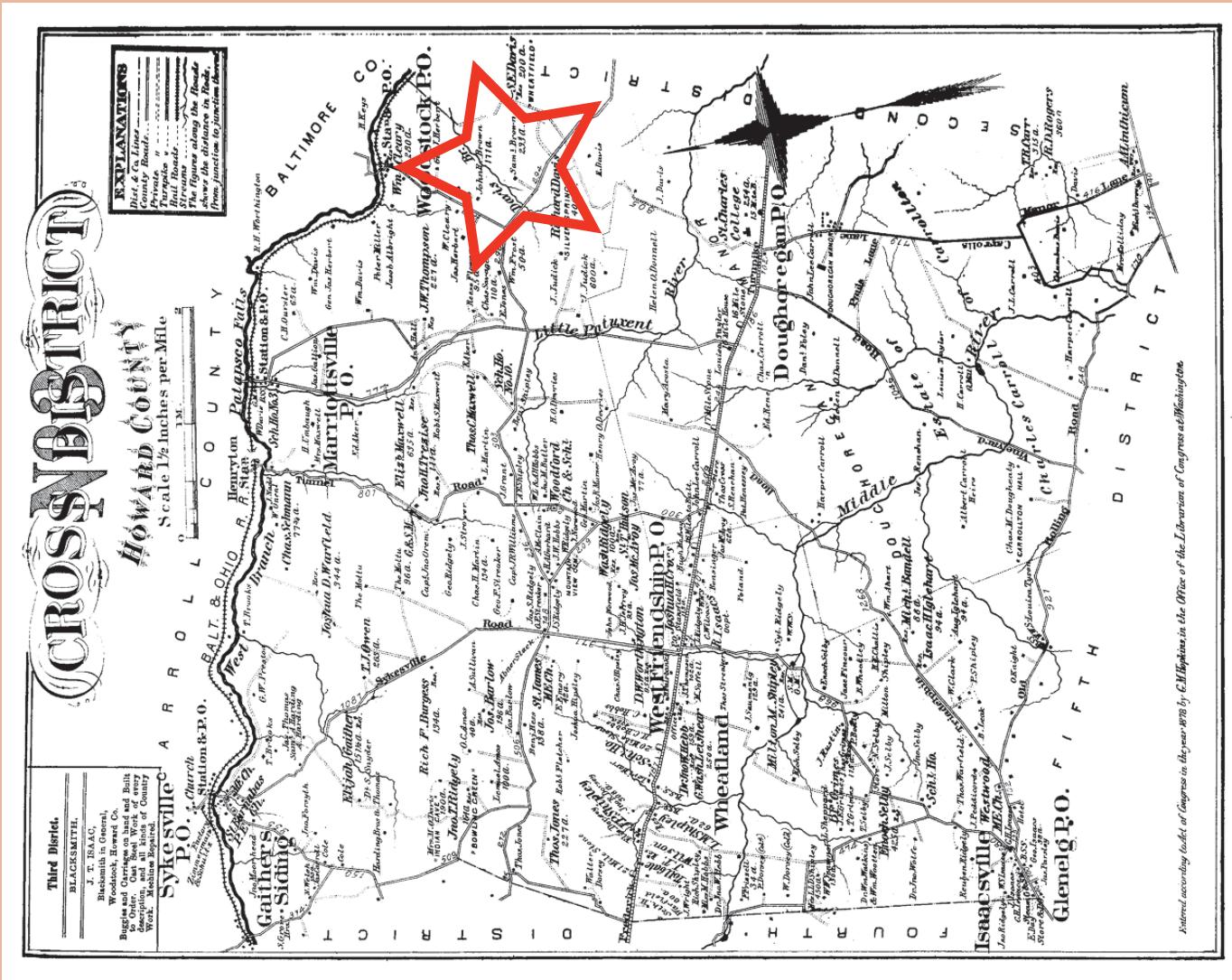
**Early 1900s** A small utility/laundry room with a second-story storage area was added to the west side of the 1865 addition. The first floor of this addition is now used as a kitchenette.

**Circa 1950** The rear wing of the house was removed and rebuilt. This is now the kitchen and north side upstairs bedroom of the house. Running water and indoor plumbing were added.

**2012-13** The kitchenette area and the kitchen and bathrooms of the house were remodeled. A geothermal heating and cooling system was installed, as well as a new electrical panel to handle upgraded electrical service. New storm doors and storm windows were installed. The insulation was upgraded. These improvements created a more energy efficient historic house.

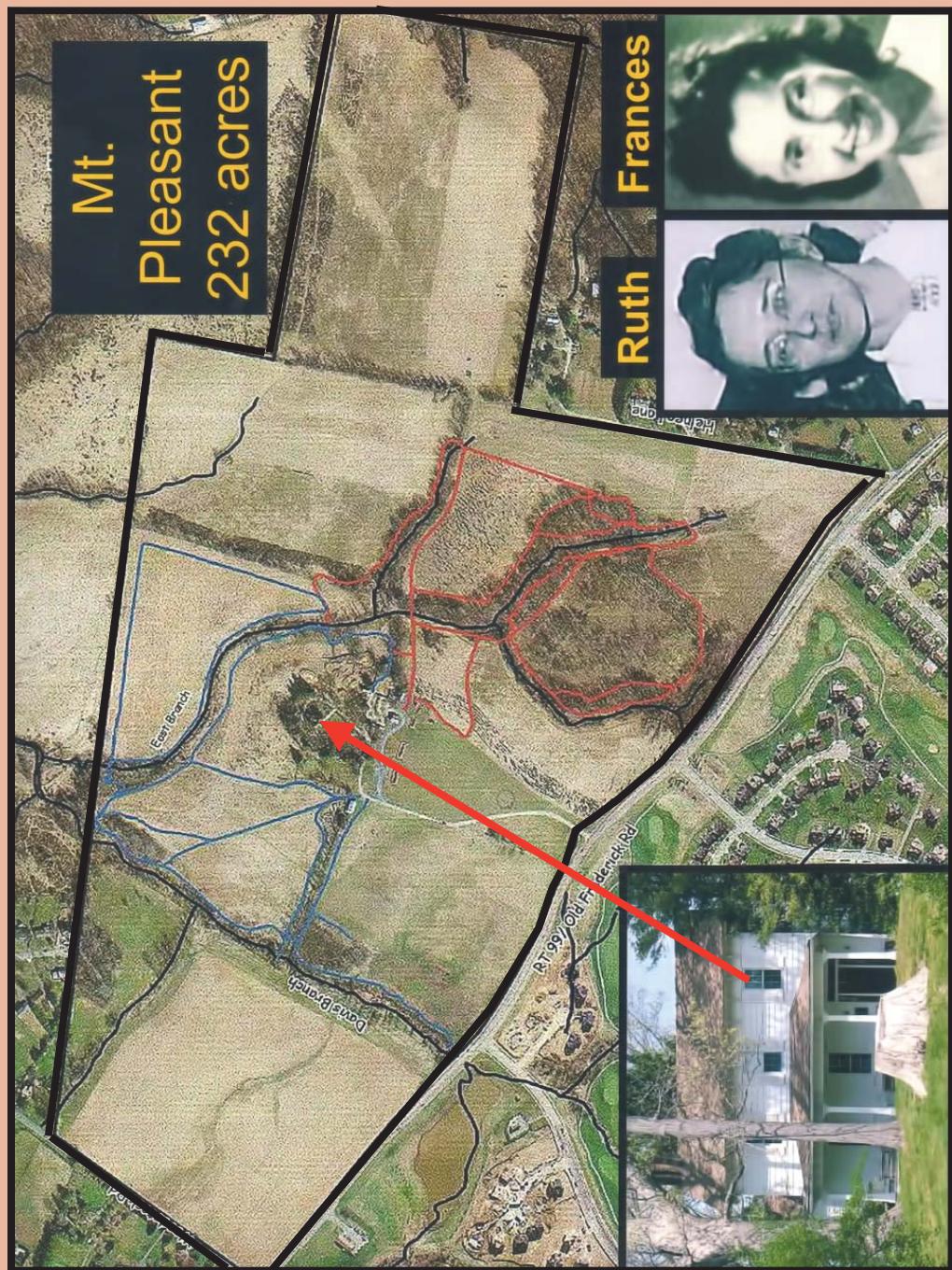
# 1878 Map

The star indicates the location of Ranter's Ridge near the Howard/Baltimore County line. This land was granted to the Brown family in 1703, and held for eight generations, until it became part of the Howard County Conservancy in 1992.



