

Final Report: Main House Group II (Exteriors)

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This report details the findings and conclusions drawn from the exterior of the main house on the Monroe Hill site. Specifically focused on the kitchen, rear, and range-side elevations, we worked with the main house interior group extensively over the course of the semester to produce a cohesive site development narrative. We searched for evidence of changes, additions, and alterations in the remaining fabric of our elevations, and we combed through historic photographs for clues and Ben Ford's archaeological report to understand what is already known or hypothesized about the house. As a result of this investigation and our collaboration with other groups, we understand the development of the house as occurring in a series of phases, outlined below:

1. 1790s: original construction.
 - An insurance document shows the main house as a 26 by 20 foot block, matching the law office nearby.¹
2. By 1819: expansion to the west.
 - The 1819 Annual Report refers to a 27 by 20 foot block (which we assume to be this 1790s house despite the foot difference) with a 27 by 17 foot brick shed addition. This shed addition was attached to the back (west) face of the 1790s building, known due to evidence on the rear elevation.
 - There is a cellar underneath both spaces. The main house is said to have four rooms and an entrance on the main floor and two upstairs, though we are unsure whether this second story would have been a full or half story, but likely half.²
3. 1822-25: significant expansion likely consisting of second story added over 1790s block and one-story 27 x 20 foot addition toward south.
 - Large number of supplies purchased between 1823 and 1825, suggesting significant work taking place. Probably connected to Proctor Brockenbrough's decision to make Monroe Hill his permanent residence.³

¹ Mutual Assurance Society Declaration #388, August 15, 1800.

² *Report and Documents Respecting the University of Virginia [Annual Report, 1819]*, p26. (Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, 1820). Found in Benjamin Ford, "The Monroe Hill Property: A Site Physical History" Draft (Charlottesville, January 2018), n.p..

³ Benjamin Ford, "The Monroe Hill Property: A Site Physical History" Draft (Charlottesville, January 2018), n.p..

4. 1841-1842: expansion to double story across entire front.
 - Receipts from late 1841 or early 1842 state that \$58.06 was paid for “papering new addition to Proctor’s House,” indicating that there was indeed some addition meant to be usable space, but it is not stated where this new addition was.⁴
5. January 1842: front portico added.
 - \$105.70 paid to James Lobban for new portico.⁵
6. 1843: expansions to rear. Existing shed raised to full two stories and 1.5-story shed addition beside it to establish complete rectangular footprint.
 - \$645 was paid for “addition to Proctor’s dwelling.”⁶
 - Interior evidence and south elevation support large 1840s construction campaign.
7. After 1866: expansion to full second story rear elevation.
 - In 1866, Professor Charles Venable moved into Monroe Hill and made request for repairs. He stated, “I have caused estimates to be made of the amounts necessary to repair the house and so to arrange then fencing as to give desirable privacy to the premises, leaving the building in its present condition of half story & shed room rear. The estimate is about \$1000. To repair and at the same time to raise up the walls of the half story & shed room would cost \$922 more than the above estimate, but would add very much to the completeness of the house, especially as we have been unable hitherto to stop the leakage in the present roof.”⁷
 - This suggests that the entire second story and rear facade were not complete until after 1866.
8. By 1877: expansion complete.
 - Known due to 1877 first request made by Thomas Price to add porches to the house. Unlikely that this would have been done without the expansion completed.⁸
9. After 1877: back porch added or expanded to two stories and front porch given second story.
 - “Your Committee would also recommend that the Proctor be directed to have a porch built in front and rear of the house now occupied by Prof. Price and on consultation with him, to make such other repairs as said residence may need and as can be done, all at an expense of not over \$500 which we

⁴ *Proctor’s Journals*, Vol. 4: 1832-1844, November 1841, p247; January 1842, pp 219-220; April 1843, p232. In Ford.

⁵ *Proctor’s Journals*. In Ford.

⁶ *Proctor’s Journals*. In Ford.

