

Nova Scotia



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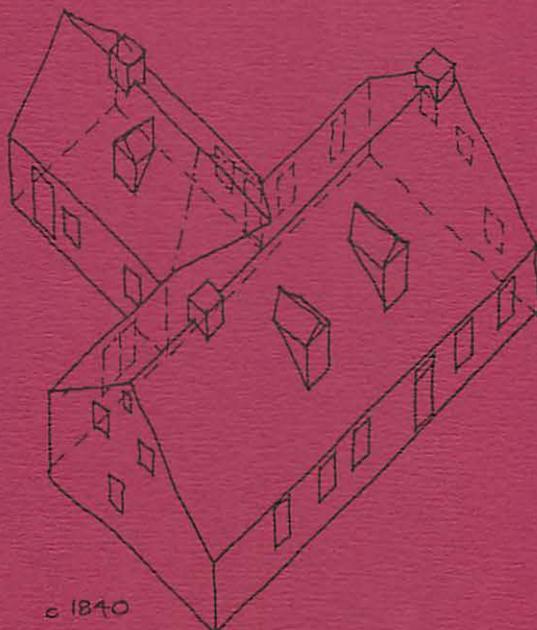
Curatorial Report Number 60

# The Simeon Perkins House: an Architectural Interpretation 1767-1987

Nova Scotia Museum  
1747 Summer Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada  
B3H 3A6

By Allen Penney  
February 1987

*With drawings  
by the author*



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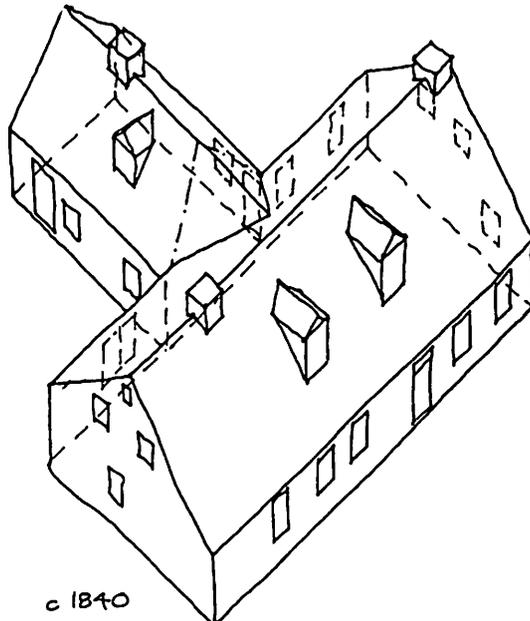
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NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUM  
Curatorial Reports

The Curatorial Reports of the Nova Scotia Museum contain information on the collections and the preliminary results of research projects carried out under the program of the museum. The reports may be cited in publications but their manuscript status should clearly be indicated.

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is a Research Associate with the Nova Scotia  
Museum and Associate Professor in the Faculty  
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Scotia.



Perkins House from Main Street in 1978

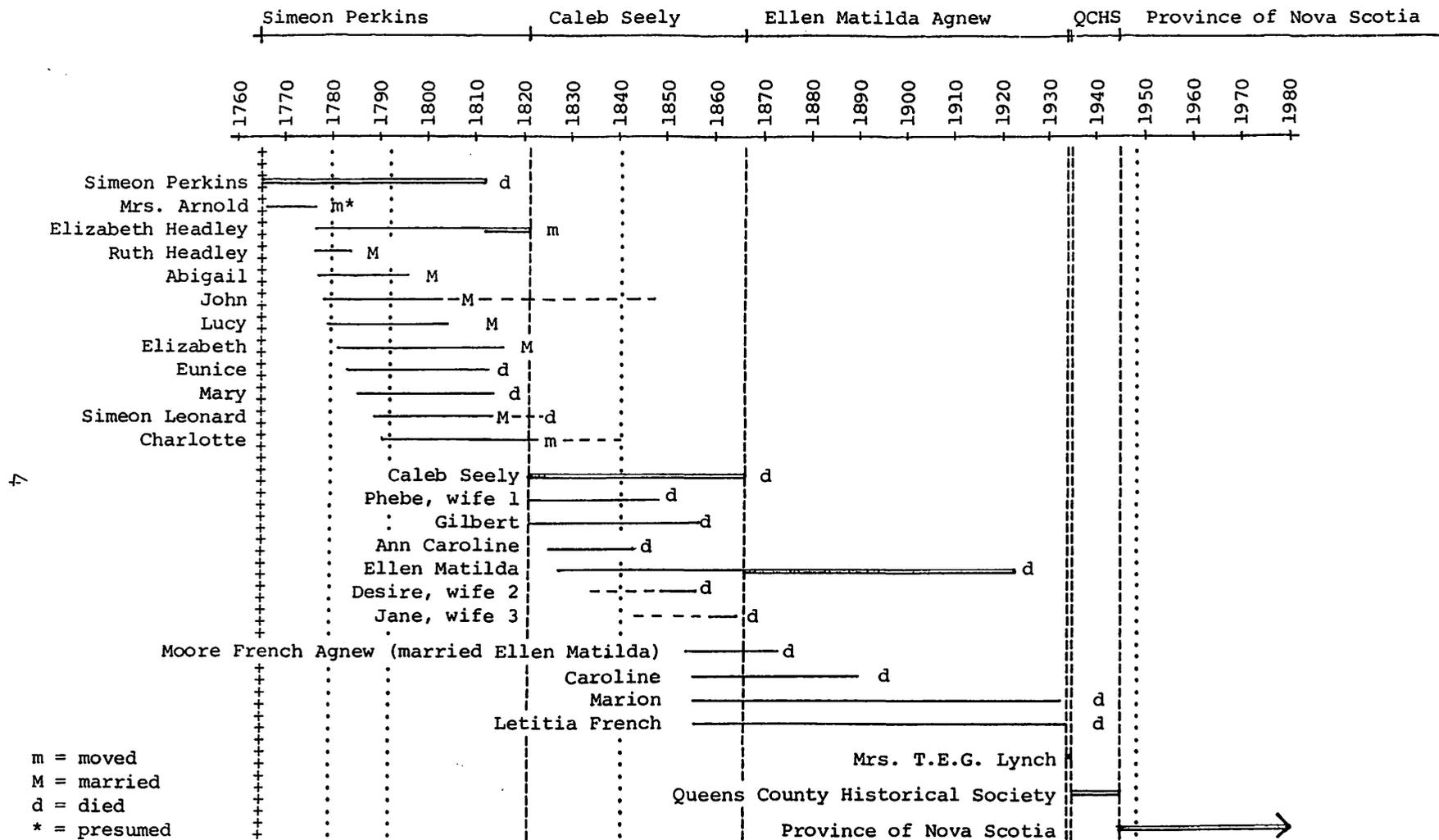


The North Front before 1935, possibly as early as 1900

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CHART OF THE OWNERS AND OCCUPANTS OF THE HOUSE



- Note:
- 1 Ellen Matilda Seely Agnew lived most of her 93 years in the house with the exception of a short period after her marriage.
  - 2 Marion and Letitia French Agnew lived in the house until their deaths but never actually owned the house.
  - 3 Mrs T.E.G. Lynch owned the house for 3 months but never lived in it.



The North Front in 1978. The lack of symmetry is caused by the addition to the left hand end in 1781 and the later dormers.



An early photograph shows the house with creeper on the roof.

Preface

This is a report about a house. By writing it the author originally expected it to become an architectural interpretation which would allow people to enjoy this particular house as a piece of Nova Scotian vernacular architecture. The format of the report was chosen to allow it to be read at the house or away from it. Until the author studied the house there had been no architectural measured drawings made of the house, neither had there been a written compilation of the history of construction and alteration to the fabric of the house. How the house came to be built, how it was used, and how it was sequentially adapted and altered to fit changing needs over time, are now recorded for the first time. As a first attempt at unravelling some mysteries it is only tentative.

As the first report being written on houses in the Nova Scotia Museum collection of historic buildings it must be noted that each house in this collection has its own reasons for being included. Because the houses were added to the NSM collection for reasons of significant ownership rather than as a demonstration of the range of architectural styles within the Province, they do not attempt to form an architecturally complete collection. By good fortune the houses do cover a broad range of styles, social status and function. As a collection they are made more significant when it is realised that all the buildings are on their original foundations. Also the scope of technological development which they display is remarkably broad and comprehensive.

Ultimately it is hoped that through these books more people will

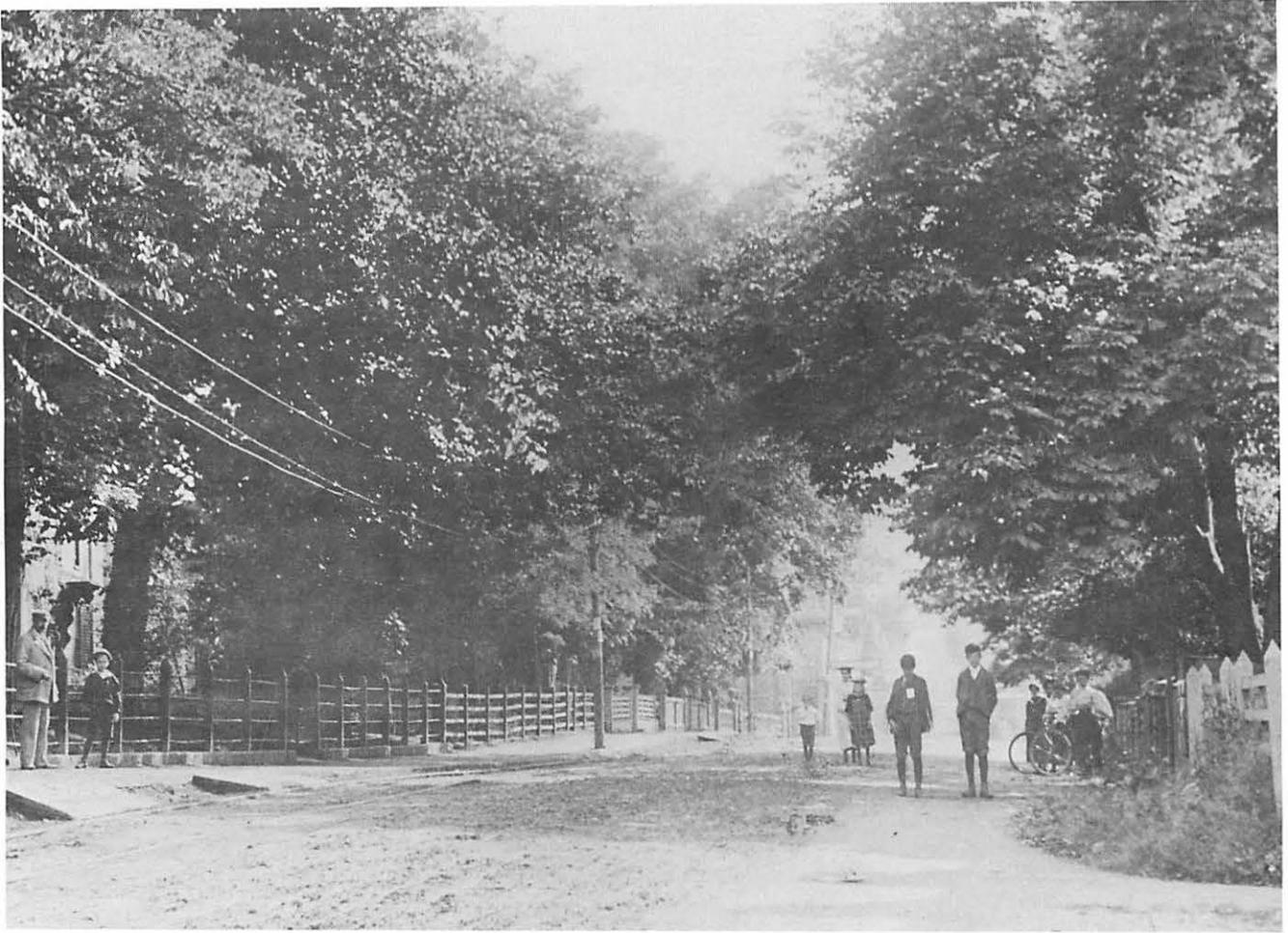
become interested in the buildings around them. If the reports generate a greater desire to understand a few specific structures, then it is hoped that the same interest will be applied to our heritage in general. A further outcome could well be that buildings which are either collapsing or need to be substantially rebuilt are properly documented during the process so that fewer clues are lost or destroyed.

Two major sources were used in writing this report. The first was the house itself, which was carefully measured, drawn, and photographed. In the process it was rather thoroughly examined. The second source was the remarkable document created by the first owner of the house, Simeon Perkins, in his diary which spans the period from 1766 to 1812 and precisely dates the major changes to the house and describes details of minor alterations.<sup>1</sup> We are fortunate that in over two hundred years of existence the house has been lived in by only two families before becoming a museum, and that most of the major fabric changes took place during the life-time of Simeon Perkins and are recorded in his diary.<sup>2</sup>

One of the disadvantages caused by the diary is the temptation to over-indulge in quotations from it, or to want to write into the text those things which catch the eye but are not central to the architectural story. Two examples will be sufficient to illustrate the variety of potential distraction as well as satisfy the author's need to digress. First, in an entry for 4 March 1785 Perkins wrote: "Sent Peter West to ye Falls and got one pair of my oxen, the Black hide Staggs, & the Slead." Native caribou were obviously used as well as horses and oxen for hauling work. Second, amongst numerous entries



Main Street, Liverpool 1899, looking east. Taken from outside the Perkins house. Note the rails of the steam railway in the road way.



Main Street, Liverpool 1899, taken outside the house looking west. Perkins house is to the left. The trees had grown since Perkins' day to substantially block the view to the river.

about the garden produce is this one for 6 June 1781: "A very warm Day & Growing Season. The Grass in my lot by the Garden is in Some places Knee High, my peese very forward. We stick them this day. One Water Melon is Come out of the Ground". Here is Arcadia in Acadia.

Many other sources of information were consulted as well as the house and diary, taking the author to Ottawa, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine and Liverpool in addition to local sources in Halifax, where numerous kind people unlocked the mysteries of their data. The opportunity to write this book was provided through the grant of special leave for one year from the Technical University of Nova Scotia (formerly Nova Scotia Technical College). Grateful recognition is also made to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for their generous grant in aid of research.

The staff of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia <sup>3</sup>, and especially Brian Cuthbertson, the Queen's County Historical Society <sup>4</sup>, especially Gary Hartlen <sup>5</sup> of the Queen's County Museum, and the Nova Scotia Museum including Mary Harvey, Scott Robson and Robert Frame, provided invaluable help. I wish to thank them all and especially Marie Elwood of the Nova Scotia Museum for her initial encouragement and continuing advice.

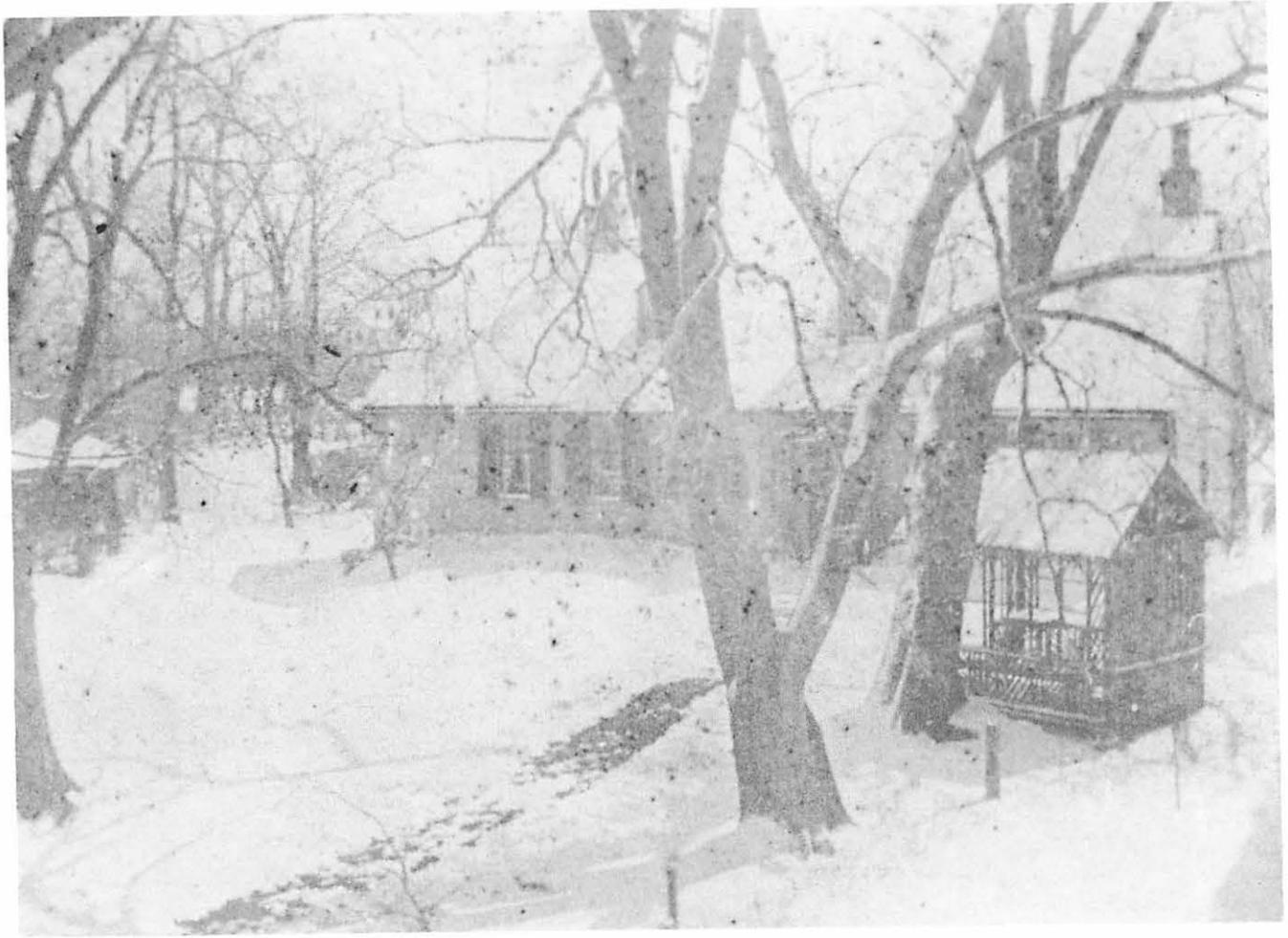
To Yvonne Piggot, Jayant Maharaj and Victoria Grant I shall ever be thankful, as in many different ways they helped to make it happen. Any errors are mine.

## Footnotes

- 1 Dates given in the text are either specific with year, month and day, or general with the year only when referring to a period of time. Construction dates are for completion rather than start.
- 2 The Diary of Simeon Perkins has been published in five volumes by the Champlain Society (Toronto) from 1948 to 1979: The Diary of Simeon Perkins I: 1766-1780; II: 1780-1789; III: 1790-1796; IV: 1797-1803; V: 1804-1812.
- 3 Public Archives of Nova Scotia is hereafter abbreviated to P.A.N.S.
- 4 Queen's County Historical Society is hereafter abbreviated to Q.C.H.S.
- 5 Nova Scotia Museum is hereafter abbreviated to N.S.M.



A. P. Freeman House, Liverpool 1900 with the front lawn of the Perkins House in the foreground, making this the neighbour to the east.



A photograph taken in 1900 shows the house in winter.



The house of the Freeman family, Liverpool 1897, known as Elmwood, the neighbour to the west. The lady in the wheel chair is Mrs. Freeman.



"Katherine, Mrs Agnew's House, 1900." There appear to be evergreen boughs at the base of the wall for thermal insulation. The photograph was taken by Simeon Perkins Freeman, a great-nephew of Simeon Perkins.



The north front in 1947. Note the horizontal window and plumbing stack on the east end, (left hand side) and the Victorian Gothic Chimney Pots. The overall deformation of the house can be seen by the drooping ends.



The Liverpool Lighthouse erected on the south end of Coffin's Island. Begun on 30 May 1811, when Simeon Perkins laid the foundation stone, it was completed on 13 Dec 1815, but was not lit until June 1816. The light revolved every two minutes and the total height was 75 feet. Liverpool is at the left in this drawing by J.E.Woolford in 1817.

## Liverpool

On 1762-05-04 Simeon Perkins arrived in Liverpool from Norwich, Connecticut to open business for a mercantile partnership.<sup>1</sup>

Although Liverpool was still in its infancy, it had become well enough established over the three preceding years to encourage further immigration.<sup>2</sup>

The British colonies along the Atlantic seaboard to the south were already extensively settled and inhabitants were becoming eager to find new land for expansion. They were hampered from spreading inland by the presence of hostile Indians. The French to the north had long restricted their trade and fishery, but after the fall of Louisbourg, Quebec and Montreal in the late 1750's, a major obstacle to a northward expansion was removed.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Nova Scotia lacked a reliable and evenly distributed population, and was anxious to receive settlers whose allegiance was assured to fill the void created by the Acadian deportation in 1755. Advertisements published in New England appealed to the desire for expansion space. In addition to the promise of arable lands and the prospects of a profitable fishery close to the Grand Banks, Newfoundland and Labrador, Governor Charles Lawrence was prepared to guarantee the newcomers their township form of local government.<sup>4</sup> In the years following Lawrence's proclamations, about seven thousand New Englanders responded and Nova Scotia was on the way to becoming a British colony.<sup>5</sup>

In September 1759, a grant of the township of Liverpool had been issued to John Doggett of Boston and others.<sup>6</sup> Agents and surveyors had visited the area but the first settlers did not arrive until May 1760.<sup>7</sup> These earliest arrivals were reported to be nearly all from Plymouth, Cape Cod or towns nearby; others came later from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and Rhode Island.<sup>8</sup> Governor Lawrence described their coming in a report to the Lords of Trade in June 1760:<sup>9</sup>

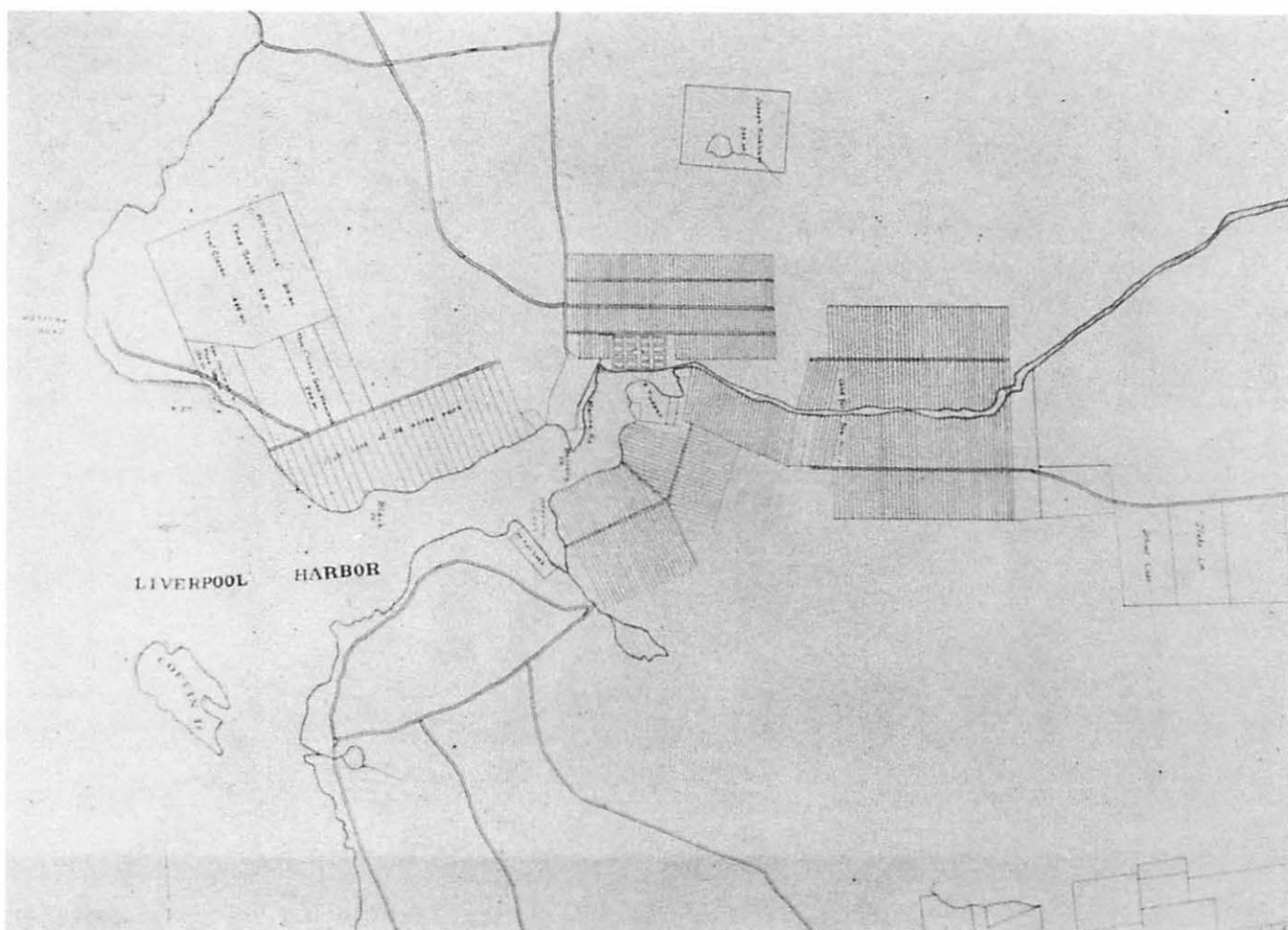
The first settlers arrived at Liverpool. They consist of Seventy head of families, who besides considerable numbers of live stock of every sort brought with them thirteen sail of fishing schooners...The people on shore are at present occupied in preparing Houses...They brought with them, and immediately erected, three Saw Mills...

From the beginning the settlers organized themselves for an orderly development of the township. The proprietor's meetings over the next few years dealt with land surveys, the awarding of fish, meadow and farm lots, the erection of saw mills and a meeting house.<sup>10</sup> Charles Morris, Government Surveyor, wrote late in 1761:<sup>11</sup>

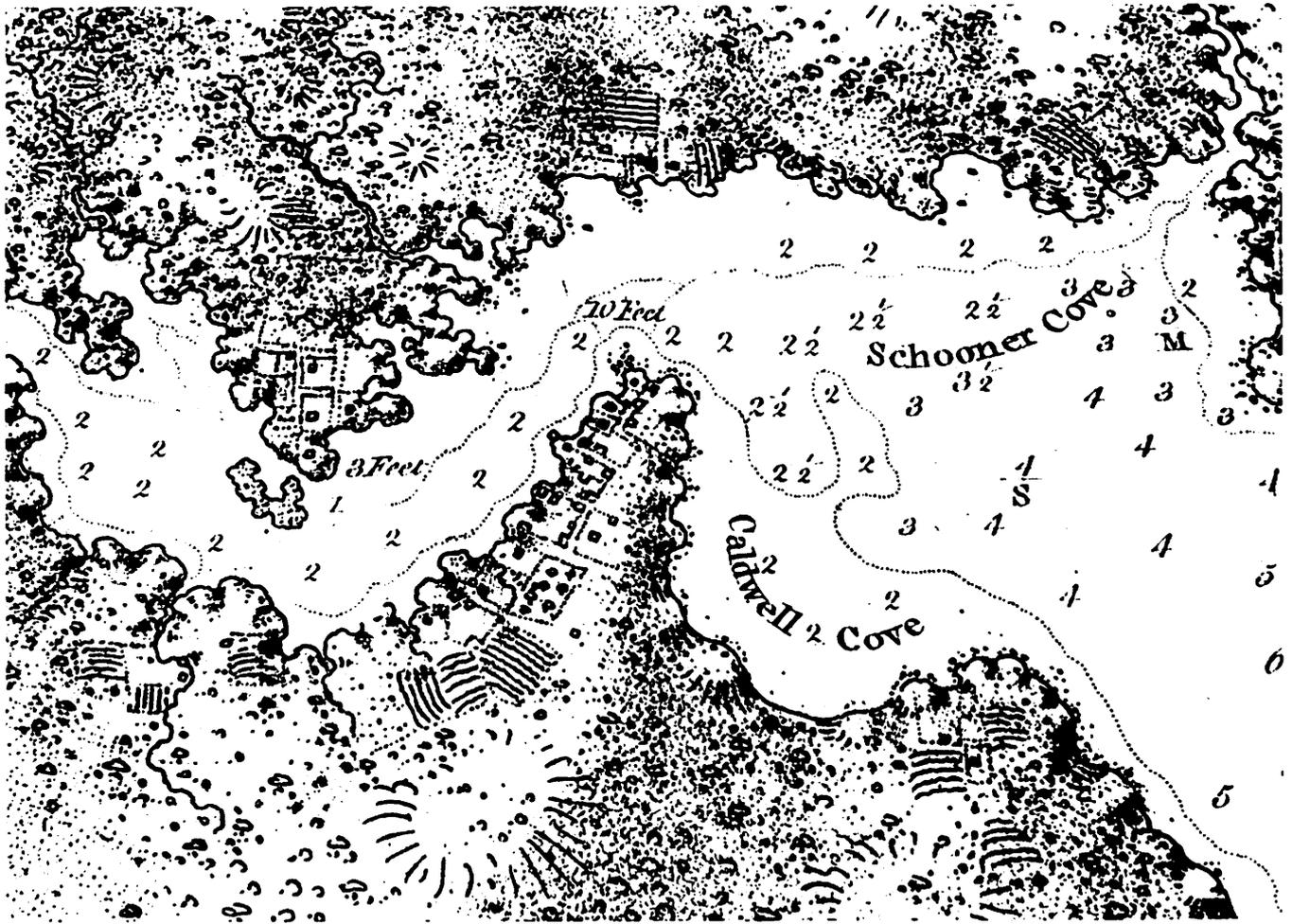
They have built Seventy Houses, have employed Seventeen Schooners in the Fishery, and made about eight thousand Quintals of Fish, besides which they have made a considerable quantity of Shingles, Clapboards, Staves, and erected a Saw Mill for Sawing Boards.

At the end of 1761 prior to Perkins' arrival, there were already ninety families in Liverpool numbering 504 persons.<sup>12</sup>

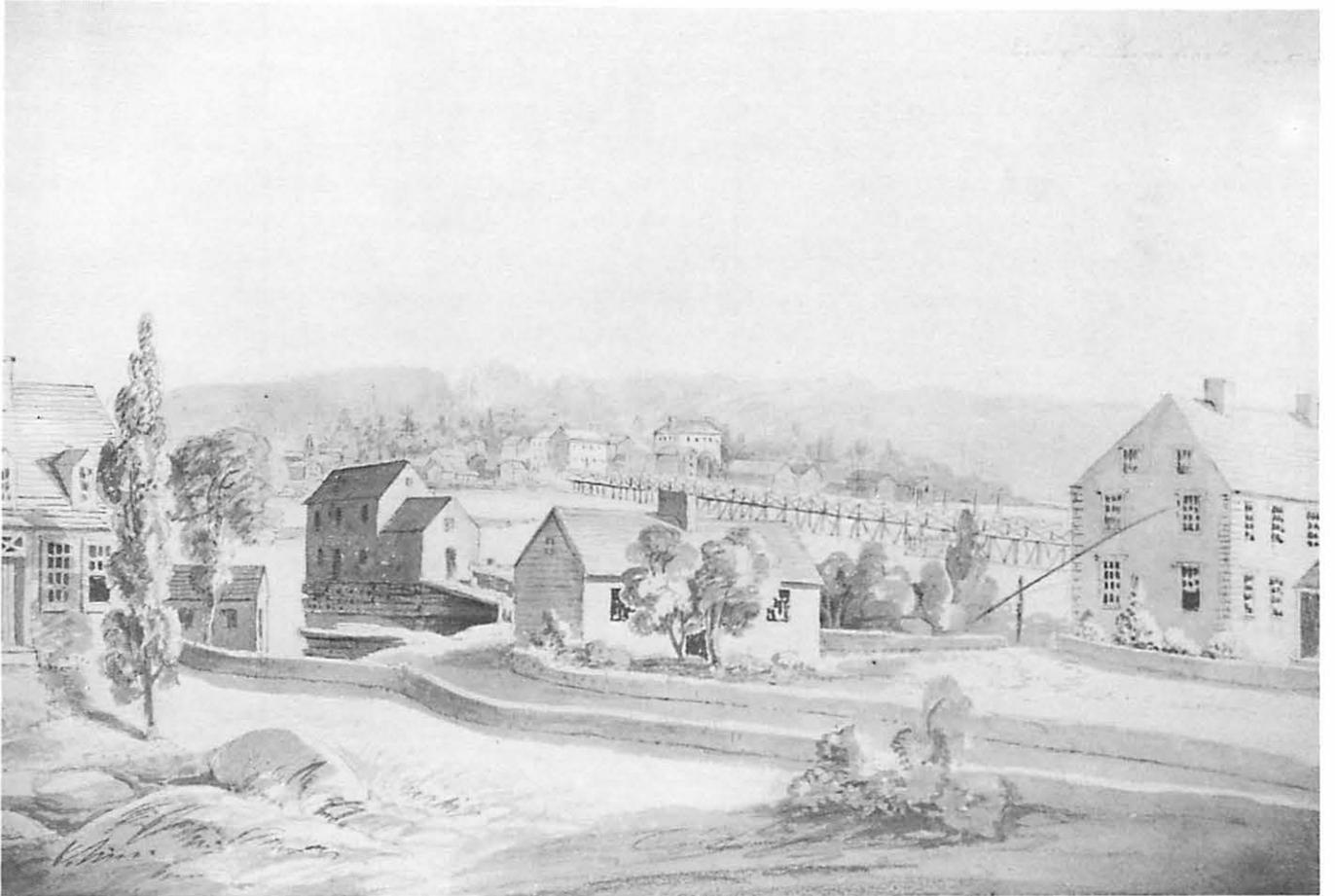
After Lawrence's death, the government in Halifax curtailed the



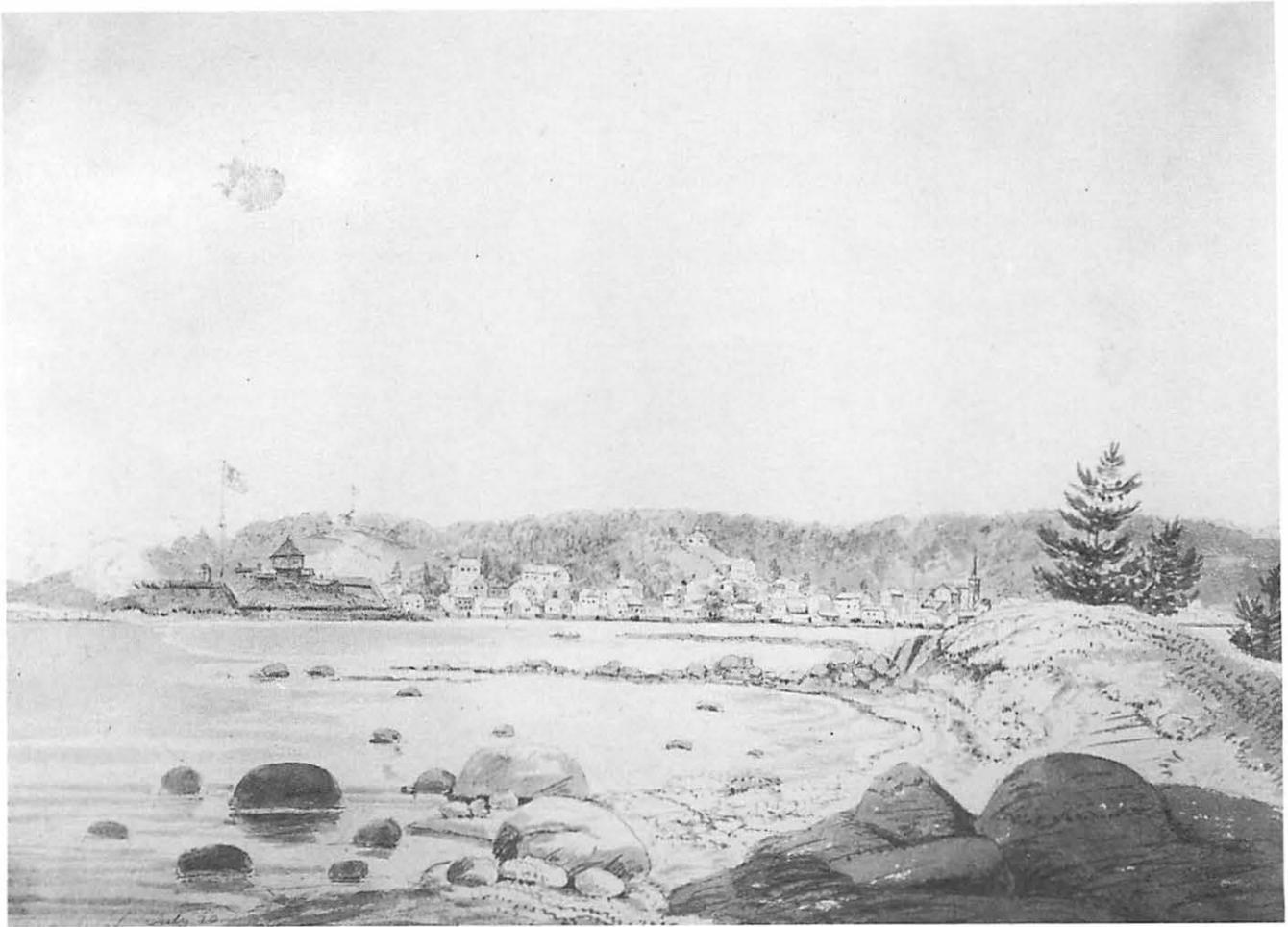
The original town plan for Liverpool drawn by Charles Morris in 1759. It shows the site for the centre of town further upstream than it actually developed and the ironical lack of any plots in the area towards the Battery Point which is where the town was established. The site for saw mills at Milton is shown together with the tracks which must have been made by the Indians or Acadians living in the area.



Part of the Des Barres map of Liverpool, published in 1777. Topographical information is less accurate than the nautical information given.



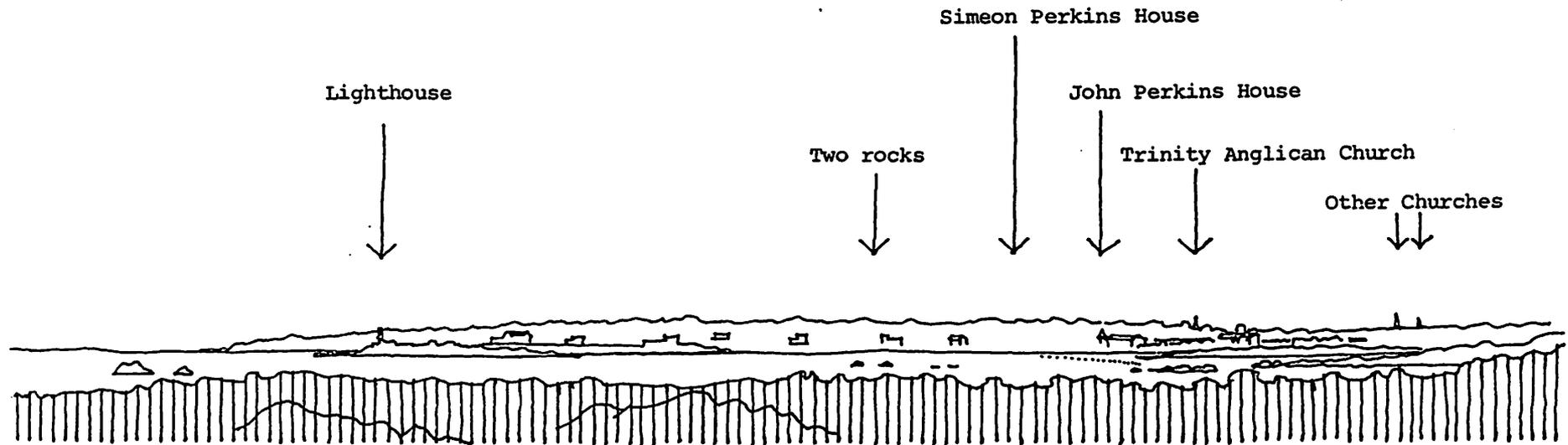
Part of the Bridge and Town of Liverpool. Note that two eye-levels have been used to permit inclusion of the bridge. This is one of seven sketches drawn the same day by John Elliot Woolford, artist to the Earl of Dalhousie, 20 July 1817.



The town of Liverpool from across the harbour, drawn by John Elliot Woolford. At the left is the fort with gunsmoke from, presumably, the Royal Salute. At the right is the spire of the Methodist Church, Trinity Anglican Church not being built until five years after this drawing. The vertical heights have been exaggerated but despite the apparent condensation of the buildings, the character of the small waterfront village is easily appreciated.



Liverpool from across the harbour, taken in 1982. In this photograph of the same view as the previous drawing by Woolford, the extent of the artist's license can be appreciated, but it must also be noted that the real view is much less informative.



Taken from a photograph of Liverpool, the outline shows the relationships of various physical features and the location of the Simeon Perkins House. When compared with the drawing by J. E. Woolford, there is a marked difference in vertical scales, but certain features, including the two rocks give it authenticity.

freedoms inherent in the township form of local administration (not without protest from the Liverpool settlers) and eventually the proprietors' jurisdiction extended only to providing for the local poor.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the initial survey of the town site (see p 21 ) which had indicated a good potential for farming the river banks, agriculture became of secondary interest, because the settlers preferred to pursue their familiar occupations in lumbering and fishing.<sup>14</sup> Perkins wrote in 1774 "...Stone in particular said the Land was good, and could not understand why farmers had not settled there".<sup>15</sup> Thus periodically, as Perkins reports in his diary, there was "great distress" when importing of food was interrupted by weather or war. Ten years later the situation was no better, as Perkins wrote<sup>17</sup> "...Hay is exceeding Scarce, which looks very malencholla indeed. Provisions for men also very Scarce." Other diary entries refer to the tenuous nature of the settlement with some people leaving very soon after their arrival. In the early 1770's Perkins moved to the Falls (later called Milton) as there was no business going on in the town. By 1773 even Perkins was a bit depressed for he writes on 11 Jan 1773<sup>18</sup> "Capt. Sheffield sails for Newport. John Wall and family go passengers. Wall removed to Rhode Island for good. Many other families talk of going away, as the outlook is bad. I think Liverpool is going to decay, and it may be many years ere it is more than a fishing village".

By 07-06-1778, the situation was similar, though for different reasons. By this time the war had affected trade in the form of privateers. Perkins wrote <sup>19</sup> "Our people are much Discouraged, and seem to be looking out to leave the place..."

The growth of the population is recorded by Simeon Perkins in his diary entry for 07-05-1787, where he lists the current population of Liverpool as follows:-

Liverpool	Men	Women	Children	Total
White	283	234	449	966
Black	19	10	19	48
	<u>302</u>	<u>244</u>	<u>468</u>	<u>1014</u>

In County

White	449	320	615	1384
Black	20	11	19	50
	<u>469</u>	<u>331</u>	<u>634</u>	<u>1434</u>

Militia, Liverpool, Officers included: 249  
County, Officers included: 414

It appears that 40% of the population of Queens County lived in the town of Liverpool at this time.

20

On 24-08-1795 Perkins writes "...the Gentlemen drink tea at my House. (Hon. Mr. Collector Newton, Capt. Jones Fawson, and Mr. Weeks) Capt. Hall of the Lynx and Mr. Collector Bruce of Shelburne, come on shore and take a walk. They all speak in high terms of the growing Situation of the place..." As Mr. Newton's son was to become Simeon Perkins' son-in-law just three months later, this evaluation may have been just a little biased.



Liverpool from the Bridge looking towards the Marine Railway about 1900. The Mulhall Wharf is on the right, the Timber Wharf beyond. The wharf built by Simeon Perkins would have been in the middle distance, but it has not been possible to ascertain whether any of the buildings shown in the photograph were built by him.



Milton, or the Falls as it was called in Perkins' time. The sawmills on either bank were subject to damage in the Spring run-off and were often rebuilt. None exist, but in this late nineteenth century view the sawmills are in operation still.

Ship-building prospered with a supply of timbers of various species at hand, and the additional advantage of a well-situated natural harbour, which had the restriction of a bar at the entrance.<sup>21</sup>

The Reverend James Munro provides us with a colourful description of Liverpool as it was in 1795:<sup>22</sup>

Liverpool was settled from New England in the year 1760. They received a considerable addition to their number in the latter End of the American War...There are two good Meeting Houses in the Town near to one another...Both Meeting Houses indeed are commodious in general; their Ware Houses preferable to any in the province at least to any I have seen. Their Churches, Dwelling Houses, and Ware Houses are painted in common with red or yellow paint which makes them look better and more durable. Its a place of considerable trade both to and from the West Indies. They export Lumber and fish in great plenty, especially the latter. Salmond and Herring are caught here in great plenty. At an average there will be near 1500 Barrels of Herring in one day. Besides Cod fish which they catch upon the banks. Besides what fish the Merchants purchase from others along the shore and send them to the West Indies for which in return they have mollases, sugar, Rum and salt. Their trade for such a small place is considerable and appears from the number of square-rigged Vessels to the amount of 25 well employed, making so many trips and live chiefly by that means, yet they are in charge with being much given to smuggling...