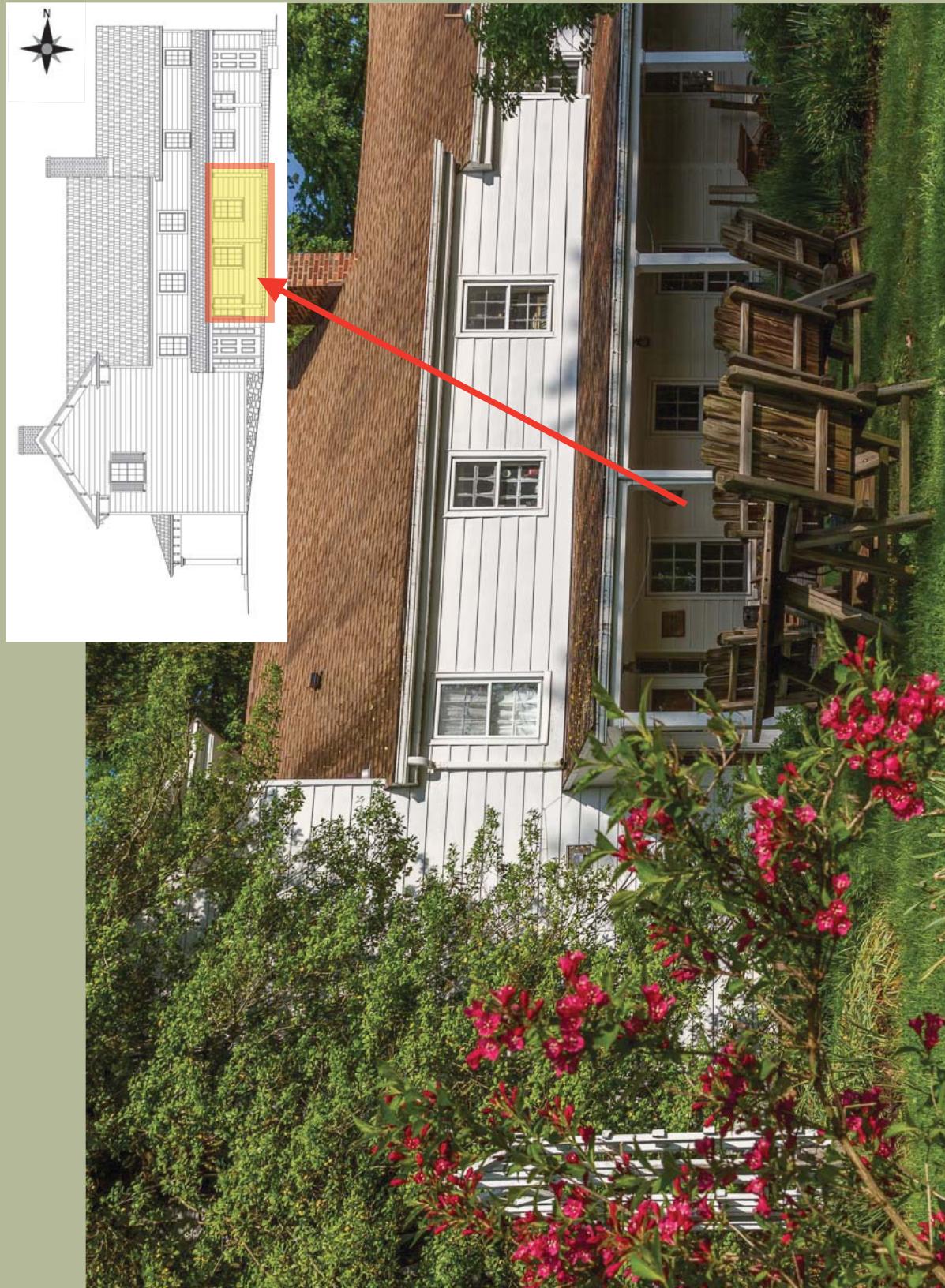
# The Land

In 1692, Thomas Browne was commissioned by the colonial government as a Patuxent Ranger to patrol the Northern area between the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers and to observe the activities of the Native Americans. He received Ranter's Ridge in 1703 as a land grant. This farm, which later became known as Mt. Pleasant, remained in the Brown family until the deaths of Ruth and Frances Brown in the early 1990s.



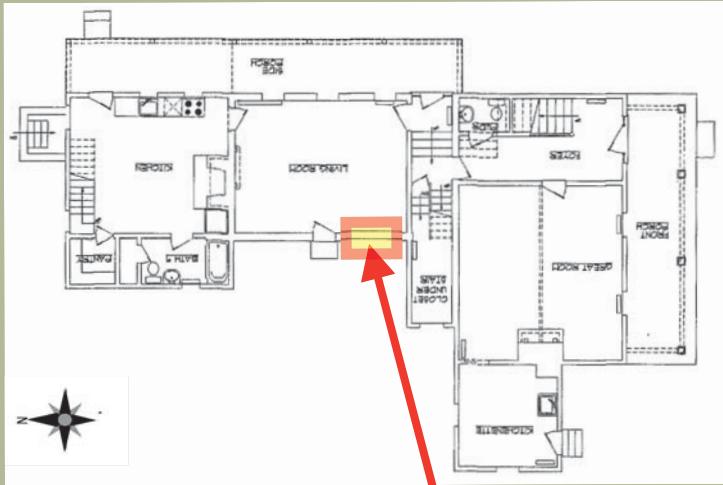
# Log Cabin

Circa  
1775



# Evidence of the Log Cabin

Circa  
1775

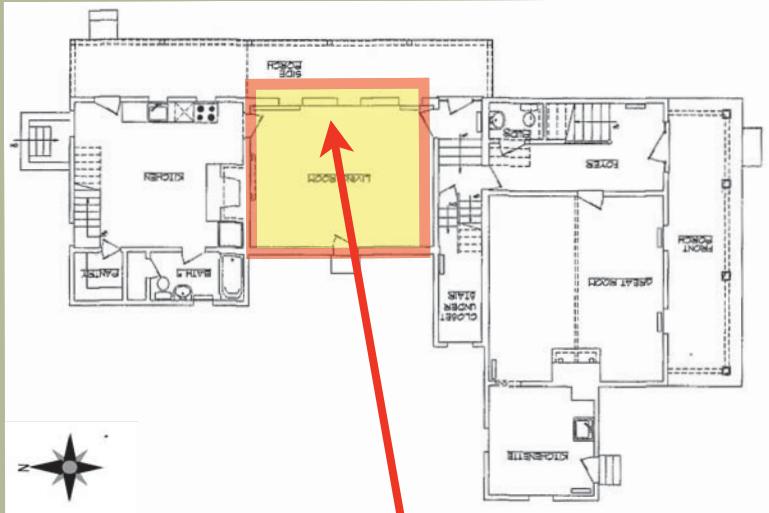


West wall exterior view, lower level mid-section

Hand-hewn logs

# Log Cabin

Circa  
1775

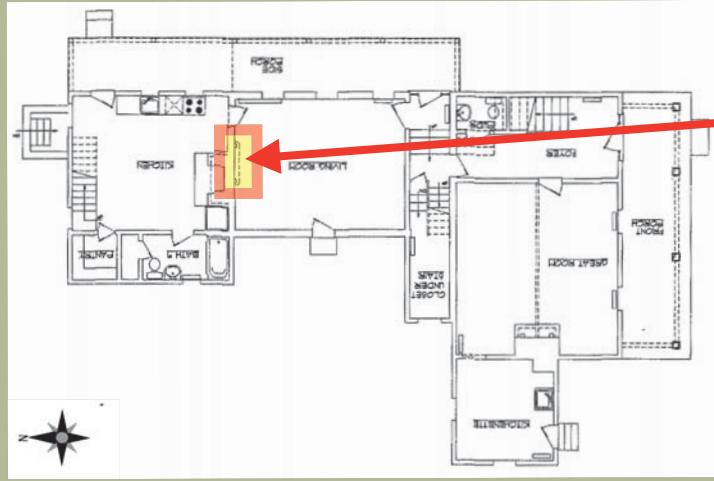


East wall windows, lower level mid-section, currently  
the living room



# Evidence of a Fireplace in the Log Cabin

Circa  
1775



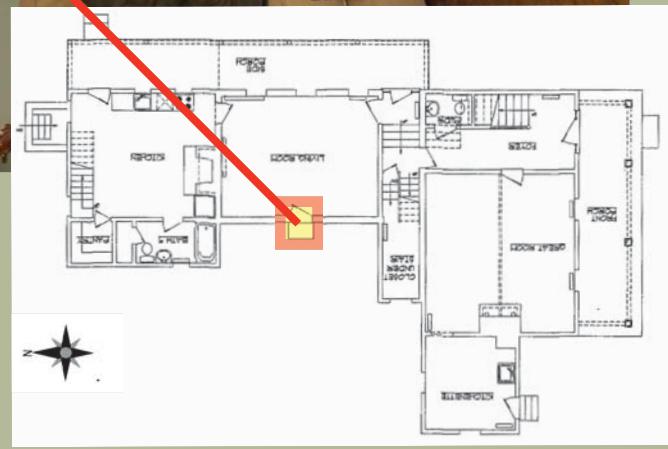
Pieced-in boards indicating the existence of an early  
hearth in the log cabin