⁷ Charles Venable to BOV, 6/27/1866. Proctor’s Papers, Box 16. Quoted in Ford.

⁸ *BOV Minutes*, June 25, 1877. Quoted in Ford.

recommend to be appropriated for that purpose.” Quotation from follow-up letter from 1879 asking for porches to be added to the house, occupied by Thomas Price. Had requested funds for porches in 1877 but apparently was denied.⁹

Our individual investigations of our assigned elevations are detailed below. In these passages, we will explain the visual and documentary evidence that encourages us to make the claims seen above. These findings should be supported by the interior evidence provided by the other main house group, but as stated above, this report is focused on the stories told by the exterior of the main house at Monroe Hill. Katie McCarthy Watts studied the north (kitchen) elevation, Jane Trask investigated the west (rear) face, and Andrew Ashcraft analyzed the east (range-side) facade.

⁹ *BOV Minutes*, June 27, 1879. Quoted by Ford.

North Elevation- Katie McCarthy Watts



The North elevation is dominated by the kitchen addition and two mismatched chimneys. The kitchen had been presumed to be an early twentieth century addition to the main house, as modern appliances and technological advances decreased the risk of fire and the need for household staff (whether paid servants or enslaved African Americans). However, the kitchen appears on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps before the twentieth century begins. While we began thinking the North elevation was only telling a twentieth century story, closer inspection proved otherwise. Below the red arrow on the chimney in the photo below is Flemish bond brick, indicative of the 1790s original house. Above this line the brick switches to running bond, indicative of the nineteenth century expansion into a full two-story. Evidence from the interior of the dining room and the large stone hearth in the basement (large enough perhaps to be an original cooking kitchen before the separate outbuilding is listed on the 1800 insurance plat) all agree that this side of the

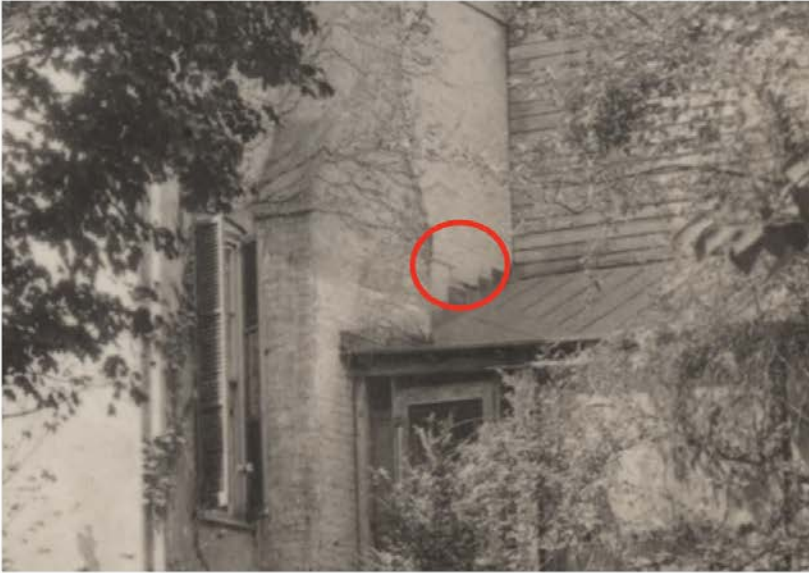
house is the earliest portion, the 27' x 20' original Monroe house. The window in the dining room that appears on my side elevation is larger than the other windows in the main house currently. Before the kitchen addition, it is likely that there was a matching window on the other side of the fireplace, where the door to the kitchen is now. We attempted to use the infrared camera around door frames and walls in the dining room, but because many of these walls are masonry (former and current exterior walls) the results were inconclusive.