During Perkins' lifetime numerous significant changes occurred in Liverpool. The township form of government gave way to central control by the government in Halifax, Congregationalism was

replaced by Methodism, and the successive wars provided both a threat to security, requiring military action on the part of the local inhabitants, and an opportunity for making profit and extending trade.<sup>23</sup>

After Perkins' death in 1812, the fortunes of the town continued to wax and wane with the times. Anthony Lockwood wrote the following description of Liverpool which was published in 1818:<sup>24</sup>

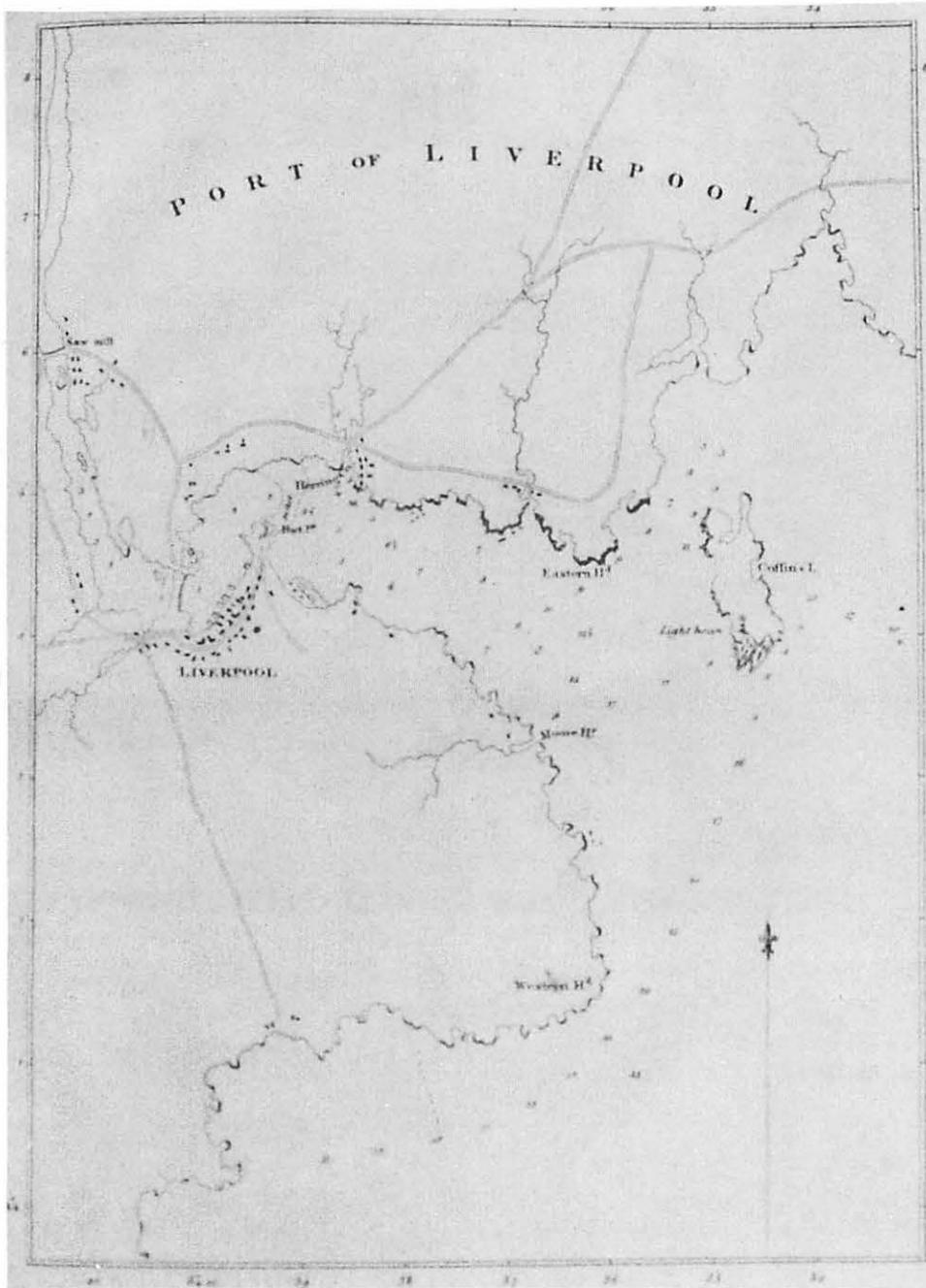
The town was settled in 1760. In 1762 the settlement contained 90 families, who, it is said, removed hither from Port Seigneur, for the convenience of the river and port for fishery. Yet it is not easy to conceive a place where nature has done less to favor man. A broken, rocky, barren country, surrounding a port obstructed at the mouth, and possessing a capacity very limited. The settlers originally came from the United States, of industrious, sober habits, and their exertions being unanimous, they not only surmounted these difficulties, but have raised the town to respectability and opulence. Their commerce is extended to every part of the West Indies, and their enterprising spirit, during the late war, was very conspicuous.

The population is now twelve hundred persons. An Episcopal church, a Methodist and Anabaptist meeting, a Custom House, and school, form the public buildings, the latter was built at the expense of James Gorham Esq, who presented it to the town in 1803. The houses are substantially good, and the regularity of painting them outside, not only improves their appearance, but tends to exclude the native humidity, and materially preserves the buildings, which are chiefly of wood.

As a contemporary comment to the Woolford drawings (p 23 & 24), this description throws some light on how a high ranking official



Liverpool c. 1898, possibly photographed by Gilbert Kempton, from a church tower, which shows the harbour and waterfront at the left, Main Street with its steam railway lines, and Fort Point hidden by the trees at the end of Main Street in the middle distance, and the former estate of Simeon Perkins lies hidden in the same trees.



The Port of Liverpool, 1818, by Anthony Lockwood, from A brief description of Nova Scotia with plates of the Principal Harbours, London, 1818. Although the main information appears accurate, the bridge is curiously drawn and misplaced. The general disposition of the houses can be clearly seen in Liverpool and up river in Milton.

saw and judged the town and its inhabitants, just six years after Simeon Perkins' death.

At the same time the population of Nova Scotia was changing. Highland Scots and Irishmen were beginning to immigrate in substantial numbers, but there were many who left.

Liverpool suffered the ravages of fire three times before the end of the nineteenth century, in 1856, 1884, and in 1895.<sup>25</sup>

Fortunately for us the fires never reached the Perkins' house.

But the threat of fire was possibly greatest in July 1792, when a forest fire was close enough to ignite a fence. Perkins was there, and put the fire out.<sup>26</sup>

Liverpool, Footnotes.

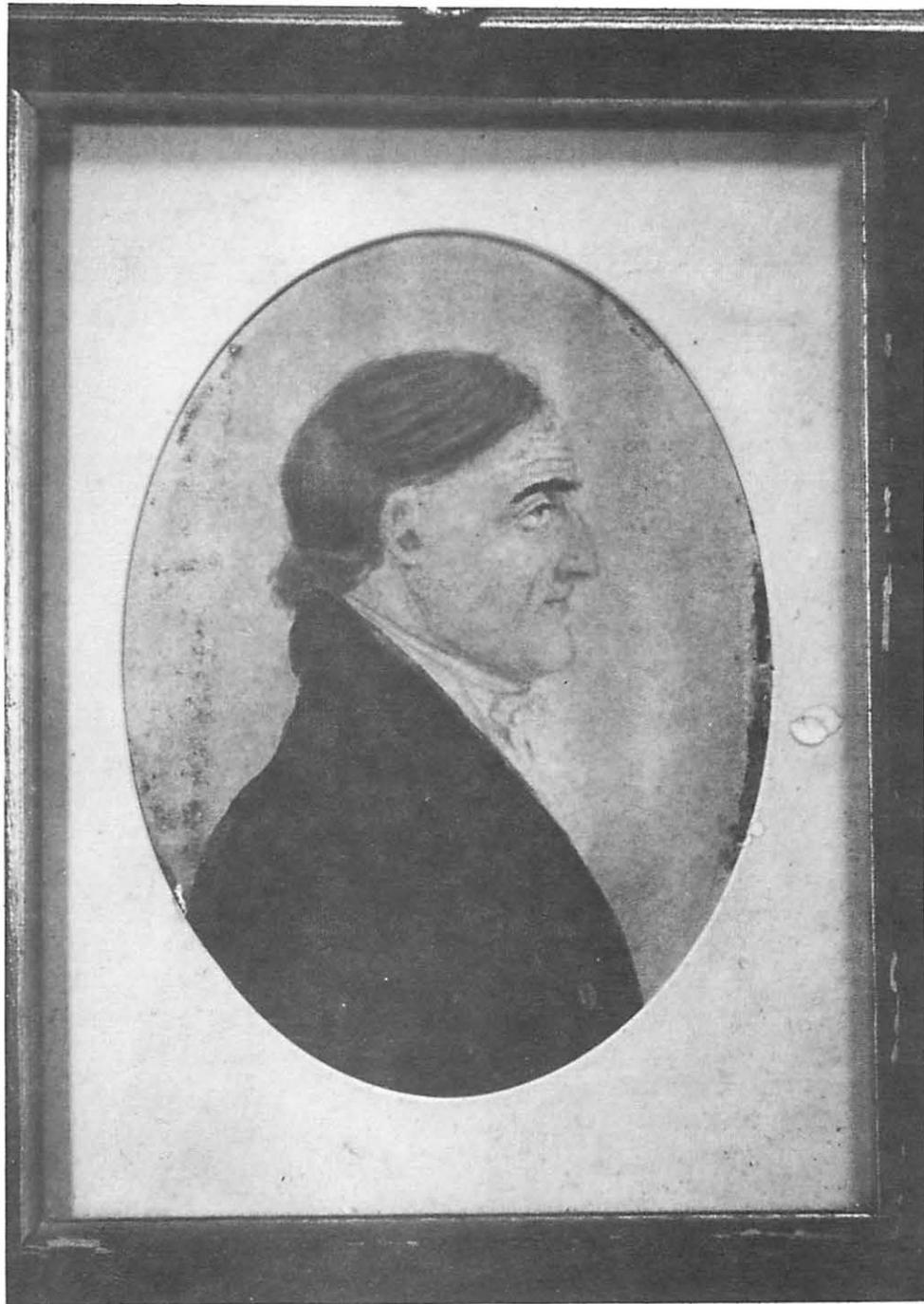
- 1 Diary, I, 1786-02-24.
- 2 Fergusson, C.B., Early Liverpool and Its Diarist, P.A.N.S. Bulletin #16, pp. 4-5.
- 3 For a general history of Nova Scotia see MacNutt, W.S., The Atlantic Provinces, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1965; Brebner, J.B., The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1969; MacKinnon, I.F., Settlements and Churches in Nova Scotia 1749-1776, Halifax, T.C. Allen & Co., 1930.
- 4 See Governor Lawrence's letter to the Lords of Trade written in Halifax, 8 December, 1755, Akins, T.B. editor, Nova Scotia Archives Vol. 1, Selections from Public Documents, Halifax, Charles Annand, 1869.
- 5 MacNutt, W.C., op. cit., p 61.
- 6 Fergusson, C.B., op. cit., p6. P.A.N.S. M.S.S. Doc. Vol. 359, Doc. 39.
- 7 Ibid., p.9. Governor Lawrence to Board of Trade, March 17, 1760.
- 8 Ibid., p.23. Novascotian, 1826-08-03.
- 9 Ibid., p.12. Governor Lawrence to Lords of Trade, 1760-06-16.
- 10 Ibid., pp.13-15.
- 11 Ibid., p.17.
- 12 Ibid., p.
- 13 Ibid., p.18. Minutes of Council, 1764-07-24.
- 14 Ibid., p.22. Also Diary, I, 1773-01-11, 1773-03-20.
- 15 Diary, I, 1774-08-20.
- 16 Report of Charles Morris, 1763-10-29, in P.A.N.S. Report 1933, p. 25.
- 17 Diary, II, 1785-03-25.
- 18 Diary, I, 1773-01-11.
- 19 Diary, I, 1778-06-07, when some Liverpool men deserted to join American privateers.
- 20 Diary, III, 1795-08-24.
- 21 Charles Morris to Governor Lawrence, 1760-06-01. P.A.N.S., R.G.1. Vol.211, Minutes of Council.
- 22 P.A.N.S. Report 1946.
- 23 Diary, passim.
- 24 Anthony Lockwood, A brief description of Nova Scotia with plates of the Principal Harbours, London, 1818.

Liverpool, Footnotes, contd.

- 25 P.A.N.S., Vertical M.S.S. file, Liverpool (General);  
Liverpool Transcript, 1865-09-21; Liverpool Advance,  
1977-06-22 (1884, 1895).
- 26 Diary, III, 1792-07-07.



An aerial photograph of Liverpool taken on 1923-09-26, which shows the extent of development of the town by that date. Milton is at the extreme right of the photograph.



The original and only known portrait of Simeon Perkins now in the drawing room of the Elizabeth Bishop Perkins House, York, Maine. This small watercolour has no date.



A Portrait of Simeon Perkins. A photographic copy hangs in the office of the house. Neither the date nor the artist are known.

to Interrogatories administered to him on or near the 4th  
June 1794 in a certain cause depending in the  
Court of Vice Admiralty in Bermuda wherein  
Thomas Tucker Commander of the Private Sloop of  
war called the Bermuda in behalf of himself and  
the Officers and Crew of the said Sloop is  
libellant against the Schooner Adament and  
Alexander Godbey Commander of the said Schooner  
Adament his Claimant of the said Schooner

Simon Perkins

Sample of the handwriting of Simeon Perkins in a formal document.

## Simeon Perkins

Simeon Perkins was born at Norwich, Connecticut, on 1735-02-24,<sup>1</sup> the fourth of sixteen children.<sup>2</sup> His ancestor, John Parkyns of Gloucestershire, England, landed in Massachusetts in 1630 or 1631.<sup>3</sup> On 7 Nov 1800 Perkins writes<sup>4</sup> "My Son John got our Family Arms painted by one Mr. Cole, in Boston, viz. He beareth Azure, Nine bars of Gold or Billets, Or, by the name of Perkins', Crest, a Lions Head, erased proper. This Family descended from the County of Kent, England". Two sons moved to Connecticut and while one produced a succession of doctors the other produced merchants.<sup>5</sup> Simeon came from the second line. He grew up in Norwich<sup>6</sup> and may have attended the local Latin school<sup>7</sup> or even the Academy at Lebanon, just 12km away, which was founded by Governor Trumbull in 1743.<sup>8</sup> His diary suggests that he was above average in intelligence and also that he was well-educated. His numerous public positions suggest an ability to cope with all levels of society and to succeed. Together with his cousin Jabez Perkins he was apprenticed to an older cousin, Jabez Huntington, to learn shopkeeping.<sup>9</sup> Jabez Huntington graduated from Yale College in 1741.<sup>10</sup> When another Huntington died, Governor Samuel Huntington, Perkins referred to him as a "once Intimate acquaintance."<sup>11</sup> There were Huntington Generals and State Governors so that Simeon Perkins was well connected.<sup>12</sup>

In 1760, Perkins married Abigail Backus, who died two weeks after

giving birth to a son Roger, when she was only eighteen.<sup>13</sup>

Abigail was a niece to Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut and therefore a cousin of his son, John Trumbull (1756-1843) the famous American painter.<sup>14</sup>

Eighteen months after his wife's death, Simeon Perkins moved from Norwich to Liverpool, "disconsolate".<sup>15</sup> He was twenty-seven. He sold interests in the business with his cousin Jabez<sup>16</sup> and appears to have entered into a new partnership with Jabez and brother-in-law Ebenezer Backus immediately afterwards. He set out for Nova Scotia, leaving his young son behind, presumably in the care of relatives.<sup>17</sup> On 31 October 1765, he wrote to his elder brother Jacob<sup>18</sup> "Please to give my Deauty to Father & mother Love to Brothers & Sisters & Little Roger with proper regards to all Friends & accept the Same from Sir Your Loving Brother Simeon Perkins". In his diary for 1772 July 1 he writes<sup>19</sup> "...Capt. Freeman arrives in a sloop from Norwich, bringing as passengers, my brother Jabez, and my son..." Roger would have been 11 years old. Despite the distance and succeeding wars Perkins maintained close ties with his family over the next fifty years, making visits to Norwich himself (including one of nine months)<sup>20</sup> and sending some of his children for up to a year at a time for schooling and experience.<sup>21</sup> Some relatives made the journey to Nova Scotia, one staying with the family for a year.<sup>22</sup> In 1773, January 1, Perkins writes,<sup>23</sup> "Ebenezer Perkins, my brother, is sent by my parents to live with me." It would appear that their



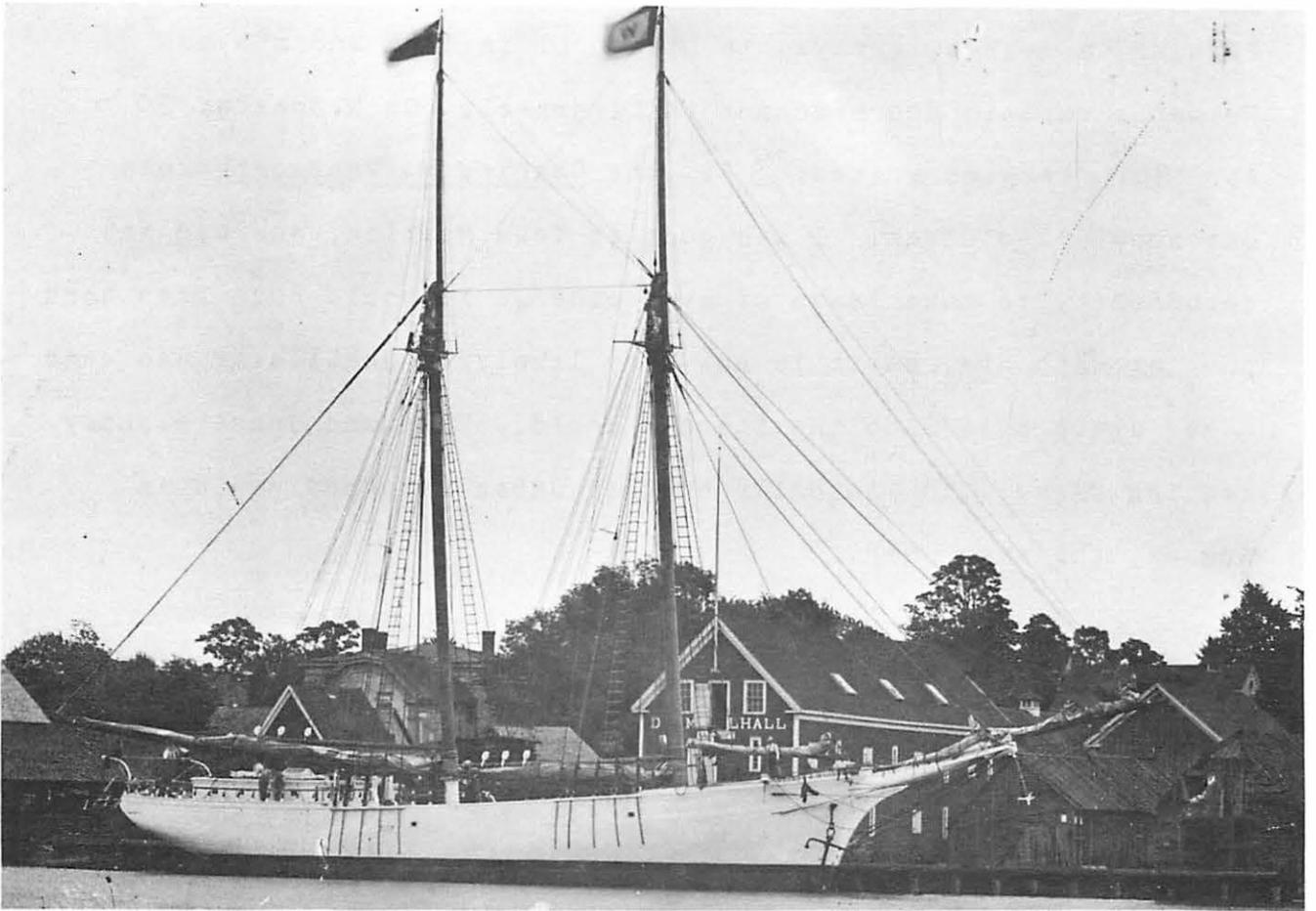
The Captain Matthew Perkins House, Ipswich, Massachusetts, built by Simeon Perkins' great-uncle in 1705. The Norwich Perkins' descended from two brothers who left Ipswich for Connecticut about 1700.



The Jabez Huntington House in Norwichtown, Connecticut, the home of Simeon Perkins' cousin and the man to whom Simeon was apprenticed. The size indicates the wealth of the Huntingtons, and while Simeon remained loyal to the Crown his relatives in Connecticut became wealthy as colonels, generals and painters of portraits of George Washington.



The Jabez Perkins House in Norwichtown, Connecticut. Although altered over time, the house of Simeon Perkins' cousin and business partner suggests that by staying in Connecticut he materially benefitted over his cousin Simeon.



Liverpool waterfront in about 1900. A two masted schooner berthed at Mulhall's Wharf. Simeon Perkins built similar but smaller ships one hundred years before, and used them in his business.

concern for their son was met in a practical way. Zebulum Perkins, a nephew, arrived in Liverpool in 1785 and stayed.<sup>24</sup> He was a captain and merchant in Liverpool. On Wednesday 30 Apr 1801, Perkins writes:<sup>25</sup> "...the Charles M. Wentworth goes out about 11 o'clock. I was gone to Town Meeting, and had Not opportunity to take leave of my Brother. It would have been hard parting with him, as it is not very likely We Shall ever See each other again this Side the Eternal World. The Lord Grant a happy meeting there...!" Actually brother Jabez returned again in August, the same year.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless Perkins did not hear of his Father's death until a year had passed<sup>27</sup> and of his mother's death until two years after the event.<sup>28</sup>

On the same day that Simeon Perkins set foot in Liverpool, he rented a store in which to set up business as a merchant.<sup>29</sup> The partnership seems to have been formed to trade in fish, lumber, molasses, rum and other goods between Nova Scotia, New England and the West Indies and appears to have foundered by 1773 when Perkins refers to it as the "Late Company."<sup>30</sup> Perkins was also in business with Bartlett Bradford, until the latter's death in 1801-08-10.<sup>31</sup> Toward the end of his life Perkins entered into partnership with Daniel Bishop who later became his son-in-law.<sup>32</sup>

Perkins was also heavily involved in the affairs of the community. He had been made a Justice of the Peace and a Justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas in 1764 only two years after his arrival in Liverpool.<sup>33</sup> In 1765 he was elected to represent Queens County in the House of Assembly in Halifax,<sup>34</sup> a position which he held until 1799.<sup>35</sup> He became Lieutenant-Colonel of the Militia in 1772 and later assumed the title of Colonel-Commandant until his retirement in 1807,<sup>36</sup> and in addition held an assortment of municipal and county posts: Proprietor's Clerk, Town Clerk and County Treasurer.<sup>37</sup>

The best diary reference which gives us a glimpse of how he saw himself, is from 18 Mar 1792, on hearing of the death of Colonel Tonge,<sup>38</sup> "...He was Member of the House of Assembly the first time I attended that House in May 28, 1765, and was the only member of the House, except myself, that had a Seat in the present House. I am now the only one Left. The House then consisted of twenty Six Members, 20 of which are either dead or gone from the Province, five, besides myself, are left Living in the Province, viz: - Honbl. Charles Morris, Honbl. Isaac Duchamps, Joseph Bernette, Esq, James Brenton, Esq., & John Burbage, Esq. They were a very reputable Body. What wonderful goodness & mercy of God that I am Still alive, When almost the whole of that Body of the first Charicters in the Country are gone the way of all the Earth."

Throughout his business career, Perkins' fortunes were mixed. Many transactions in trading and fishing were unsuccessful, as when a shipload of timber taken to the West Indies met a 'dull' market;<sup>39</sup> certain fishing expeditions did not yield expected gains,<sup>40</sup> a load of potatoes arrived at their destination frozen and unsaleable<sup>41</sup> or when a voyage was described as 'poor doings',<sup>42</sup> or 'a very bad voyage indeed',<sup>43</sup> and even as 'ruinous'.<sup>44</sup> He diversified his activities, constructing several saw mills and building ships from timber supplied by his own woodlots;<sup>45</sup> he made some gains from his privateering activities, but lost much in return at the hands of American privateers.<sup>46</sup> Perkins wrote the following on October 16, 1776:<sup>47</sup> "this is the fourth loss I have met with by my countrymen, and are altogether so heavy upon me I do not know how to go on with much more business especially as every kind of property is so uncertain, and no protection afforded as yet, from Government..." A week later he sustained his fifth loss.<sup>48</sup> In some cases his losses appear to be the result of bad luck, but in others, ineptitude or poor judgement. Not all were calamities. In 1810 he records that he had an 'overstock of chambermugs'.<sup>49</sup>

Through the medium of his diary, Perkins frequently lamented his lack of funds. Throughout his life he was plagued by problems of trying to operate his business ventures at a time when currency was in short supply and barter or credit was the chief means of transacting business.<sup>50</sup> This affected government and every form

of business, so he was not unique in his suffering. On those occasions when he was pressed to provide cash to pay off a debt (sometimes as long as thirty-one years after the original event),<sup>51</sup> he would find himself in difficulties since those owing him were also in no position to supply him with money.<sup>52</sup> Despite this, he remained solidly in business by one means or another, and by his own account, and the evidence suggested by his house, clearly enjoyed a standard of living which was superior for the time, despite periodic hardships suffered because of war, weather or shipping losses. His diary contains wistful references to the good fortunes of others, like his good friend Benajah Collins, who retired to New England with a small fortune.<sup>53</sup> Perkins also refers to the missed opportunities of his own life. He, writes,<sup>54</sup> "I cannot do any business to profit, or scarcely support my family. God knows what is best for me, and I prey for a conted [contented] mind."

Diversification had its advantages. In 1773, November 1st, he writes<sup>55</sup> "carried 950 bricks to build a chimney at the Falls. I have [men] getting a frame for that purpose, as I am determined to live there, it being cheaper, no business in town and more lumber can be cut by me being there." On 1773, December 7, he writes<sup>56</sup> "I move my furniture to the Falls, my family lodges at Mrs. Jane Headleys." He lived at the Falls for six months and then moved to his farm house at Birch Point.<sup>57</sup>





Elizabeth Headley Perkins, the second wife of Simeon Perkins painted by J. Comingo in 1813. The original hangs in the drawing room of the Elizabeth Bishop Perkins House in York, Maine. The chair on which she sits is similar to chairs in the house, as can be seen in the photograph of the Keeping Room, P 182.

In 1775, after being a widower for fifteen years,<sup>58</sup> Perkins married Elizabeth Headley a widow with a seven-year-old daughter, Ruth.<sup>59</sup> Perkins first refers to Elizabeth when both Mrs. Headleys went strawberrying with Stevenson, Russell & Perkins.<sup>60</sup> Stevenson & Perkins later married the two widows.<sup>61</sup> In 1775, between March 20 and May 29, Perkins went to Norwich, Connecticut, partly, one expects, to check on his feelings about Elizabeth Headley.<sup>62</sup> Between 1776 and 1790, eight children were born to them - six daughters and two sons.<sup>63</sup> Simeon's son Robert by his first marriage also joined the family in Liverpool in May 1777.<sup>64</sup> He had visited Liverpool before and had land granted to him, but apparently he received his schooling in Norwich where in 1775 he was apprenticed to Jedidiah Huntington, a merchant. He subsequently died three years later at the age of twenty when his ship was lost at sea, on return passage to Connecticut.<sup>65</sup>

Although Perkins' diary does not document his domestic life in the same detail as his business activities, his family life was obviously busy. In addition to the increasing number of children, there was a constant flow of relatives, visitors and servants who lived in the house. In 1777 Perkins bought a black boy called Jacob, who was 10 or 11 years old.<sup>66</sup> It is a reminder of the context that Perkins had a slave. Perkins changed his name to Frank and he lived in the family until he died.<sup>67</sup> Anthony and Hagar, a black couple from Shelburne also lived in.<sup>68</sup> Women who were hired to teach the children took up residence (one of them even

brough her own furniture!)<sup>69</sup> Visiting clergymen were provided with room and board for months at a time,<sup>70</sup> soldiers were billeted,<sup>71</sup> sailors slept in the barn,<sup>72</sup> and members of the ship-building crew boarded with the family.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the house was used for entertaining visiting officials and naval officers.<sup>74</sup> The Lieutenant-Governor visited and stayed for tea in August 1779.<sup>75</sup> Even religious services were held in the house. Perkins' diary entry for Sunday February 3, 1781 reads<sup>76</sup> "A Religious meeting held at my House in the Evening. A Large Concourse of People. I believe Near 150 Attended, which is till of Late a Very Strange thing in this Place Since the Settlement of it, till since Mr. Alline was here." Henry Alline was a well-known "New Light" Preacher. As this took place before the house was first extended in 1781, the people must have been packed in tightly! There was an occasional dance as well as a singing school of thirty people.<sup>77</sup>

Perkins' diary gives us a fascinating opportunity to study the character of this very busy and multi-faceted individual. He shows himself to have been a moderate man, concerned to make wise decisions. As a Justice of the Peace, he made meticulous efforts to question the individuals involved so that truth could be discovered and justice enacted.<sup>78</sup> As a member of the House of Assembly for thirty-four years,<sup>79</sup> he participated in various working committees, acted as speaker on several occasions in 1793,<sup>80</sup> and was judged, as his obituary states,<sup>81</sup> "not forward

as a speaker, yet in deciding upon any important question, he always manifested a depth of wisdom and good understanding, as one tenacious of the rights of the people, with a sacred regard to the prerogative of the Crown." His methodical care and caution served him well as a judge and a magistrate but less well when he missed business opportunities through delays and slowness.

His exploits as Commander of the Militia revealed his courage in dealing with a crisis. On 13 September 1780,<sup>82</sup> he led the militia to save the town from privateers, and as he described the incident himself, "thus ended the Dubious and Difficult Affair. At four o'clock in the morning, three of the Officers, all the Soldiers but six, the Fort & Ammunition, the Gunner, and some of the Inhabitants, with a Number of the Militia Arms, were in possession of Captain Cole, and by twelve o'clock everything restored to its former Situation without any Blood Shed." Benjamin Cole had lived in Liverpool for a while, but had become a New England Privateer Captain, with some success.<sup>83</sup>

From his diary, it is not possible to determine the political position of Simeon Perkins. He refers to the "Birth day of our beloved Sovereign George 3rd." ,<sup>84</sup> but makes no comment on the beheading of the Queen of France.<sup>85</sup> Other references appear to balance out against one another for example when Perkins writes on 6 Jan 1800<sup>86</sup> "...He brings News of the Death of the Great & Good General Washington.", whereas on June 4, the same year, he

writes<sup>87</sup> "...King's Birth day. We hoist the flag at the Fort, and at 12 O'Clock fire a Royal Salute on board the Privateer Charles M. Wentworth. The Owners Powder."

The reference to the powder reinforces the idea that this was a genuine response of the people, not a purely military exercise paid for and staged by the Government.

Yet he must have suffered in conscience as his brother Hezekiah fought on the other side and was imprisoned by the British in New York,<sup>88</sup> and some of his cousins were officers in the Army of Independence, one as a General.<sup>89</sup>

As a prominent citizen, merchant, and politician he came into contact with many of the leading figures in the province dining with Princes, Governors and military men. He was suitably impressed as he wrote on 2 Apr 1793,<sup>90</sup> regarding dinner at Governor Wentworth's, "His Lady at Table looked very gay & was Vastly pleasant." He was an active participant in church activities, at first Congregationalist, and subsequently Methodist,<sup>91</sup> but despite his interest in spiritual things, he was not above selling a crucifix on a gold and coral chain to buy wine!<sup>92</sup>

His affection for his family is demonstrated in many diary references. He clearly enjoyed the company of his wife and

children,<sup>93</sup> was attentive during times of illness<sup>94</sup> and rejoiced whenever they returned safely after the dangers of travel.<sup>95</sup> He saw to it that his own family was among those innoculated for smallpox when he was elected chairman of the Liverpool committee to carry out "the Innoculation law of 16 of George 3rd" in 1801.<sup>96</sup>

Perhaps the best summation of Simeon Perkins' career is in his own words written on Tuesday, 4 May 1802, when he was 67:<sup>97</sup>

A little Like Spring. Haisey weather. We are at work on our Fences etc. This day, forty years ago, I arrived in this Harbour, and Spent the Greatest part of that time here. I opened a Store and Carried on the Fishery directly on my Arrival, and have continued, more or less, ever since, except part of the year 1768 and part of 1769, I was at Norwich about my Company Business. Since which I have been Very Steadily here, and have not been to Norwich, or any part of the States, Since May 1775, 27 years, in which time I have been married, & have two sons and six daughters. Have gone through Much Fatigue & Anxiety in Business, and have met with many Losses & Misfortunes, and have not added so much to my property as might be expected from the Business I have done. But have in the Main had Tolerable Health, myself & Family, for Which I have abundant reason to be thankful...

Simeon Perkins died at Liverpool on 9 May 1812, leaving his wife Elizabeth and all eight children born to her.<sup>98</sup>

So within ten years, there were no Perkins left in Liverpool. How settled had Simeon ever felt? He wrote a comment in 1798<sup>99</sup> which might suggest that he never felt Liverpool to be his home, "... Two Schooners from Green Island put in here, one is Capt. Rhodes, of New London, the other Capt. Pendleton, of Stonington.

They are bound hom. I write to my Br. Jabez, & to Zebulun, by Capt. Rhodes. Have not time to write to John & Lucy." Had he become rich it might have been a different outcome.

He fulfilled his duty in important roles, even against his own country men, suffering much at their hands, and exercising sound judgement in his legal responsibilities. Yet his reason for coming to Nova Scotia was never satisfied. He failed to make a fortune. By the age of seventy, his realism was beginning to turn to pessimism, as he refers to another business venture, "...The Voyage will be a loosing one as Usual..."<sup>100</sup>



The Liverpool waterfront about 1900 showing sailing craft and warehouses. It would have looked somewhat similar in Perkins' day, but probably the vessels were smaller and less numerous.



John Perkins, 1778-1849, eldest son of Simeon and his second wife Elizabeth.



The John Perkins House at the bottom of Wentworth Street in Liverpool was built in 1810. It has been altered over time but because of a Diary entry we can fix the position of an office and a barn which previously stood here. The view of the harbour entrance meant that Perkins knew everything thing that was going on in the harbour.



The house of Joshua Newton and Abigail his wife, who was the eldest daughter of Simeon Perkins, was built on Main Street in Liverpool just before the death of Simeon in 1812. Although it has been altered it remains as a reminder that his children stayed close by as he sold off two lots of land to children late in life.

Simeon Perkins, Footnotes.

- 1 Perkins, Mary, Old Houses of the Antient Town of Norwich 1660-1800, Norwich, CT, Bulletin Co., 1895 and Diary passim.
- 2 Perkins, op. cit. p553 and Diary, III, 1794-07-21.  
In the genealogy of the Perkins family there are sixteen children listed whereas the Diary suggests only fourteen brothers and sisters. The explanation appears to be that there were two Marys, the first born 1735, who died young, and the second born 1753 who had just died, in 1794.
- 3 Diary, I, p. x.
- 4 Diary, IV, 1800-11-07.
- 5 Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, History of Norwich, Connecticut, published by the author, 1866.
- 6 Diary, I, p. x.
- 7 Perkins, M. op. cit.
- 8 Perkins, M., ibid. p. 235.
- 9 Perkins, M., ibid. p. 235.
- 10 Perkins, M., ibid. p. 479.
- 11 Diary, III, 1796-05-02, was Governor of Connecticut 1786-1796.
- 12 Perkins, M., and Diary passim.
- 13 Perkins, M., op. cit. p.235 and p. 553, and letter from the Connecticut State Library, Hartford, CT, 1976-07-21, re the Barbour Collection of Norwich Vital Records, 2,237.
- 14 Perkins, M., passim.
- 15 Perkins, M., ibid. p. 235.
- 16 Perkins, M., ibid. p. 235.
- 17 Diary, I, 1766-06-08, and III, 1796-02-24. See also Diary I, 1772-07-01, quoted below.
- 18 Diary, V, Appendix 1, Letter of 1765-10-31.
- 19 Diary, I, 1772-07-01.
- 20 Diary, II, 1786-02-24.
- 21 Diary, eg. 1793-09-12, Abigail, 1795-11-19, John, 1797-10-09, Lucy, 1799-11-09, Elizabeth and Simeon Leonard.
- 22 Diary, eg. 1766-09-20, Hezekiah (brother) to 1767-06-10, 1767-08-31, Ebenezer Backus (brother-in-law), 1770-05-23, Jabez (brother), 1785-09-22, Zebulun (nephew).

Simeon Perkins, Footnotes, contd.

- 23 Diary, I, 1773-01-01,
- 24 Diary, II, 1785-09-22.
- 25 Diary, IV, 1801-04-30.
- 26 Diary, IV, 1801-08-25.
- 27 Diary, I, 1776-11-29 and 1777-05-15.
- 28 Diary, II, 1781-07-14.
- 29 Diary, II, p. xx, and IV, 1797-02-02, 1802-05-04.
- 30 Diary, I, 1773-08-17, and possibly 1773-03-29.
- 31 Diary IV, 1801-08-10.
- 32 Diary, IV, 1802-07-06.
- 33 Diary, I, 1766-06-19, and I, p. 4. footnote 3.
- 34 Diary, I, 1766-07-17, and I, p. 7, footnote 1.
- 35 Diary, IV, 1799-12-04.
- 36 Diary, I, 1772-05-19 and III, 1793-09-09.
- 37 Diary, III, 1796-02-24, Justice of the Peace, Justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas (see introduction to Vol. II.) 1772-04-14, Town Clerk and County Treasurer (resigned as Treasurer in 1802), 1777-05-19, Judge of Probates, and 1777-02-24, Proprietor's Clerk.
- 38 Diary, III, 1792-03-18.
- 39 Diary, see Iv, xxvi-xxx, for summary of poor markets of 1797-1803.
- 40 Diary, IV, 1802-11-04, 1803-05-04.
- 41 Diary, IV, 1802-03-27.
- 42 Diary, II. 1786-11-07.
- 43 Diary, IV, 1799-01-23.
- 44 Diary, V, 1804-07-12.
- 45 Diary, I, 1773-01-01. Perkins has a mill for dressing leather. 1773-11-01 he decides to live at his saw mill and stays six months.
- 46 Perkins was involved in building a number of ships. Between 1784 and 1791 he built: Betsey, 1784, Lively, 1785, Despatch, 1785, Minerva, 1788, and Liverpool, 1791.
- 47 Diary, I, 1776-10-16, and IV, xl-liv, summary of privateering.
- 48 Diary, I, 1766-10-23.
- 49 Diary, V, 1810-05-12.
50. Diary, IV, 1797-12-01, Other debts are mentioned in Diary, II, 1787-05-11, III, 1792-10-27, IV, 1801-12-03 and V, 1810-03-07.

Simeon Perkins, Footnotes, contd.

- 51 Diary, IV, 1797-12-01 and 1799-05-31 for a twelve year debt.
- 52 Diary, eg. III, 1792-10-27.
- 53 Diary, IV, 1797-09-29 and 30.
- 54 Diary, IV, 1798-05-04.
- 55 Diary, I, 1773-11-01.
- 56 Diary, I, 1773-12-07.
- 57 Diary, I, 1774-06-07.
- 58 Perkins, M., and Diary, passim.
- 59 Liverpool Township Book, 1761-1870, P.A.N.S. microfilm M.G.4, Vol. 180, p. 58. Marriage 1775-09-10 to Elizabeth Young, widow of John Headley, (d. 1767); their daughter Ruth born 1768-01-01.
- 60 Diary, I, 1774-07-02.
- 61 Diary, I, 1774-10-06 and 1775-09-10.
- 62 Diary, I, 1775-03-20 to 1775-05-29.
- 63 Liverpool Township Book, 1761-1870, ibid.  
Abigail, 1776-10-03, John, 1778-08-19, Lucy, 1780-08-07, Elizabeth, 1783-01-17, Eunice, 1785-02-27, Mary, 1786-07-12, Simeon Leonard, 1788-05-20, Charlotte, 1790-01-01.
- 64 Diary, I, 1777-05-15. Roger had been in Liverpool earlier, but had returned to Norwich where he was apprenticed to Jedidiah Huntington, Diary I, 1775-01-04.
- 65 Diary, III, 1796-02-24.
- 66 Diary, I, 1777-07-12. Jacob cost £35.
- 67 Diary, II, 1784-06-22, aged 17 or 18.
- 68 Diary, II, 1783-12-20.
- 69 Diary, II, 1789-11-04, III, 1790-12-28.
- 70 Diary, II, 1784-03-27, III, 1793-05-02.
- 71 Diary, II, 1781-02-26.
- 72 Diary, IV, 1797-10-27.
- 73 Diary, II, 1788-09-02, I, 1778-10-06.
- 74 Diary, IV, 1797-12-19.
- 75 Diary, II, 1789-08-22.
- 76 Diary, II, 1781-02-03.
- 77 Diary, II, 1784-02-13.
- 78 Diary, IV, 1797-09-26, IV, 1803-12-19, V, 1811-04-10.
- 79 Diary IV, 1799-12-04.
- 80 Diary, III, 1793-03-26, 1793-04-12, 1793-04-17.

Simeon Perkins, Footnotes, contd.

- 81 The Weekly Chronicle, 1812-06-05, cited by C.B.Fergusson, op. cit., p. 54.
- 82 Diary, II, 1780-09-13,
- 83 Diary, I, 1774-12-03, when Benjamin Cole Jnr. worked for Simeon Perkins, and II, 1780-07-30, and 1780-09-12; as a privateer.
- 84 Diary, V, 1805-06-04.
- 85 Diary, II, 1794-01-11.
- 86 Diary, IV, 1800-01-05.
- 87 Diary, IV, 1800-06-04.
- 88 Diary, I, 1778-09-13, where it could be interpreted that Jabez also fought against the British.
- 89 Perkins, M., passim.
- 90 Diary, III, 1793-04-02.
- 91 See Diary II years 1783 and 1784 referring to the New Lights and the Methodists in Liverpool. 1784-08-15, the Methodists retain control of the Meeting House.
- 92 Diary, IV, 1798-11-17,
- 93 Diary, passim.
- 94 Diary, III, 1790-05-17, 1790-01-01 and passim.
- 95 Diary, IV, 1799-03-02 and passim.
- 96 Diary, IV, 1801-01-29.
- 97 Diary, IV, 1802-05-04.
- 98 Dates of deaths have been compiled from Perkins, M., op. cit. pp. 553 and 555, the Perkins family genealogy and from the T.B. Smith Collection, Perkins file, MG 1, Vol. 851, with frequent citations from Long, R.J., A Copy of the Annals of Liverpool and Queen's County 1760-1867, West Medford, MA, 1926, P.A.N.S. Microfilm, and the Diary, passim.

	Born*	Died
Roger	1760-12-08	1781 ? (at sea)
Elizabeth Headley	c1747	1825 at Ithaca, NY.
Abigail	1776-10-03	1819-09-18
John	1778-08-19	1849 at Norwich, CT.
Lucy	1780-08-07	1817 at New York, NY.
Elizabeth (Betsy)	1783-01-17	1856
Eunice	1785-02-20	1815-08-10, Liverpool.
Mary (Polly)	1786-07-12	1815-01-20, Liverpool.
Simeon Leonard	1788-05-20	1822-06-12, Liverpool.
Charlotte	1790-01-01	1837-10-08, New Orleans.

\* from Diary.

Simeon Perkins, Footnotes, contd.

99 Diary IV, 1798-09-20.

100 Diary V, 1804-09-13.



Moore French Agnew who died in 1873 was the husband of Ellen Matilda Seely who lived in the house for most of her 93 years.