# Log Cabin

Circa  
1775



Door in west wall, lower level mid-section

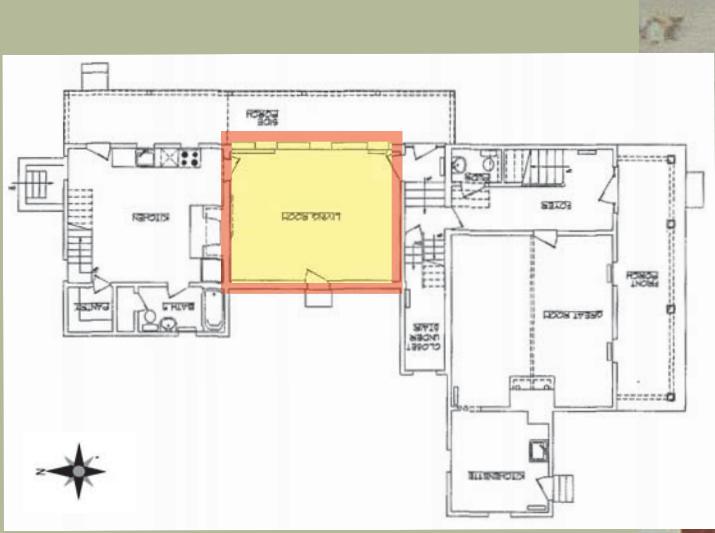


# Log Cabin once used as a Dining Room

Circa  
1775



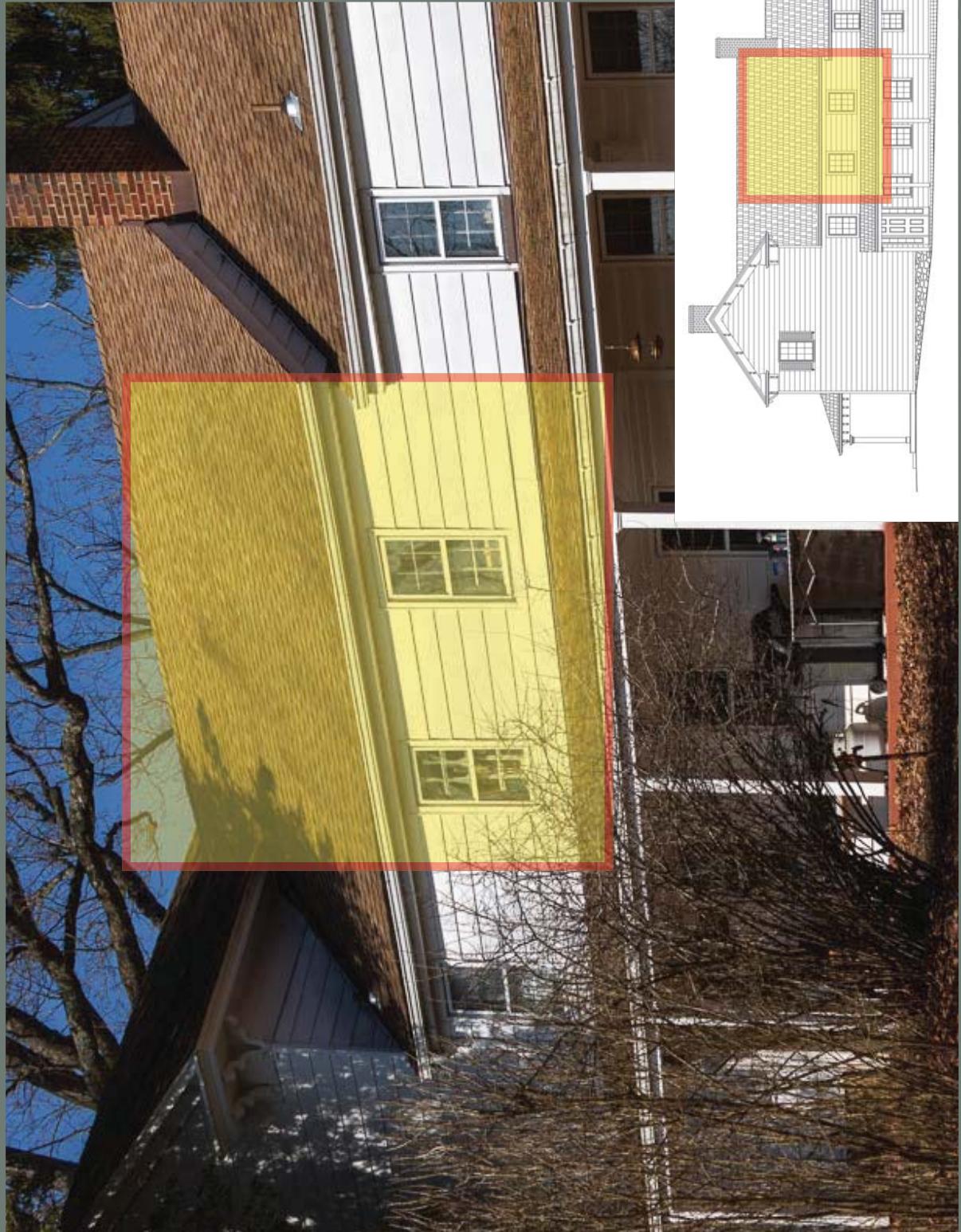
East wall, lower mid-section



Dinner in 1959

# Second Floor

Early  
1800s



# Building Techniques

Early  
1800s

A portion of the plaster was removed revealing logs in the second floor bedroom wall.



A piece of horsehair plaster from the farmhouse. Look closely to see the horsehair.

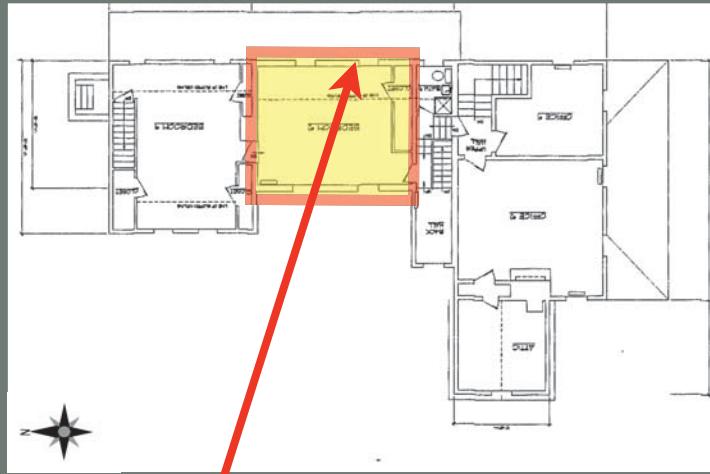


Chinking was used between the logs.

# Second Floor Bedroom

Early  
1800s

Window wall facing east

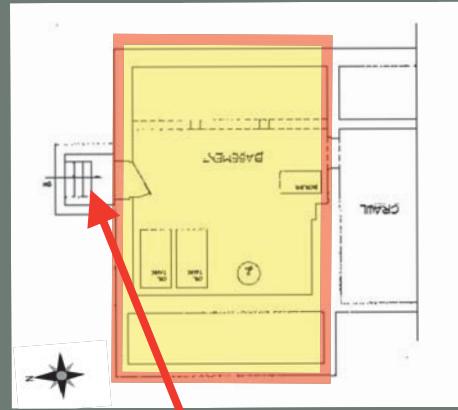


Mid-19th century round heat grate  
located in bedroom floor

Wide boards and square nails in  
the flooring

# Basement/Cellar

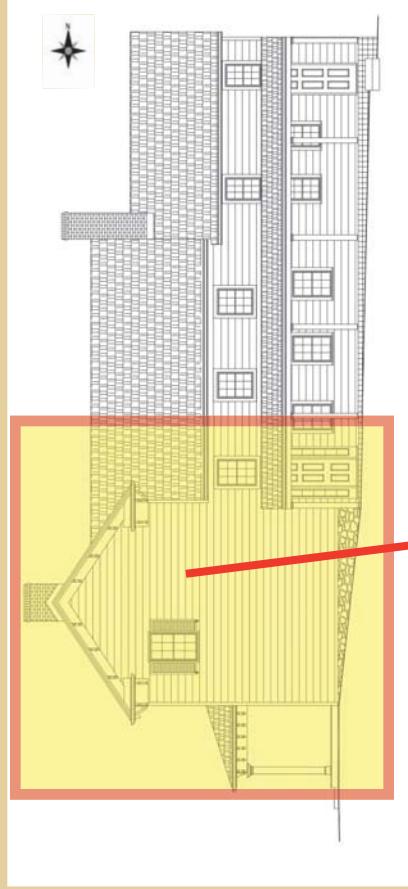
Early  
1800s



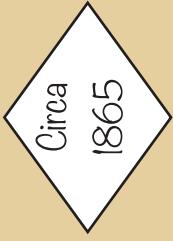
The cellar area, located at the back of the house (north side) under the kitchen, has a dirt floor in the northeast corner and a concrete floor in the remainder of the space. Today it houses the furnace and water heater. These areas are accessed by an exterior entrance.