Documentary evidence suggests that by 1819 there was a 17' x 27' shed addition off of the original house. Evidence along the North elevation shows signs of this addition. Above the current kitchen roof is a brick soldier course that protrudes more than the surrounding brick (circled in red in photo below). Below the soldier course appears to be Flemish bond brick. This likely shows where the shed addition was, and where it was converted to a full two-stories in the first

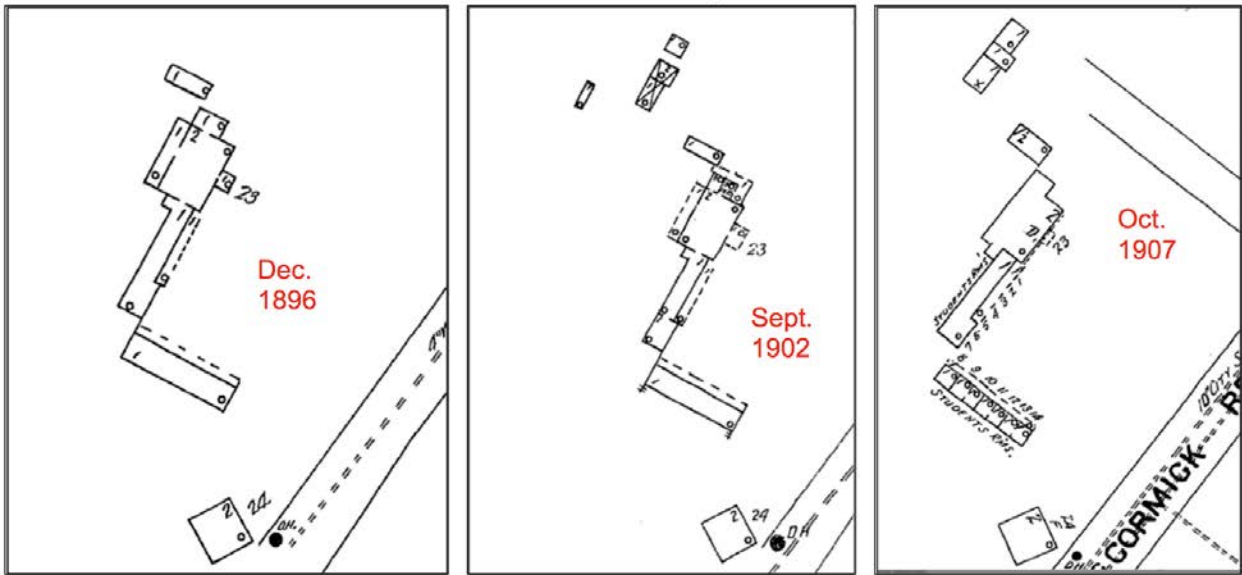
half of the nineteenth century. The soldier course is also evident in the undated historic photo with

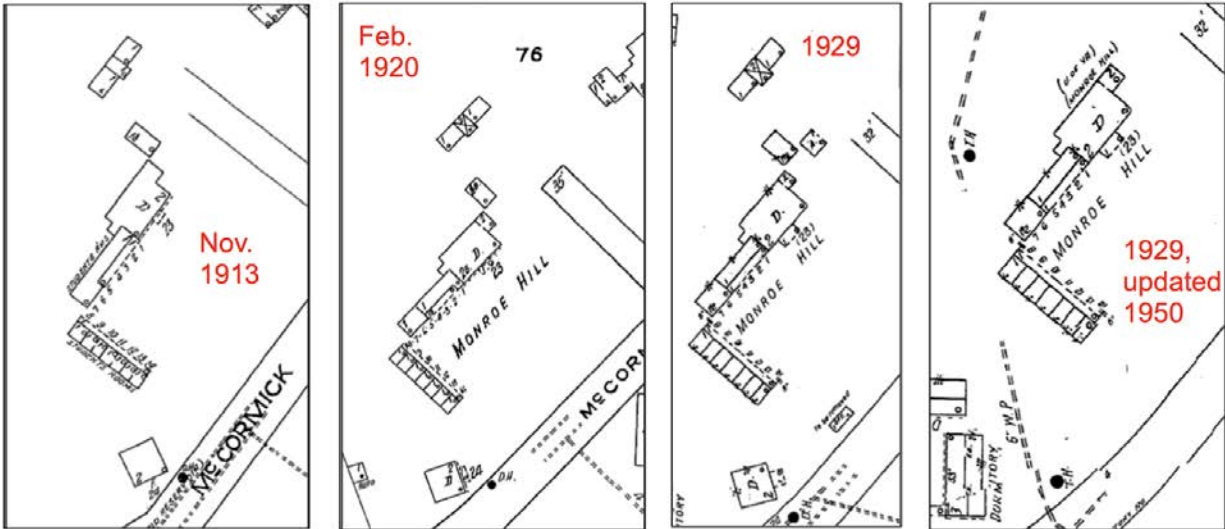
the two-story frame kitchen. In addition to the insurance plat from 1800, between 1819-1821, there is still a framed kitchen documented. Later documentary evidence from 1845 talks about building a stand alone kitchen with payments to a mason recorded, so likely this new kitchen was brick.