### Subsequent Owners of Perkins' House

Elizabeth Perkins continued to live in the house for another ten years after Simeon's death.<sup>1</sup> At first she was surrounded by children, but then in a period of only ten years, five of her eight children by Simeon Perkins were dead. Four daughters died by 1819, Eunice, Mary and Abigail died in Liverpool, and Lucy died in New York.<sup>2</sup> John Perkins, the eldest son, left Liverpool about 1819 to settle at Norwich,<sup>3</sup> but Simeon Leonard, the second son, died in 1822 at Liverpool.<sup>4</sup>

After 1815 the economy of Nova Scotia slumped and by 1822 was a matter of public concern.<sup>5</sup> Within ten years Elizabeth Perkins had lost her husband and five of her eight children. In November 1822, she sold the house to Caleb Seely for £600<sup>6</sup> and moved to New York with her remaining unmarried daughters, Elizabeth & Charlotte.<sup>7</sup>

Caleb Seely was the son of Loyalists from Connecticut who settled in St. John, New Brunswick. Seely was a merchant and well-known privateer, the former owner of the "Liverpool Packet" which had captured fourteen vessels in one year.<sup>8</sup> After he retired from privateering, he shared a successful ship-building partnership in the 1830's with Patrick Gough and Enos Collins, and later worked on his own.<sup>9</sup> He was defeated in an attempt to be elected to the house of Assembly in 1830.<sup>10</sup>

Seely moved into the house in 1822<sup>11</sup> with his wife Phoebe<sup>12</sup> and two small children.<sup>13</sup> By 1831 three more children were born to them.<sup>14</sup> Phoebe Seely died in 1847,<sup>15</sup> and Caleb remarried twice, Desiah Grieve in 1848<sup>16</sup> and Jane Sancton in 1855.<sup>17</sup> He outlived his third wife. It is likely that by June 1855, Seely's daughter Ellen Matilda and her husband Moore French Agnew, an Irish dentist and watchmaker, were also occupants of the house.<sup>18</sup> Mrs. Agnew retained the property after the death of her father in 1869<sup>19</sup> and her husband in 1873.<sup>20</sup> When she herself died at the age of ninety-six in 1923,<sup>21</sup> her unmarried daughters Marian and Letitia who were both living in the house, continued their occupation until their deaths in 1935 and 1936,<sup>22</sup> although they never legally owned the house.<sup>23</sup> The property then passed to a niece Mary Edith (Nichols) Lynch, who did not live in the house but sold it to the Queens County Historical Society in 1936.<sup>24</sup> Remarkably, until this time, the house had survived one hundred and sixty-nine years under the ownership of only two families, through five generations.

Under the leadership of its President, Thomas Raddall, the Queens County Historical Society carried on a protracted campaign to have the house made into a museum available to the public.<sup>25</sup> This dream was achieved in 1949 after the property was donated to the King for the Province of Nova Scotia in 1947.<sup>26</sup> The house was officially opened as a Nova Scotia Historic House on 29 June 1957, with Premier Robert Stanfield, Lieutenant Governor Allistair

Fraser and Thomas Raddall giving brief addresses.<sup>27</sup>

The house was transferred from the Department of Trade and Industry to the Department of Education in 1960, where it remains as the earliest of the houses in the Nova Scotia Museum collection.

28

Subsequent Owners, Footnotes.

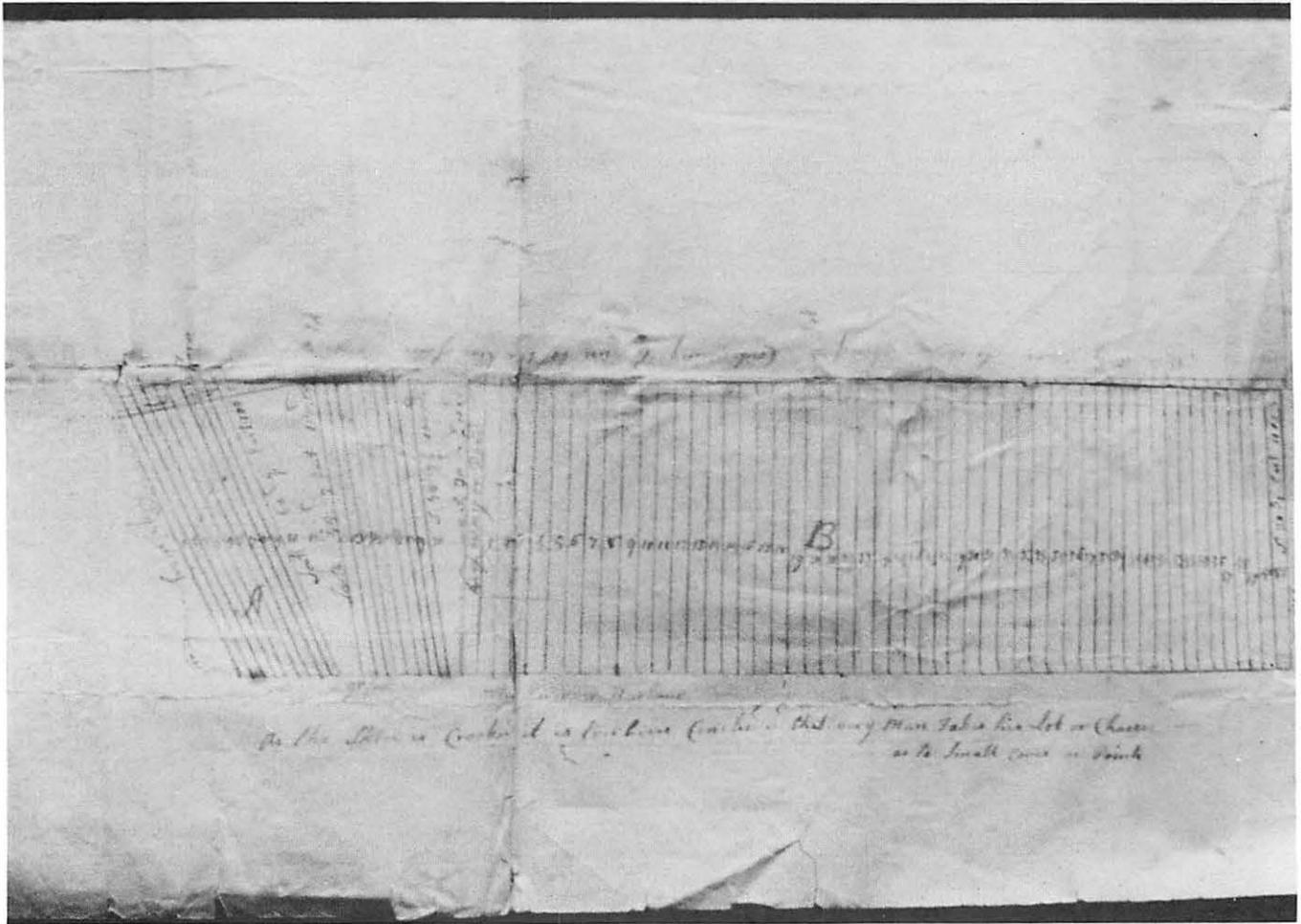
- 1 Liverpool Registry of Deeds, Book 8, P 253.
- 2 Charlotte married Dr. C.P.Heermans and died at New Orleans Long, op. cit.
- 3 Perkins, M., op. cit. p. 555.
- 4 Tombstone inscription, Liverpool.
- 5 Howe, Joseph, Western and Eastern Rambles: Travel Sketches of Nova Scotia, University of Toronto Press, 1973, p. 99, footnote 80.
- 6 Liverpool Registry of Deeds, Book 8, p. 253.
- 7 P.A.N.S. Vertical M.S.S. file "Simeon Perkins", and Perkins,M., op. cit.
- 8 Nicholls, G.E.E., "Notes on Nova Scotian Privateers", in Collections of N.S. H.S., Vol, XIII, p. 134.
- 9 T.B. Smith Collection, op. cit., quoting Snider, C.H.J., Under the Red Jack: Privateers of the Maritime Provinces of Canada in the War of 1812, Toronto, 1928, pp. 48 ff.
- 10 T.B. Smith Collection, op. cit.
- 11 Liverpool Registry of Deeds, Book 8, p. 252.
- 12 Marriage of Caleb Seely and Phoebe Collins, Liverpool Township Book 1761-1870, P.A.N.S. MG 4, Vol. 180.
- 13 T.B. Smith Collection, op. cit., Gilbert, b. 1819-04-13, Ann Caroline, b. 1822.
- 14 Ibid., Ellen Matilda, b. 1827-05-12, Edwin Collins, b. 1830-01-26, Charles, b. 1831-12-06.
- 15 Records of Trinity Church, Liverpool, P.A.N.S. Microfilm, Phoebe Seely, 1847-06-03.
- 16 Marriage of Caleb Seely to Desiah (Parker) Grieve, Records of Trinity Church 1800-1855, 1848-12-15.
- 17 Marriage of Caleb Seely to Jane Sancton, 1855-09 at Halifax, T.B. Smith Collection, op. cit.
- 18 1861 Census for Liverpool, Poll District 1, p.3, # 38, lists the M.F. Agnew household as having 1 married man 60-70, 1 married female 40-50, in addition to a younger married couple of the age of Moore and Ellen.
- 19 T.B. Smith Collection, op.cit., Caleb Seely b. 1787-08-31, St. John, N.B., d. 1869, Trinity Church, Liverpool, Burials, 1869-02-17. Cause of death, paralysis.
- 20 Trinity Church, Liverpool, Burials, Moore F. Agnew, 1873-12-08. P.A.N.S. Microfilm.
- 21 Ibid., Ellen M. Agnew, 1923-11-19 aged 93 years.

Subsequent Owners, Footnotes, Contd.

- 22 Ibid., Marian Agnew, 1935, Letitia Agnew, 1936.
- 23 Liverpool Registry of Deeds, Book 83, p. 84.
- 24 Thomas Raddall, "The Queen's County Historical Society, 1929-1959", unpublished excerpts from his personal diaries, p. 2., the Queen's County Historical Society purchased the house for \$2500. Copies of Raddall's History can be found in the P.A.N.S., N.S.M., and the Simeon Perkins Museum, Liverpool, N.S.
- 25 Raddall, passim. the purpose of it being written.
- 26 Ibid., p. 6.
- 27 Ibid., p.18.
- 28 N.S.M.



The Reverend Joshua Newton Perkins, grandson of Simeon Perkins, who despite living in the United States, returned the portions of the Diary written by Simeon Perkins in Nova Scotia to the Town of Liverpool about 1900. This painting is in the town of Norwich, Connecticut.



The original survey drawing for Fishlots A & B drawn in 1764. The comment at the bottom reads, 'As the shore is crooked it is ever been concluded that Every Man takes his lot or chance - as to Small Coves or Points'. Simeon Perkins seems to have drawn Lot B3 which is above average in area.

## Site

Initial grants of land were made to the first settlers of Liverpool in 1760.<sup>1</sup> Simeon Perkins arrived in Liverpool in May 1762<sup>2</sup> but no free grant land was available. By November 1764, many new immigrants had arrived and were requesting land,<sup>3</sup> and so a new area of lots was made available closer to the harbour entrance, which included the fish lots in area B, where Perkins built his house. Simeon and his son Roger acquired extensive holdings in the Liverpool area. Perkins owned a farm at Birch Point, land for sawmills at the Falls, which is now called Milton, and woodlots from which he cut both lumber and firewood. At this time he is listed as owning three salt meadow lots, one 12-acre lot, and two-and-a-half 30-acre lots and three 200-acre woodlots.<sup>4</sup>

Perkins bought other land and buildings, was given land in payment for debts, and built and rented out houses.<sup>5</sup> He used at least five ship building sites but was not necessarily the title holder to the land.<sup>6</sup>

To the north-east of the town itself, he drew Fish Lot B 5 of three acres and subsequently Fish Lots B 3,4,5,6,7 and 8 were either used by him or owned by him.<sup>7</sup> On 13 Sept 1779, he writes<sup>8</sup> "Go to town to see about my old houses there." He

subsequently established a considerable estate in what later became a strategic position located on the main street and on the waterfront within easy reach of the open sea. With the passage of time the town centre drew closer to his property,<sup>9</sup> largely stimulated by the location of the bridge across the harbour.<sup>10</sup>

On his fish lots he developed two distinctive groups of buildings on either side of the main street, to the north a business complex and to the south a domestic one, with some farming on both sides.

On the northern waterfront portion of the site, he built stores,<sup>11</sup> shop,<sup>12</sup> office,<sup>13</sup> workshed,<sup>14</sup> barn<sup>15</sup> and blacksmith's shop,<sup>16</sup> as well as a wharf<sup>17</sup> and a short wharf,<sup>18</sup> a ship-building yard<sup>19</sup> and a small house for the blacksmith.<sup>20</sup> One of the buildings was rented as a slaughter-house for a while.<sup>22</sup> Some of the land was also used as a meadow, for a potato field<sup>23</sup> and for drying fish.<sup>24</sup>

A Portion 'where the office and old barn stand' was sold to his son John in 1806 for a house lot.<sup>25</sup> John began building in May 1810.<sup>26</sup> This house is still standing on Wentworth Street, though altered, thereby locating the office and barn. From the office there would have been a good view of the harbour and waterfront activity.

On 17 Jan 1812 Simeon Perkins sold land to his son-in-law, Joshua

Possible land use adjacent to house and store

Field

Fruit Orchard

Hoop

Barn

Woodshed

Well

Meadow

'Shore' Garden

Shop & Office

Workshop

Square field

Store and extension  
'Necessary'

Joshua Newton House

Barn

John Newton House

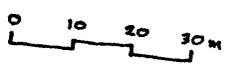
Fish flakes

Office

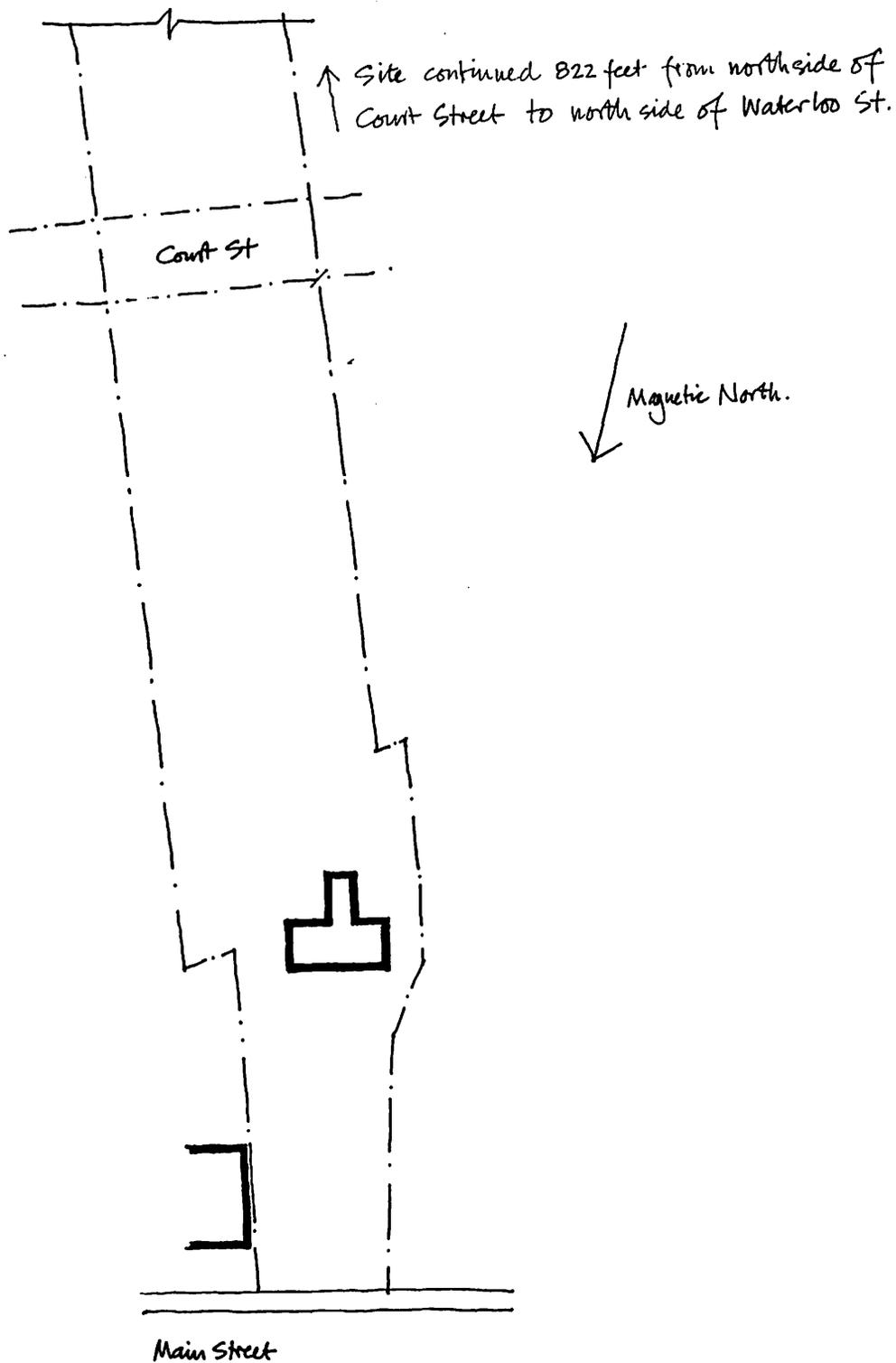
Blacksmith Shop

Ship building

Wharves



A conjectural site plan showing the locations of buildings and activities, compiled from Diary references.



The 'Homestead'.

The extent of the property on the death of Caleb Seely in 1873.  
 Site plan drawn from the deed description in the Caleb Seely Estate papers, P.A.N.S. A 521 RC 48, Reel 1129

Newton.<sup>27</sup> This appears to be part of lot B8, which on 7 Sep 1804, Perkins writes that he did not own.<sup>28</sup> Newton built a two-storied house on Main Street opposite to Perkins' house. It still stands, although considerably altered. (See p 63 ). Several authors refer to the house next door to the Perkins' house as that of Joshua Newton, yet the reference in the diary must be interpreted as locating it on the opposite side of the street.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout his life, Simeon Perkins spent a considerable amount of time in his office doing business, in legal matters and in writing his diary. During his later years, each winter around the middle of January, he appears to have removed his books to the house for the coldest weather and then returned to the office about mid March or later.<sup>30</sup> References are confusing, with store,<sup>31</sup> shopstore,<sup>32</sup> counting room<sup>33</sup> and office<sup>34</sup> presumably meaning quite different spaces. The office appears to have been kept apart from the store because on one occasion he rented out the counting room to a shoemaker.<sup>35</sup> The diary entry for Friday, 18 June 1802 suggests another good reason for separation,<sup>36</sup>

"...I agree with Mr. Wilson to rent him my old store for a joiners shop, @ 7/6 a month, 4 or 5 months. I told him there is powder in the loft. So he will, I hope, be carefull."

The diary entries during 1800 show that the old store was repaired,<sup>37</sup> that a new store was built at the end of the old

one,<sup>38</sup> and that a new extension was added in 1801.<sup>39</sup> In 1790 there is another entry which records that the 'old' store was being reshingled.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately no accurate picture emerges as to which was the old store, which the new store or where they were located. It has been suggested that the last store still stands on the corner of Wentworth St. and Main St. and is now used as a two-family dwelling.<sup>41</sup> Perkins does not differentiate between his various buildings, but refers to the store,<sup>42</sup> upper store,<sup>43</sup> lower store,<sup>44</sup> King's or Govt. store,<sup>45</sup> prize store,<sup>46</sup> town store,<sup>47</sup> Campbell's store,<sup>48</sup> shop store,<sup>49</sup> Old store,<sup>50</sup> new store,<sup>51</sup> small store<sup>52</sup> and platform store,<sup>53</sup> and shop.<sup>54</sup> There were probably fewer than five buildings altogether. In one of these stores was a "chamber", and presumably close by was a privy or as Perkins calls it a "necessary". It was blown over in a gale.<sup>56</sup>

Rum,<sup>57</sup> salt,<sup>58</sup> herring,<sup>59</sup> cannon,<sup>60</sup> cotton stockings,<sup>61</sup> osnaburg,<sup>62</sup> tar<sup>63</sup> and old sails<sup>64</sup> were presumably not all stored under one roof, and the retail store was obviously separate from the militia supplies.

Having purchased or built a store in town before 1765,<sup>65</sup> Perkins later rented it during the period in which he lived at the Falls and Birch Point in 1773-4,<sup>66</sup> and again in 1777.<sup>67</sup>

By May 1774 he had begun construction of a store near his house at Birch Point.<sup>68</sup> In September 1779 a "road or Smooth passage" was made "from the Store to the House."<sup>69</sup> It is hard to imagine why this was so important as to warrant the cost of five pounds.

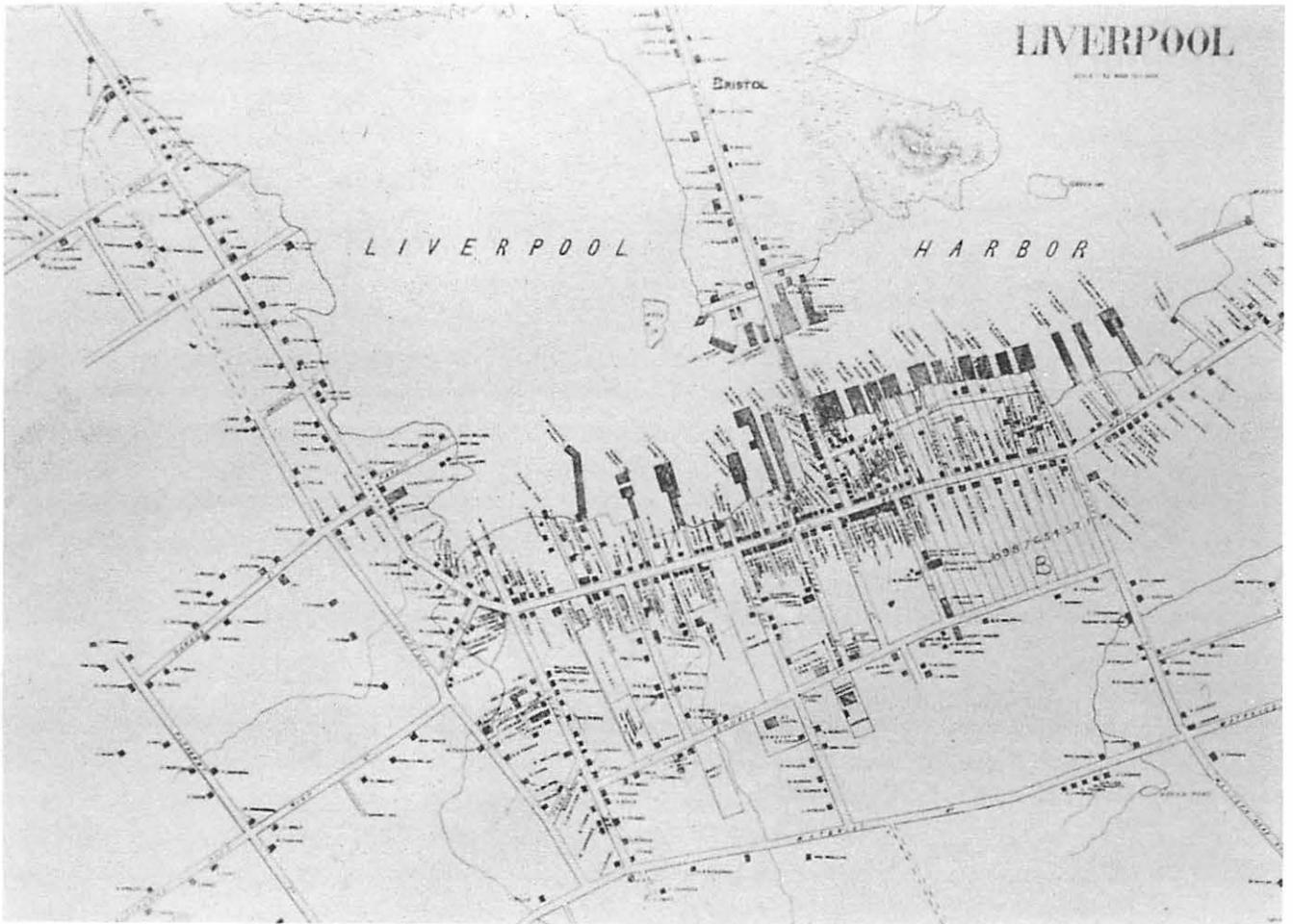
On the southern part of the site, Perkins constructed his house,<sup>70</sup> barn,<sup>71</sup> hogpen,<sup>72</sup> workshed,<sup>73</sup> woodshed,<sup>74</sup> and other outbuildings.<sup>75</sup> On 23 February 1811, he records<sup>76</sup> that a fire destroyed a woodshed which was located between the barn and the house on the far side of the well. On 15 July 1789 he writes<sup>77</sup> "...I agree with Joseph Bangs to Set up an Addition to my Barn of 10 feet & to run 10 feet back of the present Barn, which will make it 26 feet by 10..." Does this mean that the finished barn would be 26x10 feet or the extension?

The buildings were surrounded by a meadow cultivated for hay,<sup>78</sup> various vegetables,<sup>79</sup> and orchards with fruit trees<sup>80</sup> and berry bushes.<sup>81</sup> But there was also room for extras in his husbandry, as Perkins writes in 1791,<sup>82</sup> "I begin to Build a wall in front of Show Garden." Despite the fact that Perkins devoted considerable time and effort to the construction of numerous walls and fences on his property, they were ineffectual, at least in part. On 28 Feb 1784 he writes<sup>83</sup> "My Cow Calves in the woods and lost her Calf. My Sow pigs abroad and loose part of her pigs." Whereas in 2 Jun 1793 he writes<sup>84</sup> "the Pigs & the grubbs have destroyed the most of my Cabbage." But walls had other uses as on

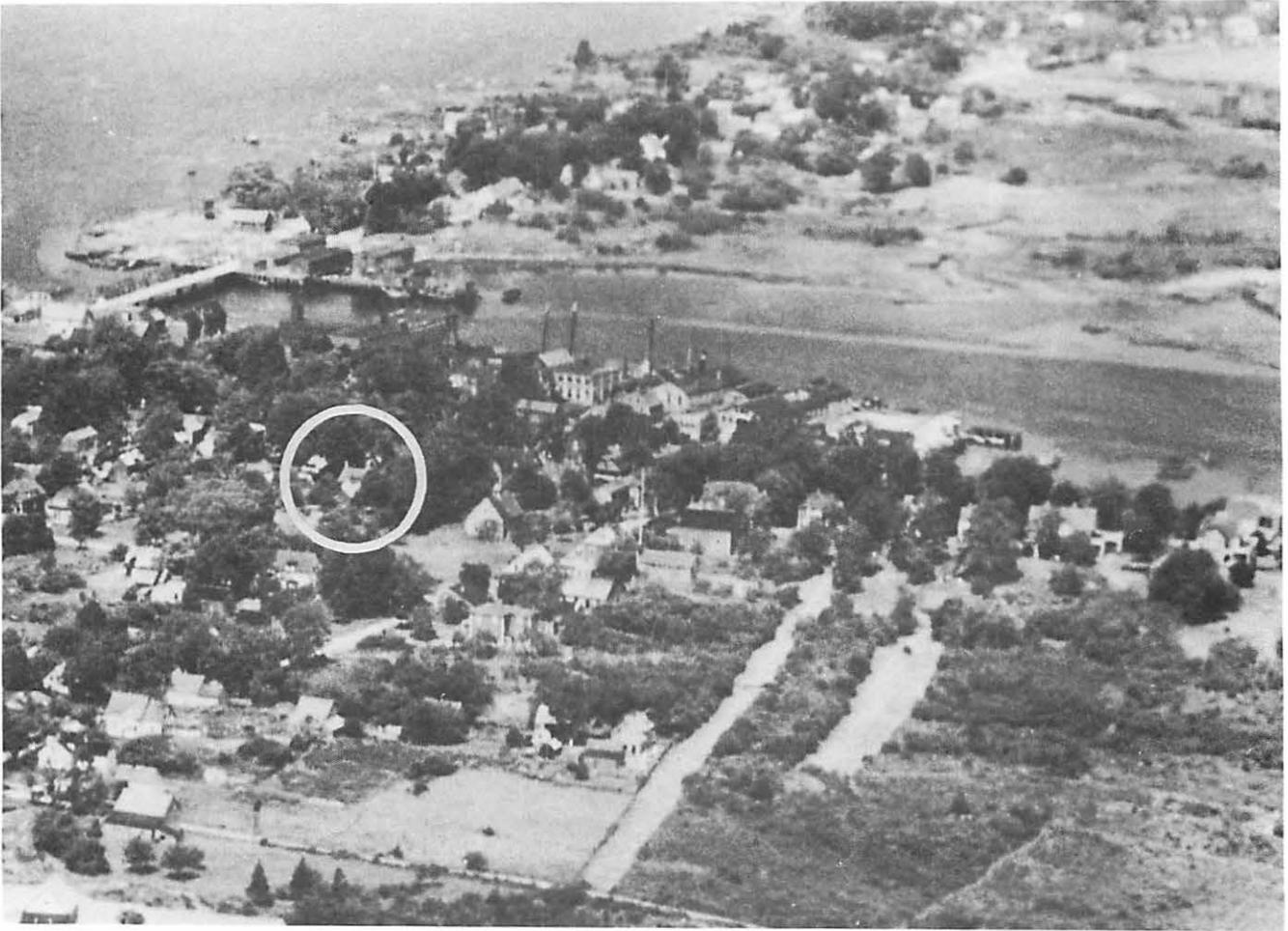
31 Dec 1801, when Perkins was using old stone walls for ballast, because they were convenient.<sup>85</sup> On 10 May 1811 he reports<sup>86</sup> part of a fence stolen, presumably for firewood.

As the visitor perceives the site at the present time, it is hard to imagine how it appeared in Perkins' day. Initially, the house was isolated from neighbours, with some farm activity around it and with the mercantile business at the water's edge. Later it became the centre of a complex of farm buildings surrounded by hay fields and stone walls with a business complex including his shop and office across the street. The waterfront was close at hand and the harbour with its shipping activities was visible from the house, with masts rising over the top of the waterfront buildings as the Woolford drawing of 1817 shows. Perkins complained of the erosion of his view by a neighbour's house in 1792,<sup>87</sup> "It takes off Some of my prospect from the river." This also suggests that there were few trees left standing amongst the buildings.

The house now sits in a suburban setting, with neighbouring houses crowding in and a new museum has recently been constructed so close to the house and of such dominating scale that the visitor now finds a house overwhelmed by the surroundings. The mature trees, especially the chestnuts, also dwarf the house. The relationship of the house to the water has to be consciously sought out as Wentworth Street and Duke Streets<sup>88</sup> have been built up, and industrial buildings now obliterate any view of the



Part of the A. F. Church map of Queen's County showing a portion of the town of Liverpool. This map was published in 1888. The 1764 lot lines have been drawn in, Lot B6 contains the house of Mrs. Agnew.



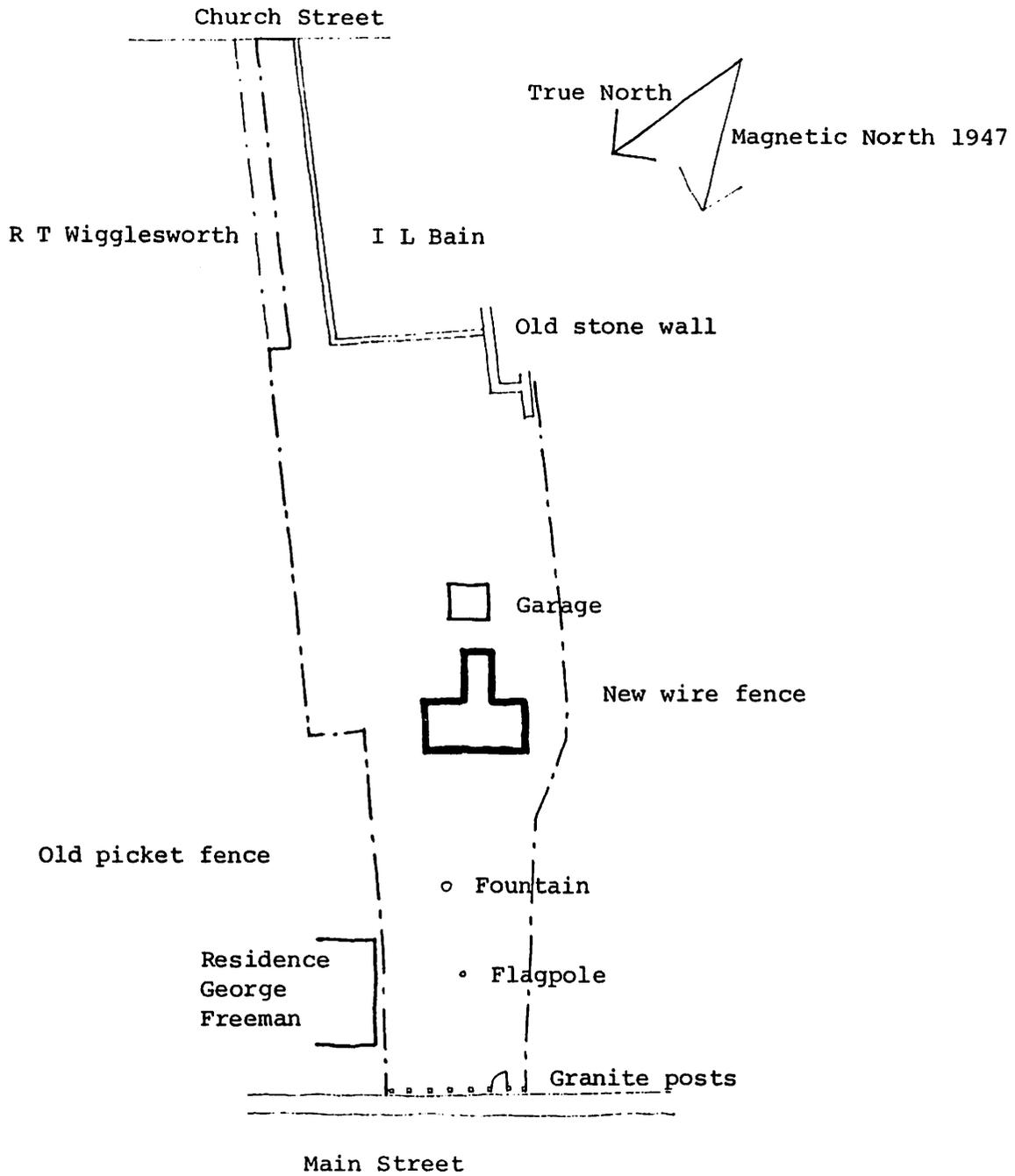
A portion of an aerial photograph taken in 1946 with the Perkins House circled.

water.

By 1899, as the Kempton photographs show ( pp 9 & 10 ) Main Street had become a residential one, nevertheless the steam railway which operated between 1896 and 1906<sup>89</sup> created more activity than is seen today. In two hundred years the setting of Perkins House has changed from business and farm centre to residential suburb. With the construction of the new museum the setting is becoming busier again, marked by the gap in the parking meters which allows a tour bus to wait outside the museum.

Site, Footnotes.

- 1 C.B. Fergusson, op. cit., p. 6.
- 2 Ibid. and Diary II, where he writes "I came here May 4th 1762, tho not the whole time here, as I Spent about 8 or 9 months at one time at Norwich, & near as Long at another."
- 3 Diary, passim. and I, 1766-12-05, and 1767-08-14.
- 4 Diary, passim., and I, 1767-02-24, buys a lot, 1766-10-17, builds a house, 1767-07-06, receives a house, workhouse and town lot as payment for a debt.
- 5 Liverpool Proprietor's Book.
- 6 Diary, passim and III, 1796-03-23, II, 1783-10-17,
- 7 Diary, passim.
- 8 Diary, I, 1779-09-13.
- 9 Morris, Charles, map of the Township of Liverpool, copy from Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests.
- 10 Lockwood, A., (see p 23) . Bridge Street, Liverpool, still bears testimony to the earlier location.
- 11 Diary, III, 1793-02-12.
- 12 Diary, IV, 1801-08-22, and passim.
- 13 Diary, V, 1806-02-01.
- 14 Diary, IV, 1798-09-26.
- 15 Diary, IV, 1803-07-26, V, 1806-02-14.
- 16 Diary, IV, 1801-06-31.
- 17 Diary, IV, 1797-11-04, 1800-08-13 & 14.
- 18 Diary, V, 1811-09-30.
- 19 Diary, passim. or III, 1791-08-15, or III, 1796-03-23
- 20 Diary, IV, 1801-07-31.
- 21 Diary, V, 1811-11-19.
- 22 Diary, IV, 1801-07-30, II, 1784-08-04.
- 23 Diary, II, 1781-05-27.
- 24 Diary, IV, 1800-08-15 & 16.
- 25 Diary, V, 1806-02-14.
- 26 Diary, V, 1810-05-08
- 27 Diary, V, 1812-01-17.
- 28 Diary, V, 1804-09-07.



Plan of the property 1947  
after B L Parker PLS

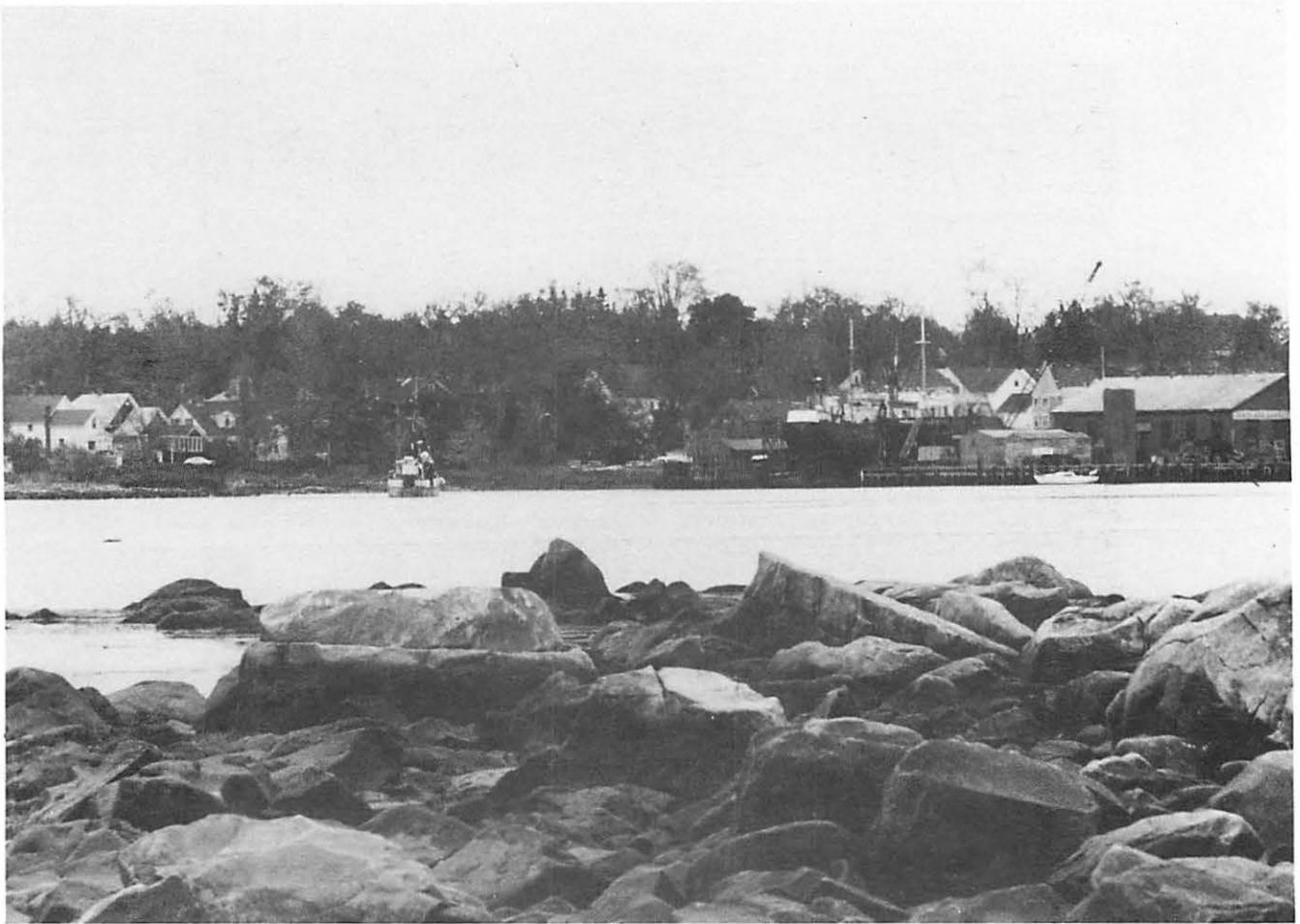
The earliest known plan of the property made at the time of transfer of the house from the Q.C.H.S. to the Province of Nova Scotia. From a drawing by B. L. Parker, P.L.S.

surroundings 1971.





A portion of an aerial photograph taken in 1970. Perkins House can be seen as the inverted T shape in the centre.



A detail of the Liverpool waterfront taken from across the harbour in 1982. The house built by Simeon Perkins is in the centre of the photograph, but hidden from view by subsequent building and in the summer by leaves. In contrast the John Newton House tower can be clearly seen at the right centre despite the development of the waterfront.

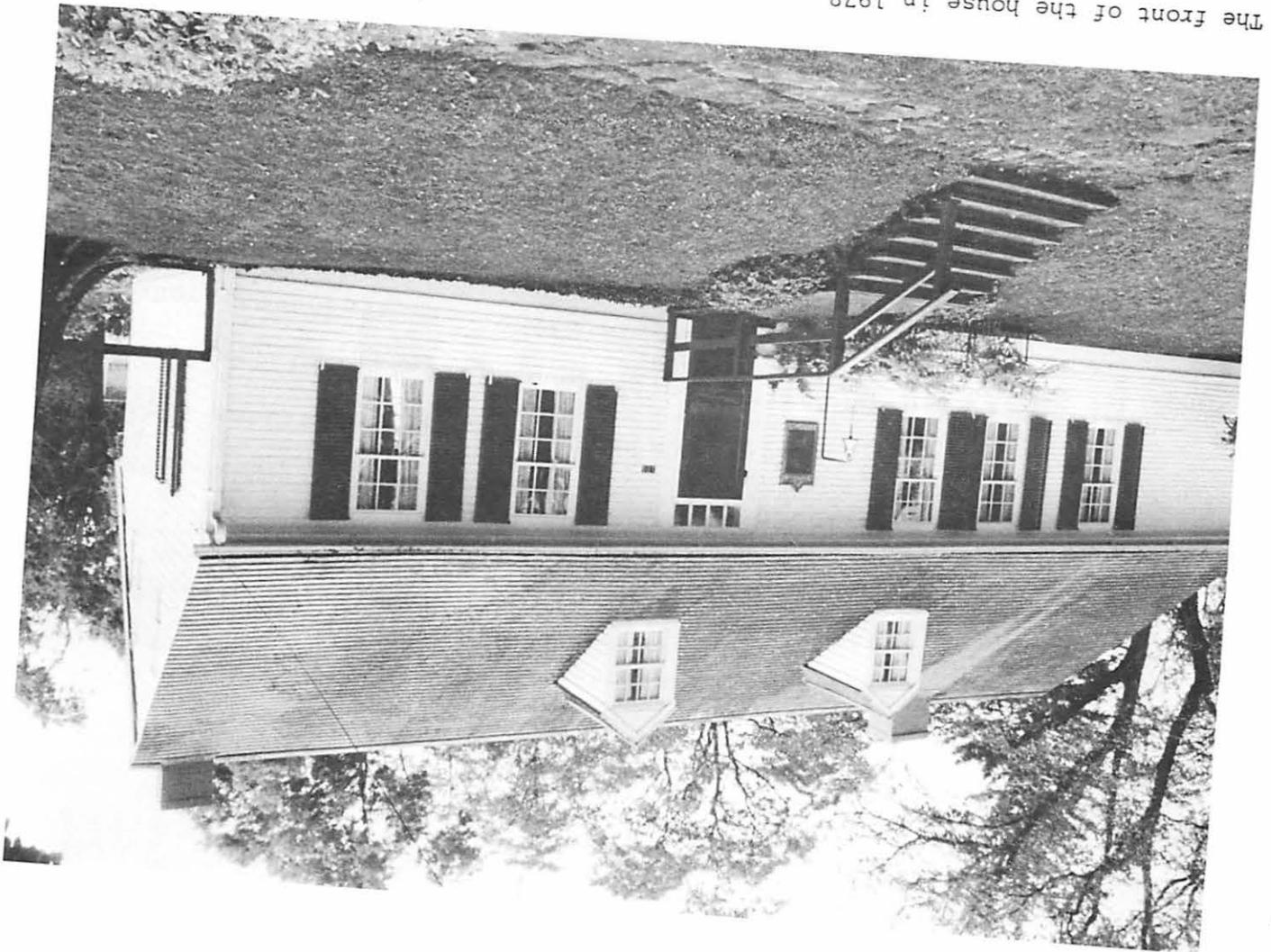
Site, Footnotes, Contd.