# Civil War Era

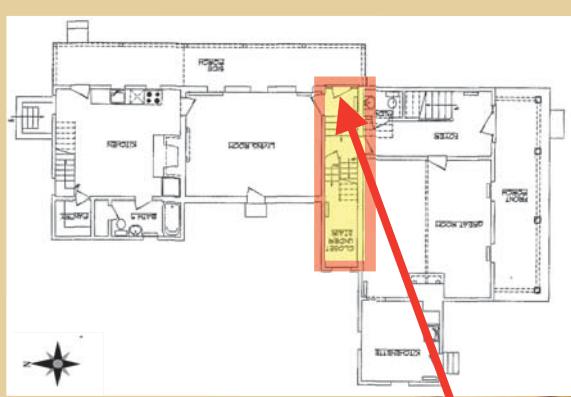
Circa  
1865



# Connector Hallway - East Side Entrance Level



Exterior door on the east side of the farmhouse



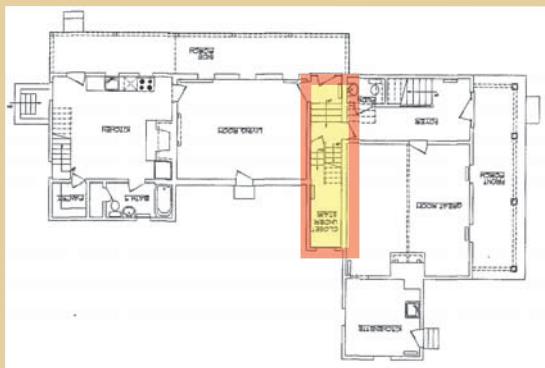
View from the lower level log cabin area into the connector hallway

Doorway on the left leads into the lower level log cabin

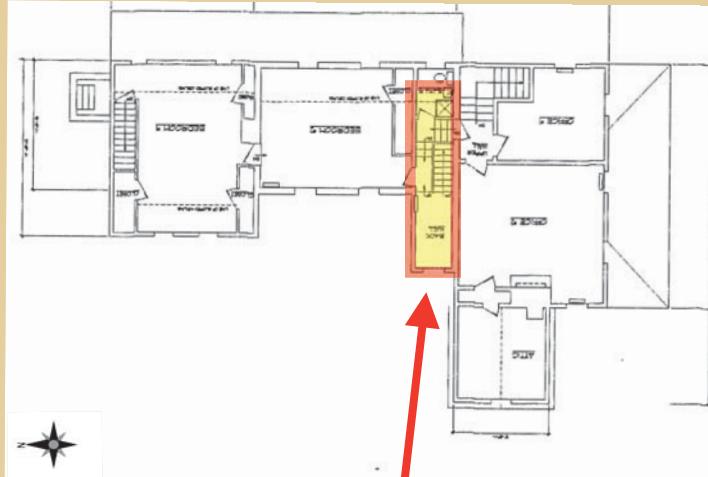
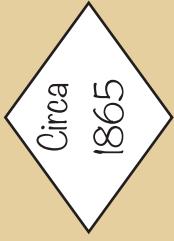
# Connector Hallway -Lower Level



Lower level facing west



# Connector Hallway - Mid Level

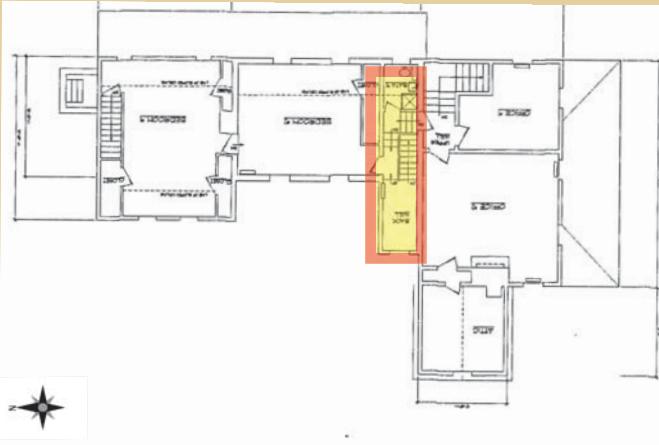


Landing with window facing the west side of the property

# Connector Hallway - Upper Level



Upper level facing east



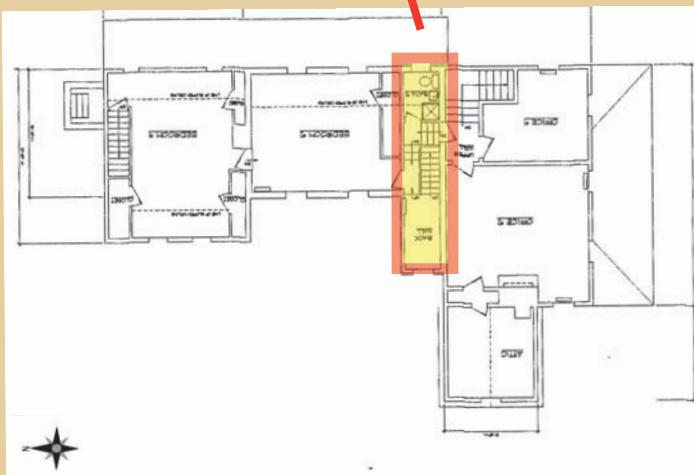
# Connector Hallway - Top level



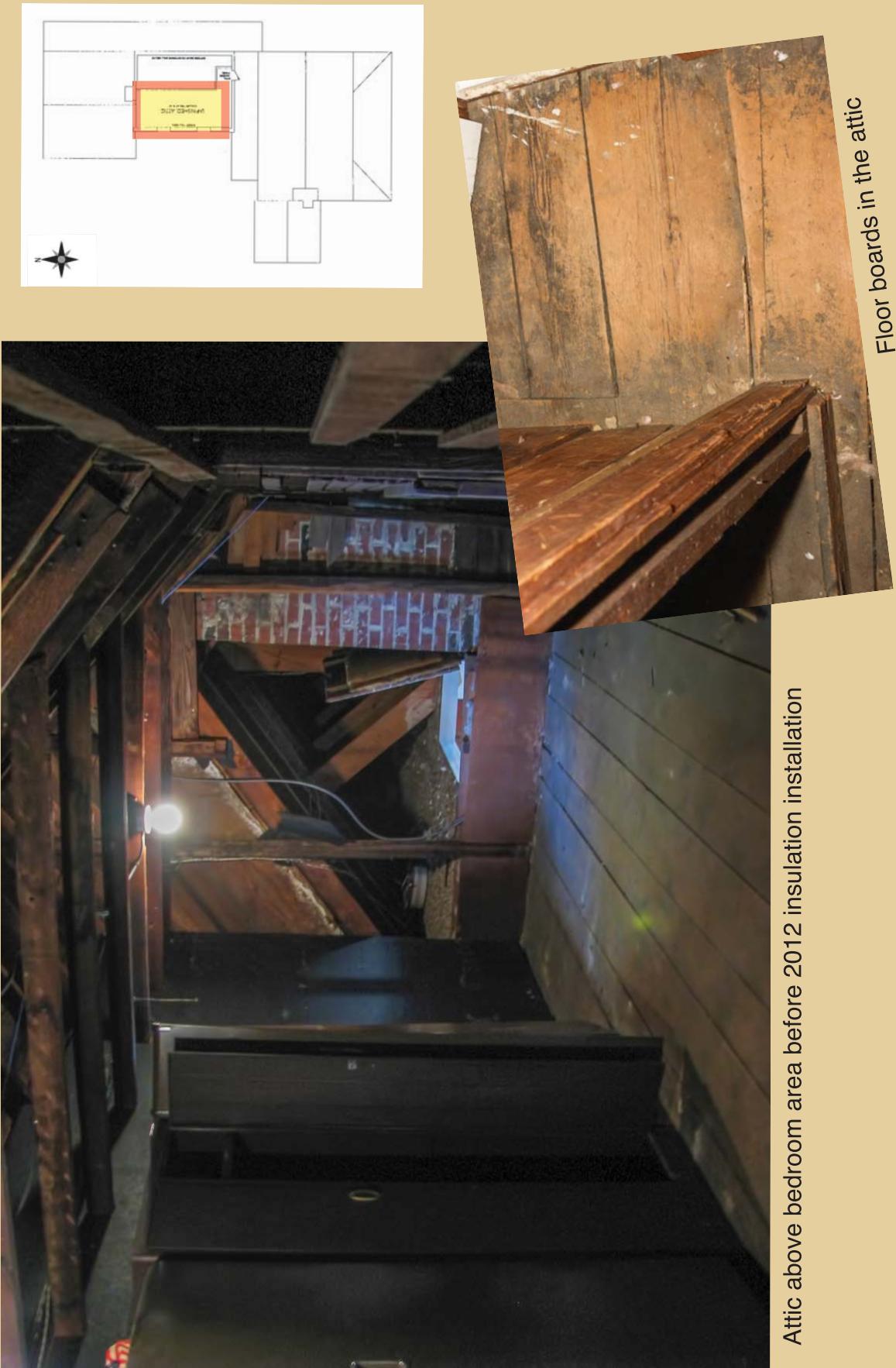
The small doorway is the only access to the attic space located above the log cabin area. It opens into the bathroom located in the connector hallway.