The first Sanborn map of Charlottesville to include the University of Virginia is from December 1896, and it includes Monroe Hill. It shows a one-story bump out on the North side of the main house, covered with a slate or non-combustible roof. In some cities, according to their key on the Sanborn maps, the circle for the roof indicates slate, but in other cities it represents a non-combustible material. The kitchen and also the main house are today covered with a standing seam metal roof, so I am curious if it was ever slate and transitioned to metal or was always metal (we have not found any documentary evidence for this either way, except for the existing roof). While Sanborn maps are wonderful for telling you the number of stories/floors, the potential materials that buildings are made of, and the existence and general location of outbuildings, they are not known for accuracy of floor plans or subdivision of space. Each surveyor also had their own idiosyncrasies in what they choose to record on a property.

For example, throughout the seven Sanborn maps below, the shed addition to the first range room between the main house and the law office jumps back and forth as to whether it is drawn as attached to the range or attached to the main house. While the existing architectural evidence suggests it was always a part of the range room, perhaps we do need to take another look at this structure as we investigate the south/side elevation assigned to Andrew and work with the range groups. The Range group found evidence that William Thornton took two range rooms over as his own, to serve as a library and office, so perhaps this was why the shed addition goes back and forth in the Sanborns. The kitchen and rear porch also go back and forth between being listed separately from the main house, or drawn within it. For Jane's rear elevation, there is evidence of a rear porch of some kind as early as December 1896, also previously thought to be a twentieth century structure.





The outbuildings associated with Monroe Hill also change over time according to the Sanborn maps, beginning with a single one-story outbuilding, later including a tripartite stable and an auto garage, and ultimately ending with no separate outbuildings by 1950, although it's likely the garage was just left off of that year's survey. Another interesting anomaly is the Sanborn map from September 1902 that shows an L-shaped frame structure, perhaps a covered walkway or porch, around the kitchen addition, connecting to the separate outbuilding. The kitchen addition also appears to be divided into two rooms, as each one is given the notation of one-story with slate or non-combustible roof. Photographic evidence from Special Collections supports this strange layout on the North side of the main house, although the image is dated 1940 (this could be a mistake). In this photo, either the kitchen or the outbuilding behind it appears to be a two-story frame structure, rather than brick, different from today's kitchen. Notice in this photo there is a fence in the front yard near the range and around the kitchen area. There is mention of need for a fence in documentary evidence. Likely this was to contain garden spaces, control movement of animals, and possibly keep students out of certain areas.



Monroe Hill, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.
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*Monroe Hill, Charlottesville, VA:
University of Virginia Library, 1940.*

Curiously, by 1907, the Sanborn map goes back to representing the kitchen as a simple bump out on the North elevation, however, it is included as part of the main house, labeled as two stories. There is a second historic photo from Special Collections clearly showing a two-story frame kitchen with a porch around it, but unfortunately it is an undated photo. It corroborates the photo dated 1940, but causes some confusion as to when this second story was put on the kitchen (since it is one story with a basement today). The second story could have provided sleeping quarters for the cook and his or her family. There is no fence around the kitchen in this photo.