- 29 Diary, IV, 1812-01-17, where the land adjoins that of John Perkins towards the water.
- 30 Diary, IV, 1797-01-12 and IV, 1797-04-29 as examples.
- 31 Diary, V, 1810-03-22.
- 32 Diary, IV, 1801-07-14.
- 33 Diary, V, 1810-02-07.
- 34 Diary, V, 1810-06-09.
- 35 Diary, I, 1775-03-02.
- 36 Diary, IV, 1802-06-18.
- 37 Diary, IV, 1800-05-09.
- 38 Diary, IV, 1800-05-10, 1800-07-02.
- 39 Diary, IV, 1801-07-14.
- 40 Diary, III, 1790-09-14.
- 41 Harvey, Mary, verbal communication.
- 42 Diary, I, 1767-03-06.
- 43 Diary, V, 1805-10-31.
- 44 Diary, V, 1805-10-23.
- 45 Diary, II, 1786-07-11, 1787-07-11, III, 1790-12-31.
- 46 Diary, II, 1782-10-01.
- 47 Diary, I, 1777-10-06.
- 48 Diary, III, 1796-12-31.
- 49 Diary, IV, 1801-07-14.
- 50 Diary, III, 1790-09-14, IV, 1803-02-22.
- 51 Diary, IV, 1800-05-28.
- 52 Diary, II, 1788-09-25.
- 53 Diary, III, 1793-01-06.
- 54 Diary, I, 1776-05-28.
- 55 Diary, IV, 1800-07-26.
- 56 Diary, IV, 1801-04-10.
- 57 Diary, III, 1790-09-07.
- 58 Diary, IV, 1800-07-01.
- 59 Diary, III, 1792-12-20.
- 60 Letter to J.M. Freke Bulkeley Esq., 1793-08-24.
- 61 Diary, I, 1779-08-02.

Site, Footnotes, Contd.

- 62 Diary, III, 1790-09-07.
- 63 Diary, V, 1811-06-29.
- 64 Diary, III, 1796-11-10, V, 1805-01-26.
- 65 Diary, I, 1767-03-18, 1767-06-17, 1769-06-19, 1775-03-02, etc.
- 66 Diary, I, 1773-12-18.
- 67 Diary, I, 1777-10-06.
- 68 Diary, I, 1774-05-17.
- 69 Diary, I, 1779-09-23 to 30.
- 70 Diary, I, 1776-06-19.
- 71 Diary, II, 1787-03-20.
- 72 Diary, II, 1782-10-03.
- 73 Diary, IV, 1798-09-25.
- 74 Diary, V, 1811-02-23.
- 75 There must have been a privy, though no mention is made of one. See also Diary, V, 1811-10-21, for reference to a stone ash house which was required after the fires had been equipped with grates and coal was used for the main fuel source.
- 76 Diary, V, 1811-02-23.
- 77 Diary, II, 1789-07-15.
- 78 Diary, III, 1790-08-03.
- 79 Diary, IV, 1797-06-10.
- 80 Diary, IV, 1797-03-18.
- 81 Diary, II, 1781-04-23.
- 82 Diary, III, 1791-04-20.
- 83 Diary, II, 1784-02-28.
- 84 Diary, III, 1793-06-02.
- 85 Diary, IV, 1801-12-31.
- 86 Diary, V, 1811-05-10.
- 87 Diary, III, 1792-03-30.
- 88 Diary, IV, 1802-02-10, 1802-06-02.
- 89 Stephens, David E., Iron Roads: Railways of Nova Scotia, Lancelot Press, Windsor, N.S. 1972.

The front of the house in 1978.



## The House

Immigrants to Nova Scotia, irrespective of the date of their arrival, brought with them the style of architecture most natural to their social position in their country of origin.<sup>1</sup> The strongest connection can be seen in the houses actually brought by the early settlers as prefabricated dwellings. Some early Liverpool settlers like Sylvanus Cobb, arrived with a house frame and other components, including ready-glazed windows, for what would become an obviously pure transplant of style and technology.<sup>2</sup> Others, who were less well off, had to cope with the climate in the best possible way using whatever materials were available, as instanced by one settler near Liverpool, who as late as 1794 was still living in a sod house.<sup>3</sup>

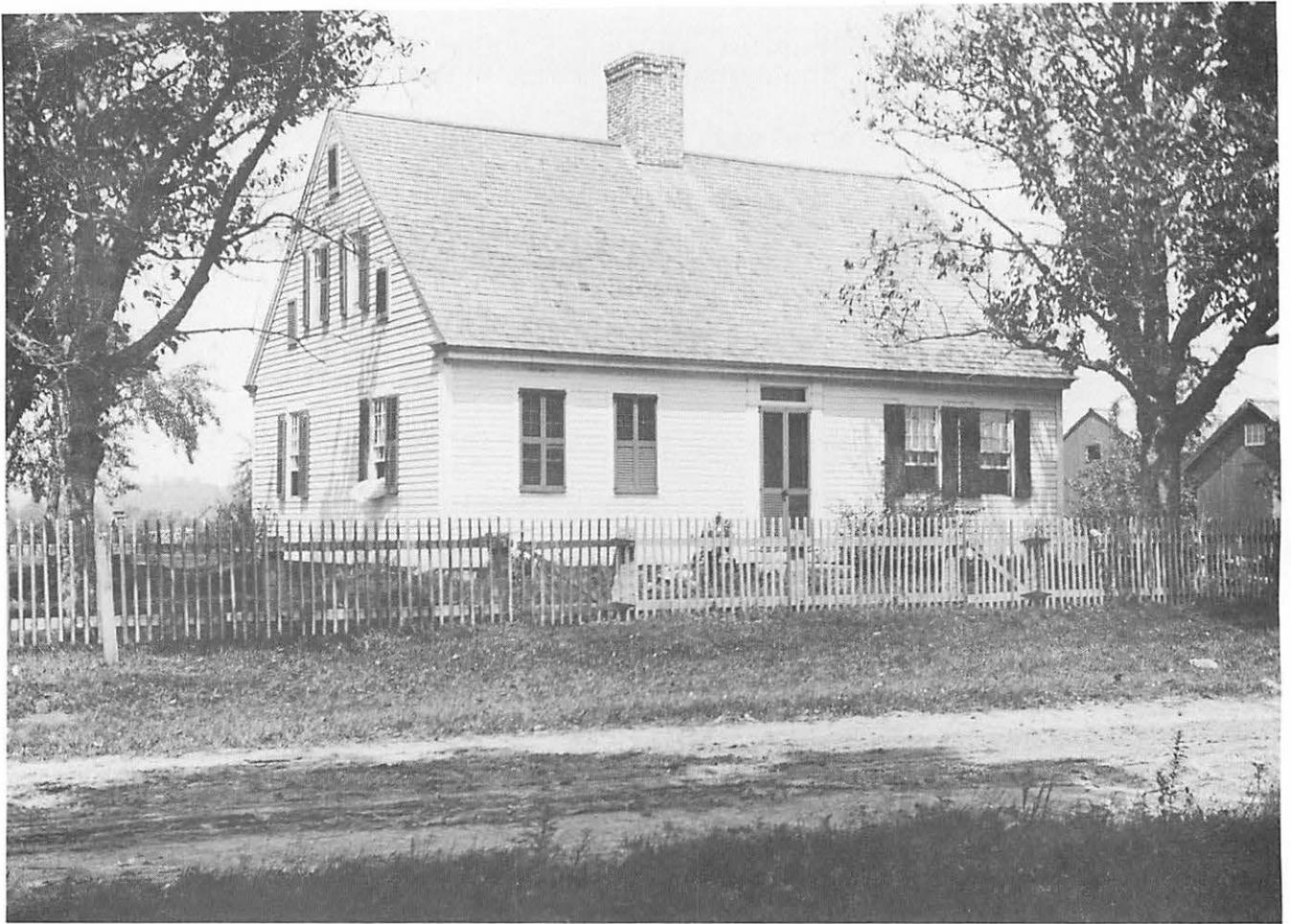
Simeon Perkins arrived in Liverpool with a load of merchandise, but no house. He had to rent accommodation.<sup>4</sup> Four years later when he built his own house, he used local materials; stone for foundations, timber for frame and sheathing from his own land.<sup>5</sup> However, he must have imported metal goods for fixings and door hardware, as well as bricks and clay for fireplaces and chimneys.<sup>6</sup> Presumably the window frames were manufactured locally as he writes on March 26, 1767,<sup>7</sup> that he was unable to move into his new house as there was no glass. At that time glass would have been imported from England but the diary entry might also be interpreted to mean ready glazed sashes.<sup>5</sup> Despite this

use of local materials, the house is truly a New England one in both style, form and technology. Although it exhibits certain characteristics typical of houses in Connecticut, it does not seem correct to limit its origins to that one State alone.

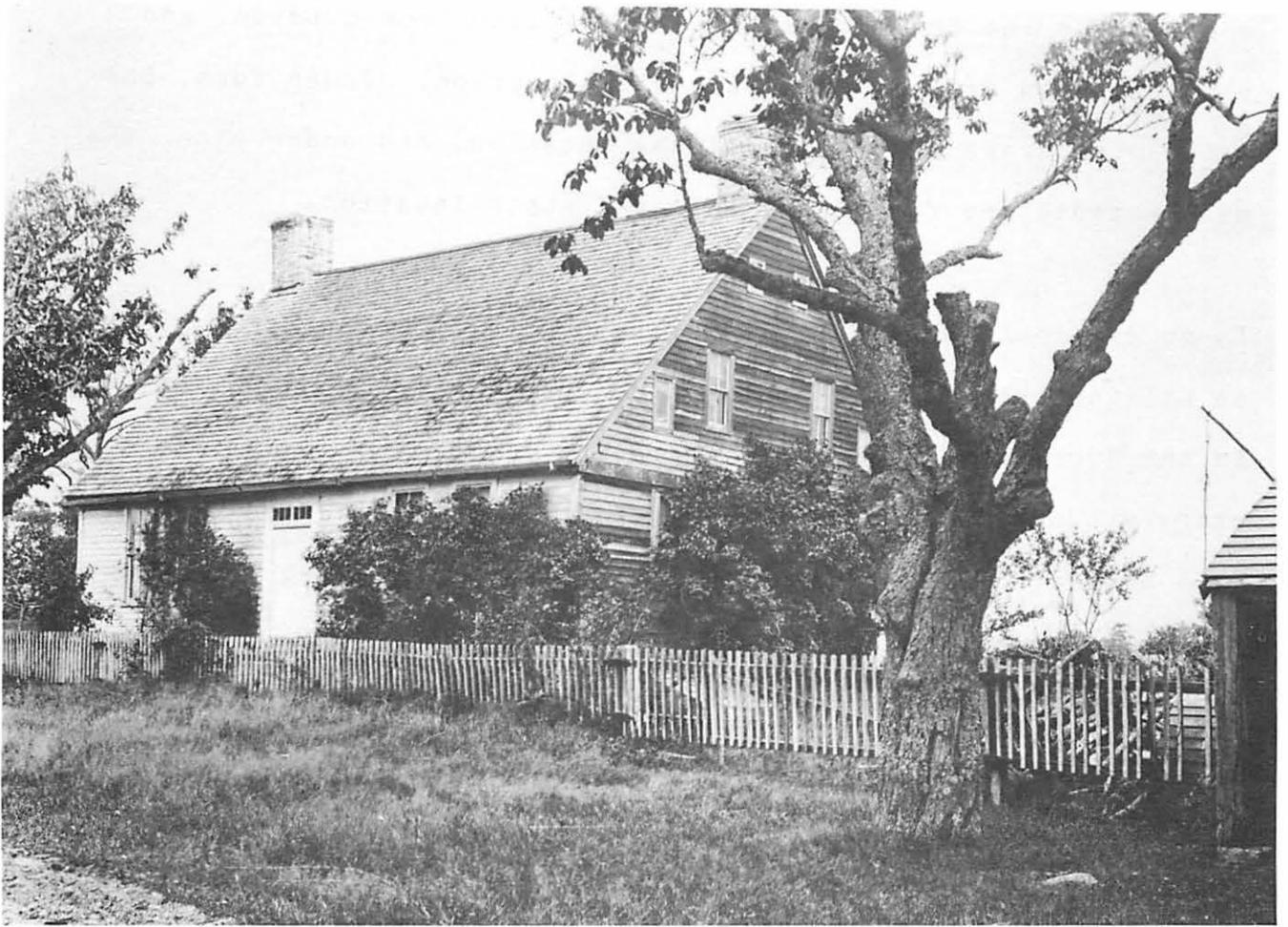
The style of Perkins' house is often referred to as "Cape Cod",<sup>9</sup> but this is rather misleading as the style is common to all of New England and beyond. During the mid-eighteenth century, from South Carolina to Nova Scotia, one and two storey houses were built in the Georgian vernacular style then current.<sup>10</sup> This style had been developed from medieval English models, but had been modified into a uniquely North American style which was universally accepted along the Eastern seaboard.

The too precise title of "Cape Cod" is coupled with the equally misleading title of "storey and a half".<sup>11</sup> With a full ceiling height over the whole of the ground floor, these houses have full height over part of the upper floor, or as it might be described, partial full-headroom to the rooms in the roof. Our common usage of 'storey' seems to imply the vertical dimension rather than the horizontal one. A better description might be one that clearly implies the area, such as "a floor and a half". For simplicity, the author will refer to the style as "New England" and to the form "as storey and a half".

Two aspects of the houses in this basic category of simple shed



The Noah Burr Homestead in Killingworth, Connecticut, photographed in 1895 by the Rev. Hollis A. Campbell. Note the large central chimney, decorative trim and general proportions. Killingworth is about 40 km from Norwich.



The Lane House, Killingworth, Connecticut. Note that the gable end projects slightly over the end wall, there are two chimneys, one at each end of the ridge, and the front is symmetrical. The house is clapboarded.

form become important when an attempt is made to understand the context for the design. Both form, as seen from outside, and plan, as seen from inside, vary with location. Under form, the main aspects are shape and chimney location, and under plan, the main aspects are fireplace, hall and stair location.

In an examination of form it may be helpful to consider two houses at Killingworth, Connecticut, which were photographed in 1895.<sup>12</sup>

In the Burr house (p 98 ) there are flush gable ends with small extra windows which presumably provide light to roof spaces. The Lane house (p 99 ) has similar small windows but also has a slightly projecting gable wall above the upper floor. The appearance of the two houses is most noticeably different at the roof ridge where the Burr house has a central chimney and the Lane house has chimneys located at the extreme ends of the ridge, though still located within the end timber wall. The Lane house is particularly interesting as it combines the typically early projecting gable end with the typically later end chimneys. Both houses have symmetrical gables and equal eave heights, which appears to have been more common than the asymmetric section of the "salt box" form.<sup>13</sup>

A number of examples of this type of house from New England, including Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine, which all date from about 1750 to 1830, have been studied and certain types emerge.

<sup>14</sup> (p 102 ) Most common are those with a central door, balanced

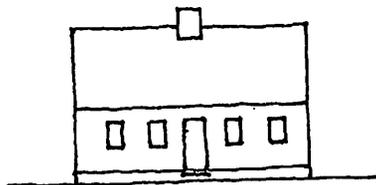
windows and central chimney. (p 102a) Less common are those houses with relaxed symmetry, (p 102b) and least common are those with end chimneys. (p 102c)

Examples have also been found which illustrate a stoop with a roof (p 102d) and a variety of attitudes to asymmetrical layouts, some of which may be due to alteration or extension. (p 102e) to h))

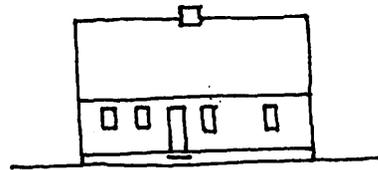
The original front elevation of Perkins' house was symmetrical overall, with a central door, but appears to have had only one window on one side of the door and two on the other side, and the house began life with end chimneys.

Turning to the plan, the interpreter has a severe practical problem. Few plans have been drawn and published which show anything but the grand or architecturally superior houses, and the tendency has been for scholars to concentrate on the two-storey rather than the storey-and-a-half houses, with a consequence that there is little published material for comparison. <sup>15</sup>

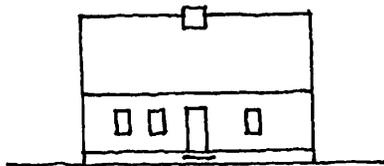
Around 1750 central chimneys (p 106 , a) began to give way to end or separated chimneys <sup>15</sup> as shown in the plans (p 106 at b), where it can be seen that the hallway stretches from front to back, and the staircase is given greater prominence. In the older houses with tight winding stairs, the emphasis was on economy of space whereas the later houses began to express grandeur and even



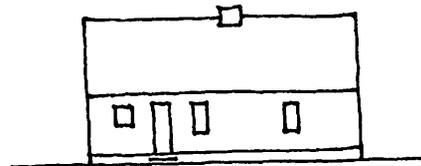
a)



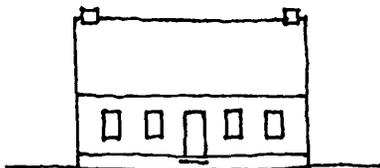
e)



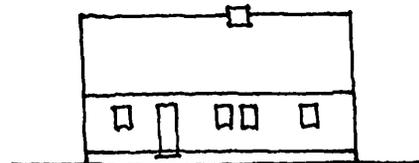
b)



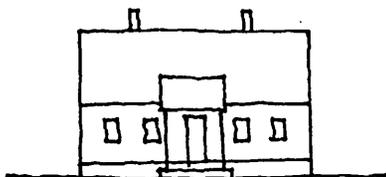
f)



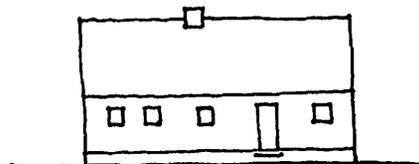
c)



g)



d)

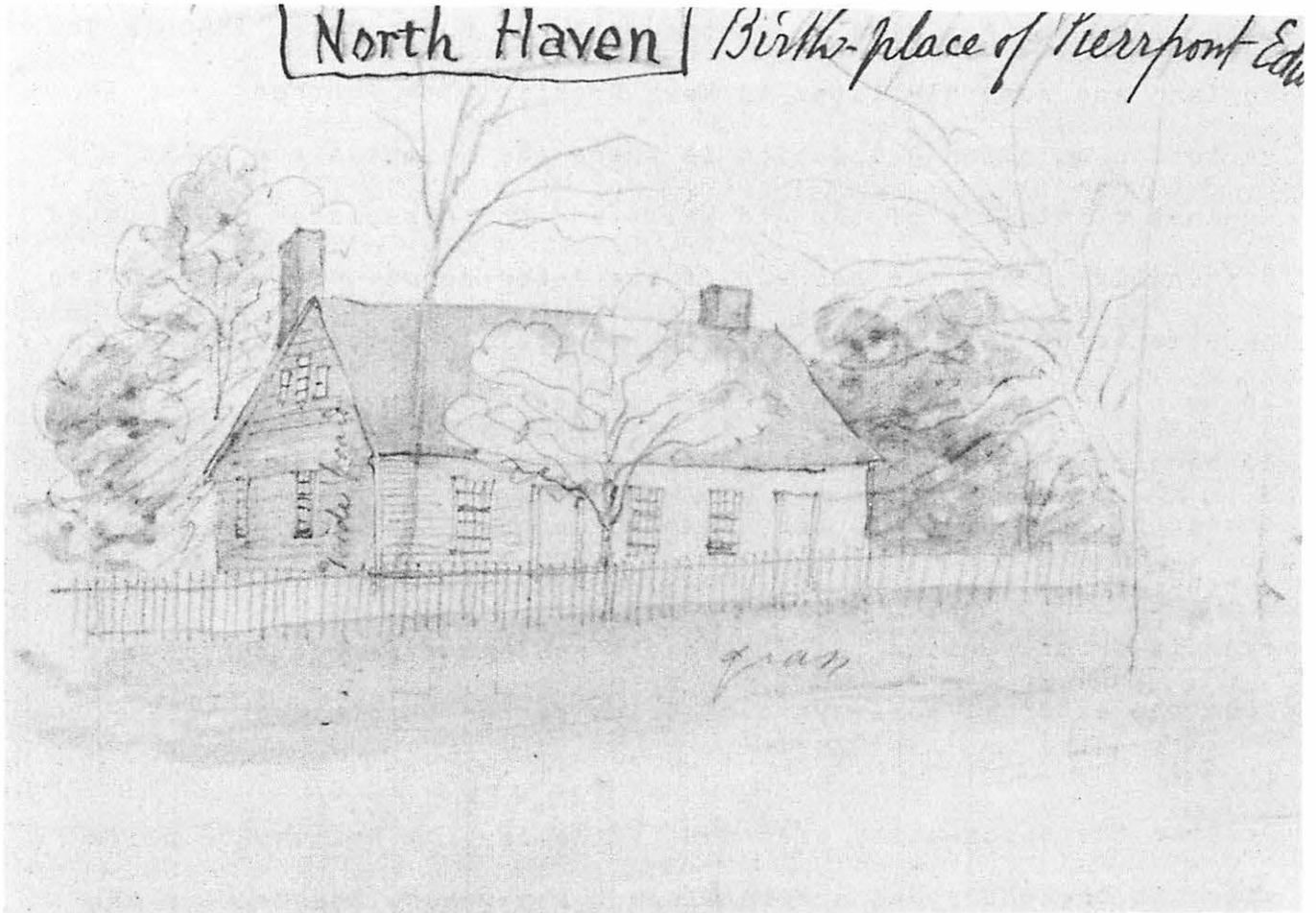


h)

Variations in New England storey-and-a-half houses.

- a) Typical New England central chimney, symmetrical house, the most common type.
- b) Central chimney type, but with asymmetrical openings about a central door, quite common.
- c) End chimney type, with symmetrical openings, the least common.
- d) Symmetrical with stove chimneys and a porch or covered stoop.
- e-h) Examples of other asymmetrical arrangements; note the variable positions of chimneys, doors and windows.

North Haven Birth-place of Pierrpont Edu



The birthplace of Pierrpont Edwards, North Haven, Connecticut. This house appears to be asymmetric in both elevation and in section, although it has the relatively rare end chimneys.

a little ostentation. Nevertheless it would appear that houses with tight stairs (plan a) continued to be built until 1830 in New England and possibly later in Nova Scotia.<sup>17</sup> A further variation on chimney location is where the chimneys are built against the inside of the end walls and the fireplaces are located diagonally across the corners of the lower rooms. (p 106 c) This appears to be less common than the central location but it exists in both one and two storey houses in and around Norwich, Connecticut,<sup>18</sup> even though it would appear to be more characteristic of the Dutch, Flemish and Swedish settlers from further south than of the New England 'Yankee' settler.<sup>19</sup> One example from Uxbridge, Massachusetts, has been visited but in this case the external walls were of brick rather than timber.

Despite the opportunity afforded by the central hallway to allow space in the entry and a more elegant staircase, the need in the storey-and-a-half house was to arrive upstairs within the high part of the ceiling. This tended to limit the location of the stair and keep it straight and steep. Typically, stairs were condensed in plan, to use the least space. In some cases the stair was boxed in, which simplified construction, and reduced the connection with upstairs. This might be further reinforced by the stair rising from the back rather than from the front of the house. In the earlier form of two storey houses (p 106a), the staircase was closely related to the chimney and typically had winders, was steep, dark and therefore potentially unsafe.

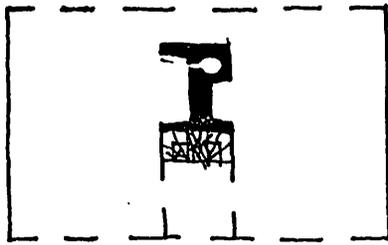
Examples of stairs in the one-and-a-half storey houses vary widely from open to boxed in, with or without winders.<sup>20</sup>

Although the development of the house type was generally to move from tight stair to central hallway, (p 106a) to p 106b) in the two storey houses, those with corner fireplaces ( p 106c ) seem to be uncommon but rather satisfactory. Corner fireplaces permit a greater sense of interior space and possibly less masonry was used in building the chimney stacks in these houses, with obvious economic benefits.<sup>21</sup>

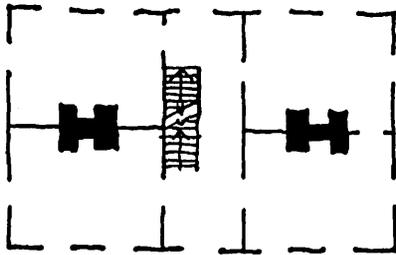
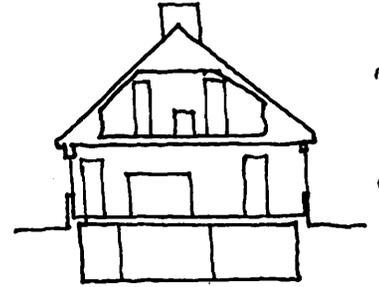
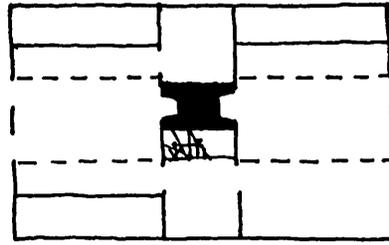
Apart from the form and plan, a number of other design elements may be considered in testing the common root of Perkins' house to other New England houses of the period.

The windows, at least on the north or front facade, are thought to be original, with unequal sized sashes and generous proportions. Size, location, pane size, trim and vertical position, all fit with a Connecticut pedigree.<sup>22</sup> Even the continuation of the chair rail across the sill to unify the interior is typical of New England.<sup>23</sup>

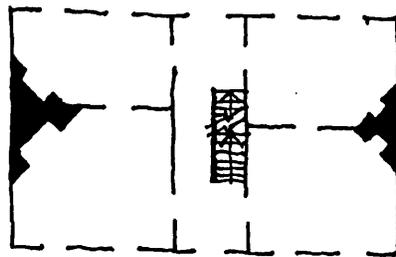
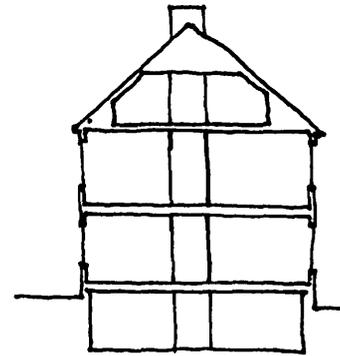
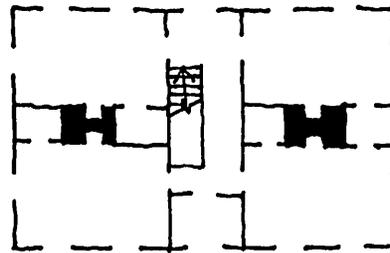
The roof overhang at Perkins' house is about 350mm, which makes it considerably more generous than those commonly employed on New England coastal houses, or lower income houses which in some cases project no more than the thickness of a fascia board.<sup>24</sup> Both



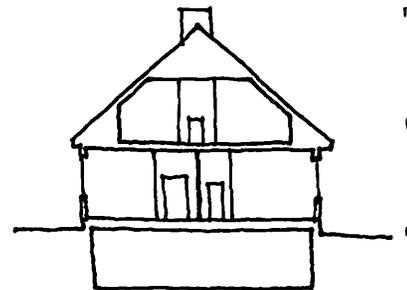
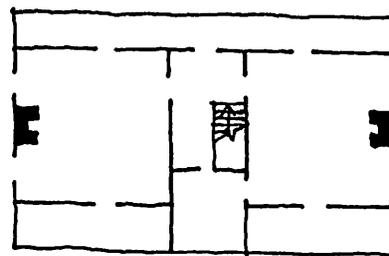
a)



b)

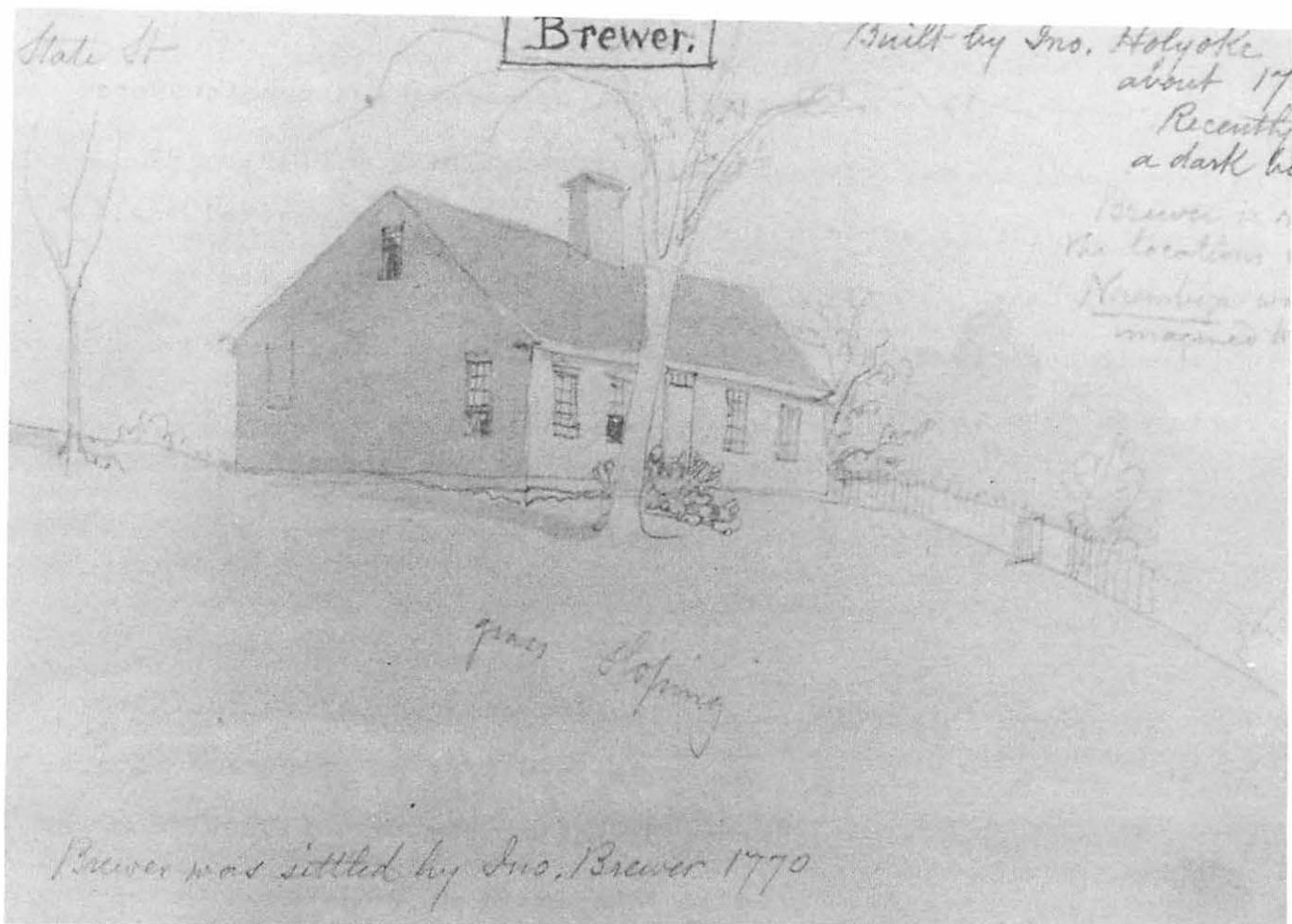


c)



New England House Types.

- a) Central chimney, one-and-a-half storeys,
- b) Central hall, two storeys,
- c) End chimney, one-and-a-half storeys, relatively uncommon, though dating in the main period of about 1750-1830. Corner fireplaces are even less common.



The house built by Jno. Holyoke about 1783 in Brewer, Maine. Note the symmetry of the front and the end walls, and the significantly raised centre chimney. This is the most common form of storey-and-a-half dwelling throughout New England.

the projection and the mouldings add refinement and graciousness to this small house, which is quite rare in Nova Scotia. The standard mouldings used in the trim are made up of several smaller mouldings shaped with standard moulding planes to fit the universal neo-classical language of the eighteenth century. One variation from the standard may be use of less than normal width clapboard for the front facade. The three inch exposure in Nova Scotia compares with a more normal four inch exposure used to the south. <sup>25</sup>

Perhaps enough idiomatic evidence has been produced to justify calling the Perkins' house a New England type of Colonial cottage, yet the strongest evidence remains relatively well hidden from the casual visitor's view. This is the system of construction.

Commonly referred to as "plank frame",<sup>26</sup> (p 111), the system of construction is a transitional one in the development of the North American stud frame. It was used in Connecticut as early as 1690<sup>27</sup> and as early as 1686 on Nantucket Island. <sup>28</sup> Its simplicity and elegance as a structural solution is so daring as to leave one wondering how the roof is really supported. Corner posts and some intermediary posts support continuous longitudinal beams, which are tied together at the ends by girts. The longitudinal beams support the upper floor joists and the roof system. Alternate floor joists hold the ends of the rafters, which in turn support the purlins. The whole house is sheathed

with vertical planking on both the walls and the roof. It was 'rather rare' to build this way in eastern Connecticut, according to Isham & Brown,<sup>29</sup> but it was also very economical in time and material. It is easy to see how the system had developed out of a thatch roof technology to fit the new climate and material constraints. In Connecticut the frame members would have been made from oak whereas in Nova Scotia they are of softwood, probably pine.<sup>30</sup>

In discussing the repairs to the roof James Reside, the provincial engineer who supervised reconstruction in 1949, makes the following comment<sup>31</sup>

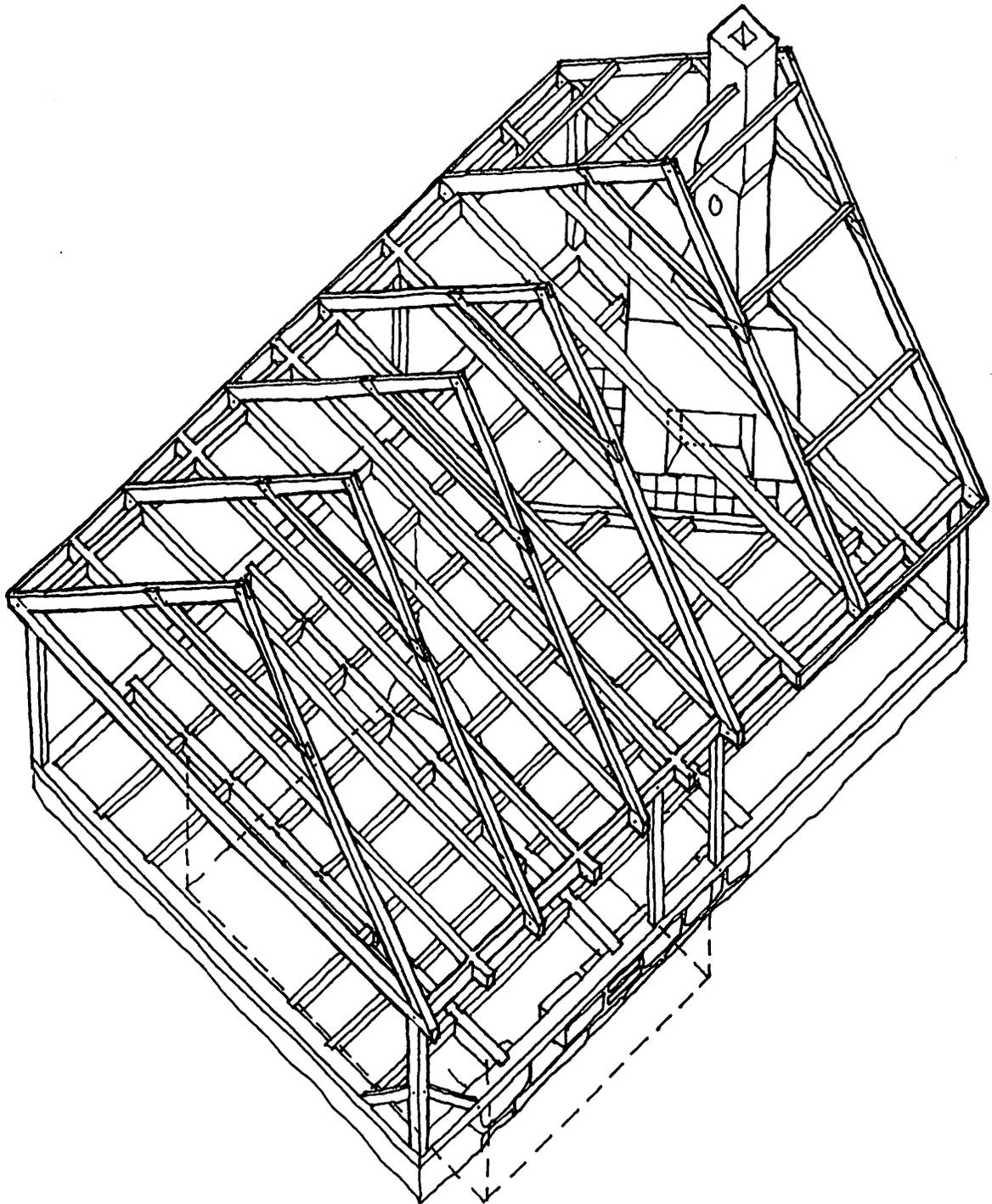
"Before reshingling the roof, an examination of the roof from the outside suggested that the roof rafters should be replaced. When the roof was stripped for re-shingling it was discovered that instead of rafters there were boards, about 20" wide, laid over purlins from eaves to ridge.

The outside wall studs were installed sideways making a very thin wall. Split laths and plaster were on the inside and birch bark and shingles or clapboards on the outside."

It is curious that Reside was surprised by the vertical planking as it is visible from inside the house, and also that he doesn't comment on the double layer of sheathing on the roof, which presumably was made obvious when it was stripped of shingles.<sup>32</sup> Even more surprising is his comment about "studs installed sideways". There simply are no studs. Was he therefore referring to the sill & beam which run lengthwise, or was this a late-in-life

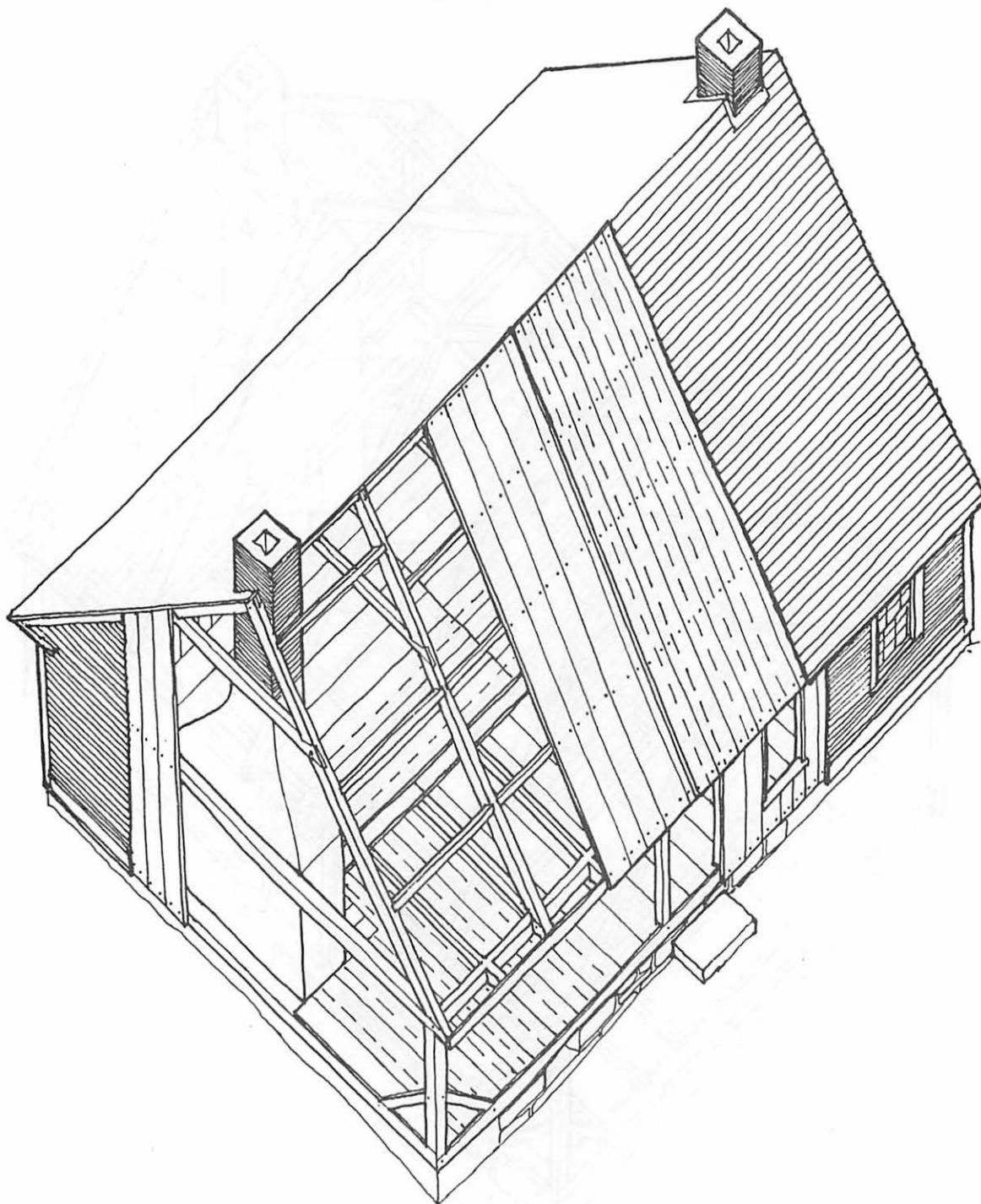


The Latham Forseth House built in 1764 at Salem, Connecticut, which shows the unmistakable central chimney and the rather obvious lack of concern over absolute symmetry.



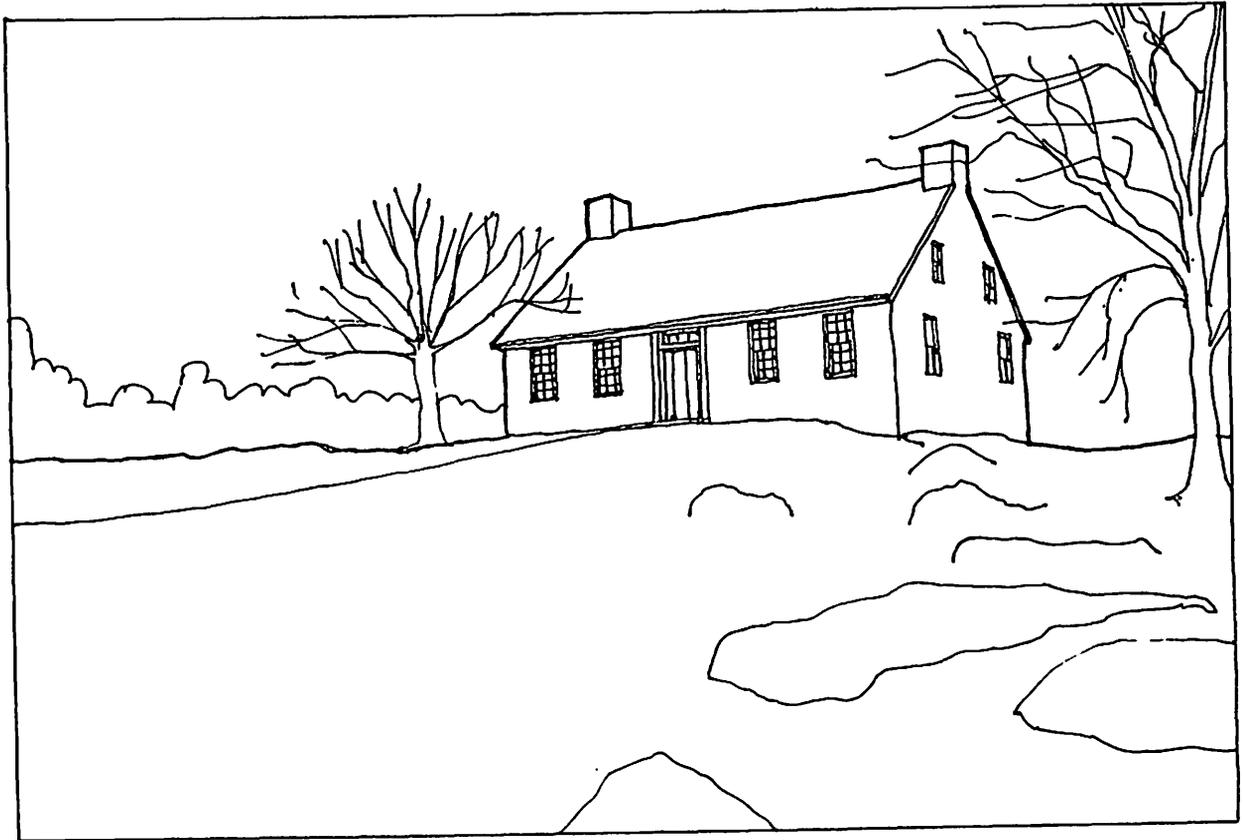
The frame of the Simeon Perkins House.

Note the small number of vertical posts, the relatively few number of rafters and the use of purlins between the rafters. No evidence of a summer beam has been found but there has been no attempt at destructive investigation to make sure, so it cannot be entirely eliminated. The small cellar provides support in the centre, but when first built there were no walls under the sills except at the cellar.



The cladding of the Simeon Perkins House.

Both the roof slopes and the walls are covered with vertical boards. It is a single layer on the walls and a double layer on the roof, but thinner. The roof surfaces were shingled whereas the walls were clapboarded. The walls at the lower level were plastered from the start, but the upper level walls and underside of the roof sheathing appears to have merely been wallpapered; neither wall being good thermal insulation.