Attic access door



# Attic over Log Cabin Area



Attic above bedroom area before 2012 insulation installation

Floor boards in the attic

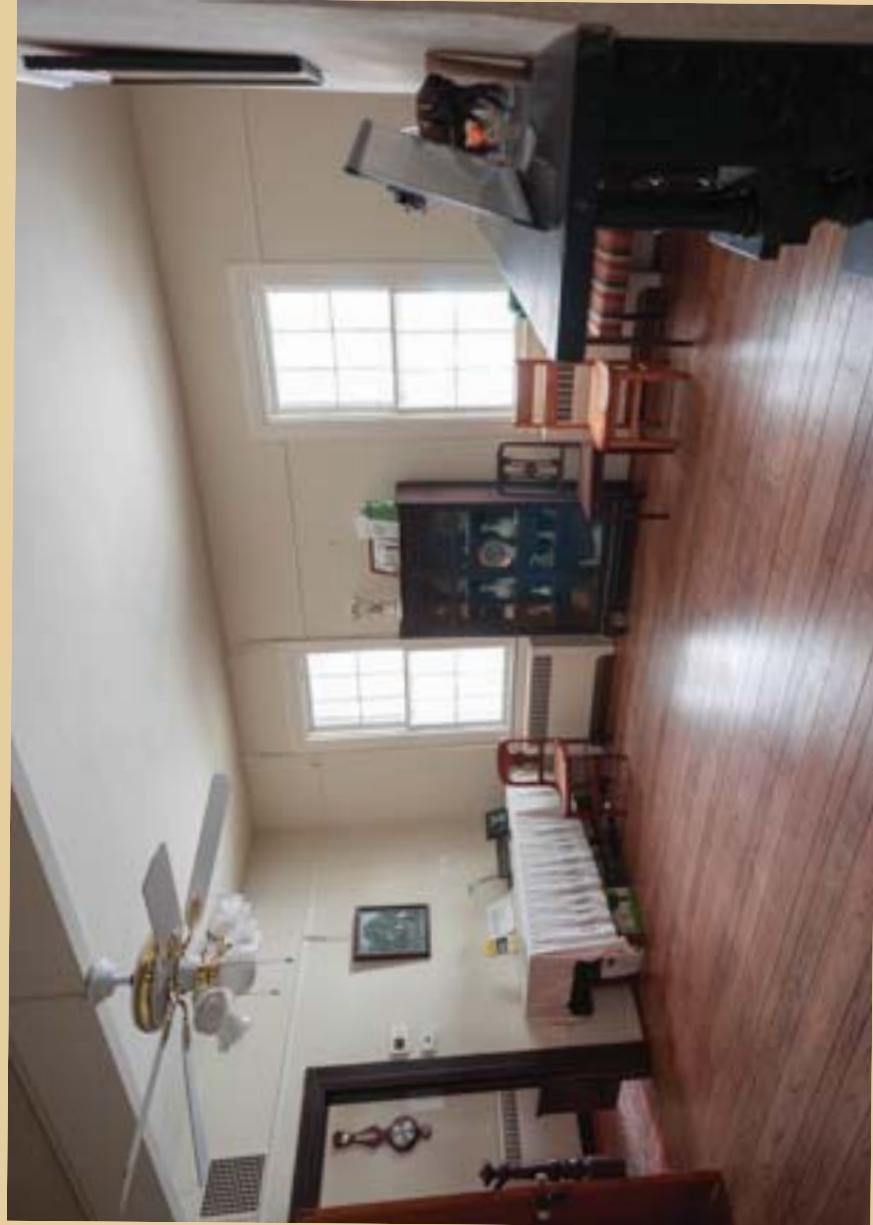
# Front Foyer of the House



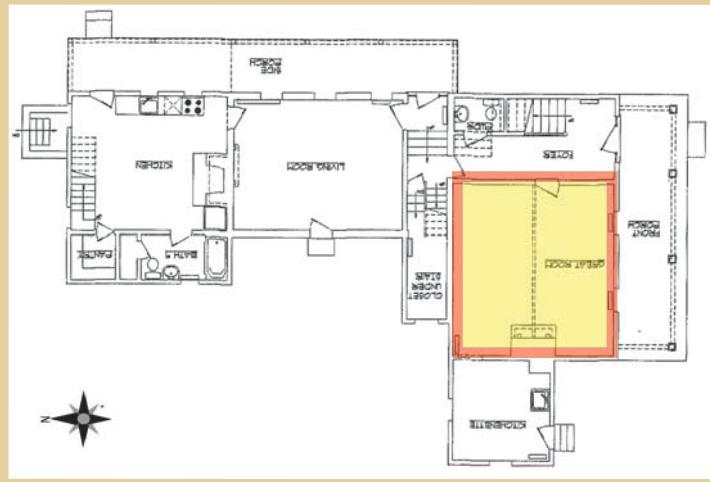
Circa  
1865

# Parlor

Circa  
1865



First floor front of the house, now used for exhibit and meeting space



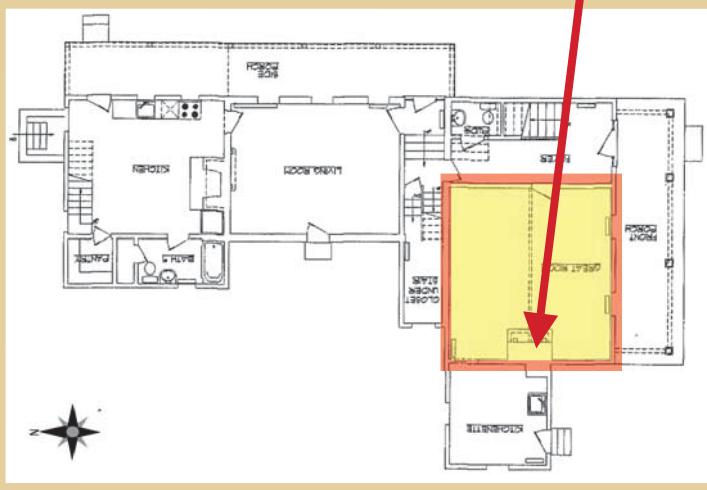
# Fireplace in Parlor

Circa  
1865



The mantel and surround are made of slate. The slate was painted to resemble marble.

This was a popular technique in the 1800s.

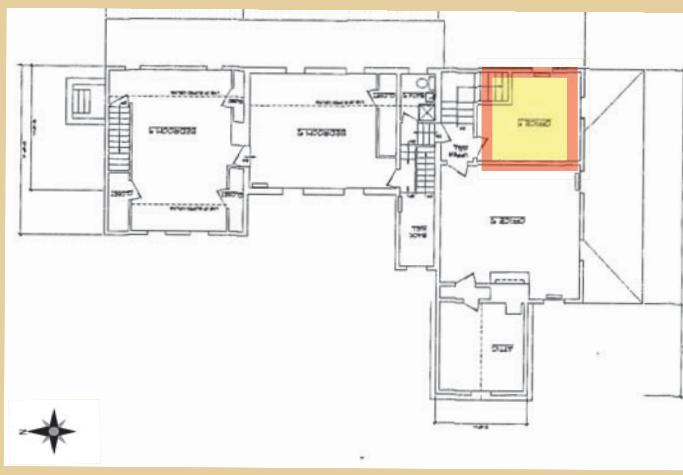


# Brown Family Bedroom

Circa  
1865

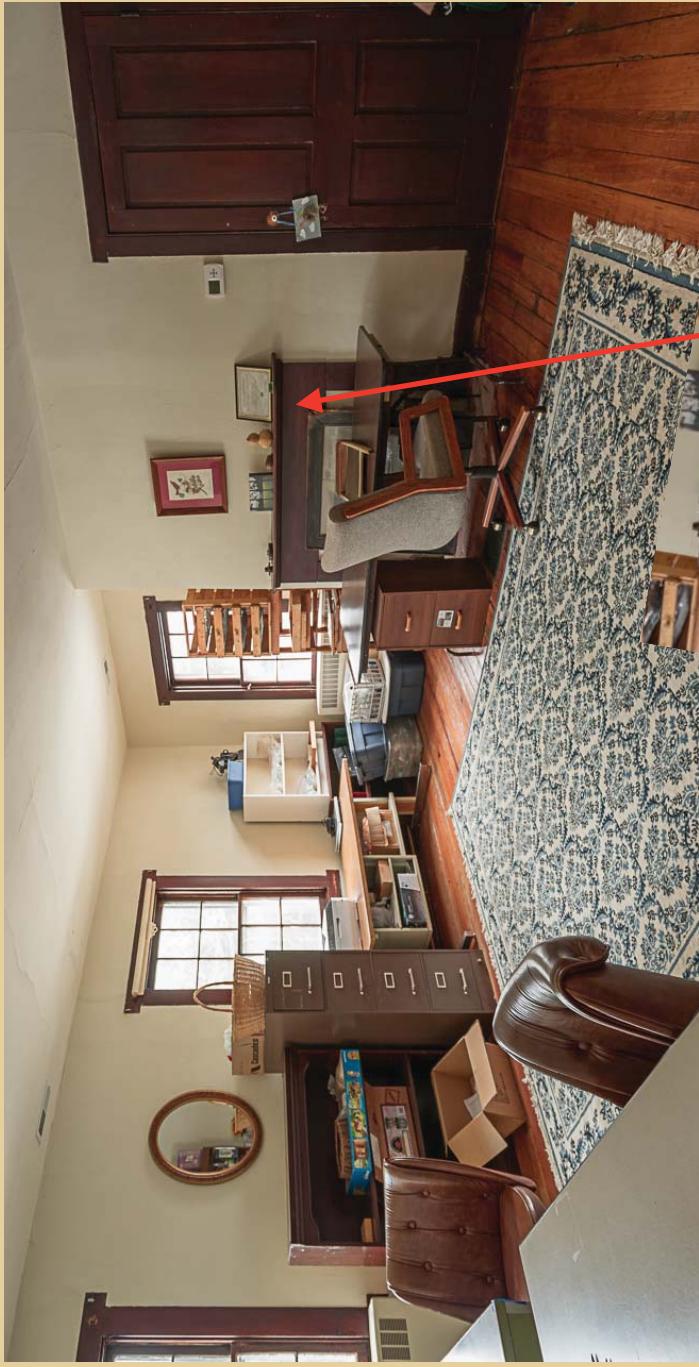
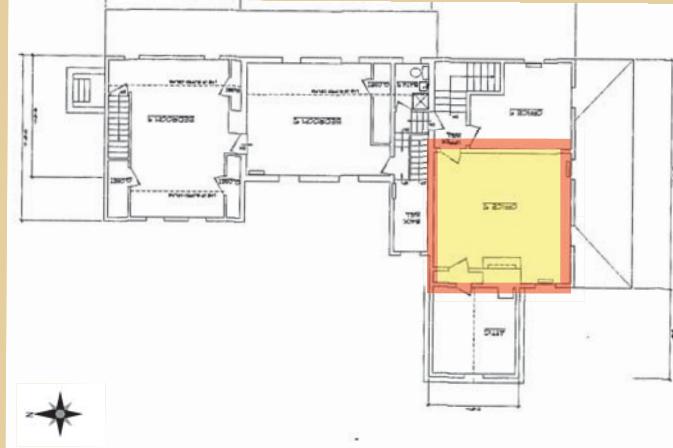