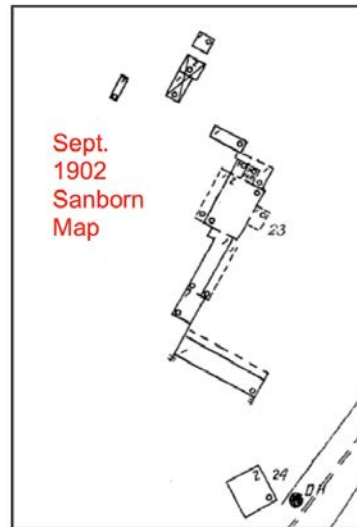
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The 1909 Jackson and Laird topographical map (below) agrees with the 1902 Sanborn, showing the kitchen addition with an L-shaped connection to an outbuilding behind and to the side of the main house. By 1929, the Brown College dormitories start appearing on the maps, and have expanded significantly by 1950. The two ranges of student rooms are also more elaborated as time goes on, including a numbering system as early as 1907 and continuing through 1950.

1909 Jackson & Laird Topography Map



Further architectural evidence on the North elevation confirms the two-story frame kitchen with a porch. The bricks on the large front chimney are messy, with lines of divots along the upper coursing (right photo), almost in line with the current kitchen roof. This may have been where the flat part of the porch roof extended out, across the chimney (see historic photo). There is also evidence on the lower part of this chimney where the porch or stairs to the porch may have been notched in (left photo).



The second chimney on the North elevation is interior to the house, although it has a thin section of brick exterior to the house that does not match this chimney's location exactly and looks quite strange in comparison with the large front, fully exterior chimney. This second chimney is also partially obscured by the kitchen chimney in elevation view. It is likely that as the house gained its second story, masons had to try and tie the exterior together as much as possible. The South elevation has a similar set of mismatched chimneys as well.

During Professor Price's tenure, an additional improvement to Monroe Hill was noted. In 1881, the Board of Visitors approved \$2,000 to be "appropriated for the improvement of grounds and building, of which sum is to be used in the enlargement and improvement of the Proctor's house." The reference to the 'Proctors House' in this instance is believed to refer to Monroe Hill, and not the actual residence of the Proctor in this period (Hotel D). Since we know the kitchen addition was built before the 1896 Sanborn map, perhaps 1881 was when the kitchen first becomes a structure attached to the main house. There is also documentary evidence from 1886 that refers to

a servant's water closet being needed at Monroe Hill, so perhaps this was a bathroom in the kitchen addition. Given that there was a second story, this was presumably where the cook and his or her family might live. In presenting his report to the faculty of the University in 1886, Proctor J. K. Campbell noted that at Professor Wheeler's residence [Monroe Hill], "all outside wood needs repainting. New guttering and spouting are needed. A servant's new water closet is needed. When built, should have connection with our line of sewer pipe." Currently on the second floor of the main house there is no evidence of a window or door connection to the kitchen, so it's likely that the second floor of the kitchen was always service space, and did not connect to the main house.

Rear Elevation: Jane Trask

The rear elevation of the main house at Monroe Hill bears a number of scars and irregularities that are important for confirming suspicions about the house's development, but these scars also present many questions that we are unable to answer at this point. In the photograph to



the left, the porch that shades the first story of the house is in clear view. At the beginning of this project, we believed that this porch was a twentieth-century story, like much of the north elevation described above, but also like that elevation, we found that there is

more to the story than that. Though it was not this exact porch that existed on the house, it is clear that there was a porch added onto the rear elevation of the house in the 1860s or 1870s. It appears on the December 1896 Sanborn map shown above, and documentary evidence shows a request for a porch in 1877 and 1879. It is first mentioned in 1877, when Professor Thomas Price (resident at time) unsuccessfully petitioned the Board of Visitors for funds to build a porch. Two years later, he attempted to procure funding again, this time asking for money for both a front and back porch. Ben Ford, in his crucial archaeological report on Monroe Hill, asserts that this request is for the upper levels of both the front and back porches, seen in the image below, but there had been no mention yet of the first-floor back porch. Therefore, it is unclear if the porch went up in two stages, or all in one after 1879. Today, it is a single story.