The Moses Farnham house at Uxbridge, Massachusetts, built in 1766 and located about 65 km north of Norwichtown, Connecticut. Although built of brick, this house is remarkably similar to the initial phase of the Perkins house. There are end chimneys within the exterior wall, corner fireplaces in the main rooms and there is a central hallway with a staircase boxed in with vertical boards. Drawn from a photograph taken in June 1894, the original in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

comment based on partially remembered facts?<sup>33</sup> What is certain is that the perimeter wall is very thin and that it relies in part on the chair rail for its integrity which acts as a single horizontal stud, and that the vertical sheathing boards contribute substantially to the support of the longitudinal beam, almost as a stressed-skin structure.

The house remains in the tradition of Connecticut or New England building techniques. The slow rate of development of style and technique is best understood in the context of the normal craftsman's apprenticeship taking seven years to complete.<sup>34</sup> Another factor in assessing the style and construction is that there was little pressure to change from workable solutions. Economy of time and effort which appears to have been important during the period of initial construction, also helped to inhibit originality of solution, or risk of failure.

Nevertheless, speed and inexperience contributed to risk as when Simeon Perkins' son John was involved in building a house at Port Mouton for Perkins, Bishop & Co., and it collapsed during construction, on Thursday, 25 November 1802.<sup>35</sup>

With successive alterations and additions to the house, there appears to have been a lowering of the standards of workmanship. Simeon Perkins is very unlikely to have willingly lowered his

standards, but in the fledgling community there were pressures which repeatedly created financial difficulties for this family, and no doubt resulted in a reduced desire to spend money on the house. <sup>36</sup> An intriguing diary reference from 19 September 1810

suggests that personal and family standards were maintained to the end:- "the Judge (Munk) and his suite (including Uniacke Jr.) took breakfast with me. They spoke very highly of my Daughters painting the Chimney piece, etc." Unfortunately no trace of the painting has been found, though it may equally never have been looked for. Presumably Charlotte was the artist.

The house construction system is interesting as an example of how a medieval building technique was being transformed into an industrialised one. The adze marks on the framing members can be compared with water-powered saw marks on the planks used in the sheathing. (p 294 )

From diary references it seems that large timber members were squared right where they had been felled in the forest, whereas logs for planks were first dragged to the river or directly to the mill where they were sawn.<sup>37</sup> Transportation was a continual problem, with many diary references bewailing winter rains which "destroyed the sleading".

When first raised on June 19, 1766, the house was a modest one, measuring 11 x 8 m (36.5' x 26') with a single floor, attic

bedrooms, and a cellar measuring 4.5 x 6 m (15.5' x 21').<sup>38</sup>

There was probably a stoop at the back of the house on the sunny side.<sup>39</sup> On the ground floor there was a parlour,<sup>40</sup> with an office<sup>41</sup> or bedroom<sup>42</sup> off it, and a kitchen<sup>43</sup> or keeping room,<sup>44</sup> each with its own fireplace.<sup>45</sup> There was probably a storeroom or pantry as well. The upper floor was possibly left as an open loft space, where some of the household would have slept.<sup>46</sup>

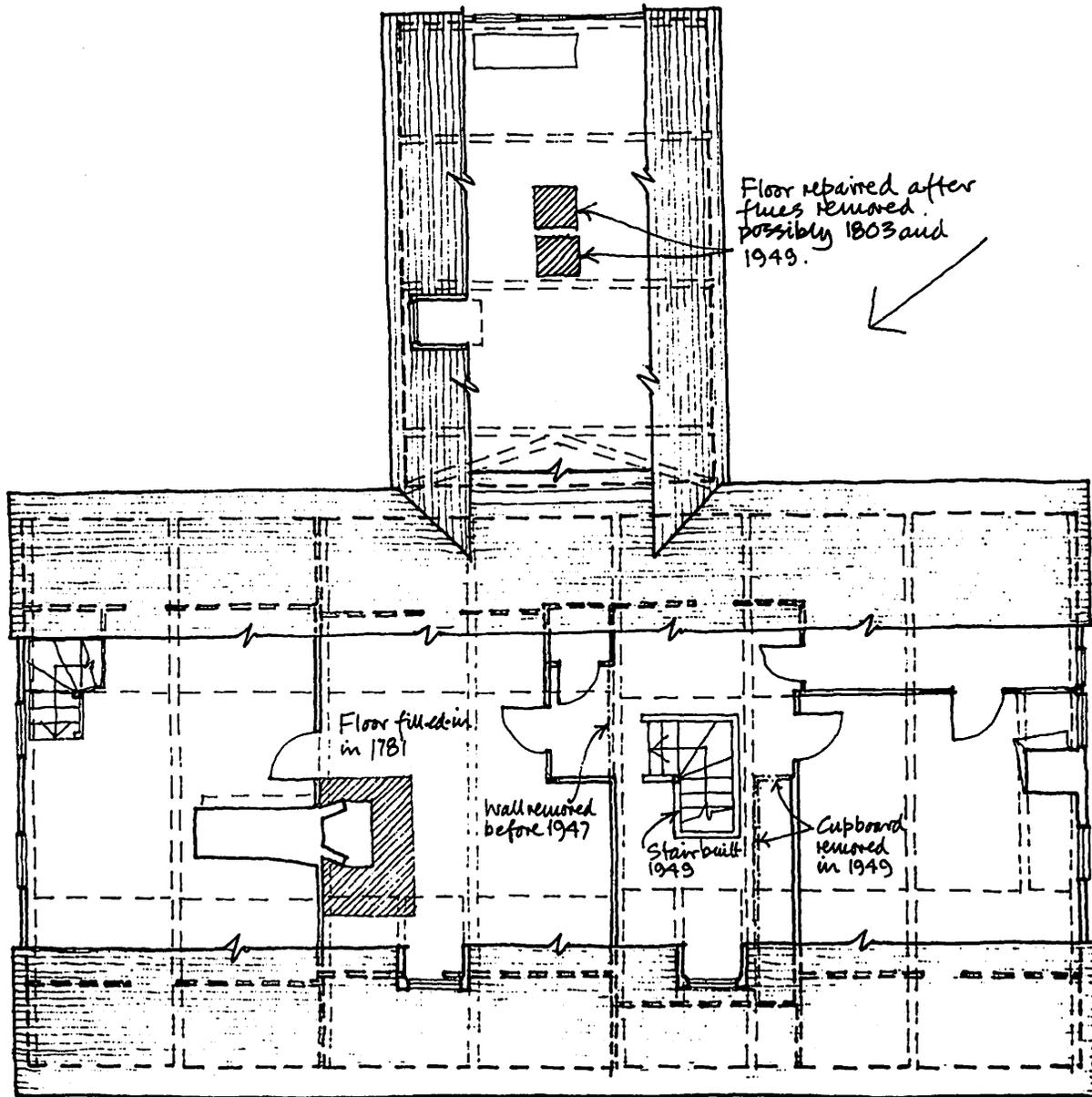
Internally, the partitions were made from vertical planks and most have since been plastered over. To begin with it seems that there was plaster and whitewash in the keeping room and parlour.<sup>47</sup> Ten years after he moved in, the parlour was papered.<sup>48</sup> The exterior walls are very thin, about 50 mm, and therefore offered little resistance to heat flow, making the house potentially cold in winter.

Some of the alterations to partitions and interior doorways can be traced through the mouldings around the openings. Where plaster was added later to a vertical plank wall, the moulding added to the wall forms a plaster stop. (p 322 a). Typically mouldings measure 21 x 35mm. Typically a door fits a rebate worked into the vertical plank on either side of the opening, and has a simple roll worked into the edge, which exactly matches examples from New England (p 323a).<sup>49</sup> Mouldings worked into door and window frames are also typical. (p 322, 321).<sup>50</sup>

Alterations to walls and flooring which are still clearly visible (p 118) can be interpreted to show the relative positions of previous walls.<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that the alterations and repairs of 1949 were done with an eye to economy,<sup>52</sup> and therefore subtle blemishes in wall surfaces were not touched, but were left to show where walls have been moved.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps the greatest difficulty for the interpreter lies in the period 1812 to 1935 because no records were kept or none have come to us to explain what changes took place and when, let alone why.<sup>54</sup> It is quite possible that no significant changes were made between 1800 and 1935.

Some confusing marks are not readily explained, and these include signs of a partition across the entry hall and across the kitchen (p118 a & b).<sup>55</sup> Beneath the main staircase, the floor has been repaired in a shape which does not appear to relate to either structure or wear. It is confusing that the 1949 repairs not only used old wood but also appear to have been done in an expedient way without the extent being recorded.<sup>56</sup> Neither drawings nor photographs recorded the condition before or after repairs.<sup>57</sup>

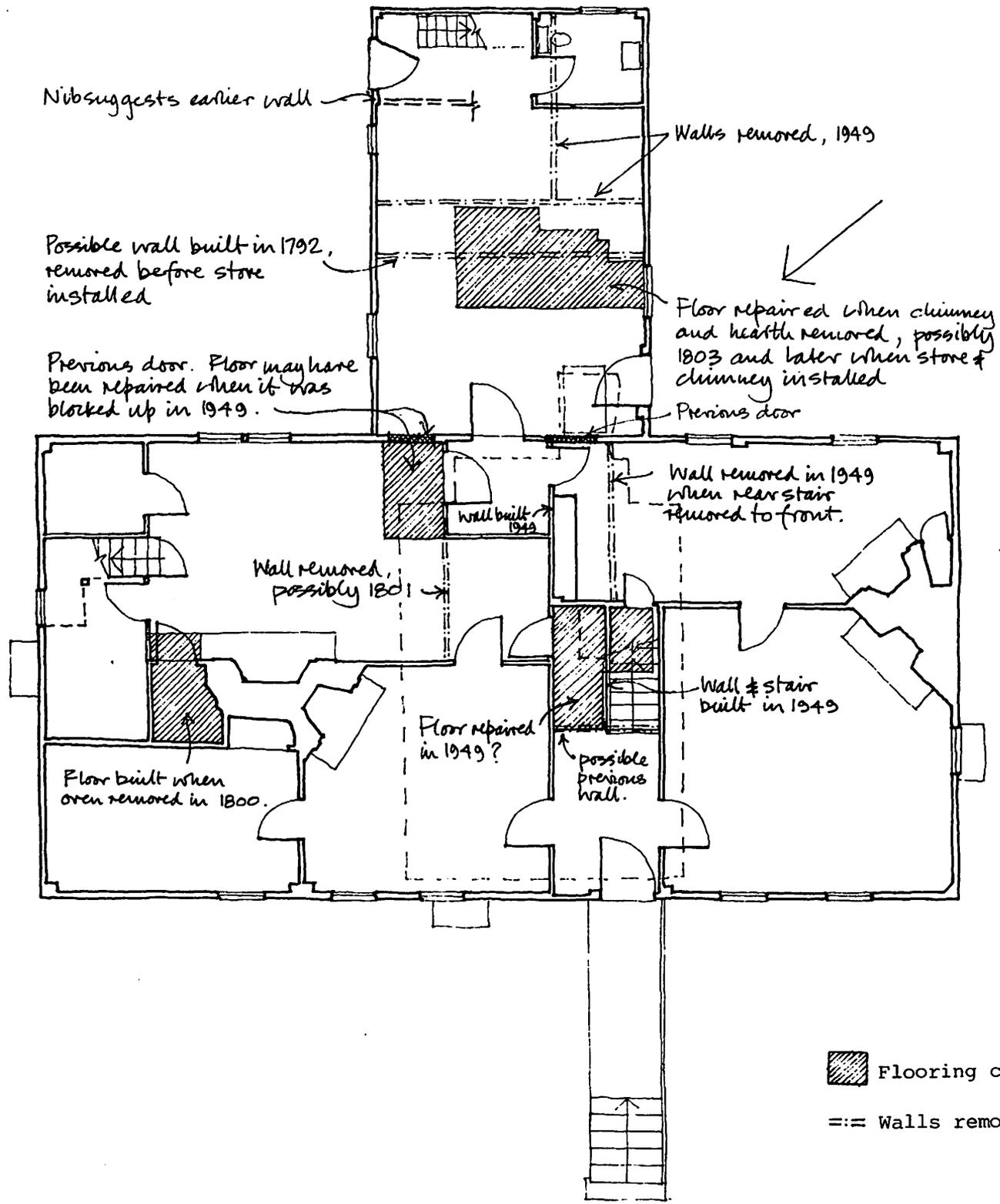
The problem of the front stair is that we know it is new, and that it is the fourth main staircase (see entry, below) and the third one in this position. We know nothing of the first, except that it was changed in 29 Oct 1787.<sup>58</sup> Of the second stair we have



 Flooring change  
 Walls removed

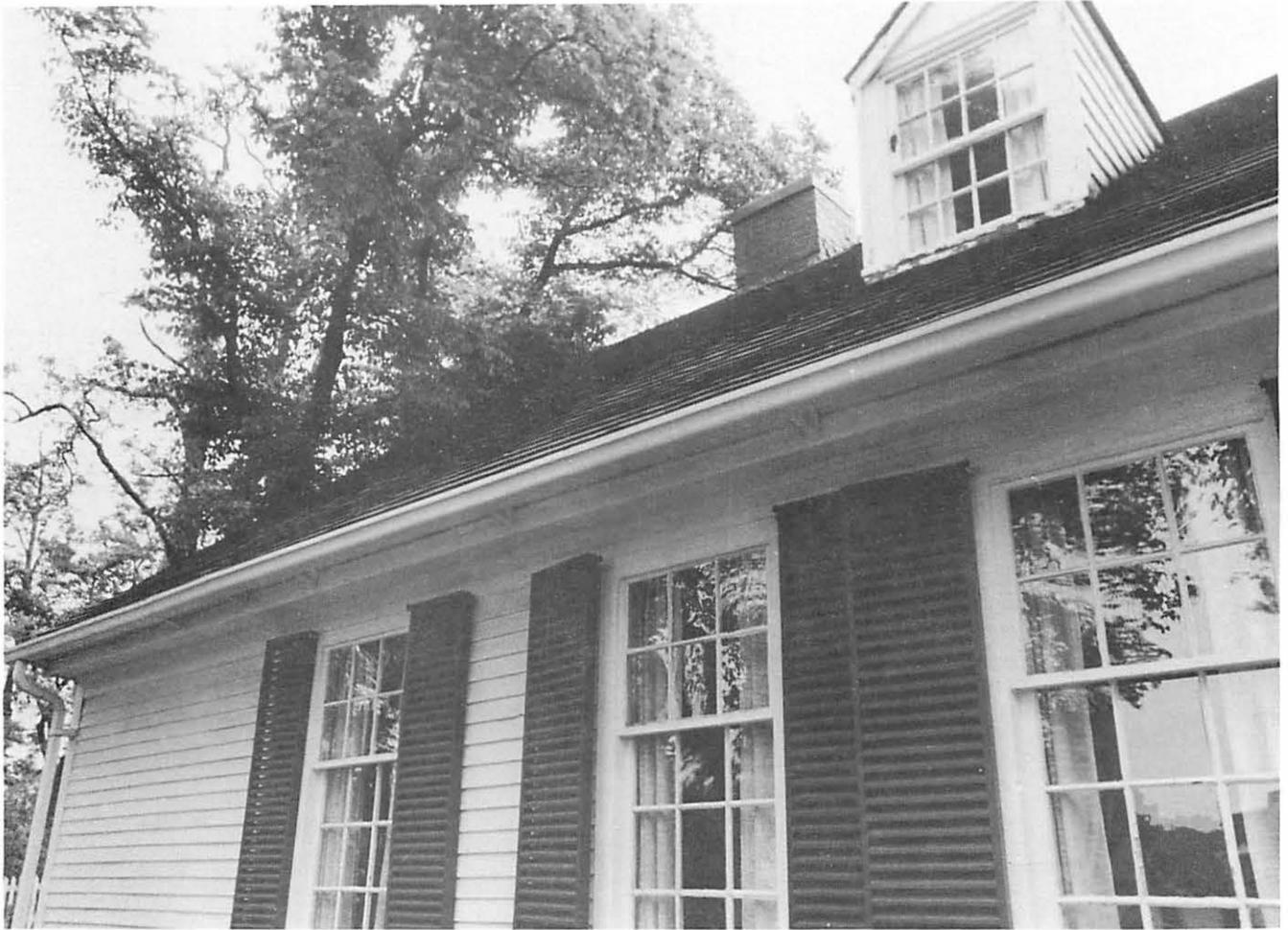
Structural changes

Upper Floor Plan 1978

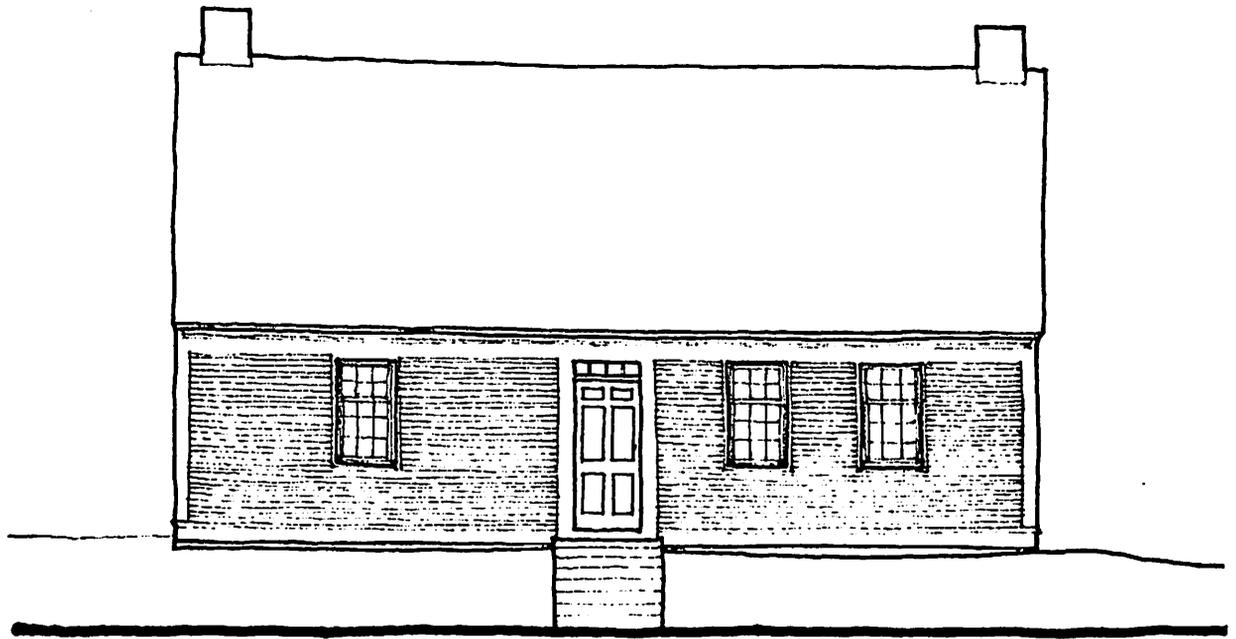


Structural changes

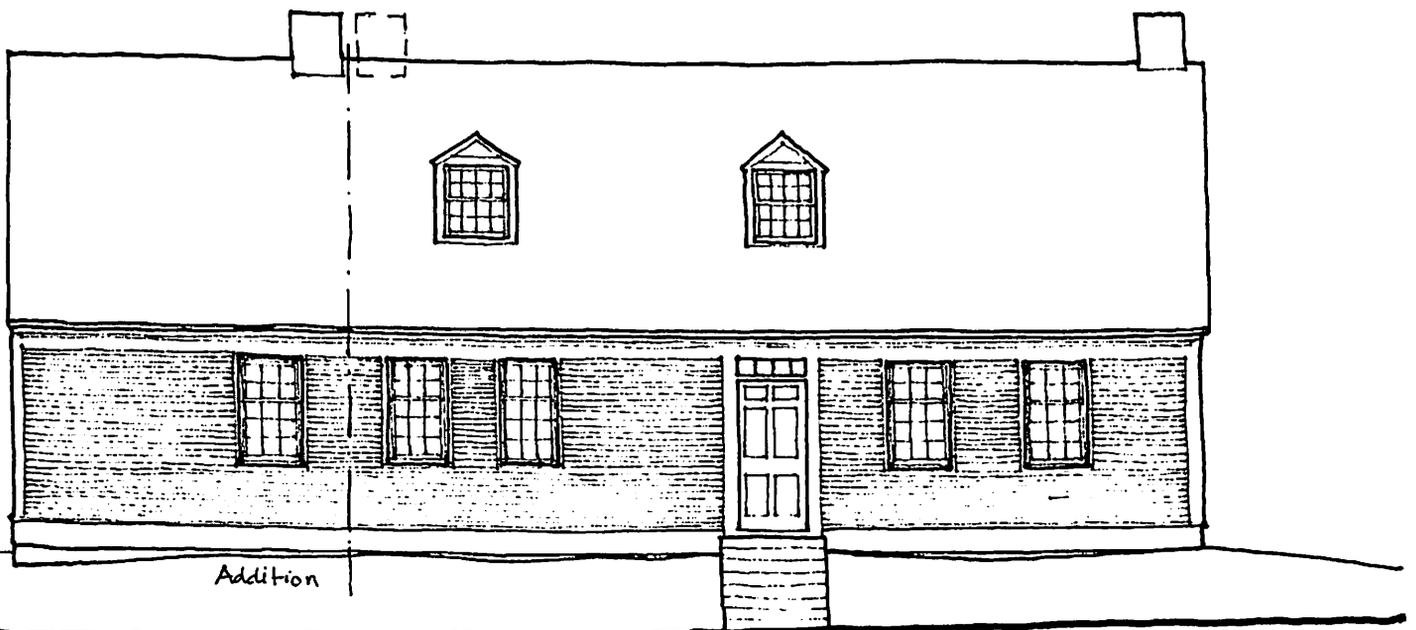
Ground Floor Plan 1978



Junction of addition and original house. The extent of the addition can be clearly seen by the hump in the roof which locates the original end wall.



a) 1767



b) 1781

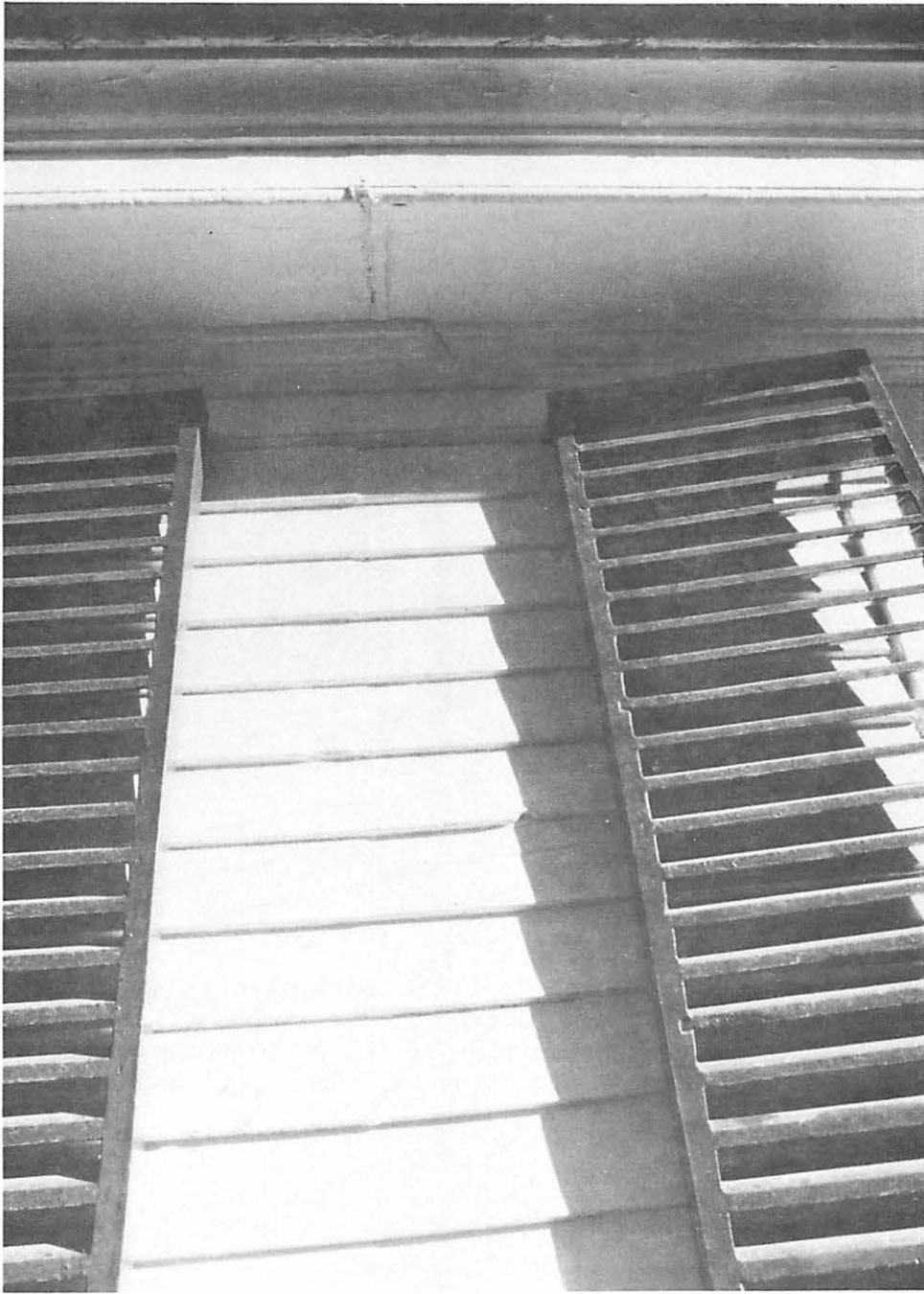
North Elevation



c) present

North elevation

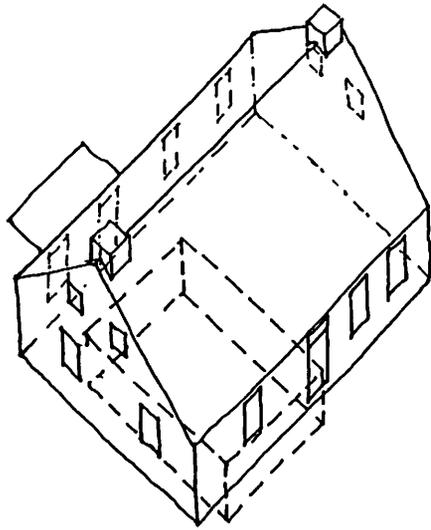
- a) 1767.  
The front door was central, with the Keeping Room window to the left of the door central within its wall.
- b) 1781.  
The extent of the first addition can be seen in context. An extra window was added to the Keeping Room and dormer windows to the roof.
- c) Present.  
Window shutters were added at some time before 1900, most probably about 1830, or later.



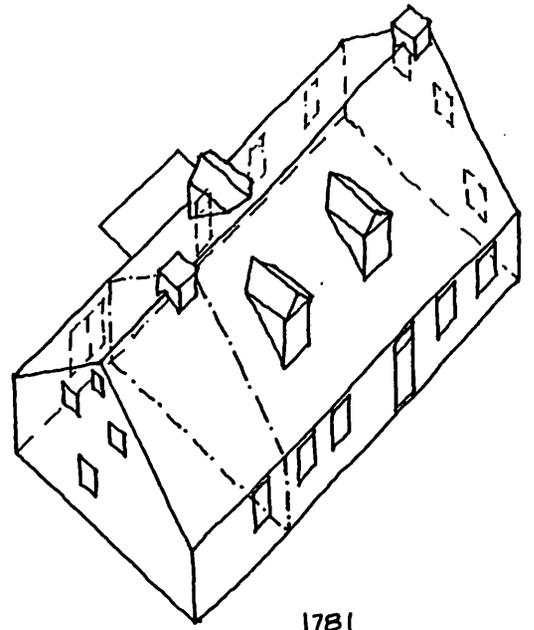
The North Front, showing the eaves where the joint between the original house and the addition of 1781 can still be seen in the joints of the mouldings under the soffit. Note the mitre joint in the mouldings which clearly shows the position of the original end wall, as this would have been the return of the moulding on to the end wall.



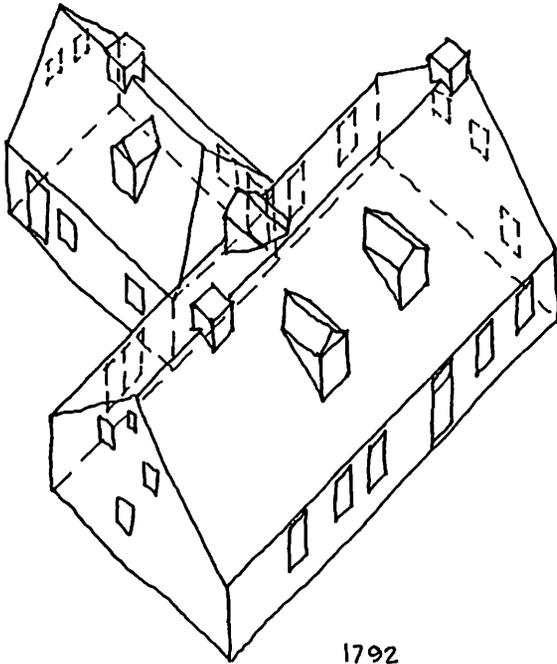
Part of the North front photographed in 1947, which clearly shows the sag at the left hand end due to the rotting of the timber sills. The original house ended at about the position of the Rainwater pipe as can be seen in the change in the roof shingles, The right hand shutters have been installed upside-down.



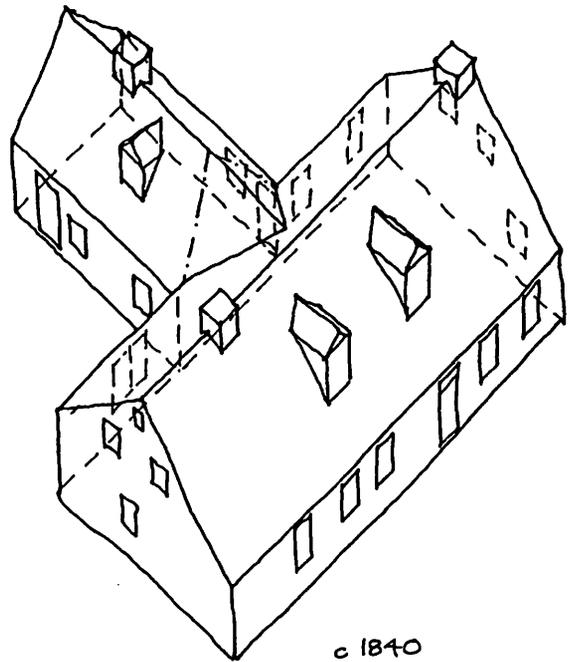
1766



1781



1792



c 1840

Phases of construction;

1766 Initial construction, completed in 1767,

1781 First addition, at the near end, with new chimney,

1792 Second addition at the rear,

c 1840 South facing dormer window removed and the valley gutter filled in.

only Thomas Raddall's diary entries,<sup>59</sup> and no physical proof like a photograph. Of the third, which was located behind the present stair, we have a partial photograph taken in 1947.<sup>60</sup> The present or fourth main stair was built in 1949.<sup>61</sup>

As the family grew the house was expanded, first in 1781<sup>62</sup> to provide a larger kitchen, separate keeping room and more bedrooms, and secondly in 1792<sup>63</sup> to provide a new kitchen with a large attic over it. The location of the first addition can be clearly seen on the exterior of the house to this day. (pp 123 & 124). Under the roof overhang, the joints can still be seen in the wood soffit, and in the mouldings above the windows to the left of the front door. In the photograph taken in 1947,<sup>64</sup> the change in texture of the roof shingles clearly shows where the two roofs join. (p 120) Note that roof repairs since 1978 have substantially reduced the apparent difference.<sup>65</sup>

Start of construction of the 1781 addition was delayed for several days due to Perkins' desire to know if the soldiers stationed in Liverpool were staying or leaving, presumably as they were needed for labour.<sup>66</sup>

When the second kitchen was added in 1792, rather than make a long house even longer, a wing was added to the rear to form a leg of a 'T'. This also avoided removing a large boulder just to the east of the house.<sup>67</sup> If the roof of this second extension had

continued to meet the main roof it would have conflicted with a dormer window in the south slope of the main roof.<sup>68</sup> In order to keep the dormer window the roof was held back, given a steep hipped end and a valley gutter was formed. (see p 245 cross section) This was out of character with the rest of the building and seems curiously inept, as it caused snow and rain to accumulate with the potential for water to penetrate into the house below. (p 248)

From the state of the shingles on the original roofslope of 1792,<sup>69</sup> and an incident in 1804,<sup>70</sup> this configuration must have lasted for several, if not many years, before being finally roofed over, possibly about 1840.<sup>71</sup> At this time it is believed that other changes were made to the house, although no proof has been found.

It appears that the roof was painted at least in September 1777, June 1783 and August 1790.<sup>72</sup> It seems that it was quite normal to paint shingles although the nature of the paint would have been rather different from modern coatings.<sup>73</sup> The shingles of 1792 are of pine and no trace of paint can be found on them, though they have since been white-washed. This raises a problem of interpretation as the main roof was painted in 1790,<sup>74</sup> so that the roof of the extension would have been in obvious contrast to the main house if it had not been painted to match when built in 1792.<sup>75</sup>



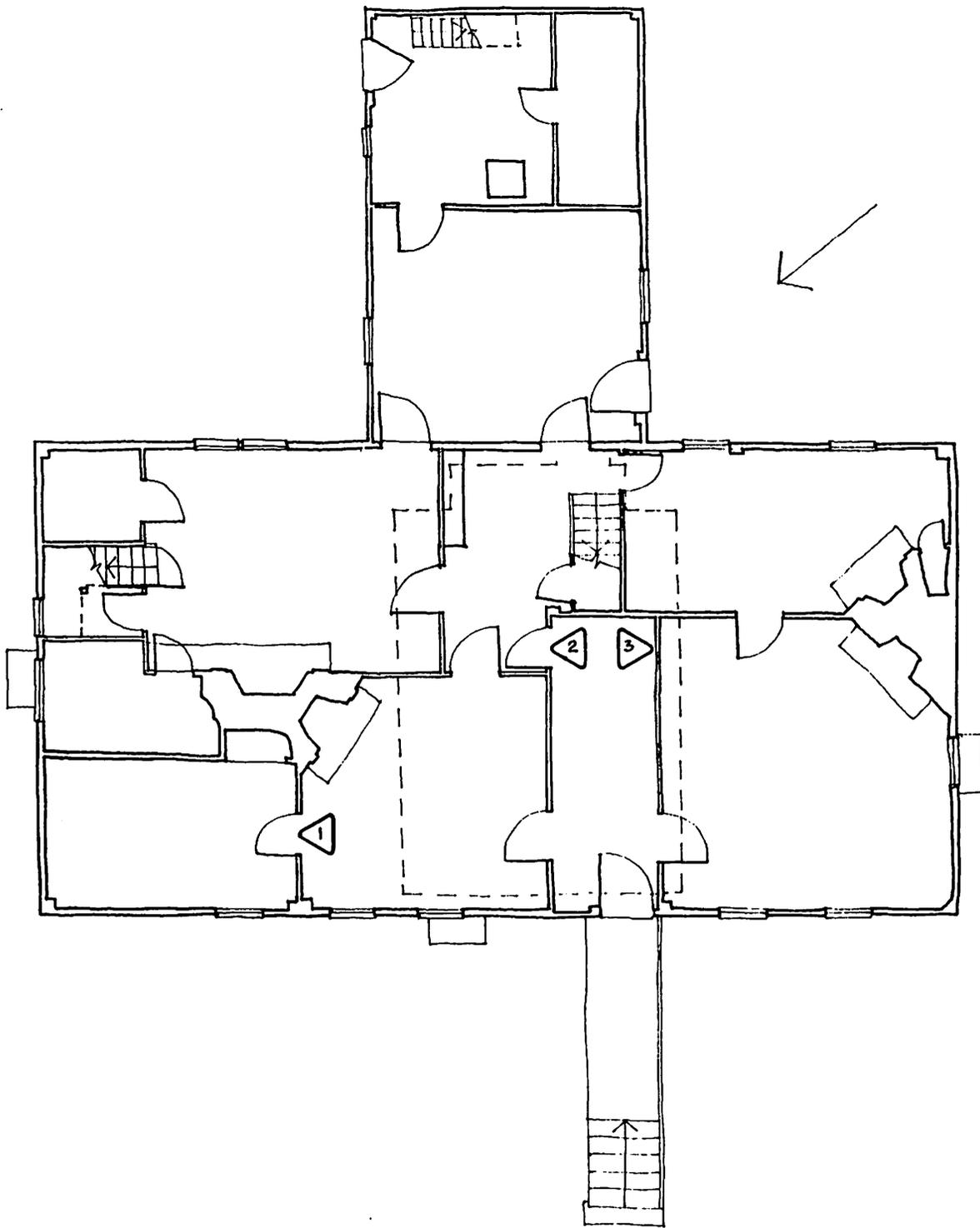
The East Elevation of 1792 clearly defines the addition of the kitchen. By holding the roof of the addition back from the original roof, the south-facing dormer could be maintained.



View from the southeast. This photograph was taken in 1947 before any repairs were carried out by the Province, but shows the state of the roof where it was repaired in 1935. Note the lack of window putty and paint. At the right-hand end can be seen the vent pipe from the plumbing installed this century. Victorian chimney pots and a stove chimney can be seen. The banked up soil and creeper on the roof provide clues to causes of rot.



View from the south west showing the roof gap filled in, perhaps in about 1840.

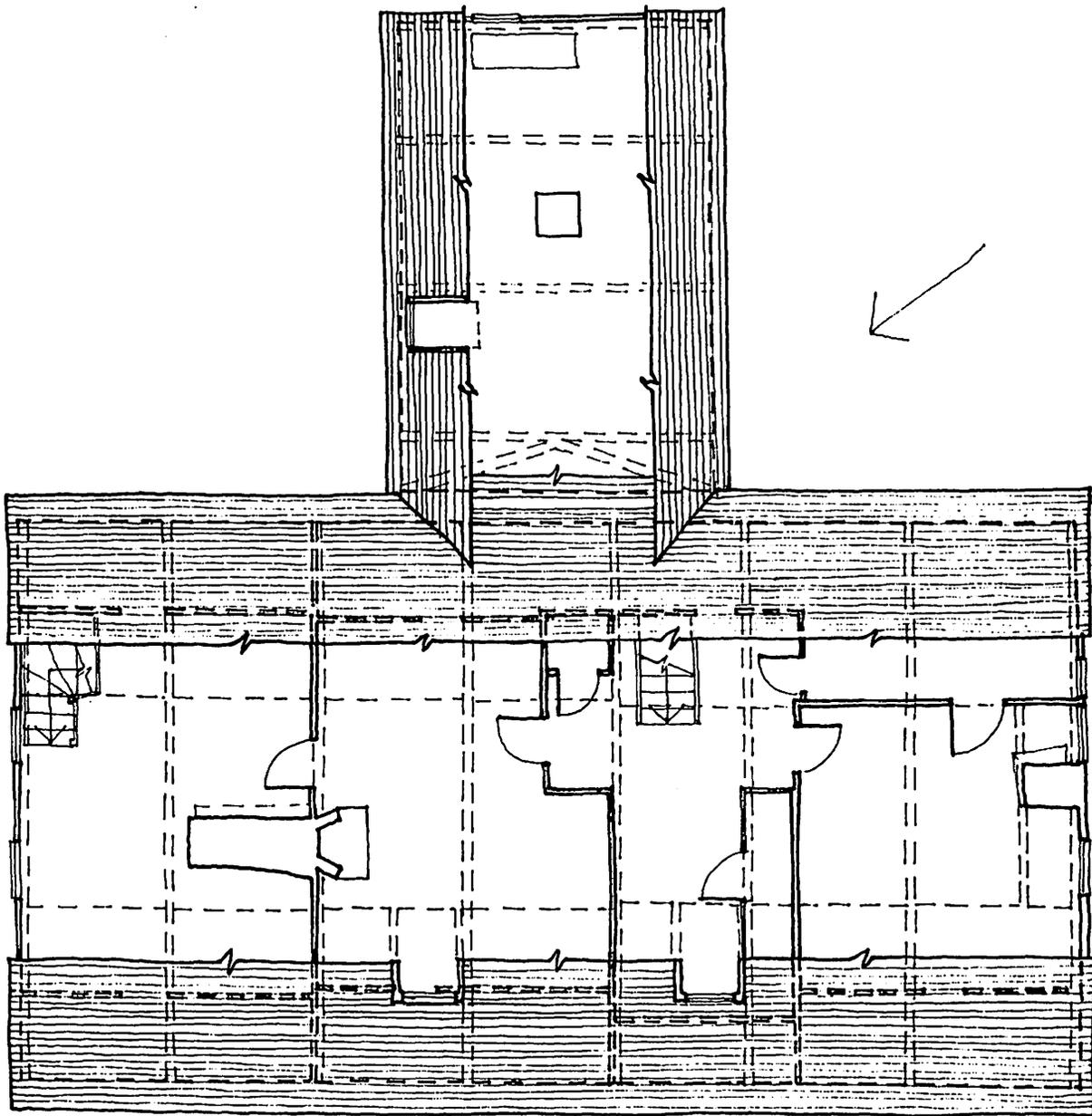


Ground Floor Plan, 1947, after B.L.Parker.

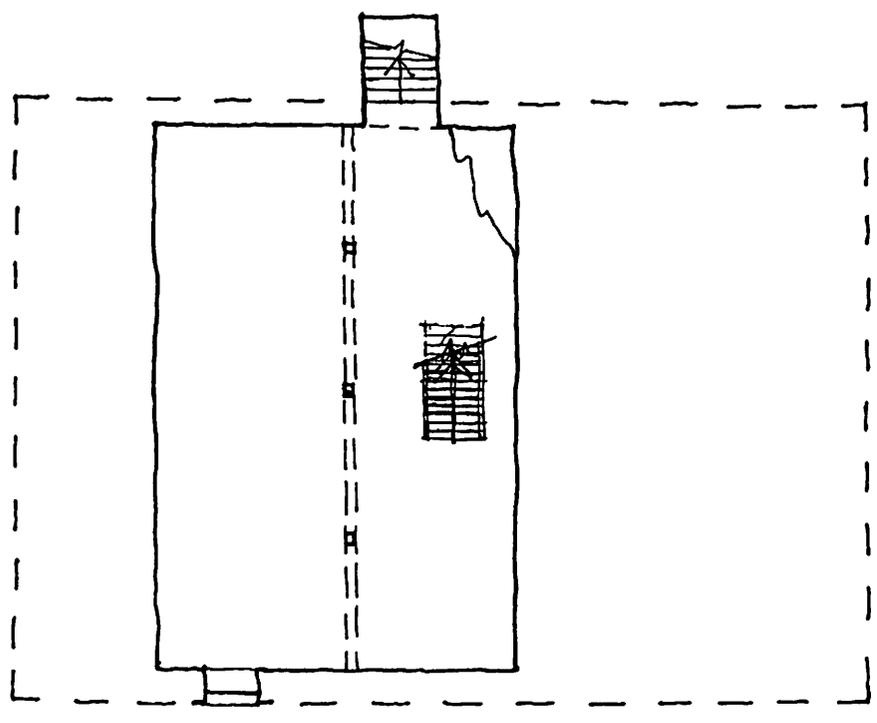
Errors in the original drawings have been corrected as follows:

- 1 Omitted doorway has been drawn in,
- 2 Door swing shown into the hall has been drawn into the rear lobby,
- 3 Doorway shown in this position has been removed,

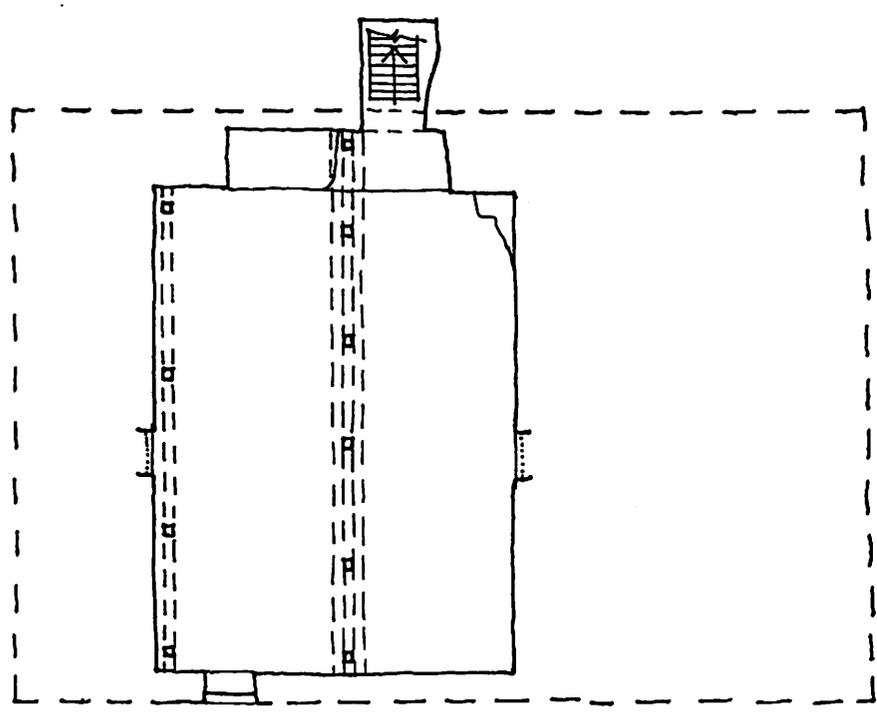
all these errors were recorded by J. Reside and are substantiated by the photographs taken by H. Doty in 1947.