Upstairs, southeast corner, now used as a Conservancy office



# Brown Family Bedroom

Circa  
1865



Upstairs, southwest corner, now used  
as a Conservancy office



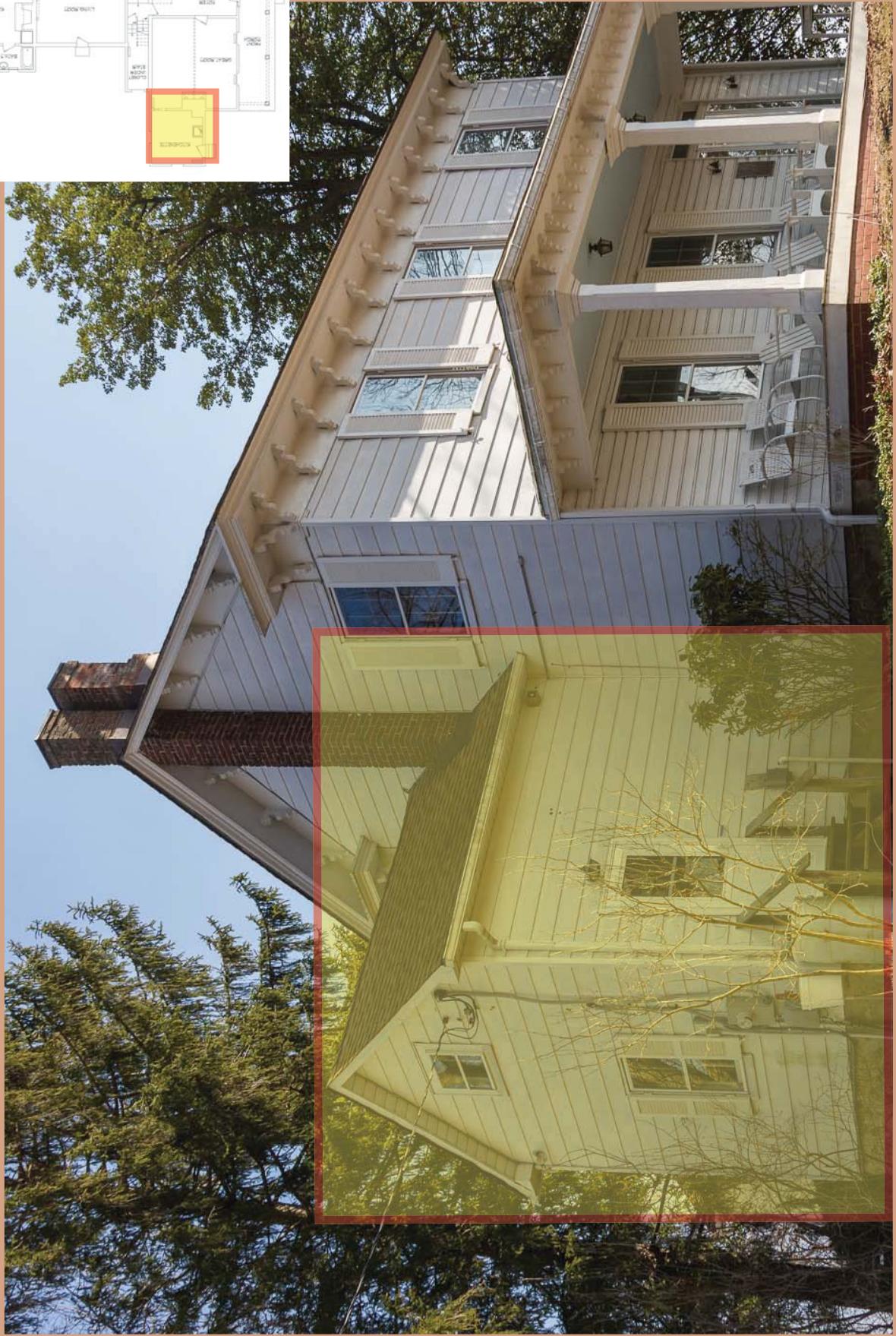
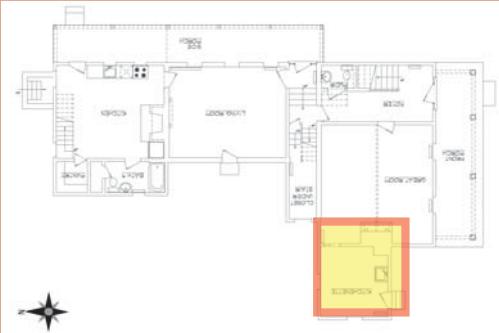
Fireplace in upstairs bedroom