To return to the general description of the elevation today, this porch stands up on eight riser blocks, leaving some of the lowest courses of brick found on the house visible only on this elevation. On the main floor, there are four windows



and a door. Although the door is flanked by two windows on either side, it is not centered within the space, crowding the south side. The top floor shows five windows which appear to be the same size. The outer two windows on each side are directly above their ground-floor counterparts, but the center one is not placed directly above the door. Instead, it is centered between the pairs of windows. Upon careful observation, it became clear that the spacing between the two pairs of windows outside the central elements on both levels are not regular. The left side windows on both levels are further apart than those on the right side, seen clearly in the photograph on the previous page. A belt course six courses of brick high runs across the top of the face, between the upper edge of the window and the bottom of the cornice. Aspects of both the kitchen and the range are visible from the rear elevation, and it becomes clear that the kitchen and the range are about the same height (about 16 feet off the ground, though the sloping ground complicates the exact measurements).

Certain aspects of our group's proposed chronology for Monroe Hill are supported by features of the rear elevation. The most clear evidence is found in the Flemish bond brickwork on the northern half of the elevation, shown in the set of three photographs on the next page. Flemish

bond covers the whole patch on the north side of the north-most window, between the sill and the seam between the main house and the kitchen addition. Moving south beyond that, the Flemish bond extends only below the window level. The entire length of the patch measures 27 feet, which is the width dimension of the original 1790s house and shed addition. This indicates that the first shed addition was attached to the west side (rear) of the original house, directly in line with the 27-foot width of the original house. Flemish bond thus likely covered both the original house and the first shed, though it is impossible to see on the front elevation due to the stucco covering.

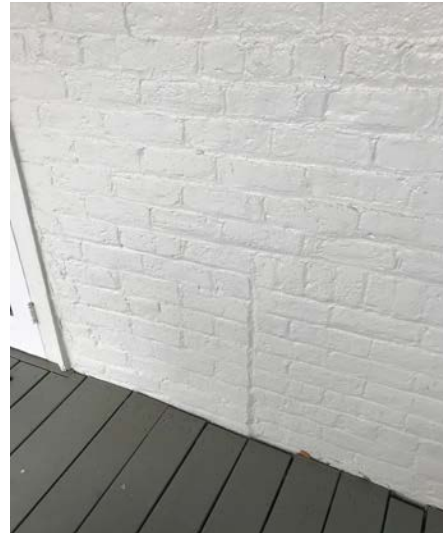


Above this lower sill level on these windows, there is common bond of varying numbers, an example of which is seen to the lower left. This indicates that when the shed was extended into a full



two stories in 1843, the Flemish bond wall was retained up to the window level, but the inclusion of new windows with the extension likely made it necessary to redo the wall from this point up. It explains why the Flemish bond is only on the outside of the first window and below sill level.

Another interesting feature of the rear elevation is a soldier course embedded in the wall on the south side of the door. Pictured to the right in full, and in detail below, the course is below the window sill and extends about six feet.



It is possible that this is a former garden wall, a vestige of the time when this quarter of the house was left open with an L-shaped house overall. It could be that there was a garden or courtyard here and this would have been a retaining wall that was incorporated into the permanent house construction when the shed was added here in 1843. There is a defined seam on the left of the patch (to the right of the door), which matches one on the left side of the door as well. This could be some infill that

corresponds with the courtyard possibilities, but we have no evidence that allows for any real conclusions to be made.