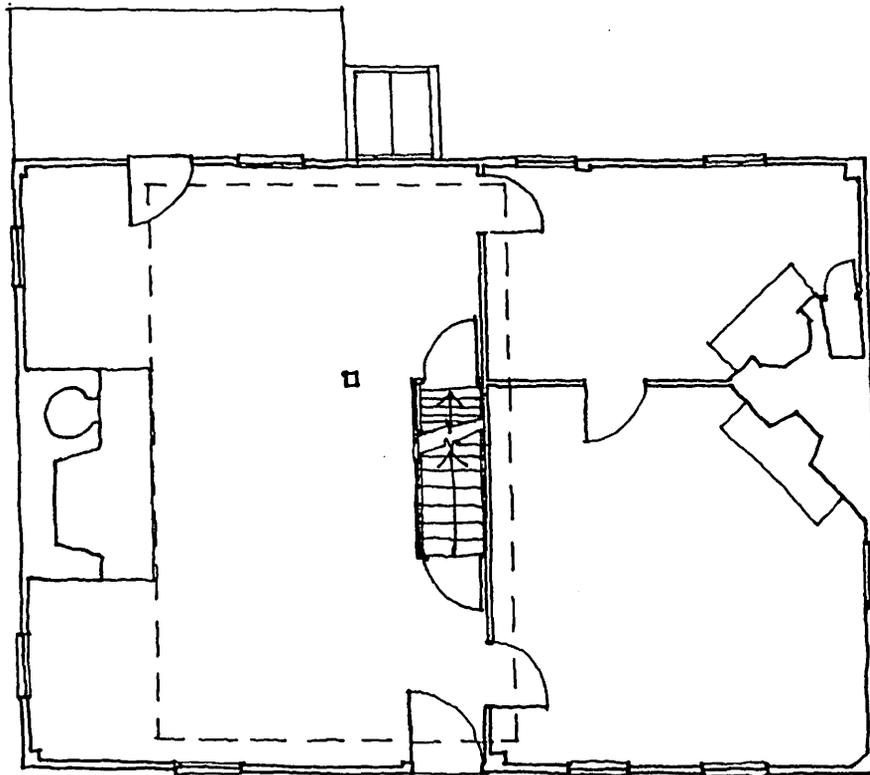
Upper Floor Plan, 1947, after B.L. Parker.



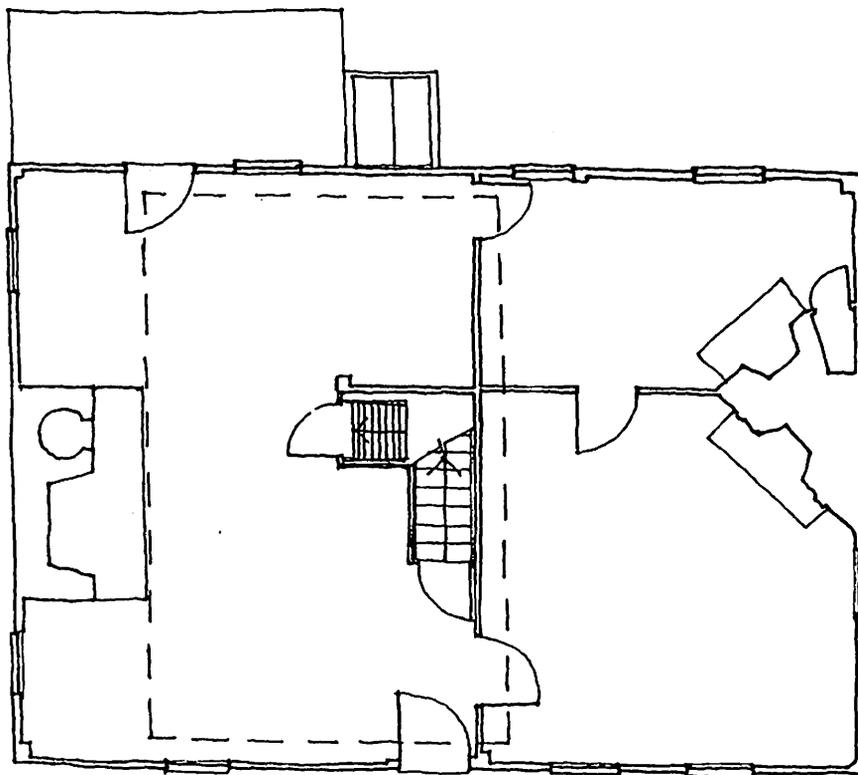
Cellar Plan, 1767, conjectural.



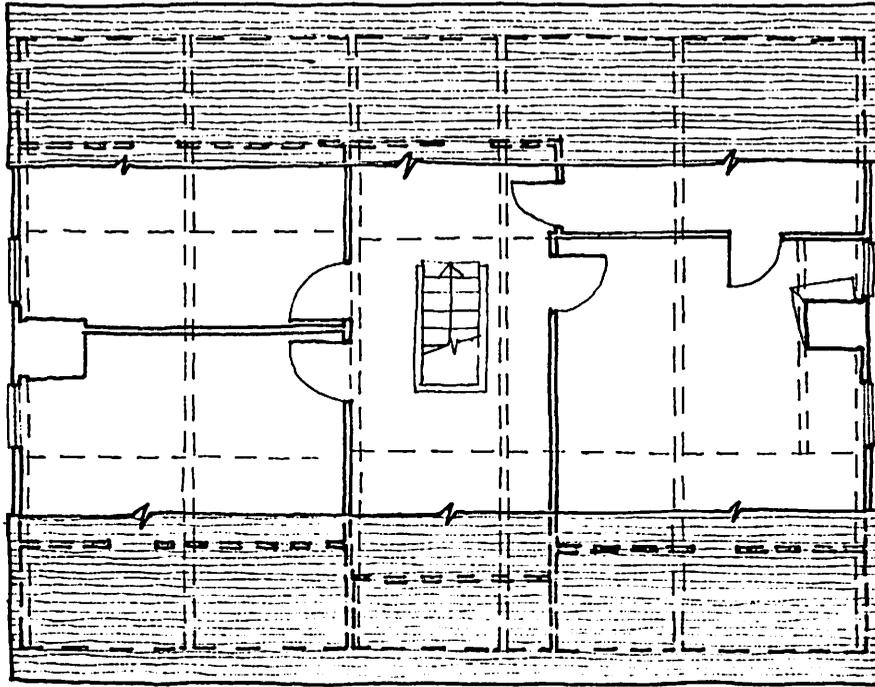
Present



a) Steep boxed stair.



b) Angle stair.



Upper Floor Plan, 1767, conjectural.

Few other external changes appear to have been made to the house between 1792 and the present day. The very obvious blinds or fixed louvre shutters were probably installed on the north elevation at a later date.<sup>76</sup> They are unlikely to have been original to the house although they were in use in the American colonies during the latter half of the eighteenth century.<sup>77</sup> In Nova Scotia blinds became popular during the reign of the Greek Revival style, which was fashionable after 1830.<sup>78</sup> A bathroom window was installed on the ground floor, probably early this century,<sup>79</sup> (see p 202 below) (see p 17 )while a window was blocked up in the south wall of the attic over the 1792 kitchen extension prior to 1947.<sup>80</sup> The glazing of an interior door to the rear vestibule could have originally been the sash from this window.<sup>81</sup> Chimney pots added in the late nineteenth century were removed as well as the brick chimney of the kitchen extension in 1949.<sup>82</sup> In 1936 the roof was substantially repaired,<sup>83</sup> and again in 1949,<sup>84</sup> when the bathroom and its window were removed from the east end of the ground floor<sup>85</sup> and a washroom for visitors was built at the south end of the kitchen extension.<sup>86</sup> Also in 1949 extensive rebuilding of the sills and foundations took place,<sup>87</sup> but most of this is invisible to the visitor. Portable electric heaters were used in 1953<sup>88</sup> and permanent heaters installed in 1957.<sup>89</sup> Roof shingles were replaced in 1978 and painted.<sup>90</sup> Further foundation work was carried out in 1982, when the front (north) wall of the cellar was

rebuilt, and a perimeter rainwater collection system was installed.<sup>91</sup> The cellar had flooded to a depth of 150mm during the winter of 1981-2<sup>92</sup> possibly due to the construction of the new museum next door which had altered the ground drainage patterns.

Internal alterations are discussed under individual room headings.

In conclusion, it may be claimed that the house built by Simeon Perkins in 1766-7 was a substantially New England house in appearance, construction and layout, transferred to Liverpool, Nova Scotia in the minds of the craftsmen who built it. Yet it did not stick to the general rules and was therefore a little unusual even in its own day. By using several precedents, it created a house which satisfied its owner for forty-five years,<sup>93</sup> with only minor alterations and additions in the same style. As a guide to the character of the owner, the house may be interpreted as modest while exhibiting an awareness of social status, sophistication and prestige, all of which were firmly established in the mind of a young merchant of thirty-one years of age at the time of its building.

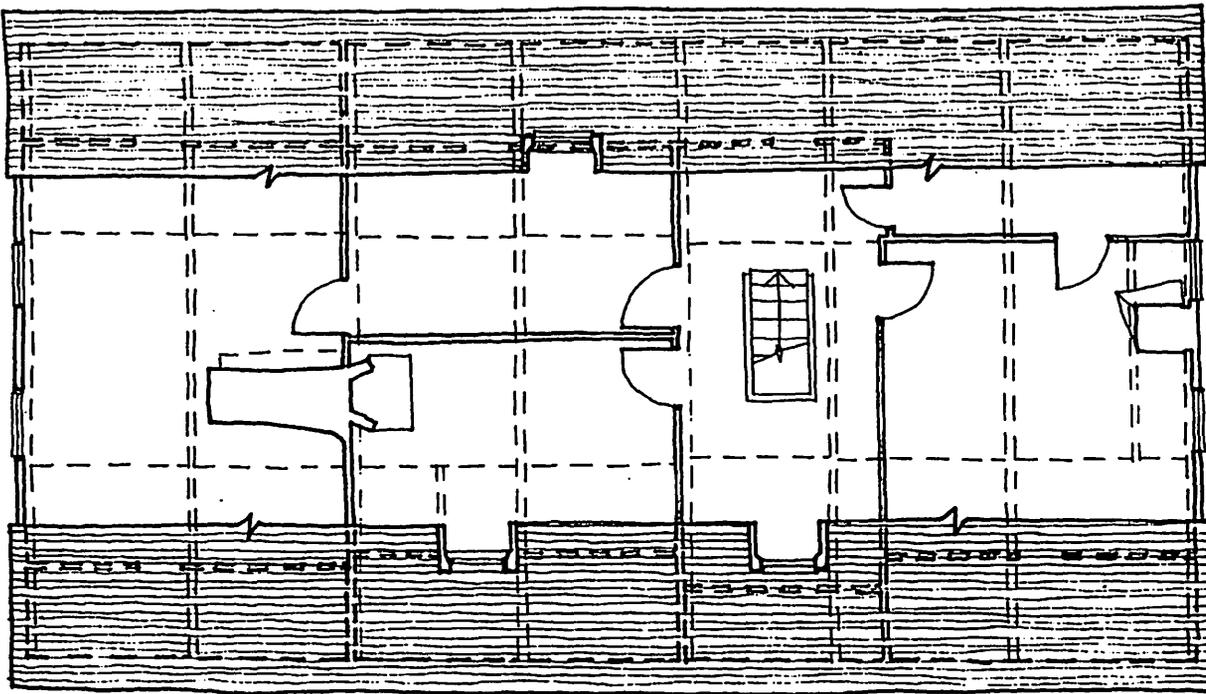
The present clean, crisp and well-maintained external appearance of the house is in direct contrast to the house of 1803 which Perkins described as being badly in need of repairs.<sup>94</sup> "The Shingles on the Westerly end have been on 37 years and might last

longer if the Nails would hold. They are so decayed that the shingles start off." In the context of an earlier reference to painting made in 1790,<sup>95</sup> it seems that exterior painting was rather haphazard and infrequent, "...I begin to paint the east end of my House. It was only primed when New, which was washed off and the clapboards very much worn." Thus the first coat of paint is applied nine years after construction. In 1773 he writes<sup>96</sup> "...I whitewash my house." Unfortunately there is no way of knowing whether this was inside, outside or both. In the context of other comments about the external coatings<sup>97</sup> it might be reasonable to presume that this was internal. In 1777 he records<sup>98</sup> that he was 'painting inside my house'.

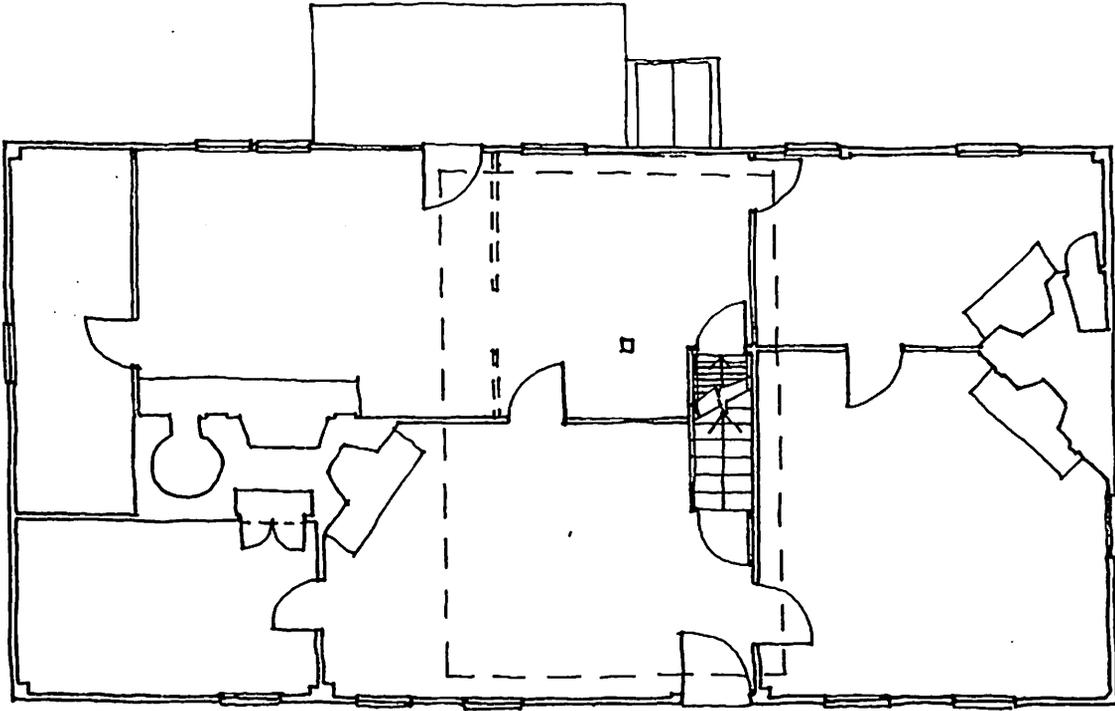
Expediency was obviously a characteristic of the man, and most likely would have been visible around the estate. There are diary references to stealing rocks from walls<sup>99</sup> and wharves<sup>100</sup> to ballast his ships, as well as a general air of relaxed untidiness about many diary entries.<sup>101</sup> Mrs. Perkins hired Diana Moc to wash the counter and windows at the store.<sup>102</sup> Was this the result of exasperation at his untidiness?

Perkins not only maintained a style of architecture common throughout New England at the time, but he also maintained close links with his home in Connecticut<sup>103</sup> and with the culture of upper class colonials, which must have been visible in his way of

life and in the way that the house was used. The visitor today will find the house remarkably unchanged from the time its builder died in 1812, but the site and context are dramatically different, and have been substantially altered during the last few years. At the present time the best way to interpret the house is to step inside and isolate it from its context of mature trees, asphalt paved parking lot and large museum, and to concentrate on the inside.



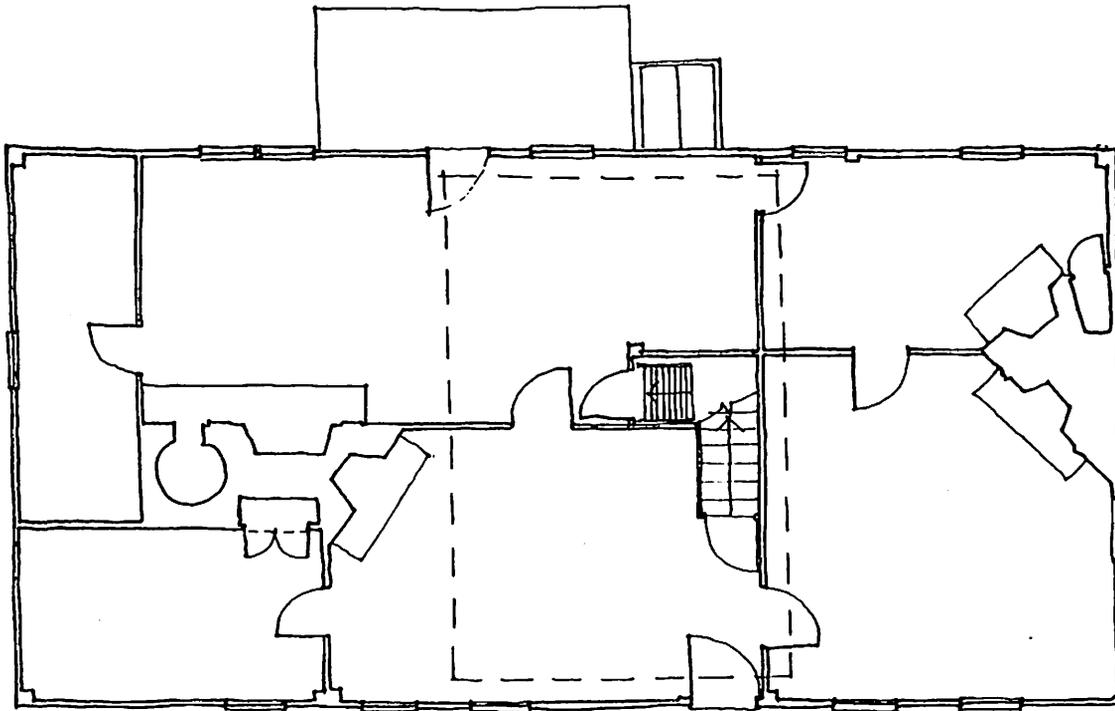
Upper Floor Plan, 1781, conjectural.



Ground Floor Plan, 1781, conjectural.

Note the back stairs were not built until a year later.

a). Steep Stair.



b) Angle stair

The House, Footnotes.

- 1 See Kelly, J. Frederick, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York, Dover Publications, 1963, and Isham, N.M., and Brown, A.F., Early Connecticut Houses, New York, Dover Publications, 1965.
- 2 P.A.N.S. card file quotes R.R. McLeod 'Old Times in Liverpool, N.S.', *Acadiensis*, April 1904, p. 113 in saying this house was built in 1762 by Captain Sylvanus Cobb. Tablet on a granite boulder on the grounds says it was built of materials from New England in 1759. Also see Diary, II, 1783-11-03.
- 3 Diary, III, 1794-01-19.
- 4 Diary, IV, 1782-05-04.
- 5 Presumption based on the other building work of later date.
- 6 Although an early N.S.M. leaflet suggests that Perkins used plaster from Windsor brought in one of his own ships, it seems improbable, because he owned no ships in 1767. He may have done so later when additions were built, but as there is no reference in the Diary, this is purely conjectural.
- 7 Diary, I, 1767-03-26.
- 8 Kelly, op. cit. p. 97, Standard sizes of glass panes were in common use, the glass being manufactured in England and shipped throughout the world.
- 9 Pamphlet from the N.S.M., written originally by T.H. Raddall.
- 10 Statement based on author's studies, which have included considerable reading and travel.
- 11 See Footnote 9 above and popular titles such as The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, Seasoned Timbers, Vols. I & II, Heritage Trust, Halifax, 1972 & 1974.
- 12 New Haven Colony Historical Society, photographs by the Rev. Hollis A. Campbell.

- 13 References to single storey houses are not at all common in books such as Kelly, Isham and Brown, or even in Fiske Kimball's Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic, New York, Dover Publications, 1966. Architectural historians have typically looked at the larger houses which may even have been designed by a known designer rather than at the plain and common smaller houses which were originally more prolific, but with the erosion of time are now seldom found without extensive alterations. Williams, H.L. & O.K., in their A Guide to Old American Houses 1700-1900, New Jersey, A.S. Barnes, 1977, deal with smaller houses but still with a too limited scope.
- 14 The author has diligently searched through the photographic collections of the American Antiquarian Society, The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, The New Haven Colony Historical Society, The Public Archives of Canada, The Public Archives of Nova Scotia and all the books and other materials which might contain photographs of houses. Although aware that his viewpoint is biased by the material seen, the author is reasonably satisfied that the general conclusions are true. Appreciation for all the help received from these organisations is hereby gratefully acknowledged.
- 15 Some sources do include plans but many leave out the scale or other useful information. Typical is the absence of a north point, room titles or building sections. See Kelly & Williams.
- 16 Kelly, op. cit. pp. 14 & 15.
- 17 Author's judgement.
- 18 Verbal communication from Ed Friedland, Lisbon, CT. and Judy Hamblen, Norwich, CT. As a dealer in antique houses, Ed Friedland claimed to have visited over 3000 old houses in Connecticut, and having carefully dismantled and subsequently rebuilt a number of them, has gained an intimate knowledge of their construction, characteristics and sizes.
- 19 Williams, op. cit. pp. 14, 55 & 61.
- 20 Examples vary from a straight boxed stair at Uxbridge MA, to an open stair at Marshfield, MA.
- 21 Williams, op. cit. p.p. 53 to 63
- 22 Author's judgement based on photograph search.
- 23 Verbal communication from Ed Friedland.
- 24 Author's observation.
- 25 Kelly, op. cit. p.82

The House, Footnotes Contd.

- 26 Kelly, op. cit. pp. 40 & 41.
- 27 Kelly, op. cit. pp. 40,41, eg. Norton House, Guilford,CT,1690.
- 28 In the photographic collection of the S.P.N.E.A. there is a view of the Jethro Coffin House on Nantucket Island taken prior to the restoration work, where it can be clearly seen that the boarding to walls and roof is vertical.
- 29 Isham and Brown, op. cit. p. 170.
- 30 Author's observation.
- 31 The lack of formal knowledge may be the reason why the job supervisor made such a statement. Reside file, N.S.M.
- 32 Raddall, 1949-04-28.
- 33 Reside gave his talk in Yarmouth nearly thirty years after the event.
- 34 Staff of N.S.M.
- 35 Diary, IV, 1802-11-25.
- 36 Diary, passim.
- 37 Diary, III, 1795-07-16 even refers to a 'Contrivance' for assisting in hauling logs, making Perkins an inventor of sorts.
- 38 Measurement and interpretation by the author.
- 39 Diary, III, 1792-06-05, where the removal of the stoop is recorded.
- 40 Diary, I, 1776-08-06.
- 41 Diary, III, 1792-01-11.
- 42 Diary, I, 1776-08-08.
- 43 Diary, II, 1781-06-21.
- 44 Diary, II, 1786-11-26.
- 45 Diary, passim.
- 46 Diary references to his brothers suggest there would have been insufficient space downstairs.
- 47 Diary, I, 1767-04-18.
- 48 Diary, I, 1776-08-06 & 07.
- 49 Verbal communication from Ed Friedland and A. L. Cummings.
- 50 As # 49, and implied by J.R.Stevens.
- 51 Various locations notably in the Kitchen, Stair Landing and Bedroom 3.
- 52 Raddall, passim.
- 53 Various locations eg. Entry, Kitchen (1792), and Bedroom 3.
- 54 In contrast to the rich data supplied by the Diary.
- 55 Author's observations. Marks in the wall surfaces could be

The House, Footnotes Contd.

55, contd.

interpreted as having been made either by electrical battens or by walls which have since been removed. The author favours the latter.

56 No records appear to have been kept which describe the extent of the work, except as a cost.

57 Reside file, which refers to before and after photographs. but makes no reference to any taken during the construction.

58 Diary, II, 1787-10-29.

59 Raddall, op. cit.

60 Raddall, 1947-05-19.

61 Raddall, 1949-04-22.

62 Diary, II, 1781-06-20, ff.

63 Diary, III, 1792-06-04, ff.

64 By Hedley Doty.

65 Author's observation, as shingles were replaced in 1979.

66 Diary. II, 1781-06-29.

67 Still visible today, though attempts to clear them were made in the past, as Diary, III, 1794-05-24, 1794-10-14 which refer to 'burning' and 'blowing' rocks.

68 Author's observation, see Bedroom 2 below for more discussion.

69 Diary, III, 1792-06-04 ff.

70 Diary, V, 1804-01-04.

71 One possible conclusion, due to proximity and age.

72 Diary, I, 1777-09-04, II, 1783-06-06, III, 1790-08-19.

73 Diary, III, 1790-08-17, IV, 1801-08-03.

74 As footnote # 72 above.

75 As footnote # 69 above.

76 Kelly, op. cit. pp. 100, 101, 206 suggesting 1800 or later.

77 Verbal communication from A.L.Cummings.

78 Author's observations.

79 It may be assumed that the installation of an indoor toilet would have followed fairly closely the building of a main sewer. Evidence from pipework suggests an early date.

80 The blocked window is visible internally.

81 Similar in size to the remaining attic window.

82 Chimney pots of Gothic style can be seen in the 1947 photos. The brick chimney in the second kitchen was removed to make space for the museum collection and display.

The House, Footnotes, Contd.

- 83 Raddall, p. 2, 1936.
- 84 Raddall, p. 8, 1949-04-11
- 85 Reside file, memo 1947-03-06 to Dr.D.L.Cooper, including an estimate of \$150 to improve toilet facilities.
- 86 Raddall, 1949-05-31.
- 87 Raddall, 1949-04-11.
- 88 Raddall, 1953-08-11.
- 89 Raddall, op. cit.1953-12-15 which refers to portable electric heaters installed in August, and 1956-07-27, which mentions damage done by damp before the heaters were installed.
- 90 Author's observation.
- 91 Author's observation.
- 92 Verbal communication from Alan North at the Department of Government Services.
- 93 Diary, I, 1767-04-18 to 1812-05-09.
- 94 Diary, IV, 1803-07-26.
- 95 Diary, III, 1790-08-17 to 30, where the colour of the roof is described but not the colour of the walls, eg. 1790-09-20, 21.
- 96 Diary, I, 1775-05-05.
- 97 Diary, passim. Perkins refers to painting the outside and inside of the house and to whitewashing. It may be assumed that the whitewash was always used internally whereas the paint would have been used externally on all surfaces and internally on the trim and woodwork such as the staircase.
- 98 Diary, I, 1777-09-08. & 09.
- 99 Diary, IV, 1801-02-09 and 1801-12-31.
- 100 Diary, III, 1790-10-23.
- 101 Diary, passim.
- 102 Diary, IV, 1803-07-08.
- 103 Diary, passim. but also IV, 1798-09-20 where he writes of other sea captains 'bound hom' to New England.

## Introduction to a Tour of the House

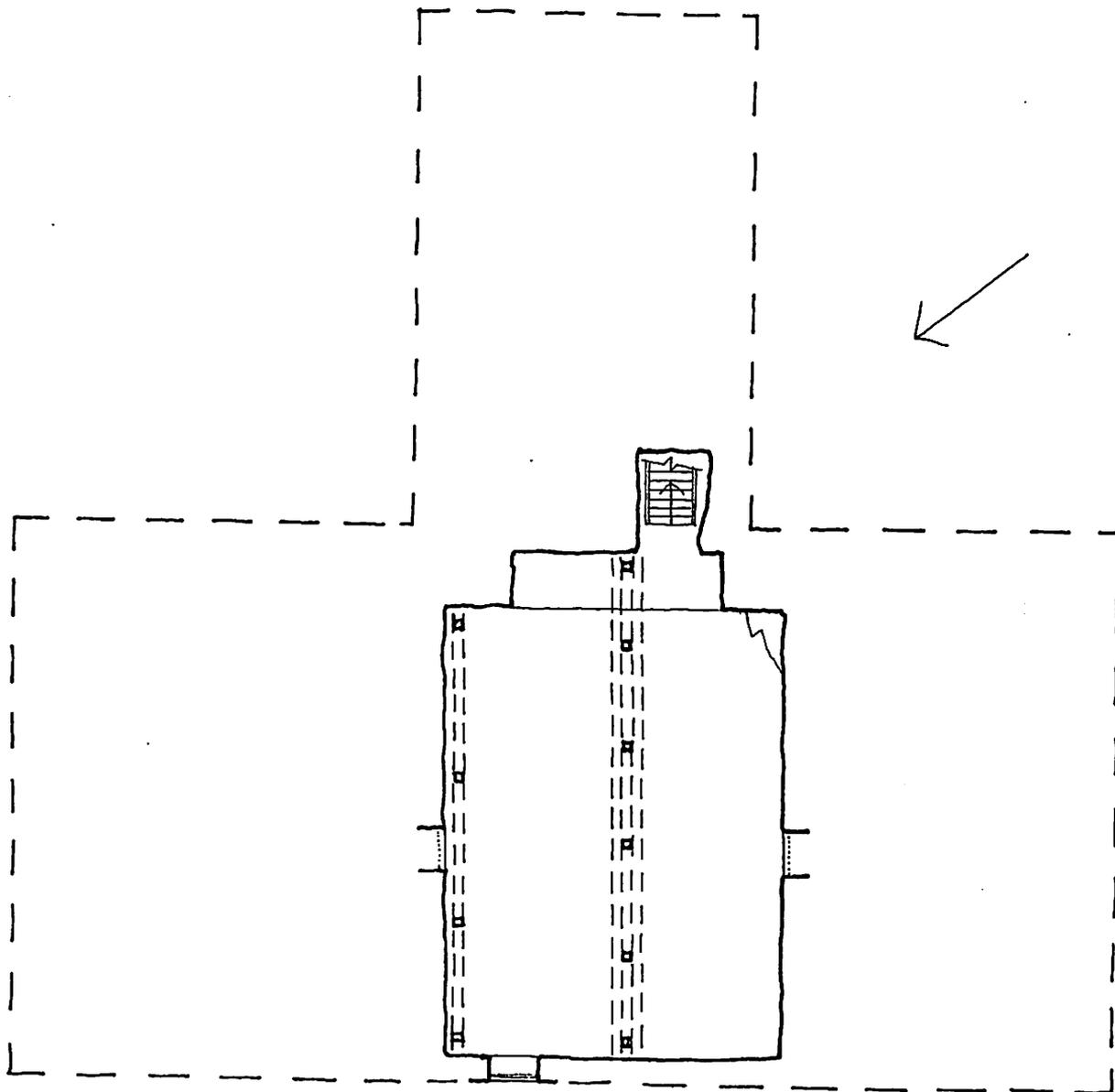
In the following pages, the house is described room by room in the natural sequence which would be followed by a visitor, starting at the front door and ending up at the attic. Each space is described as to its function, changes in use, details of construction, decoration, present interpretation, and furnishings. Not all the rooms are open to nor all the spaces accessible to the general public, but all have been described so that the reader may perceive the context and sequence of each space as it was used within the whole.

Diary references to furniture suggest that Simeon Perkins was concerned with the quality of the contents of the house. A small stand table was sent as a gift from the Norwich merchant to whom his son Roger had been apprenticed.<sup>1</sup> On two other occasions chairs are referred to, two received from Mr. Bois of Boston in 1783<sup>2</sup> and six from Mr. Bond of Halifax in 1793.<sup>3</sup>

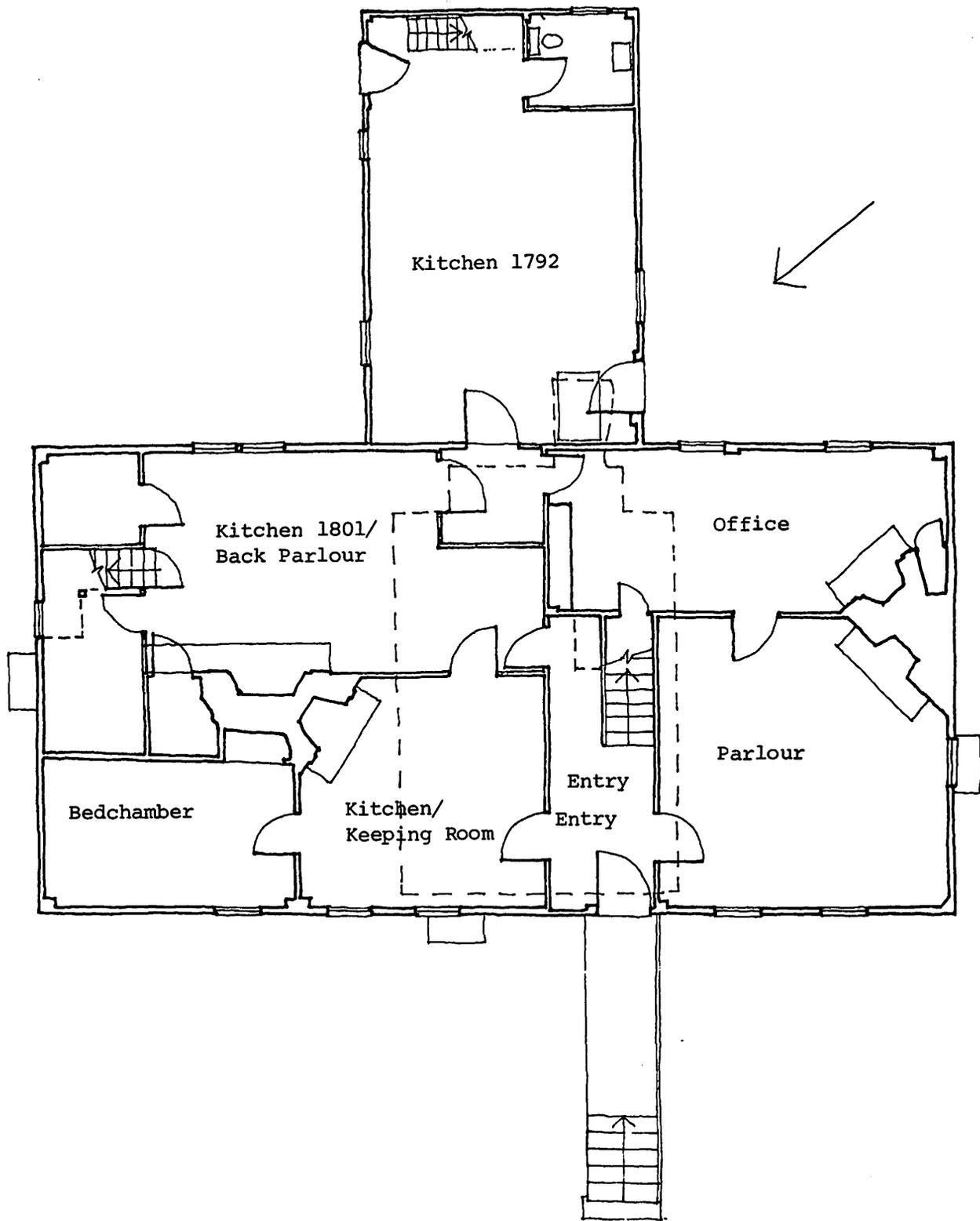
It appears that when the house was sold by Elizabeth Perkins in 1822 the contents were removed.<sup>4</sup> Little of the original furniture can be traced except the grandfather clock owned by Simeon Perkins<sup>5</sup> which now resides in York, Maine, together with a sampler worked by Lucy.<sup>6</sup> Nothing remains of the family

furnishings, and very little from the first years of the settlement. Once the house had been turned into a Museum, a small shipment of antique furniture was received from Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, which arrived 1953 August 3.<sup>7</sup> Much has been done to furnish the house with contemporary pieces of furniture by both the Q.C.H.S. and by the N.S.M.

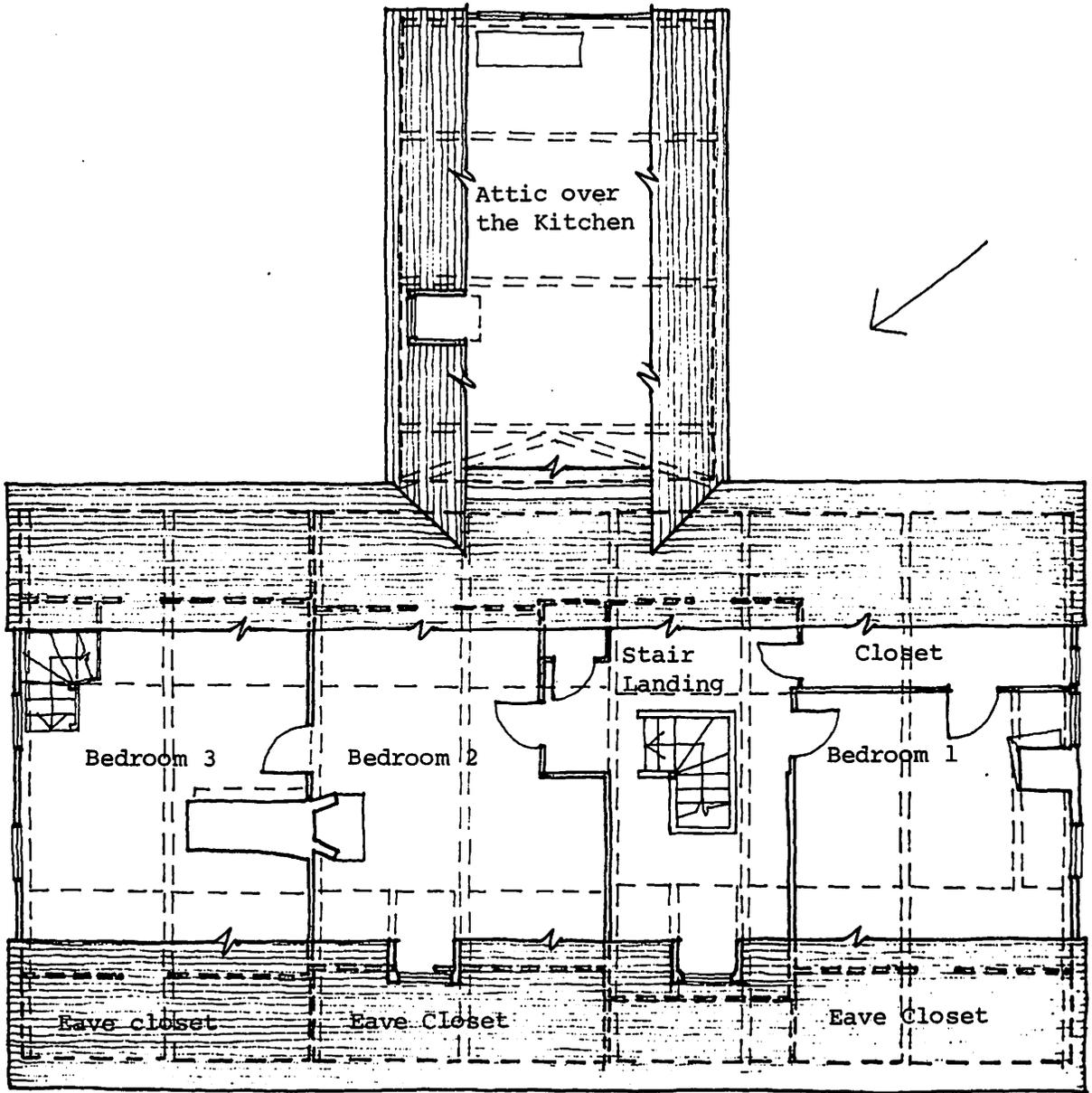
Thomas Raddall fought a protracted battle with indifferent politicians and public officials as well as public apathy to get the house both open and furnished for the enjoyment of visitors.<sup>8</sup> His dream was finally realised on 4 August 1959 when the house and grounds were the setting for a garden party to celebrate the bicentennial of the founding of Liverpool as well as the thirtieth birthday of the Q.C.H.S.<sup>9</sup>



Cellar Plan 1949.



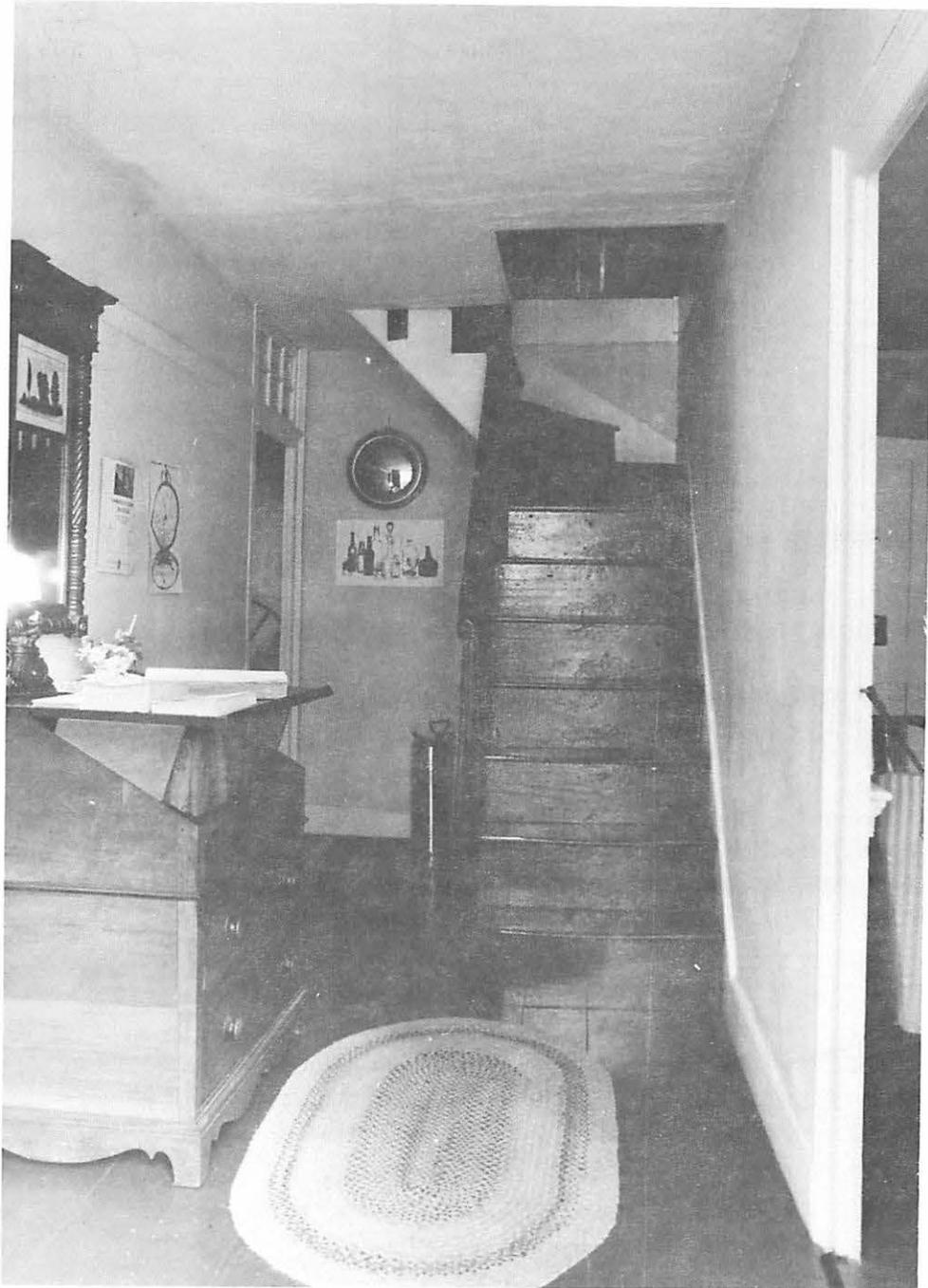
Ground Floor Plan 1949.



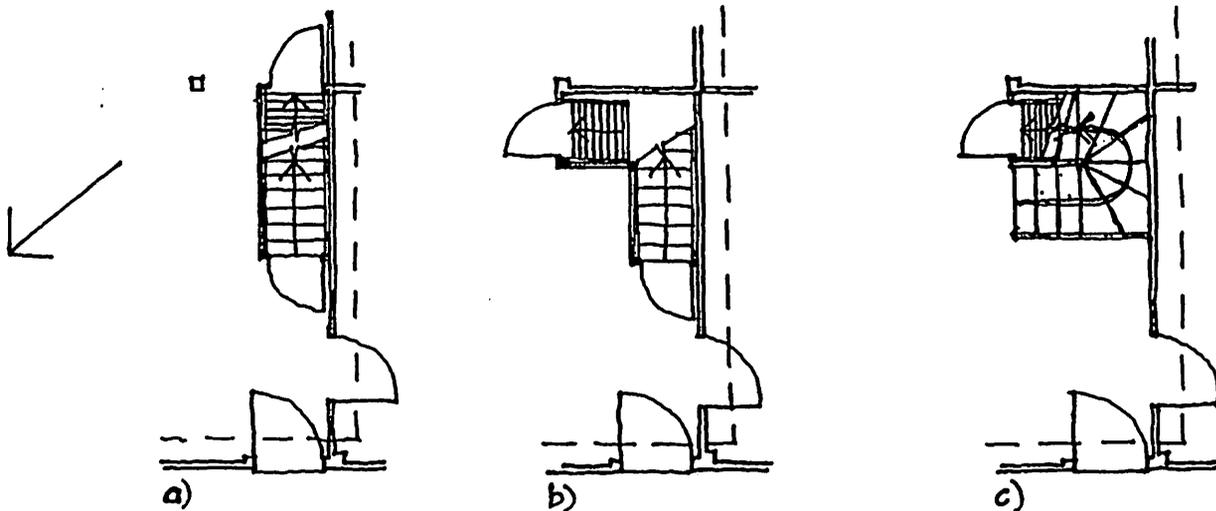
Upper Floor Plan 1949.