Heat rose from lower floors to give  
warmth to the 2<sup>nd</sup> level

# Addition

Early  
1900s

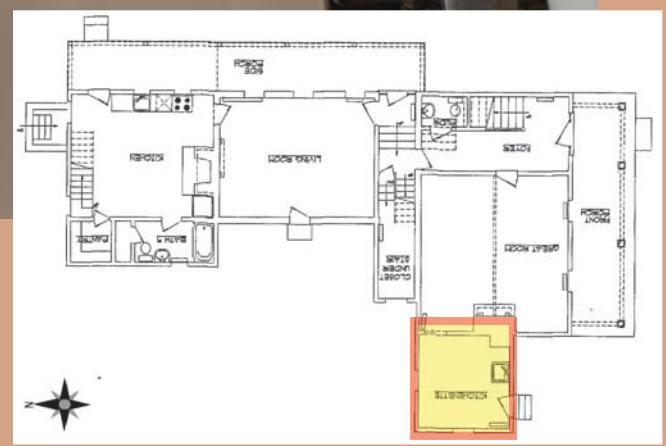


# Kitchenette

Early  
1900s

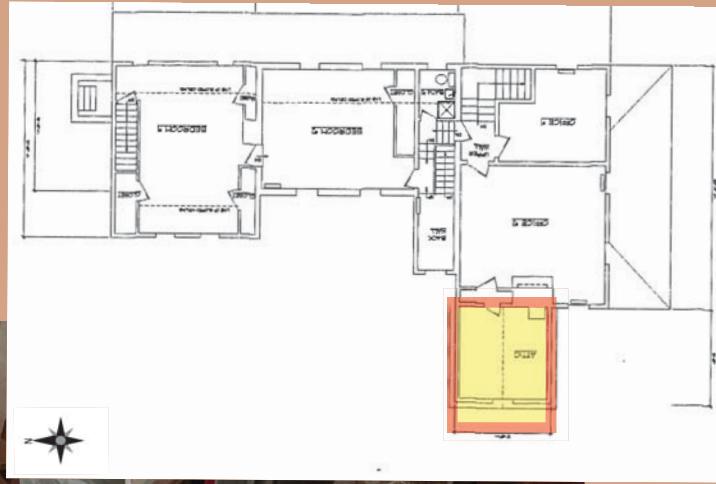


Originally used as a utility/laundry room



# Storage Room above Kitchenette

Early  
1900s



# Improvements

Circa  
1950



# Remodeled Kitchen Today

Circa  
1950

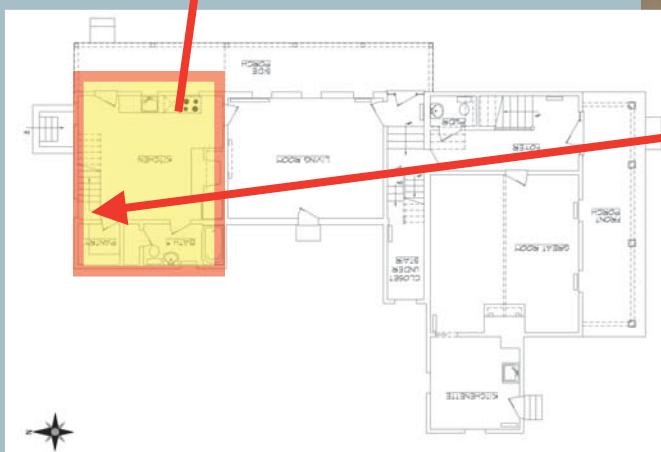


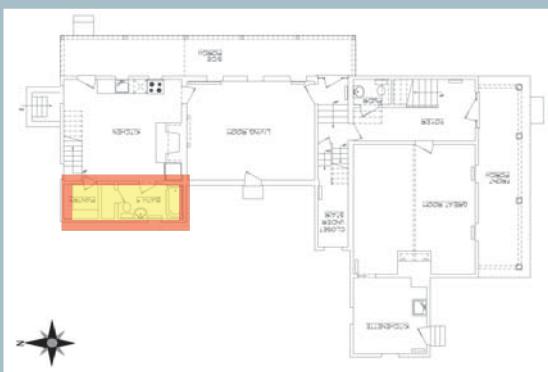
Photo of kitchen after the 2012 remodel



Stairs to second-floor bedroom over kitchen

# Bathroom off Kitchen Today

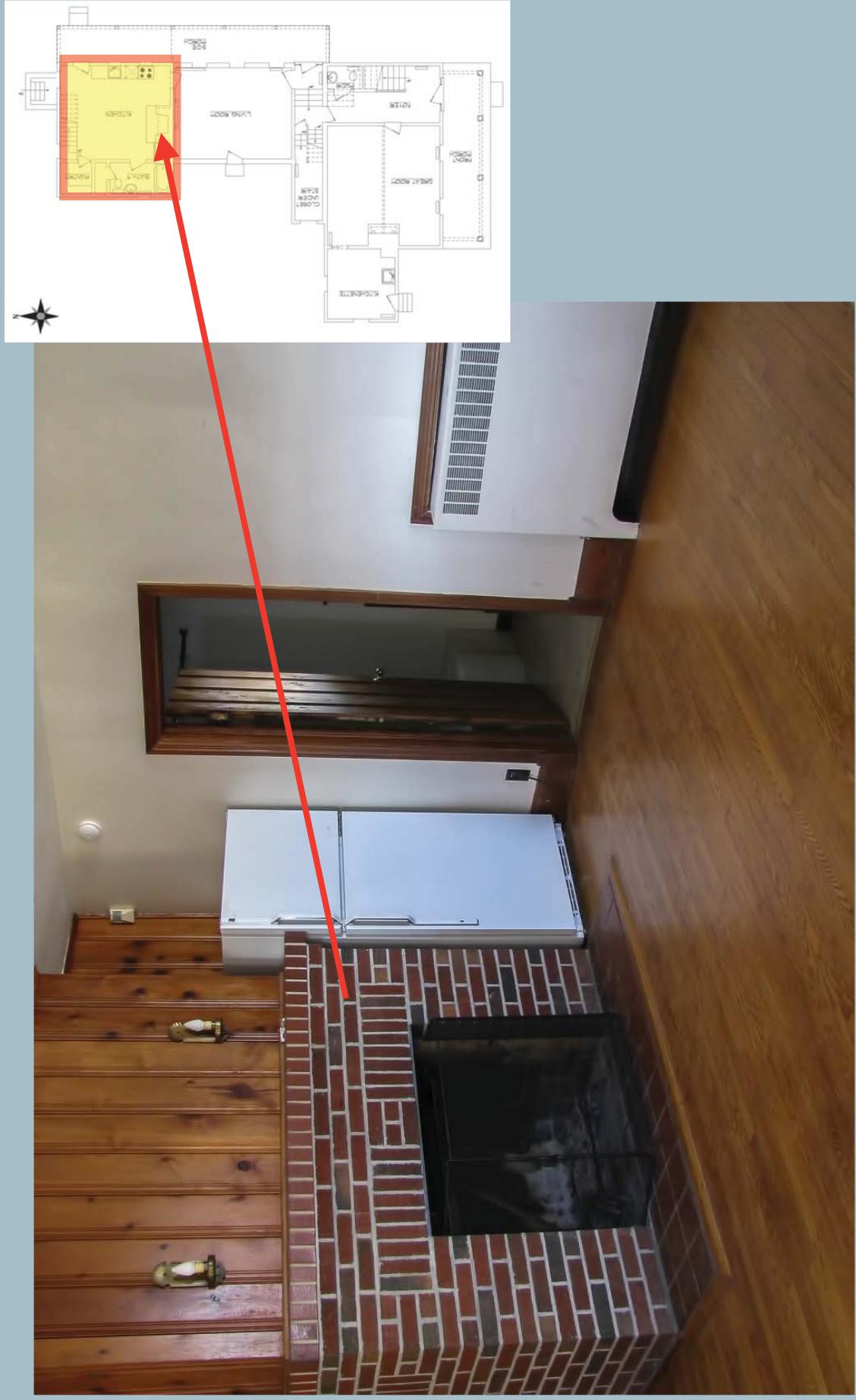
Circa  
1950



Running water and indoor plumbing installed in the 1950s,

# Brick Fireplace in the Kitchen

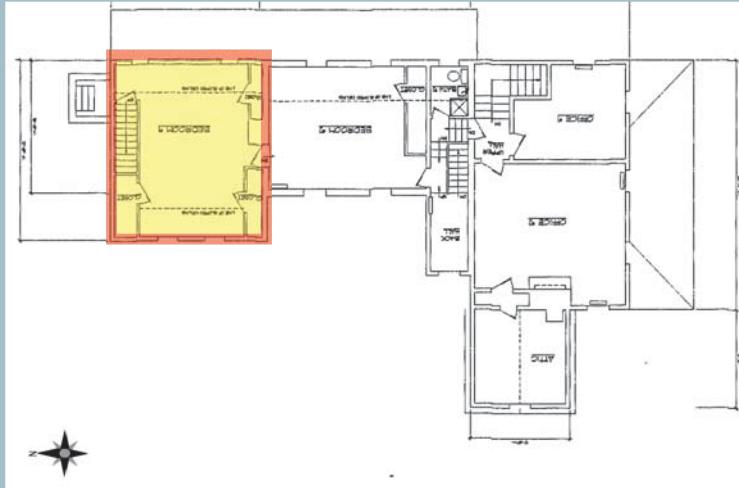
Circa  
1950



This fireplace backs up to the living room fireplace, and is believed to have been remodeled in the 1950's, replacing the previous structure.

# Bedroom over Kitchen

Circa  
1950



Second-floor bedroom over the kitchen

# Our Brown(e) Family

“Ranger” Thomas Browne md. Katherine Harris  
(1668-1715) (Unknown)

Joshua Brown md. Margaret Chew  
(1698-1774) (b. 1698-Unknown)

Benjamin Brown md. Susannah Randall  
(1724-1768)

Samuel Brown md. Achsah Rigg  
(1747-1833) (1745-1817)

John Riggs Brown md. Sarah Griffith Gassaway  
(1775-1814) (1776-1858)

Samuel Brown md. Elizabeth J. Jenkins  
(1810-1880) (1812-1892)

Frank DeSales Brown md. Sarah Louise Davis  
(1854-1911) (1869-1962)

Samuel Brown (1902-1974)  
Ruth Brown (1903-1990)  
Frances Brown (1906-1992)



# Last Generations



Sam Brown



Ruth Brown



Frances Brown



Frank and Sarah Louise Davis Brown

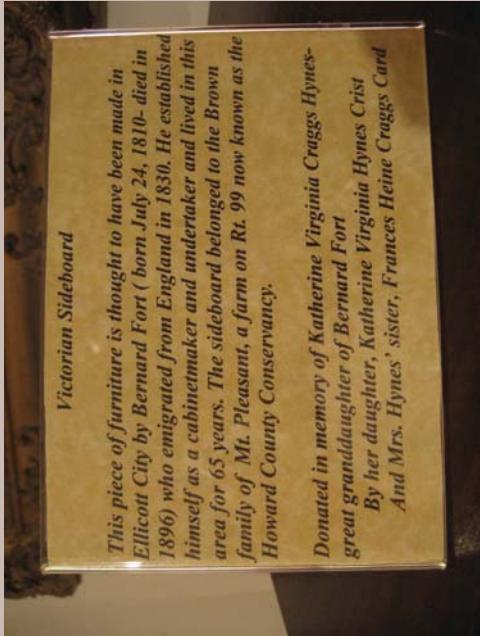
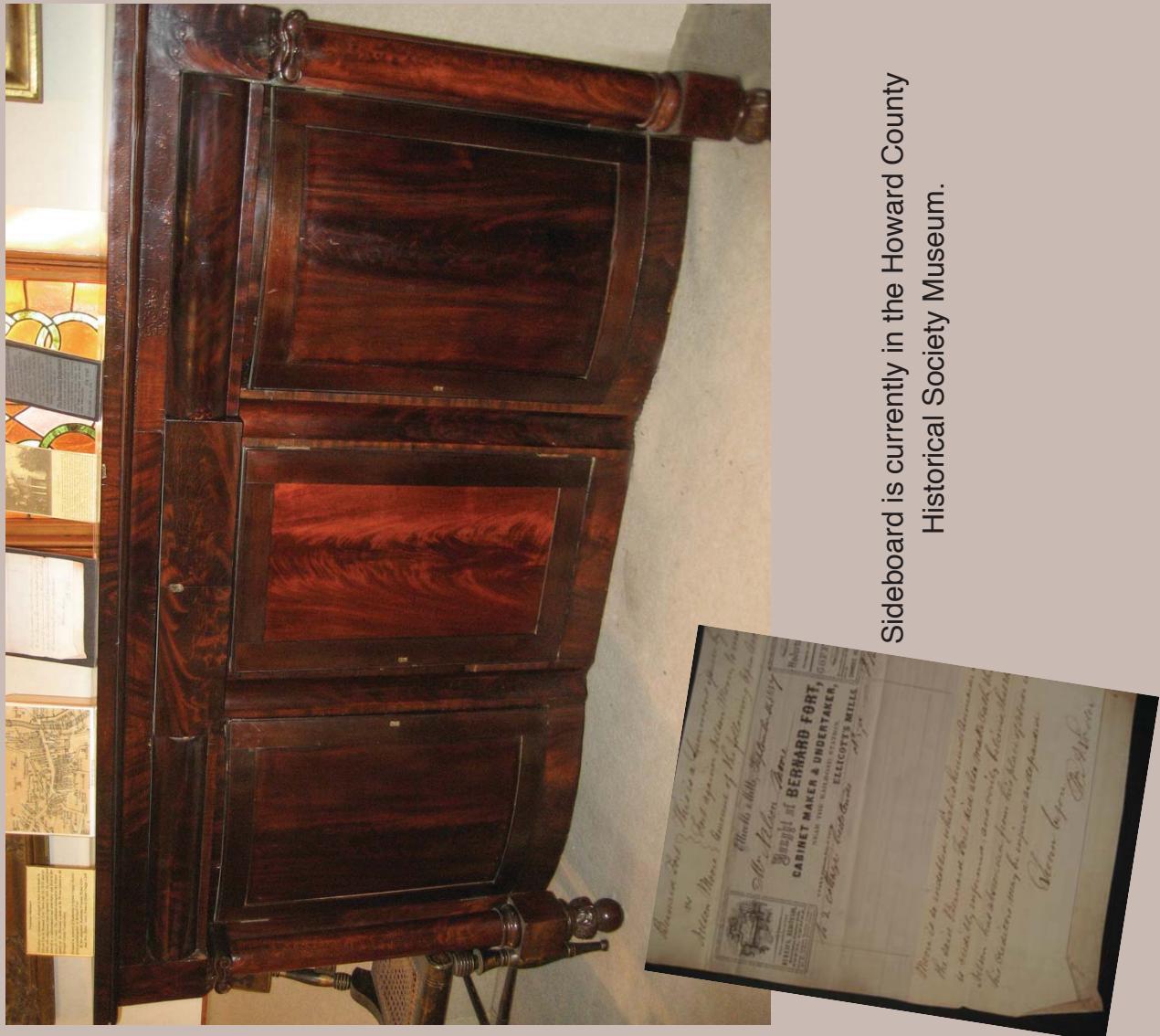
# Dinner in the Log Cabin