In addition to the brick scars described above that help support the claims made by the class, the rear elevation also bears some unexplained scars, about which I can only make suggestions. These are primarily found under the porch. Some of the scarring below the porch seems to be the result of modern utility interventions, but it is important to keep track of them in case Above are pictured the set of matching seams found below the porch on either side of the door. The southern one is expressed above porch level as well and seen as the north boundary of the soldier course.

Another of these scars is a filled-in arch located below the porch between the two windows on the south end of the elevation. The left image below shows the arch in its setting and the right provides more detail. This arch could be the remnant of a cellar window, but we were unable to gain access to the crawlspace under the main house this semester to investigate further.



South Elevation: Andrew Ashcraft



Beneath its uniform white paint, the south elevation of the Monroe Hill House bears the scars of multiple building campaigns. The present day elevation is a product of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty first centuries, with two centuries of activity beginning with an 1823 addition to the south of the original 1790s Monroe House and ending with a modern ADA ramp granting access to the rear porch. Forward of the front chimney, the elevation is obscured by a smooth white render, likely applied in the 1840s to mask seams and unify the appearance of the front facade. Work on the front portico of the house has uncovered two distinct periods of render: an earlier, lime based finish likely dating to the 1840s (and the corresponding addition of the front portico), and a later, portland cement based finish, possibly a product of the 1870s when the main block of the house was completed.



Much of the elevation is obscured by the 1849 addition of the student rooms, documented by another group in the class. A small addition to the student rooms occupies the rear corner where the 1849 addition meets the main house, sharing a north wall with the main house and a east wall with the student rooms. This addition is later than the student rooms but of unknown construction. However, as it appears on the earliest (1896) Sanborn maps, it dates between 1849 and 1896.



Periodization



Note: The following proposed periodization is based on physical evidence recovered by examining the elevation. The findings are supported by both the documentary record and by findings in the interior of the house, but this analysis stands independent from those sources.

Period I: Lower eastern elevation and forward chimney. 1823-25

A 27x20' addition to the south provides the full width of the present front facade. Such an addition would mirror the original 1790s building and, together with the pre-1819 27x17' rear shed, form the house into a modified L plan. The lower portion of the forward chimney dates to this period. Broken, staggered horizontal and vertical seams on the wall provide evidence that southeast portion of the house was not constructed to its present height in a single building campaign.

Additionally, the chimney features a two-brick thick outward corbeled section, a common way to cap a chimney during this period. Further evidence of brick bonding for this period is obscured by the student room addition and the render described earlier. However, a more thorough analysis of

the brick patterning near the forward chimney could be completed if a researcher could access the roof of the student rooms, which was not done as part of this project due to safety concerns.



Period II: 1841 Second Story Front, Unified Front Facade *1841-42*

During this period of construction, the 1824 1.5 story addition was raised to its present height to match the earlier second story of the main house. The forward chimney was raised to its present height, the front portico was added, and a render applied to the front facade and forward portions of the side elevations to unify the appearance of the front of the house. Brick bonding of this wall section appears to be irregular course common bond.

Period III: Rear Shed Addition, *1843*

A well-defined vertical seam separates the front of the elevation from the rear (periods I and III). A stair-stepped seam separates the lower rear portion from the upper rear, indicating that the rear of the south elevation was constructed in two distinct building periods, first in a one story shed addition which was later raised. Vertical seams indicate a window opening in this period of construction, the only evidence for a window on the south elevation, which was later filled (see period V). Irregular (5-7) course common bond throughout.



Period IV: 1849: Student Rooms Added

Period V: Second Story Rear, Present Main House Block Complete, *1866-1877*

The final period of construction evident in the brick wall is the raising of the second story of the rear shed (period III) to its present height to match the rest of the house. Once this was complete, the main block of the house looked much as it does in the present. The window in the lower portion of the rear shed (period III) was filled in at this time. This period of construction is characterized by irregular (5-7) course common bond.