Introduction to a Tour of the House, Footnotes.

- 1       Diary, II, 1787-10-26, "Present of small stand table...."
- 2       Diary, II, 1783-09-07, "...two round chairs....in exchange  
for silk."
- 3       Diary, III, 1793-07-25.
- 4       Raddall, op. cit. p. 2, writes that the contents were  
"auctioned off" in 1822.
- 5       Inside the case of the clock is the original printed label  
together with some added notes, stating the clock was made  
by "Simon Willard at his CLOCK DIAL, in Roxbury St." which  
was located in Roxbury at this time. The street has since  
been renamed Washington Street. The added lists suggest the  
succeeding owners and there is also a chronology which is  
interesting, as the clock is claimed to date from 1762 but  
the maker, Simon Willard, would have been only 11 years old  
at this date. It is more likely that the clock was made in  
1780 or later. The clock can now be seen at the Elizabeth  
Perkins Museum in York, ME. Elizabeth Bishop Perkins (b.  
1879-11-20, d. 1952-04-? , was the direct descendant of  
Simeon Perkins.
- 6       The sampler bears the date of 1792, at which time Lucy was  
12 or 13 years of age.
- 7       Raddall, op.cit. p.14
- 8       Raddall, passim.
- 9       Raddall, op. cit. p.19



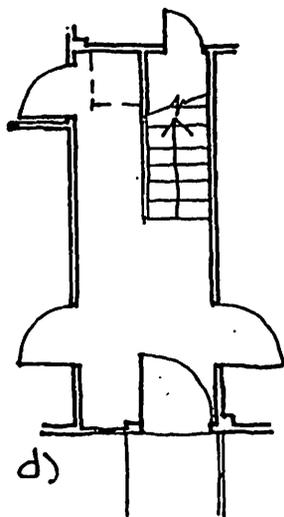
The main stair and basement stair locations. It would appear that the existing staircase is the fourth main stair. The first, built 1766-7, was either replaced or remodelled in 1787, and was itself replaced in about 1840 by the rear stair, which in turn was replaced by a new front stair in 1949.



The Entry.

- a) 1767, conjectural.  
A steep boxed staircase.
- b) 1767, conjectural.  
An angle staircase.
- c) 1767, conjectural.  
A dog-leg staircase.

d) 1949.  
Although we know that the stairs were built in 1787 when the Entry was altered, we know nothing of what it looked like. The stairs were removed in about 1840 and were replaced in 1949.



The Entry

1 Entry

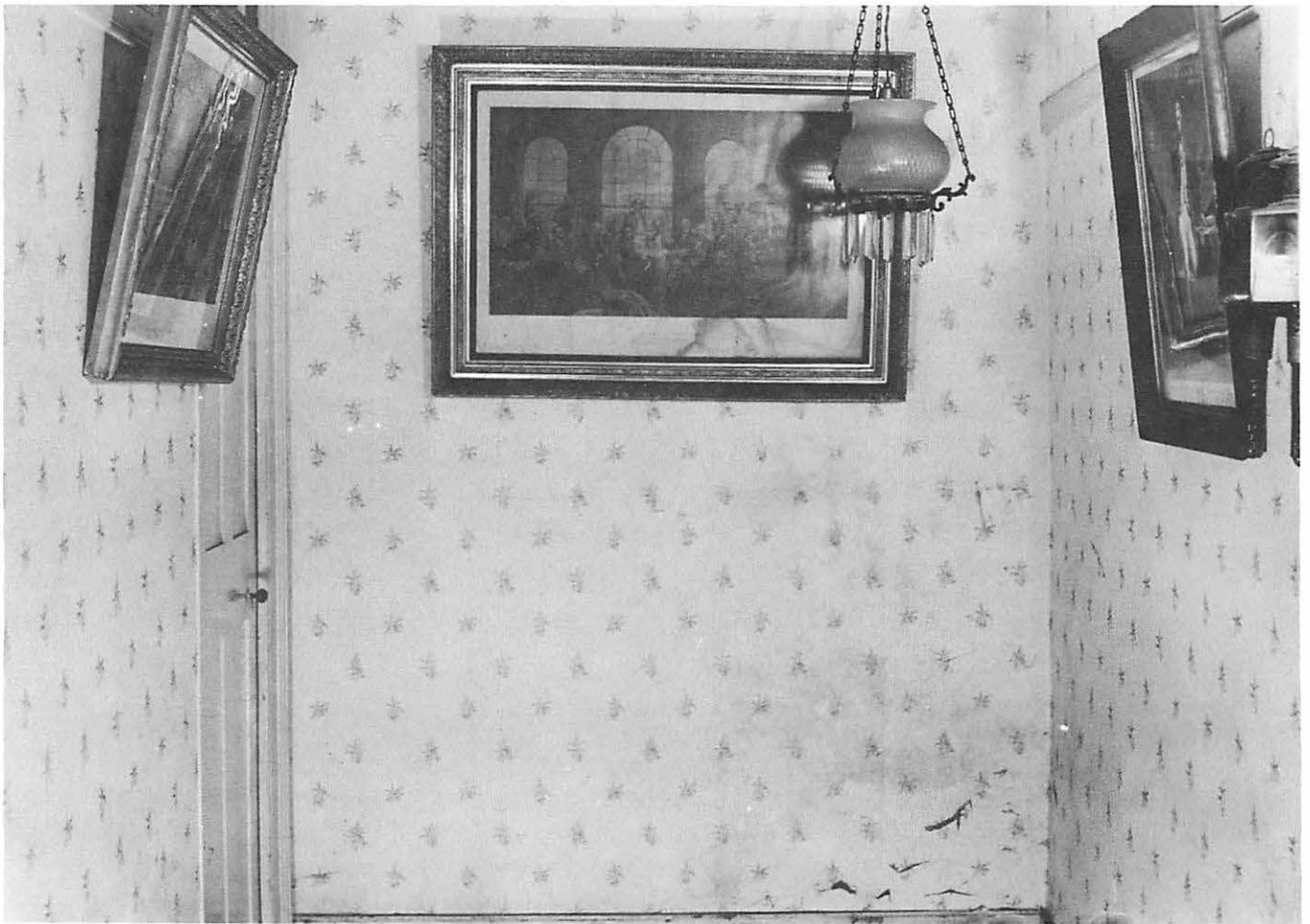
Entering the house from outside on a sunny day, a visitor is struck by the small space and dim lighting of the hall. In his diary entry for October 29, 1787, Simeon Perkins writes; "Mr. Grant and Mr. John Miles begins to work on my House, to alter the Entry and Build Stairs this morning." This may refer to exterior work or to the rear entry, but taken at face value implies the front entry and staircase.<sup>1</sup> It may have been that the original stair was a typical New England one with tight winders,<sup>2</sup> or that it was both steep and narrow and pitched the user towards the roof and was therefore difficult to use.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, Mr. Grant did not leave us any drawings to show what the alterations were. A close inspection of the doors leading from the entry suggests that the doors into the main rooms are of different dates, and because it is believed that the parlour door is original, it seems logical to presume the keeping room door dates from 1787.<sup>4</sup>

In searching for precedents to the Perkins staircase, the author was told that 70% of Connecticut staircases were built rising from the back of the house rather from the front.<sup>5</sup> Were Messrs Grant and Miles building the original stair? From the diary reference we may assume that this was a new staircase, but whether it replaced an earlier one in the same location or one in another location altogether we may never know. It is probable that the original staircase fitted the type commonly used in New England in

the mid-eighteenth century. This would have been a boxed-in type, often with winders at the bottom, and fitted with a door. Examples of this type can be found in Nova Scotia built nearly a century later.<sup>6</sup>

It therefore seems probable that Grant and Miles were replacing the steep enclosed staircase for a less steep and open one. The only way to achieve a gentler rise was to introduce winders and a short leg, which would have necessitated the removal of a section of bedroom wall above and the reinstatement of the door in the recess of bedroom 2. (See p 254 b ) The shape of the stair, its location and a small remnant of bedroom walling give further encouragement to this deduction. The author is satisfied with this solution.

Two other pieces of evidence in the entry are puzzling. A joint in the flooring passes under the support wall to the 1949 staircase. It is believed that some new flooring was laid in 1949, but as no records were kept of the location and extent, it cannot be assumed to have been in this location.<sup>7</sup> Marks in the east wall plaster suggest the removal of a partition. The joint in the floor and the marks in the wall line up. In the 1947 photograph of the entry ( p 157 ) there is no partition wall, which suggests earlier removal, but the lens had too long a focal length to record the pattern in the floor. Nothing can be deduced from this information.



The Entry in 1947. The space to the right is now occupied by the stair rebuilt in 1949.



The Entrance Door in 1978. The door itself is solid and may be original though the handle and lock are modern.

The front door is quite fine with six raised panels and delicate mouldings to the frame. The door may be original and date from 1767, but is most probably later, though still from the eighteenth century. It has modern door furniture, and holes can clearly be seen from previous hardware. It is mounted on rising butt hinges, which must have been added at a later date. The main argument against the door being original is that hinge marks in the post supporting the front door do not match up with marks on the door itself and therefore suggest that the present door is a replacement dating from as early as 1787, but possibly even later.<sup>8</sup> (See p 162 )

Further changes were made to the stairs in the Seelys' time as well. In commenting on two stairs, neither connected to the front hall, Thomas Raddall wrote on 22 April 1949:<sup>9</sup>

According to a tradition related by Mrs. John Day, one set of these stairs originally went to the front hall. At some time after Mrs. Perkins sold the house in 1822, a daughter of the current owner became either insane or fell into disgrace, and was forbidden ever to leave the upper floor. When visitors came the poor creature used to peer over the front stair rail, and the irate father had the stairs taken out of the front hall and changed to go down the back, at the entrance to the ell. The front stair-well was then covered with ceiling lath and plaster... 1

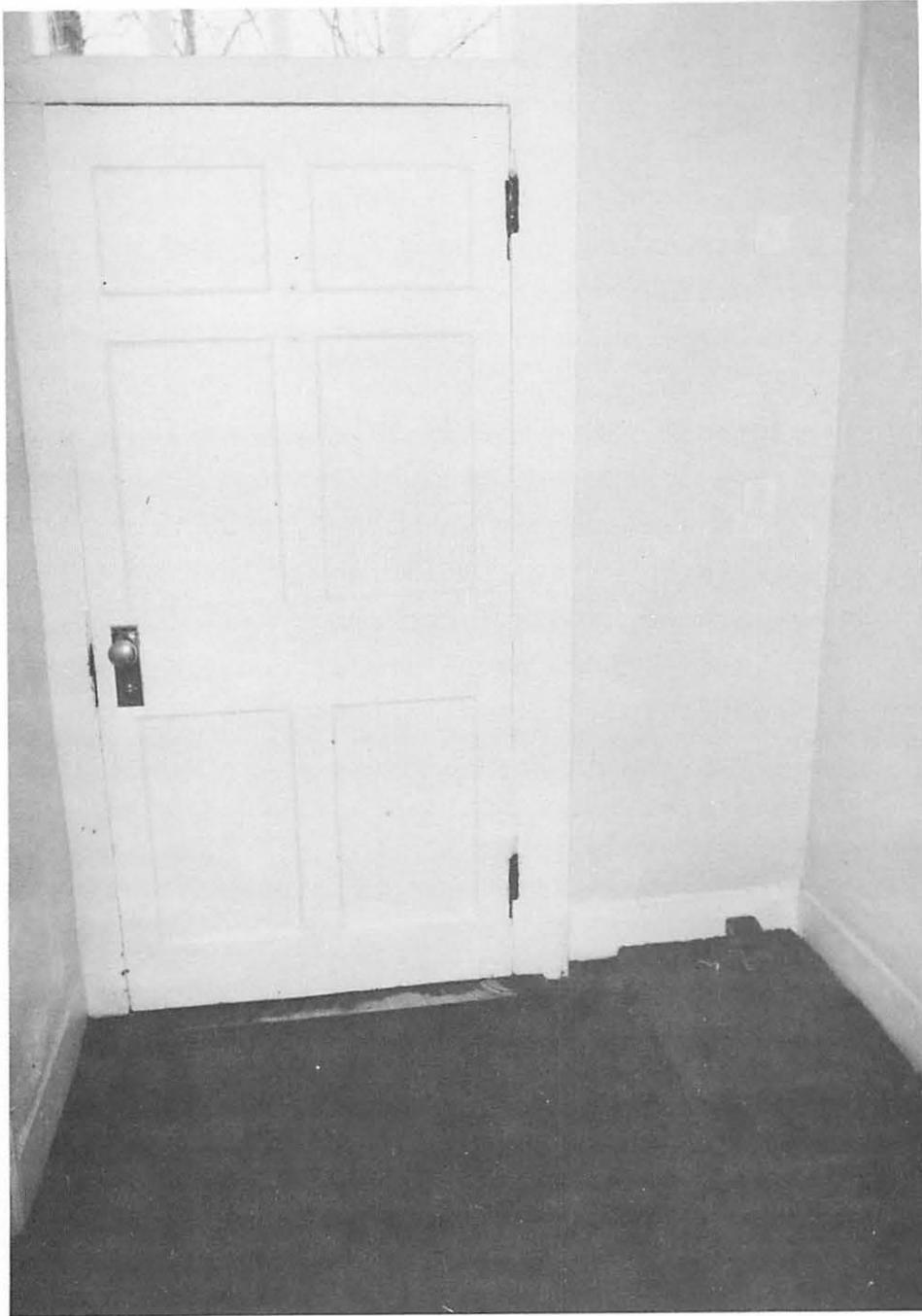
As Mrs. Perkins sold the house in 1822 and it remained in the same family until 1936,<sup>10</sup> the irate father must have been Caleb Seely

and his poor daughter would have been Caroline Ann who died of 'consumption' in 1844 at the age of twenty-three.<sup>11</sup> The Provincial Department of Public Works, with the assistance of Thomas Raddall, restored the stair to its original position in 1949.<sup>12</sup> "Carpenters cut away the plaster at the west side and ceiling of the hall", which clearly revealed the previous location of the staircase by "the cuttings and marks in the timbers".<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately no records were kept of these pieces of evidence and so we cannot tell if these were from the first or second stair. A small scrap of wallpaper recovered by the author beneath some broken plaster in 1978, helps to confirm by its pattern that the original date of removal could have been around 1840.<sup>14</sup> The staircase had to be located at the rear before 1869, when Caleb Seely died, for the handrail incident to be genuine which is discussed under Office Room, below p 218.

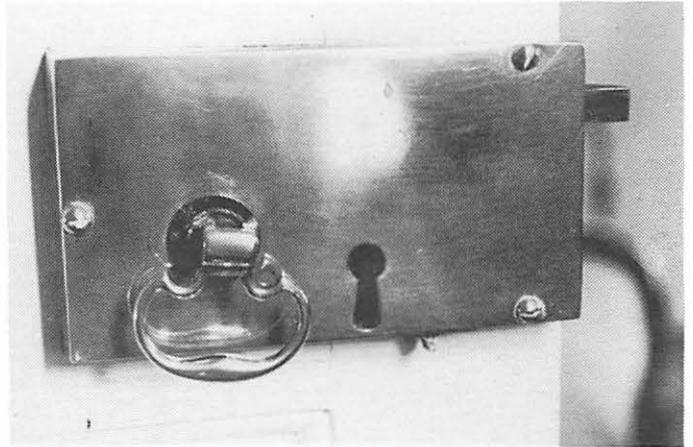
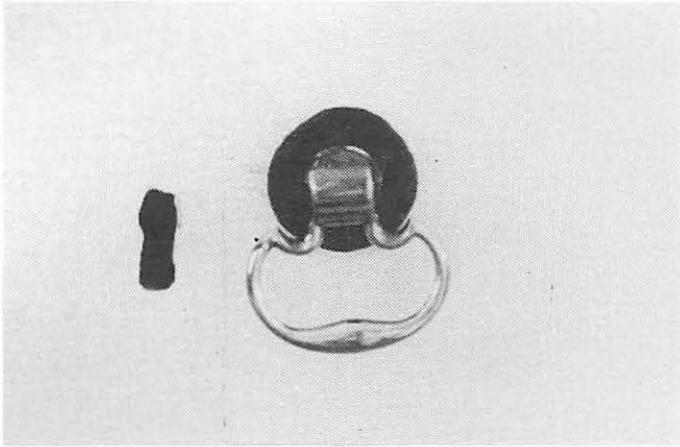
Drawings made in 1947<sup>15</sup> show two doors from the entry directly opening into the parlour. This must be a draughting error as the photograph, which was taken within a few days of the drawings being made, clearly shows a blank wall where the drawing shows a door. (see p 131 ). Blueprints in the file of J.W. Reside show graphic corrections including the elimination of this extra door. Reside also notes that the staircase was breaking away from the wall, but the photograph fails to show it in detail.<sup>16</sup> (See p 208

1 Entry, Footnotes.

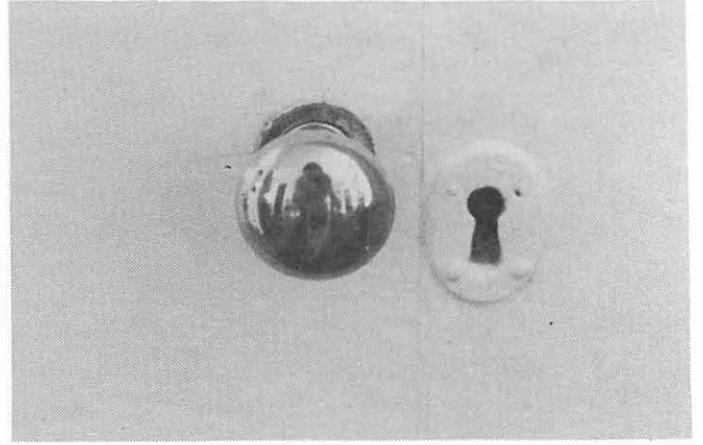
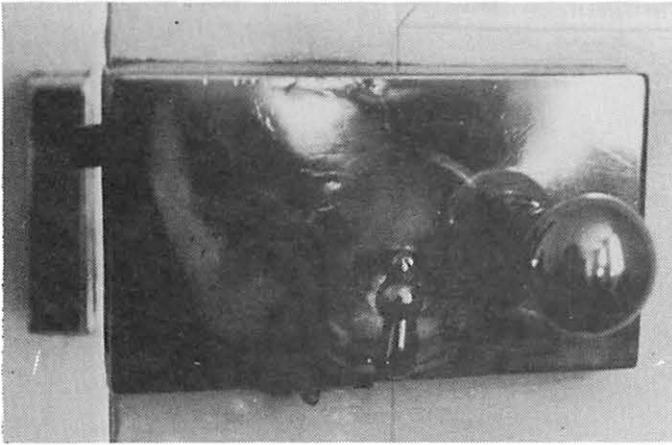
- 1 Interpretation of the names of spaces such as 'entry' or location of elements such as stairs, must be tempered with common sense. The known facts of entry, rearrangement of stairs, different doorlocks on the doors to the parlour and keeping room, all combine to suggest that there were changes at the front entry, rather than at a rear entry, although both could have happened.
- 2 See plans in Kelly, Isham & Brown, and Williams. Unfortunately neither Kelly nor Isham & Brown illustrate stairs from one-and-a-half storey houses, only from two. In Williams, p.35, the floor plan showing a tight staircase is obviously incorrectly labelled as there would be no headroom at the upper level in this "Cape Cod" house. In the John Adams House at Quincy, MA., another type of stair exists, a box stair, which could have been built into a single storey house. Perhaps a better example is the boxed staircase in the Moses Farnham House at Uxbridge, MA., 1766.
- 3 The horizontal distance between the edge of the parlour door and the point at which there is still headroom upstairs generates a staircase with a pitch greater than 45°.
- 4 Diary, II, 1787-10-29.
- 5 Verbal communication, Ed Friedland.
- 6 A number of examples in Nova Scotia from the region, eg. the Elwood House at Indian Harbour, Halifax County.
- 7 Reside claims that the flooring was left untouched, but there are signs that suggest otherwise.
- 8 Observations by the author on site.
- 9 Raddall, op. cit., 1949-04-22.
- 10 See Footnote to Subsequent Owners, numbers 1, 22, 23.
- 11 Trinity Church, Liverpool, Burials, 1844-10-27, d. aged 23 of consumption, P.A.N.S., MG 4, Vol. 78.
- 12 Raddall, op. cit., and Reside file, op. cit.
- 13 Raddall, 1949-04-22.
- 14 A small scrap of wallpaper was removed to the N.S.M.
- 15 Measured drawings by B.L.Parker, P.L.S., Liverpool, dated 1947.
- 16 Reside, op. cit., typewritten note "From notebook J.W.Reside" no date, but possibly 1947-03-05, according to Raddall.



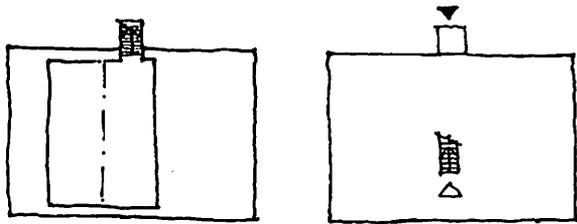
The inside of the front door in the north wall. The lock has been changed at least twice and rising-butt hinges installed, but the door appears to be either original or at least early. To the right of the door can be seen bolts with large square washers supporting the commemorative plaque on the outside.



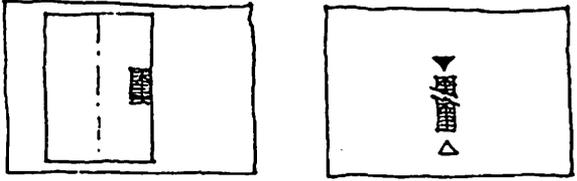
The handle and lock of the Entry/Parlour door dating from 1767.



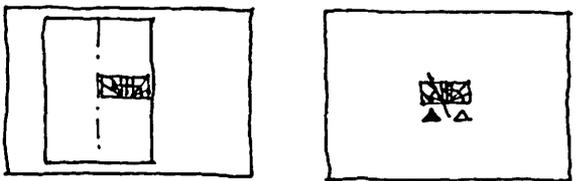
The handle and lock of the Entry/Keeping Room door, which probably dates from 1787.



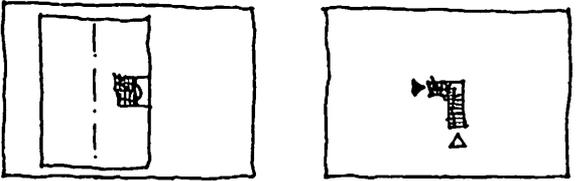
a) External only  
 for: tradition.  
 against: apparent contradiction with the Diary, especially by 1801.



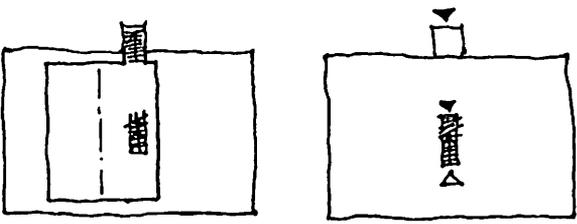
b) Internal only  
 for: tradition, simplicity, first stair which was altered in 1787 could have been very steep.  
 against: signs in flooring, but no signs in the floor joists.



c) Internal only  
 for: tradition.  
 against: impossible at the upper level.

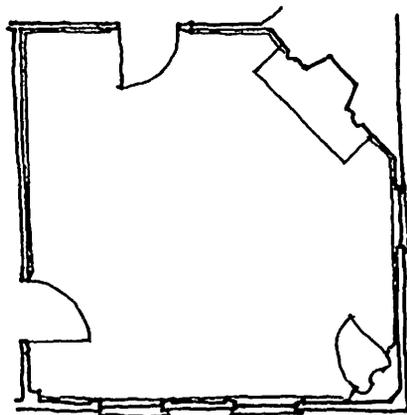


d) Internal only, angle staircase  
 for: apparent upper level stair shape after 1787.  
 against: cellar stair is difficult to fit.

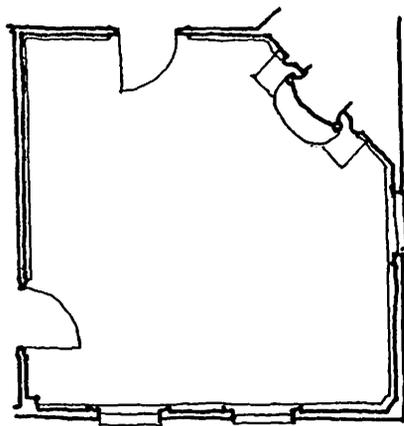


e) Internal and external combined  
 for: a common traditional solution  
 against: reconciliation with the structure, but the staircase has to be conjectural, so this seems to be the best fit.

Alternative locations for the cellar steps



a)



b)



- a) 1767, conjectural.  
Note the open fire and the corner cupboard.
- b) Present.  
A cast iron stove was installed in 1805.

The Parlour

## 2 Parlour

As the main reception room in the house, the parlour is a pleasant and comfortable space, due to the informality of the corner fireplace and partly to the relatively low ceiling and the square shape. It fits exactly the origin of the word parlour, as an ideal place for talking.<sup>1</sup> During the first ten years he was in the house, it is very probable the room was the scene of all entertainment and business for Simeon Perkins. Fifty years earlier the parlour would most likely have had a bed in it, but this practice had been largely discontinued by the latter half of the eighteenth century in New England<sup>2</sup> though it was still common in modest homes in New France.<sup>3</sup> From diary references there is every reason to believe that it would have been common in Liverpool as well, but possibly not in this superior house.<sup>4</sup> Initially there could have been a bed in the adjacent room to the south as Perkins does not refer to it as an office until twenty-five years after the house was built,<sup>5</sup> and for ten years he lived in the house as a bachelor.<sup>6</sup>

The room has witnessed a number of social events and has been used by a good number of important people. In the early days it was visited by the Lieutenant-Governor who drank tea and wine with water<sup>7</sup>, naval officers<sup>8</sup>, Winkworth Tonge<sup>9</sup>, de Barres<sup>10</sup>, Newton<sup>11</sup>, Judge Monk<sup>12</sup>, amongst others.

Of all the rooms in the house, the parlour is the least altered

and must appear much as it would have done in 1767. The windows and doors appear to be in their original positions. Main vertical framing members can be seen, one behind the door from the entry and one in the northeast corner which is less noticeable because of the diagonal wall.

The diagonal shaping of the corner post suggests that a corner cupboard originally filled the northwest corner of the room. New England parlours were typically equipped with a built-in corner cupboard.<sup>13</sup> Without the cupboard, the room looks less finished. Unfortunately, there have been too many superficial changes to finishes to show any traces of a cupboard. But instead of a corner cupboard this may have been the location of the grandfather clock which he owned.<sup>14</sup>

The only significant change has been the removal of a wainscot. When this happened is not known, but in the absence of diary references to its removal it may be assumed to have happened after 1812, when Perkins died, and is unlikely to have been removed by his widow before she sold the house in 1822. On June 19, 1793, Perkins wrote that he had the woodwork of the "small parlour and keeping room" painted blue.<sup>15</sup> Prior to the extensive renovations of 1949, Raddall wrote<sup>16</sup> in 1947 that he and Reside "... discovered that an original wainscoting about 2 1/2 to 3 feet high, composed of boards laid horizontally, had been removed at some distant time and replaced with plaster down to the mop-board.



Parlour looking southwest. The mantel shelf was added but the fireplace surround appears to be authentic to 1767.



The Parlour looking north. The sofa is Sheraton-style. Sconces on the wall are a reminder that lighting was a nuisance when candles had to be made or purchased and continually trimmed.

The walls and woodwork were covered with successive layers of wallpaper and paint to a great thickness. It was impossible to separate the innermost wallpaper and see what it was like. The wood of the ground floor rooms had many layers of paint. Careful scraping revealed the original coat as a bluish-green of the so-called Williamsbury [sic] shade." What a pity that the record of wallpapers has been lost, as well as a record of the sequence of paint colours. Fortunately the latter have merely been painted over by successive generations and may still be rediscovered at some future date.

The fireplace was originally open, and in 1805 caught fire but did no damage.<sup>17</sup> Also in 1805 "we have stove set by Keezer in the small Parlour."<sup>18</sup> The stove manufactured by the Fulton Iron Foundry of New York,<sup>19</sup> and presumably original, added to safety and comfort just in time for Christmas. Above the original fireplace surround was later added a mantelshelf.<sup>20</sup> From behind it, the author was able to retrieve a piece of early wallpaper coated with an olive green paint.<sup>21</sup> This could originally have been blue which has deteriorated with age.<sup>22</sup>

Previous investigators have questioned whether the windows were the original ones or later enlargements, but the evidence suggests the former.<sup>23</sup> The height of the window is determined at the top by how the exterior trim fits into the cladding as well as by the internal trim, and especially at the bottom the chair-rail. The

chair-rail is continuous and forms the window sill.<sup>24</sup> Thus the height appears to be fixed both by external and internal conditions. Further reinforcement of the argument in favour of original windows is provided by examples from Connecticut where large windows appear to be quite common even in smaller houses, and unequal sashes are used with the small sash at the top.<sup>25</sup>

Seeing the room in the summer months, the visitor must find it hard to appreciate the lack of comfort on a bitter winter night in the late eighteenth century. The hardest part of the exercise is to accept just how cold the walls would have been with their low insulation value, and the amount of draught generated by the open fire in contrast to the intense radiant heat given off from the burning logs and heated masonry.

Thermal comfort in a room heated by an open fire alone would not have been great. The open fire would have been very inefficient at converting the heat from the burning wood into heated air in the room. Most (about 85%) of the heat was immediately removed up the straight flue and lost. The windows and doors would have been closed, and the hot air in the room would have stratified to the top with potentially quite high temperatures at the ceiling.

Candle or rush lighting would have increased the heat and reduced the oxygen content. Heat loss through the walls and windows would have created a cold downdraft at the perimeter of the room. Fresh air required for combustion and to replace the waste smokey air from the fire would have found its way in through cracks around

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The Parlour fireplace with its original surround and later mantel shelf. The cast iron stove was manufactured by Thompson, Thompson and Clusman in New York. The mirror is Chippendale style.

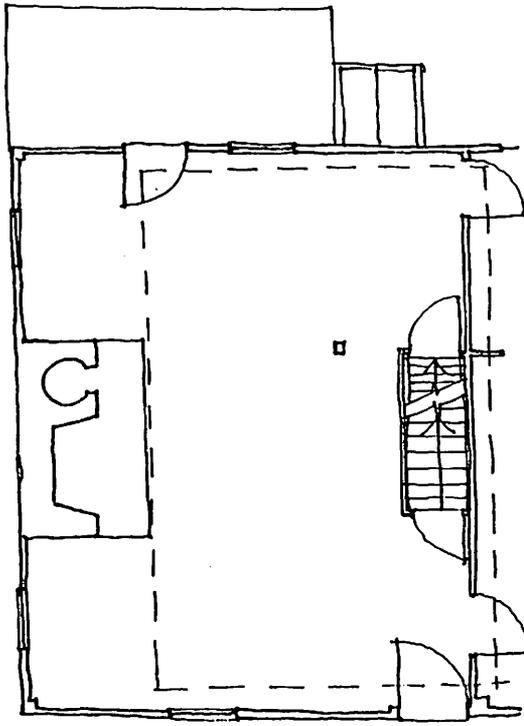


Corner post in the parlour. The lack of diagonal bracing and the chamfer suggest the location of an original corner cupboard which would have been normal when the room was built.

the window sashes and doors. The cold air would naturally stratify to the floor, and would be at close to outside air temperature and moving towards the fireplace as a very cold draft. The aesthetic luxury of a modern open fire cannot be compared with the rugged necessity of an eighteenth-century one. The cold would have been partially balanced by warm clothing as well as by the fire. Nevertheless the problem was real enough as evidenced by the diary entry for 1780-01-29, where Perkins writes "...My ink has been froze the most of the day on the table near the fire." Generally wine and rum were used to reduce the harsh effects of the climate but one suspects that moderation was exercised in this particular household.

2 Parlour, Footnotes.

- 1 Oxford English Dictionary.
- 2 Kelly, op. cit.
- 3 Moogk, Peter N., Building a house in New France, Toronto, Mc Lelland and Stewart, 1977, especially pp. 42, 43.
- 4 From the Diary, it is possible to compute that there were up to seventeen people sleeping in the house at times and there for bed spaces were in short supply. This may have meant that overnight guests may have had to sleep in the parlour.
- 5 Diary, III, 1792-01-11.
- 6 Diary, passim.
- 7 Diary, II, 1789-08-22.
- 8 Diary, III, 1793-06-17, 1794-09-15.
- 9 Diary, II, 1785-07-11.
- 10 Diary, I, 1769-08-12.
- 11 Diary, III, 1795-08-24.
- 12 Diary, V, 1810-09-19.
- 13 Verbal communication, Ed Friedland.
- 14 See introduction to a tour of the house, Footnote #5.
- 15 Diary, III, 1793-06-19.
- 16 Raddall, op. cit., 1947-05-21 and 22.
- 17 Diary, V, 1805-02-12.
- 18 Diary, V, 1805-12-16.
- 19 The name is cast in the stove surround.
- 20 See Stevens, J.R. and this seems to be borne out by the evidence of wallpaper behind it.
- 21 Wallpaper sample removed to the N.S.M.
- 22 Verbal communication from Morgan Phillips of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston, MA.
- 23 Stevens, John R., in a report for the Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, Parks Canada, Ottawa.
- 24 Kelly, op. cit. p. 147.
- 25 It is the author's opinion that the windows are original. Considerable justification has been found to support this but space will not allow a full discussion of the issues.



a)

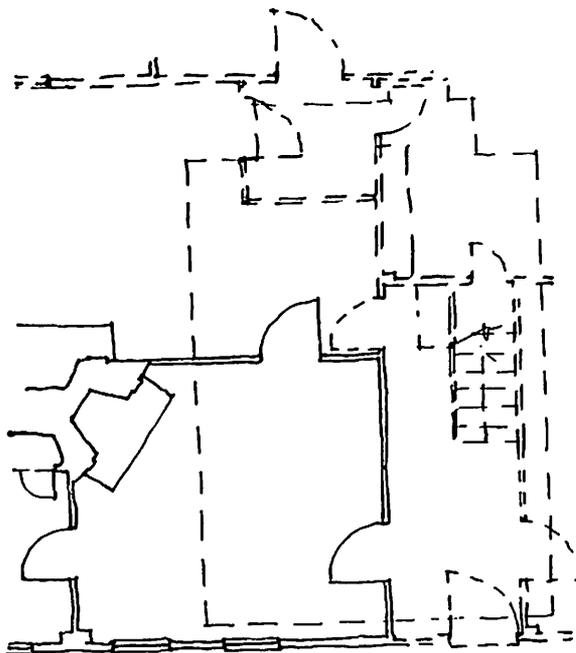
**Keeping Room Plan.**

Diary references are unclear about the nature of alterations, though the fact of alterations is clear in 1787.

a) 1767, conjectural.

The main living and eating and cooking took place here, and there would most likely have been some servants sleeping here as well.

b) Present.



b)

### 3 Keeping Room (Part of First Kitchen)

The keeping room is small and now gives the impression of being the family dining room. The large windows and imposing fireplace make it both a pleasant as well as a semi-formal room. Normally the keeping room was the central living space of a house.<sup>1</sup> In winter the warmth of the cooking fire behind the fireplace and the central location would have made it the most comfortable room in the house. Originally here also were kept all the useful objects of the house, hence one derivation of the title.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike the parlour, this room did not exist in the first house and has subsequently been altered. In the 1767 house, the kitchen probably ran the full depth of the house, with the staircase possibly opening off it, and the cellar most probably gaining access from it as well. The keeping room is now believed to be half the size of the original kitchen, but from 1767 until 1781 the kitchen had a large cooking fireplace in it and probably a bake oven as well. It was in the original room that Mrs. Benjamin Arnold presided over the working of the house as Simeon Perkins' housekeeper.<sup>3</sup> She might have slept there as well.

The present room largely dates from 1781 when the first extension was built.<sup>4</sup> At this time the chimney was taken down and completely rebuilt to include three fireplaces, two at the ground floor level and one at the upper level in a bedroom.<sup>5</sup> When the

first kitchen was divided, forming this present room, a more appropriate fire surround and mantel was installed.<sup>6</sup> ( p 180 ) When the alterations were made in 1781, it is believed an extra window was added to the north wall in this room. Marks in the corner post still show where diagonal braces were removed at this time. (p 182 ) How the room was later altered remains a mystery, although when it was altered is clear, in 29 October 1787.<sup>7</sup> (see Entry above). Another reference of 14 Dec 1796 suggests a further wall modification, possibly to form the space we see today.<sup>8</sup>

The room was not always as delightful as we now find it. Apart from smoke problems, which were severe enough to require the chimney to be rebuilt,<sup>9</sup> another occurrence is of interest. Perkins wrote on Sunday, November 26, 1786,<sup>10</sup> "It is cold. I am Disturbed in my Keeping Room with the Smell of Dead Rats or Something of that Kind, and Obligated to move out of it." The Keeping room is located partly over the cellar and partly over a crawl space.

After the 1781 alterations, the keeping room would have been maintained as the formal showspace where typically pewter and china were displayed.<sup>11</sup> There was a purpose in this display as the social status of the homeowner could easily be determined from his dishes. On the mantelpiece is a teapot and stand made of Creamware, so called for its colour. Because Queen Charlotte,



The Keeping Room looking southeast. The fireplace, built in 1781, includes a cupboard over it in which the tinder box would be kept. As a major reception space, the keeping room contained a display of the family belongings. The chamber can be seen through the door on the left.



The Keeping Room. A pewter collection. While poorer families would have used wooden plates, it is quite certain that the Perkins family would have used pewter for their main meals.



The Keeping Room. A Windsor chair.. Chairs in sets appear to have been numerous in houses of the time. They were easily moved and were often kept in sets both in reception rooms and bedrooms. From the diary it would seem that at least fifteen to twenty chairs would be required for the members of the Perkins household. Note filled mortices in corner post where diagonal braces were fitted prior to 1781.



Keeping Room fireplace. On the mantelpiece is a sample of Queensware, which was referred to by Simeon Perkins in a diary entry when he opened a hogshead of it. It would be nice to think that this teapot and warming stand came from that consignment.

wife of George III bought some Creamware, Josiah Wedgwood renamed it "Queenware".<sup>12</sup> Perkins opened up shipments of it in 1790, 1796, 1797, and 1810.<sup>13</sup>

### 3 Keeping Room, Footnotes,

- 1 The function of the keeping room was complex, is now obscure, but was obviously flexible. The etymology is based on the Middle English use of 'to keep' meaning to reside, dwell, live, or lodge.

It is variously described as,

"the room usually sat in by the family", in the Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, London 1887;

'family living room or sitting room' in the New Standard Dictionary of the English Language, New York, 1963;

'the second best room in the house', An American Glossary, New York, 1962;

'a combination of parlour and kitchen dating from 1851,' but to confuse it adds that it corresponds to a 'drawing room', from the English Dialect Dictionary, 1923;

Boswell is quoted from 1773 referring to a 'keep-house', which is more like an eighteenth century refrigerator, in The Scottish National Dictionary, Edinburgh, 1960;

'sitting-room' or 'parlour' in the American Dialect Dictionary, New York, 1944;

'sitting room' or 'parlour' in the Oxford English Dictionary, 1979, or 'living room' or 'parlour' in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1959, which possibly says more about the twentieth-century usage than the eighteenth-century usage. also from An American Glossary, S.G.Goodrich is quoted in 1857 as 'carpets....were confined to the keeping-room or the parlour'.

Phipps, Frances, Colonial Kitchens: Their Furnishings and Gardens, New York, Hawthorn Books Inc., 1972, p. 31. "The descriptive term 'keeping-room' began to be heard (more in the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth) but was not applied to kitchens. The phrase, used more often in southern country areas, occurs rarely in New England inventories. But when and wherever used, it might be applied only to what might be most clearly understood today as the family's best room - part parlor, part hall - in which the household's best furniture was kept and its plate or porcelain was displayed, and in which chests for linens were sometimes placed as also was the best bedstead and its hangings."

3 Keeping Room, Footnotes, Contd.

1 Contd.

Tunis, Edwin, in Colonial Living, Cleveland and New York, World Publishing Co., 1957, p. 33, "When a house was to have two rooms, or when more space had to be added, the second room was built to the left of the porch. Such a room seems to have been called the parlor, and the original room was then designated as the halo or keeping room.... The keeping room was used for cooking, eating and sleeping."

2 Another interpretation of 'keeping room' is a place of storage, possibly with an intention to display.

3 Diary, I, 1767-03-26, and passim.

4 Diary, II, 1781-06-20, 1781-07-18 & 20, and passim.

5 Diary, II, 1781-08-06, 07, 13, 15, 17.

6 Diary, II, 1781-08-06 to 1781-08-17, and IV, 1800-04-28.

7 Diary, II, 1787-10-29.

8 Diary, III, 1796-12-14.

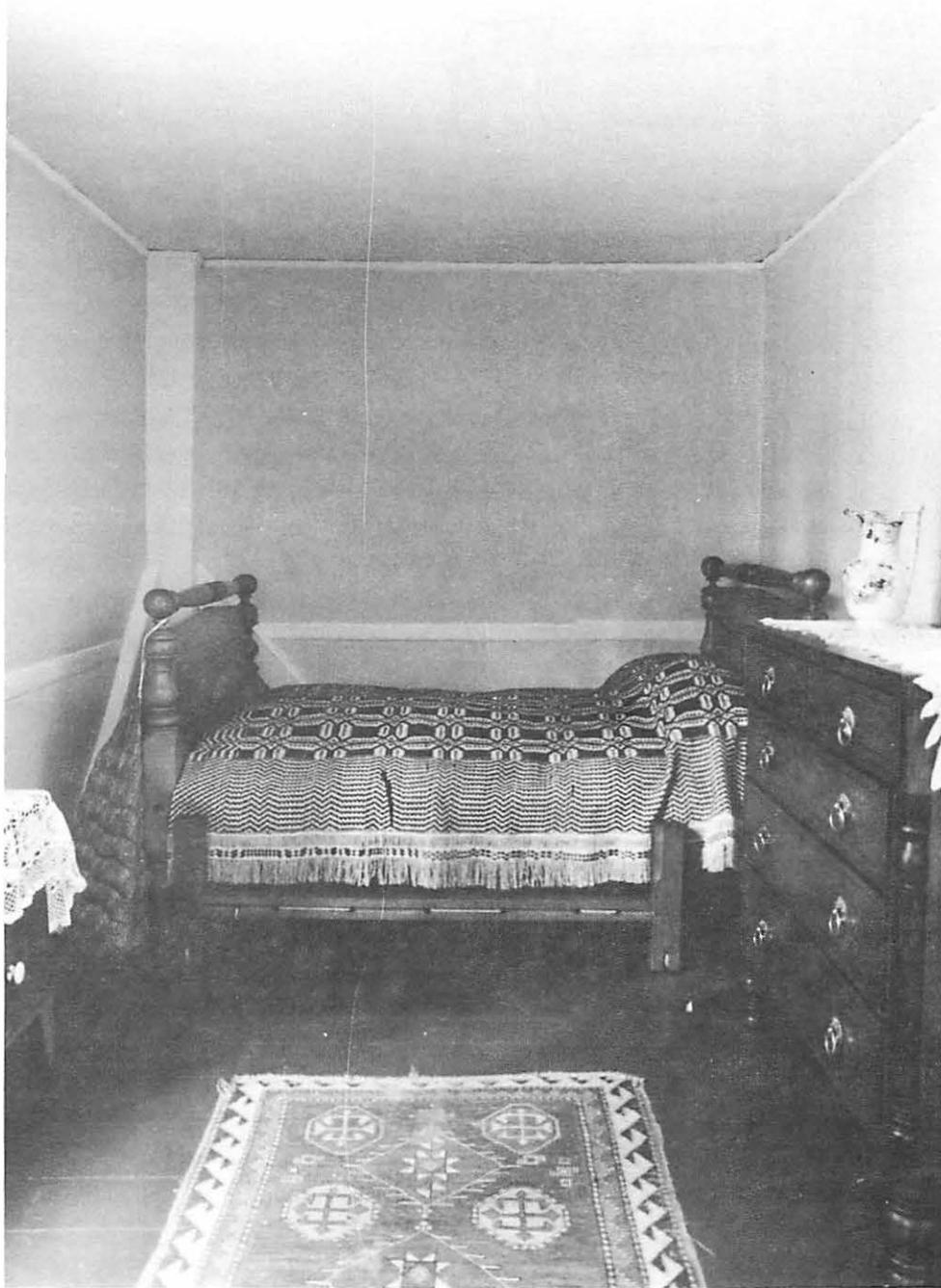
9 Diary, II, 1781-06-21.