Dinner at the Brown home before an Ellicott City Elementary School PTA meeting fall 1959.  
Guinea hen raised by the family was served for dinner.

Seated left to right: Sam Brown, Ada Smallwood (3rd grade teacher, obscured by Sam), Ruth Brown (6th grade teacher), Dorothy Noll (4th grade teacher), Sarah Louise Brown (mother of Ruth, Frances and Sam), Elizabeth Van Huss (5th grade teacher), and Mary Jane Thorney (vocal music teacher) This photo was taken by Frances Brown.

# The Brown Family Furniture

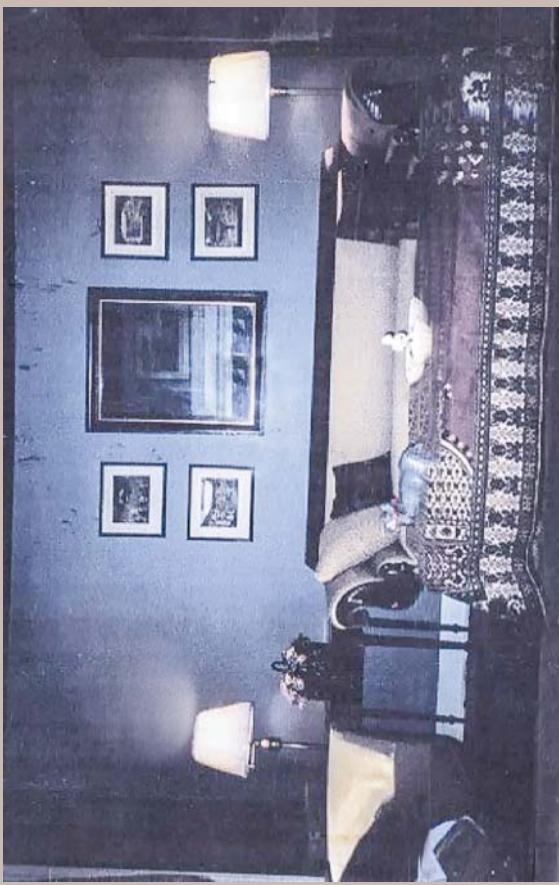


# Sarah Louise Brown's Piano



Sarah Louise's parents, William and Sallie Gorsuch Davis, purchased the rosewood piano from the Wm. Knabe & Company. Shown here is the original receipt for \$435 for the piano and stool dated July 11, 1865. It was later given to Sarah Louise as a wedding gift and is now owned by relatives.

# The Brown Family Furniture



Sarah Louise Brown's Empire sofa



Restored Mirror



Hallway table

These furnishings are now in the possession of extended family members.

# Sarah Louise Brown's Bed and Trunk

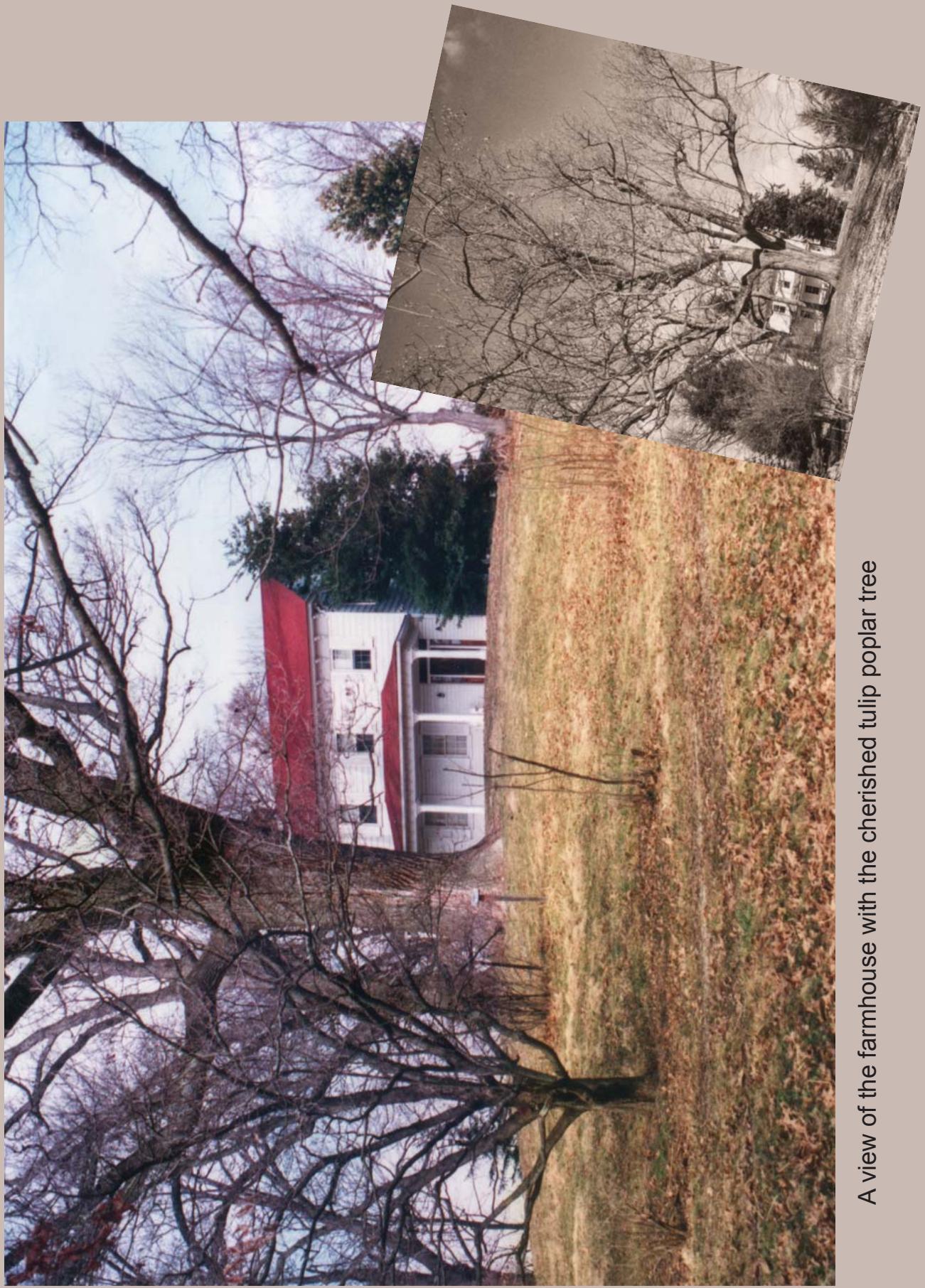
Now in the possession of  
relatives



# Recognitions



# Farmhouse 2000



A view of the farmhouse with the cherished tulip poplar tree

# References

*Information used in this booklet was obtained from:*

Atlas of Howard County, Maryland, 1878. Originally compiled by G.M. Hopkins.  
Reprinted by the Howard County Bicentennial Commission, Inc. 1975.

Reminiscences of Mr. George Riddle, whose family were tenant farmers at Mt. Pleasant during the early 1900s.

Reminiscences of Misses Ruth and Frances Brown.

Archaeology in Howard County and Beyond, M. Lee Preston, Jr. (2011). See  
pages 269-93.

Maryland Historical Trust Inventory of Historic Property Application form,  
prepared by Jennifer Goold in April of 2005.

Notes from History Committee files of relatives and acquaintances of Frances,  
Ruth and Sam Brown.

Alice Webb, the artist, granted permission to photograph her original watercolor  
used on the first cover.



Ruth and Frances Brown standing in front of the bicentennial tulip poplar tree in 1976.