10 Diary, II, 1786-11-26.

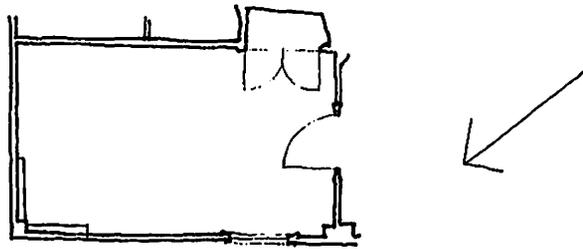
11 Verbal communication, staff of the N.S.M.

12 Verbal communication, Marie Elwood of the N.S.M.

13 Diary, III, 1790-12-27, 1796-04-24, IV, 1797-08-21, V, 1810-09-13.



The Ground Floor Chamber. Although small, this bedroom has the benefit of warmth from the back of the kitchen fireplace.



Ground Floor Chamber plan, 1781.  
In later years this may have been the master bedroom.

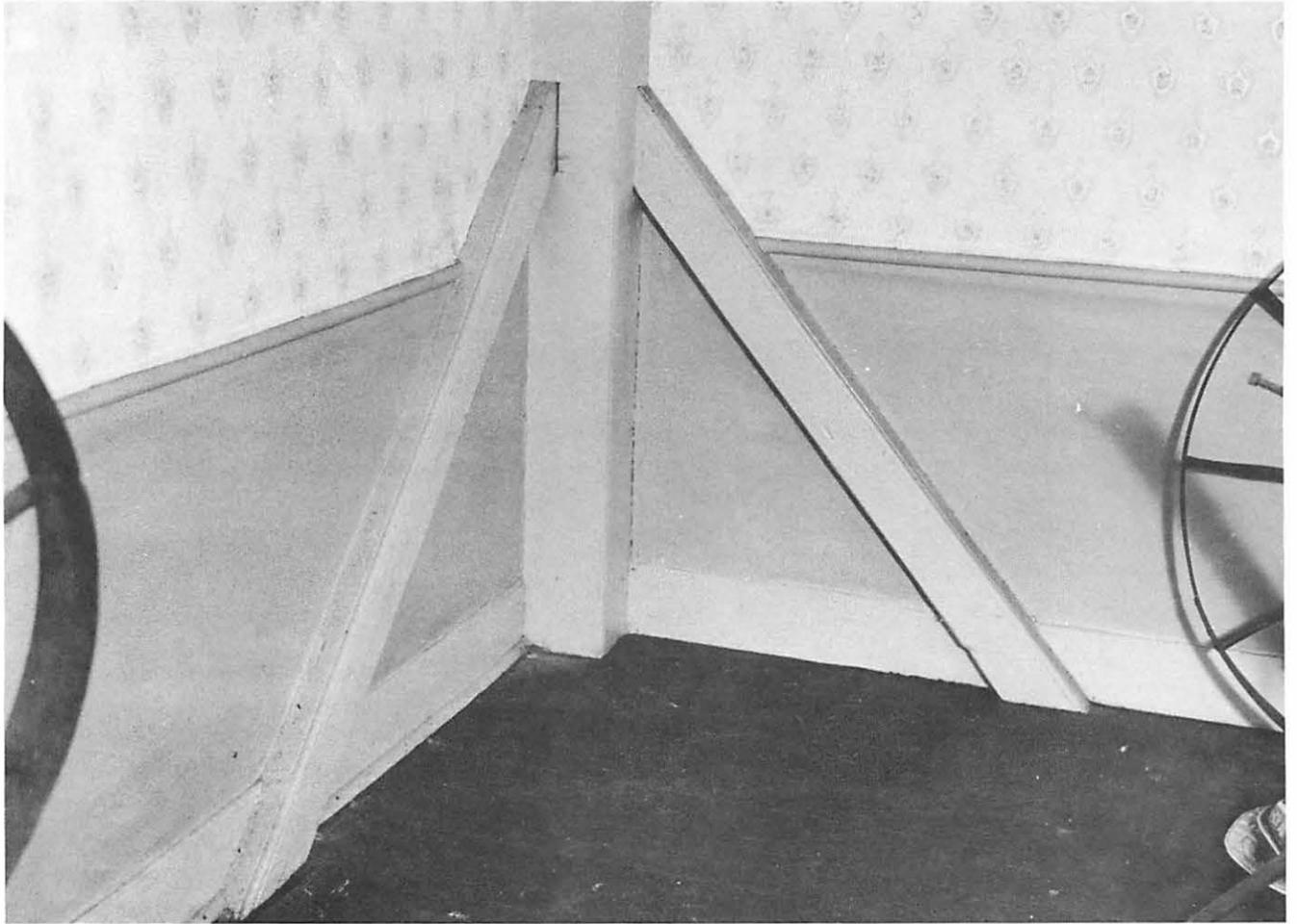
#### 4 Bed Chamber (ground floor)

Built in the extension of 1781 this small room is most probably the chamber<sup>1</sup> referred to as being lathed ready for plastering on September 20, 1781.<sup>2</sup> Dividing the keeping room from this chamber is the original end wall of the house. The door location suggests that it may have replaced a window. The framing of the 1781 extension can be clearly seen, with the corner post repeating the bracing which had to be removed from the original end wall to make way for the door into the keeping room. The position of these diagonal braces at the floor rather than at the ceiling level appears to be a typically New England influence.<sup>3</sup>

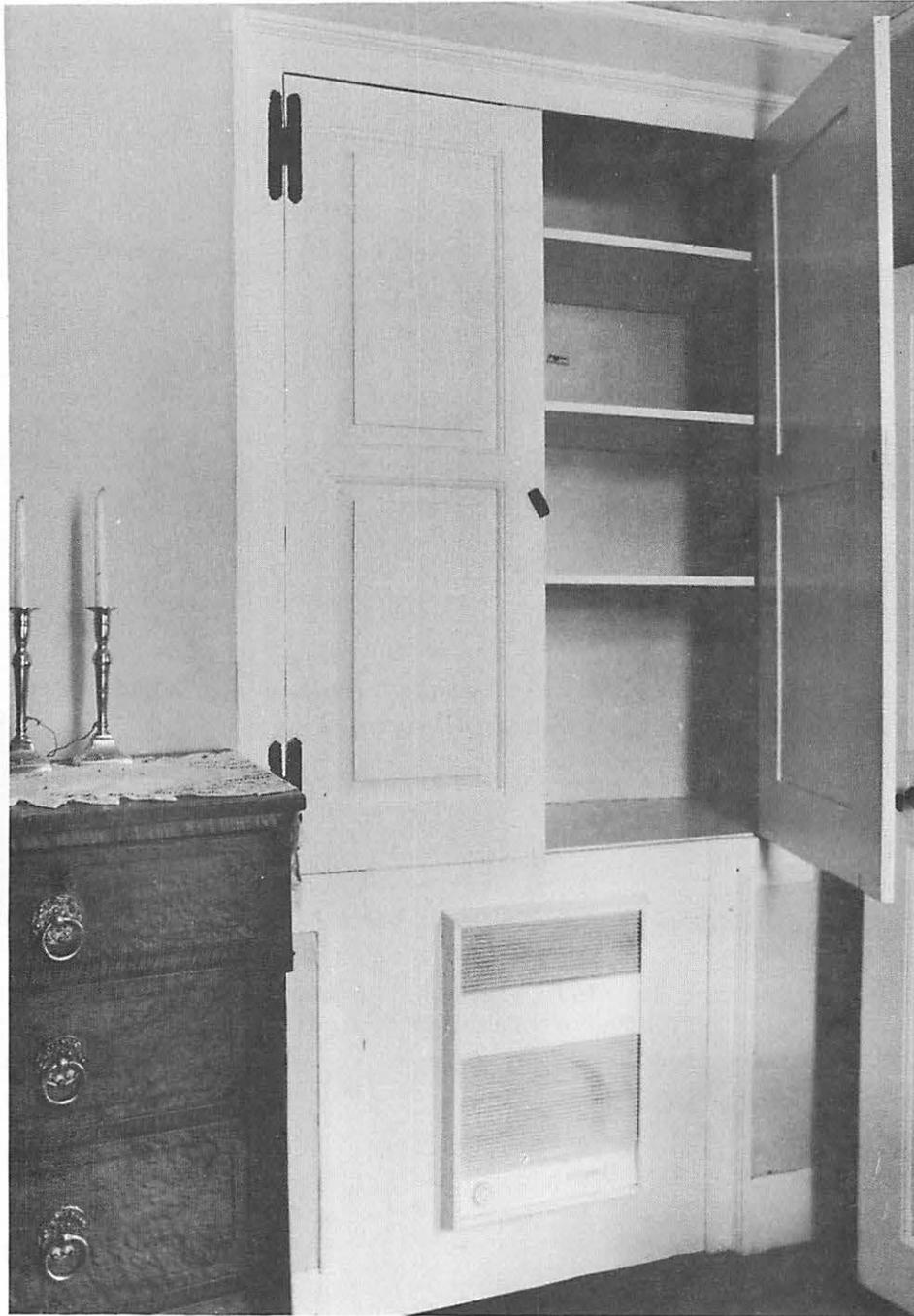
- Located directly off the keeping room, this bedchamber occupies a strategic position and might well have been the master bedroom after the extension was completed. This would fit in with the diary entry recorded on August 28, 1781<sup>4</sup> "Early in the morning Mr. Wm. Cheever Calls at my window & informs me that the 'Minerva' is coming in." Bedrooms built on at ground level were usually located on the warm side of the house.<sup>5</sup> This one faces north-east, and despite the lack of a fireplace, it would have benefitted from the heat given out of the back of the kitchen fire and oven. The relatively large cupboard is formed in the corner of the room by the backs of two fireplaces and oven, and thus would have created an ideal place for storing bedding and linen.

4 Bedchamber, Footnotes,

- 1 Simeon Perkins uses words in his diary which convey similar meaning but without the regularity which would make it obvious as to which room the information belongs. 'Bedroom', 'Bed Chamber' and 'Chamber' are used to describe what may even be the same room. On consecutive entries in the diary there is a lack of consistency in the use of words, if the context can be relied upon to suggest that there is one space being described. Kelly, op. cit. on p. 14 suggests that the use of 'bedroom' is restricted to a room at first floor level.
- 2 Diary, II. 1781-09-20.
- 3 Kelly, op. cit. p. 36 and Cummings, op. cit., figures 43 & 229.
- 4 Diary, II, 1781-08-28.
- 5 Kelly, op. cit. p. 14 and Cummings, op. cit. p. 33.



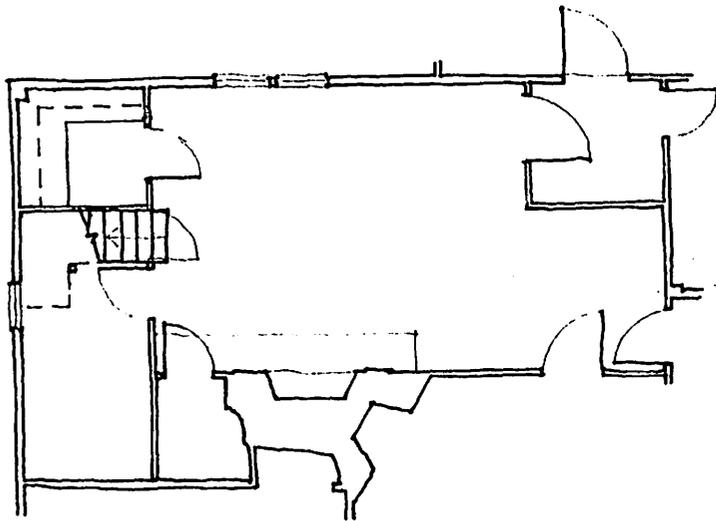
The Ground Floor Chamber in 1947. Diagonal braces are very evident in the extension of 1781. The extremely thin perimeter wall can be imagined as the brace is not hidden within it. The wall is only 150 mm thick.



Chamber Cupboard. This cupboard has no defined use but would have been warm and dry as it backs on to the kitchen fireplace. The electric heater was installed in 1952.



The Kitchen looking east. This end of the room was altered by the addition of the stair in 1782. As storage is integral with the stair, it would appear that the pantry was built at this time as well.



Back Parlour

1 0 1m

Back Parlour Plan 1949. Restored as much as possible to its original kitchen appearance of pre-1792, the room is now a complex space to study. Partitions and cupboards were relocated in 1949 when the stair was returned to its front position.

## 5 Kitchen (Second Kitchen, Later Back Parlour or Great Parlour)

When the house was extended in 1781,<sup>1</sup> the old keeping room or kitchen was cut in half to provide a smaller keeping room at the front of the house, while the remaining space was incorporated into a new kitchen at the back. This new room, half in the old house and half in the extension required the removal of the end wall. The wall position can still be clearly seen halfway along the room where there is a permanent crack in the plaster ceiling at the line of the original end framing girt.

As the centre of activities of the household after 1781, this room saw many changes, though mostly of small scale. The plastering was not completed until a year after the extension was built,<sup>2</sup> and the narrow staircase to the garret above was installed after the plastering was finished.<sup>3</sup> On Christmas Eve, 1801, Perkins writes,<sup>4</sup> "I have the partition between my back parlour & the Entry moved back to the range of the Cellar Door to inlarge the Room, as I cannot well Lessen the company, as they are all my connections and particular Friends." There were sixteen all told who sat down to dinner on Christmas Day and one extra who drank tea but did not dine.<sup>5</sup> We might identify with the problem but hardly with the solution. The ease with which the wall was removed says much for the simplicity of the building system which

permitted this kind of flexibility. In the twentieth century it is too easy to call it crude. Because of the ease of removal there are no indications as to the original or final position of the wall. The cellar door location is also a problem as no obvious clues can be found. In an attempt to locate the original cellar entry, a drawing was made of the back parlour with sixteen people sitting at table. (p 198) Various locations and seating arrangements were investigated to try to locate the cellar door, but this exercise only resulted in establishing constraints rather than a definite location.<sup>6</sup> (For more discussion see under Conclusion p 303)

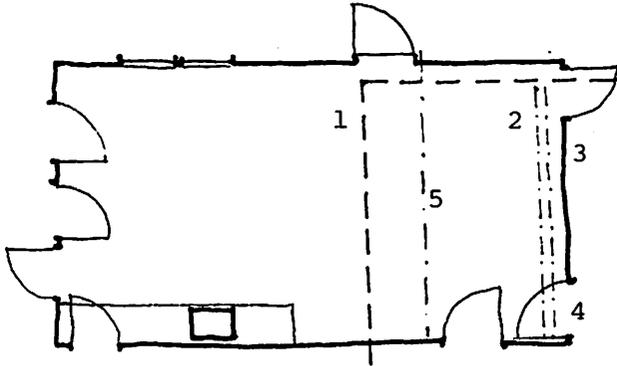
It is not possible to be sure from the diary quotation that the original cellar access door was on the main floor level with the door in the same plane as the end wall of the back parlour when it was finished, but it would be a reasonable interpretation. This supports the location of the door in a north/south wall. (p 198 a)1) If the cellar steps had been in the location of the main stair, the room would have been ample in size or already too big.

Chimneys were a continual problem as the diary entries show, for example, "I have one Gordon at work on my chimneys. He professes to cure smoaking chimneys. If he succeeds, he is to be paid, if not, he has no pay."<sup>7</sup> Mr. Gordon was paid but photographs taken in 1900 (p 14 ) and 1947 (p 17 ) show that Victorian chimney pots were later added in order to improve smoke removal. Due to the



The Kitchen looking west. When Simeon Perkins invited guests for Christmas dinner, he decided to remove the wall at this end of the kitchen on Christmas Eve to be able to seat the sixteen people he had invited.

Where were the cellar stairs? In trying to interpret the Diary entry for 24 December 1801, "I have the partition between my back parlour & the Entry moved back to the range of the Cellar Door to inlarge the Room, as I cannot well Lessen the company, as they are all my connections and particular Friends.", a number of alternative plans have been tried to fix the position of the wall that was removed, in order to locate the entry to the cellar.

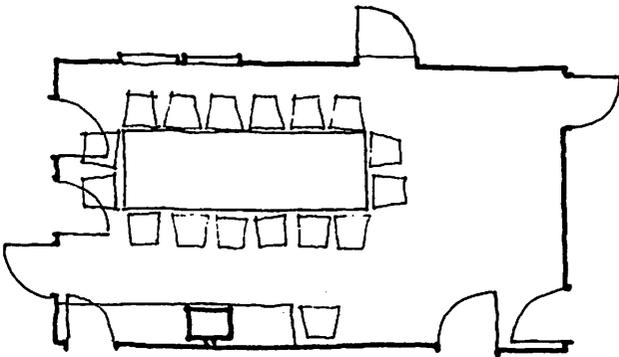


- 1 outline of cellar below
- 2 cellar beam below
- 3 fixed wall
- 4 possible cellar entry door
- 5 possible wall which was removed

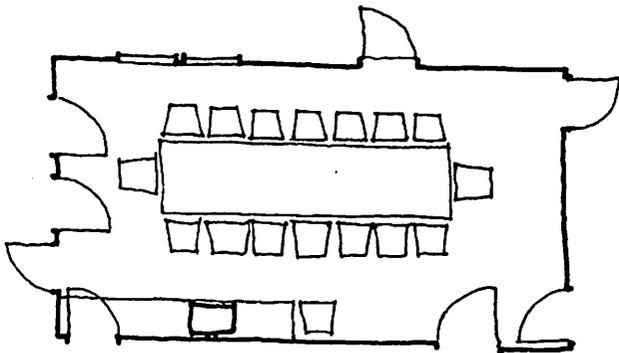
PROBLEM: to locate the wall which was removed on 24th December 1801.

Constraints;

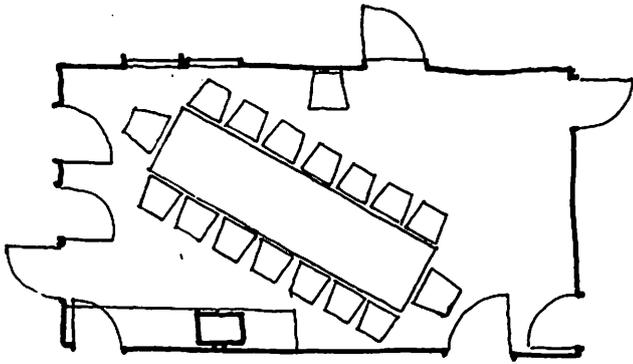
- Fixed walls and openings
- Movable walls
- Floor joists below
- Beam below
- Space required, dependent upon table size



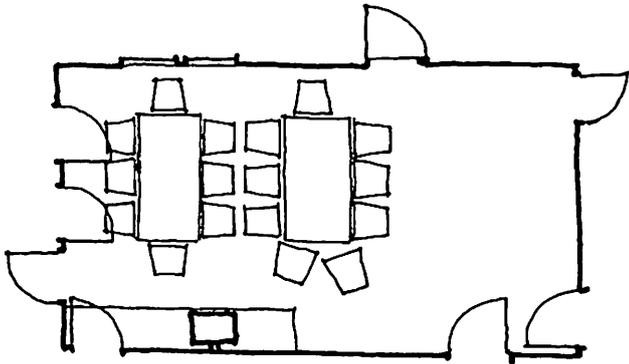
a) one table of minimum length,  
tight fit but no need to remove a wall.



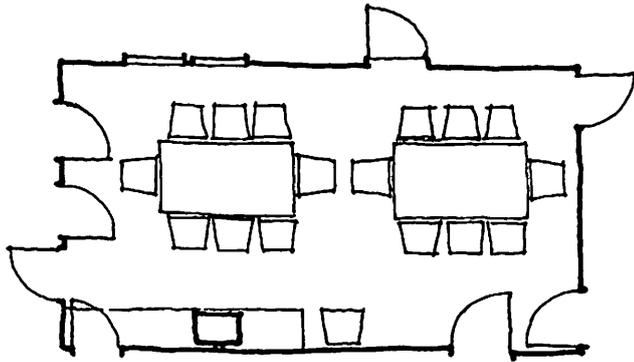
b) one table of minimum width,  
possibly unrealistic.



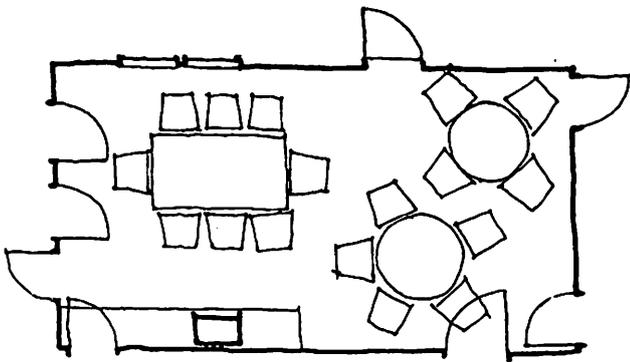
c) one table diagonally placed,  
although at first sight unlikely, there is a  
reference to a similar solution used by  
George Washington.



d) two tables  
apparently no need to remove a wall.



e) two tables  
placed to give more comfort to those close  
to the stove.



f) three smaller tables  
which shows that the most likely available  
tables would also be the least space  
efficient.

Conclusion: inconclusive about the wall  
location, but likely that there was either  
one large table or several small ones.



The Kitchen. A second staircase built by Mr. Bangs on 4 October 1782, a year after the kitchen had been built.

short flue length, short stack height above the roof ridge, and down draughts from the trees, the problem was virtually insoluble.

For eleven years, from 1781, this room served as the main cooking, eating, and living centre of the house.<sup>8</sup> Open-fire cooking had its own peculiar problems, as indicated by the repair to the mantelpiece on April 28, 1780<sup>9</sup> "which was burned last winter", as well as the heat from the flames and the potential danger to the cook who was wearing long skirts. His step-daughter Ruth was scalded in 1778<sup>10</sup> and Lucy, aged 3, fell into the fire in 1783.<sup>11</sup> The length of the hearth is 1.9m, (6'-2") whereas the common dimension in Connecticut is 2.8m (9'-2").<sup>12</sup>

In the closet to the right of the fireplace are the remains of the oven, removed on 28 April 1800.<sup>13</sup> The pantry and storeroom were presumably built in 1781 when the house was extended, or when the garret stairs was built.<sup>14</sup>

Immediately after the new kitchen wing had been added in 1792, the open fireplace of the original kitchen was altered to accept a stove,<sup>15</sup> and the room turned into the family room of the house.<sup>16</sup>

During the period 1793-1797, a number of diary references to rooms provided much opportunity for conjecture.<sup>17</sup> Room names such as small parlour, keeping room and great parlour do not give adequate

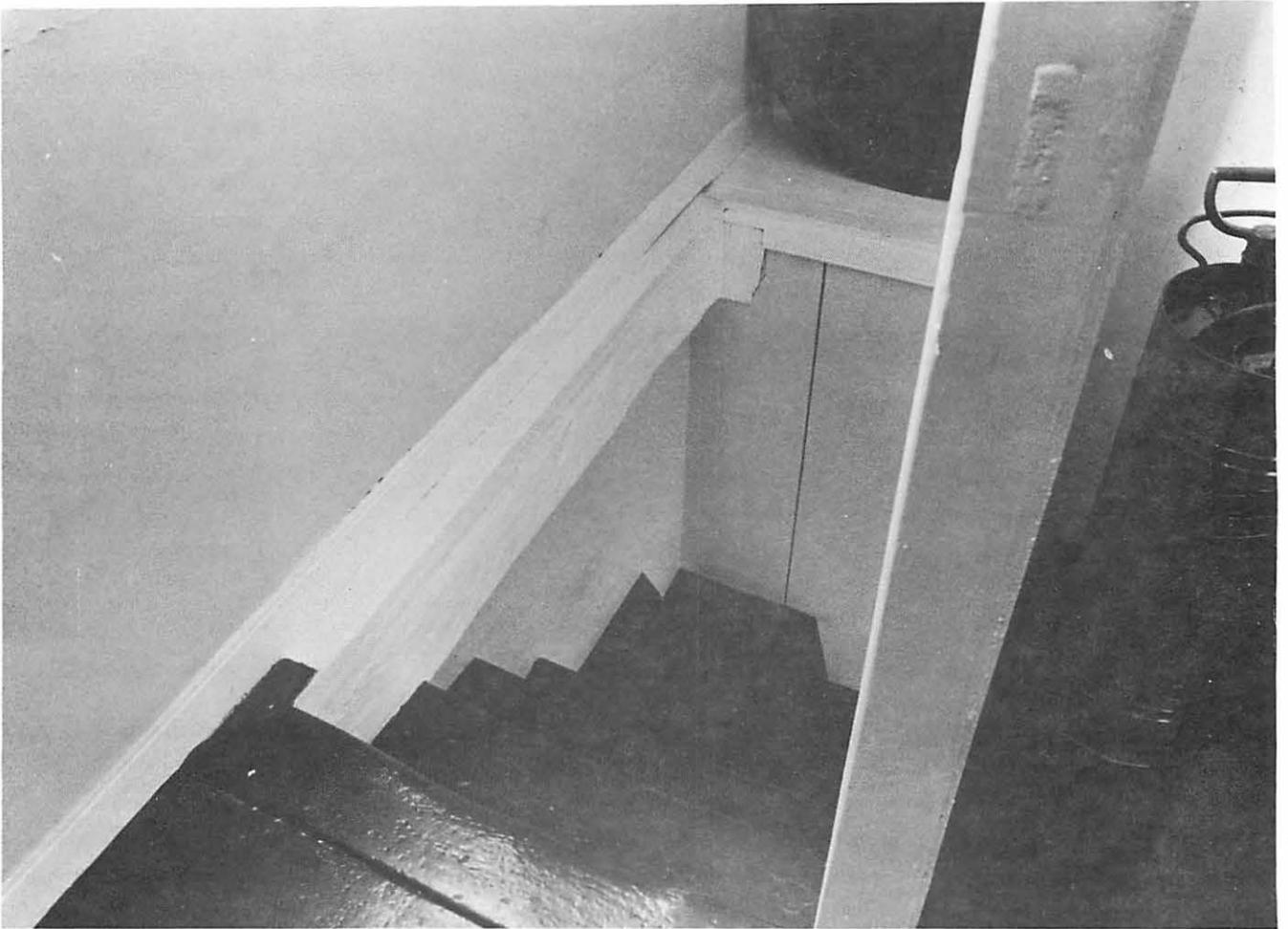
information to pin down location, but in the context of the diary it would seem that this room was called both 'back parlour' and 'great parlour', to differentiate it from the original parlour.

At some late time, probably after 1897 when the watermain was installed but before 1929 when the private sewer was connected into the new Main Street sewer,<sup>18</sup> a bathroom was formed in the storeroom and closet, but the fixtures and window were removed in 1949, without a record of the layout.<sup>19</sup> From the December 24, 1801 diary entry,<sup>20</sup> it would appear that the cellar door was internal at this time. When the main staircase was moved, which the author believes to have been about 1840, this cellar entry may also have been moved, though an internal access to the cellar would have been a very worthwhile convenience. The present entry is most probably that option. No alternative location was being used in 1947,<sup>21</sup> and there is no reason to believe that major alterations were made after 1840. In Perkins' day the cellar was well used for the storage of foodstuff, and therefore easy access from the kitchen would have been a great advantage. (see Cellar below)

After only eleven years of service this kitchen was replaced when a new ell or addition was built on to the back of the house.<sup>22</sup> It had served the family as their kitchen during a rather important part of their development and while in use five children were born to Elizabeth.<sup>23</sup> While this might encourage the title



The Kitchen. A hutch table made by Freeman Gardner, the son of an early settler.



The Back Stair. At the top of the stair can be seen the cut-away girt or end beam to ease access to the kitchen below. The room above is called a 'Garret' in the Diary and the narrow stair fits that image.

of 'borning' room for the small pantry at the eastern end of the kitchen, the room is simply too small for that activity. It would appear that the term "borning" is not from the eighteenth century, but is a later creation.<sup>24</sup> As Simeon Perkins never used the term why should we?

## 5 Kitchen, Footnotes.

- 1 Diary, II, 1781-06-20 & 21, 1781-07-18 & 20 and passim.
- 2 Diary, II, 1782-09-21
- 3 Diary, II, 1782-10-04.
- 4 Diary, IV, 1801-12-24.
- 5 Diary, IV, 1801-12-25.
- 6 Having checked with a number of historians, the author was convinced that no diagonal placement of the table would have been acceptable during the eighteenth century, until a chance reference was found to a dinner at General Washington's headquarters in 1781, quoted by Whitehill, Jane, in Food, Drink and Recipes Of Early New England, Old Sturbridge Village, 1963, pp. 19 & 22. It still seems unlikely that anyone would go to the trouble of removing a wall only to end up with a rather unsatisfactory room layout. As it is possible that several tables were used, the various options have been drawn to allow the reader some choice in the interpretation, p.
- 7 Diary, III, 1792-05-14.
- 8 Diary, II, 1781-06-20 and III, 1792-06-04 and passim.
- 9 Diary, II, 1780-04-28.
- 10 Diary, I, 1778-08-19.
- 11 Diary, II, 1783-03-27.
- 12 Verbal communication with Ed Friedland.
- 13 Diary, IV, 1800-04-28.
- 14 Diary, II, 1781-06-20 ff. and 1782-10-04.
- 15 Diary, III, 1792-09-07.
- 16 Diary, IV, 1801-12-24.
- 17 Diary passim. and III, 1793-06-19, 'small parlour', III, 1796-12-14, 'Keeping Room', IV, 1797-01-12, 'Great Parlour'.
- 18 Verbal communication from Jim Hagan, Water and Sewer Department, Town of Liverpool.
- 19 The bathroom is named in the drawing by B.L.Parker in 1947, and there is a photograph of the southeast end of the house taken in the same year which shows the plumbing vent pipe and the horizontal window. There are no signs as to where the fixtures were located.
- 20 Diary, IV, 1801-12-24.



The Kitchen. In the closet to the right of the fireplace the remains of a brick oven can be seen. The oven was removed on April 28, 1800, to form this closet.



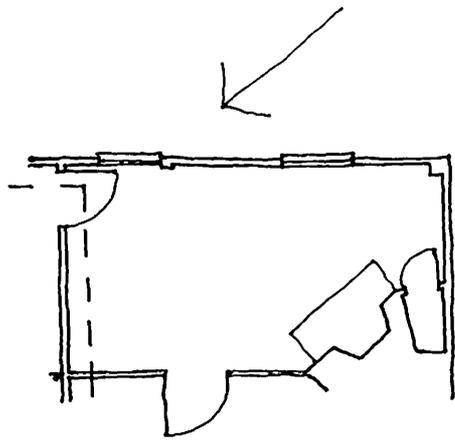
Rear Stair in 1947.

5 Kitchen, Footnotes, Contd.

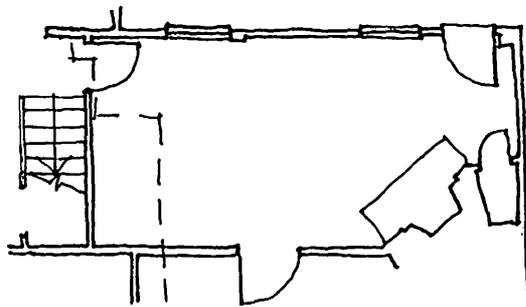
- 21 Neither the photographs of H. Doty nor the drawings of B.L.Parker show alternative access to the cellar.
- 22 Diary, III, 1792-06-04.
- 23 See above, Simeon Perkins, Footnote 92.
- 24 Various suggestions have been made to the author but no references have been found in the literature before 1900. No claim is made that all books have been read nor that the term is not historic, merely that there is no evidence to suggest that it has a place in history contemporary with the house at the time Elizabeth Perkins was producing babies.



The Office, looking west. At the end of the left-hand wall, there are still visible signs of an external door which has since been blocked up. The Scottish clock, made in 1751, partially obscures the cornerpost. Both corner fireplaces seen in the photograph from the office and the parlour lead into a common flue, hence the small size of the chimney on the roof.

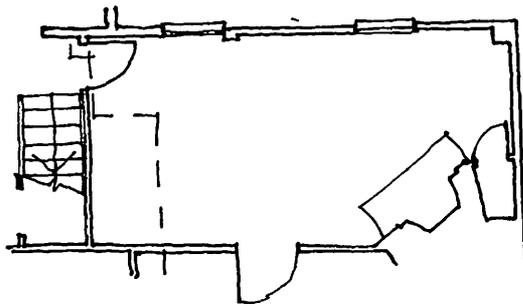


1767

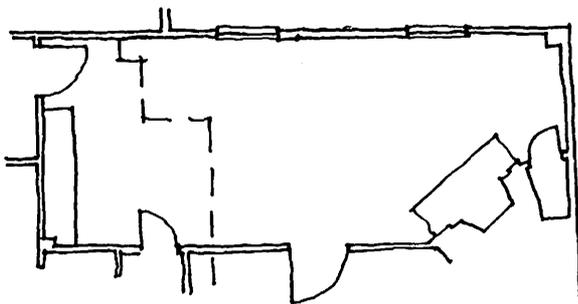


c1840

Note the extra door.



1947



1949

The Office

## 6 Office Room (1792)

This room is surprisingly gloomy with its narrow width and dark green walls, especially as it faces south west and is potentially the brightest room in the house. The dark green walls appear to be an attempt to interpret the colour quoted in the diary,<sup>1</sup> but unfortunately the colour is neither the correct shade nor tonal value to match the sample from the parlour.<sup>2</sup> Raddall on 1948-06-14<sup>3</sup> called it "queer dark green paint", but unfortunately seems to have mistaken this room for the parlour.

The exact nature of the use of this room is hard to determine, as references to it are rare and only occur after 1792,<sup>4</sup> twenty-five years after construction. In 1793, on February 12, Perkins writes<sup>5</sup> "I move my Office this day from the Store to the House." Did the office previously exist in the house and only after the chimney fire of 11 January 1792,<sup>6</sup> was it moved to the store, or was it moved to the house each winter because it was too cold at the store? He writes on 24 February 1798,<sup>7</sup> his sixty-third birthday, "I make a fire at the Store & Stay there the day, which I have not done for Sometime past, as the weather has been bad, and I have had a Sore Leg which is now well." On April 29, 1797,<sup>8</sup> he wrote, "I begin to remove my books to store." It is not possible to be dogmatic about the location of the books or the office in the house before 1792, but from this year until his death Perkins appears to write at the house every year during the

coldest season for no other reason presumably than physical comfort.<sup>9</sup>

Rather than clarify the location of rooms some diary references seem to add confusion, due to superficial similarities or changes in words from day to day. Several quotations can explain the problem, amongst them the following: "I have a Grate set in the Counting Room."<sup>10</sup>, "...Lay a new hearth in the Counting Room."<sup>11</sup>, and "...Mr Holme setting my Grate in ye office..."<sup>12</sup> In each case the context can be assessed, but it does not necessarily clarify the meaning. In the context of the whole diary these rooms were either in the store or waterfront office, but were definitely not in the house.

A sequence of diary references during the fall of 1800 helps to clarify Perkins' method of recording events.

On September 2nd Perkins writes<sup>13</sup> "...I Speak to Mr. Wiggin to plaister my office and a Chamber." Were these two spaces in the same building or separate ones, and was either or both in the house? Two days later he writes<sup>14</sup> "...Begin to make mortar for Plaistering the Counting Room and a Chamber at the House." Are "office" and "Counting Room" synonymous? On the 9th<sup>15</sup>, "Wm. Ford and Benj. Cole, Junr. begin to work about laying floor and fitting the Counting Room for Plaistering." On the 11th he writes,<sup>16</sup> "Working on the highway Ford and Cole on the store."

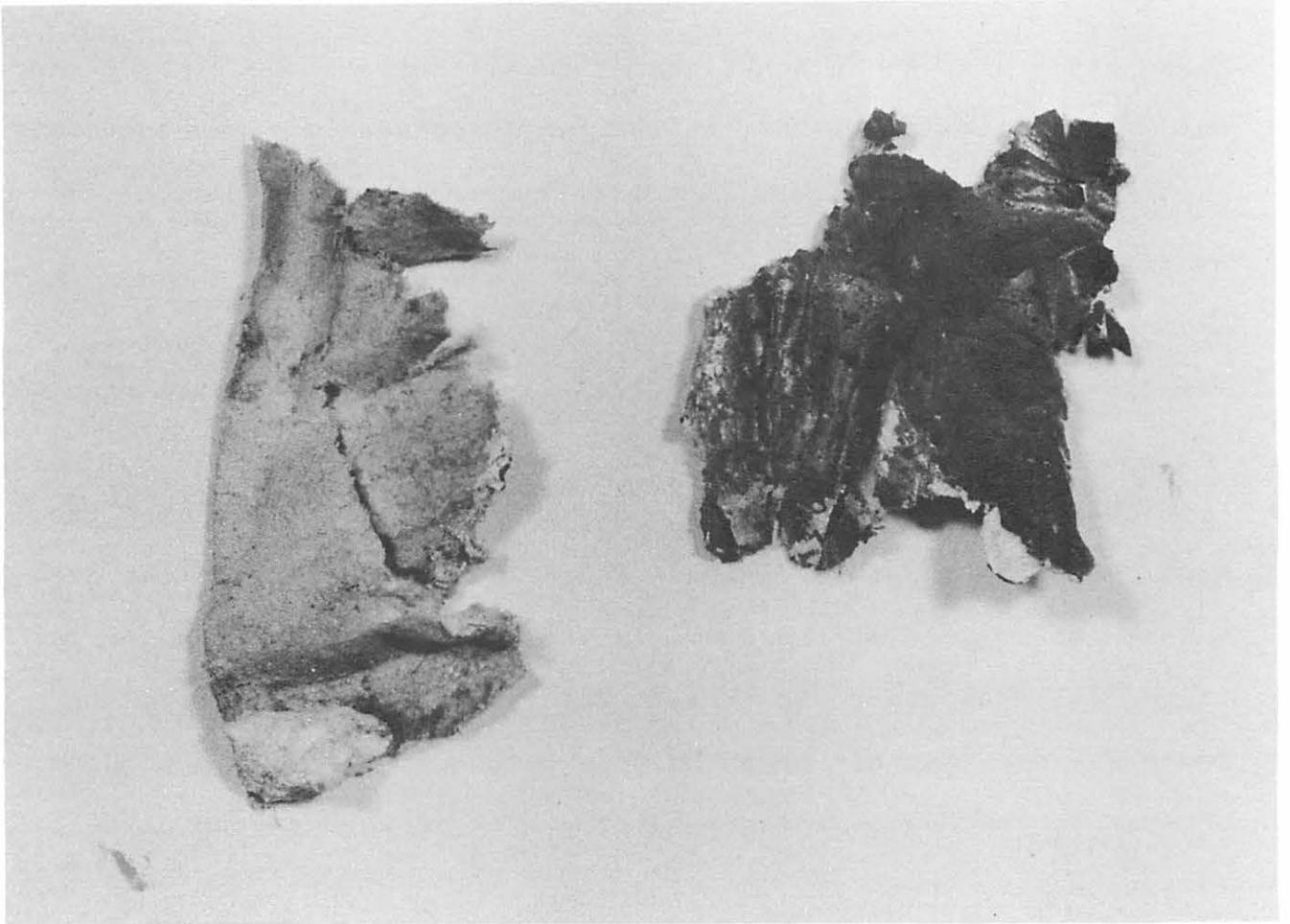
The next day<sup>17</sup> "I have Wiggins and Ralph Clint begin to lath my Counting Room.", and the following day<sup>18</sup> "Wiggins and Clint finish lathing and plaister the Counting Room." Two weeks later, His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Wentworth visited the house to receive an address read by Simeon Perkins. He may not have entered the house as Perkins invited him back for tea later. Presumably there were no plasterers about! Rain prevented the visit and early the next day Sir John sailed away. On October 7th<sup>20</sup> "Ford and Cole finish working on the Store and House.", and then on October 13th<sup>21</sup> "Begin to lath my Chamber for plaistering." On the 18th he writes<sup>22</sup> "Wiggin finishes Plaistering ye Chamber." It may be concluded from this that the Counting room was at the store and therefore was not this room, but the Chamber was at the house. The Chamber seems to have been bedroom 3.

Early in the history of the house, when Simeon Perkins was still a widower, this room was most probably his bedroom. He may have slept here on 31 Mar 1804 as he wrote,<sup>23</sup> "...I did not perceive the Storm as I slept in the S. Westerley part of the House behind the Kitchen which broke of the wind..." This is one of the few precisely worded references which accurately locates a space in the whole diary, but on which floor level was he sleeping? The description could apply to upstairs but seems more likely to refer to this room.

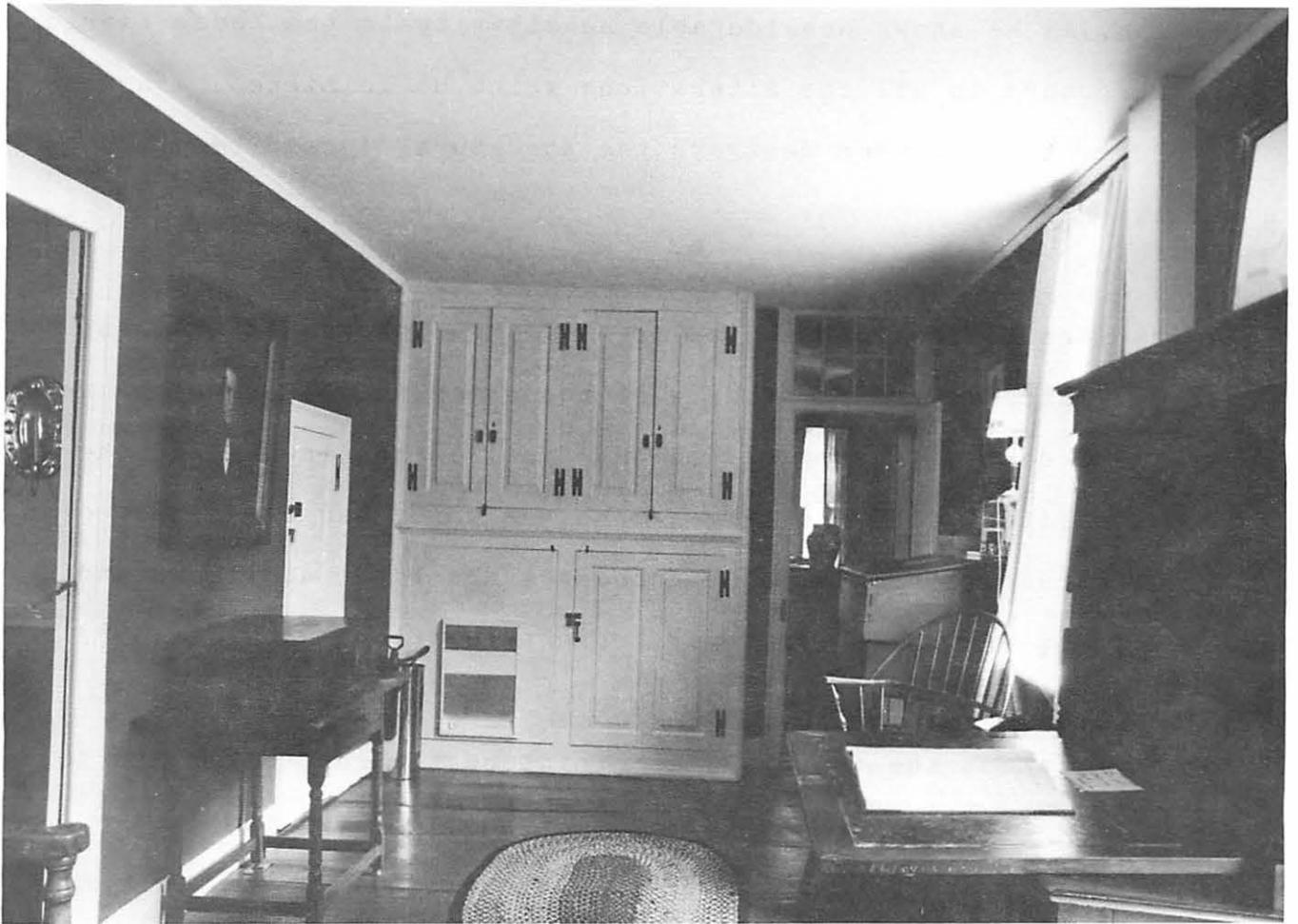
There appears to be no doubt that the wall between the parlour and the office dates from 1767, as the two fireplaces are unchanged and thought to be original and the door between the rooms also seems to be original.

The diary entry for January 11, 1792, reads,<sup>24</sup> "...my Office room chimney took fire & Burn with great rage, and I was Very Apprehensive the chimney would Bust, in which case I expected the House would be in great danger. We put water & Salt into the fire & took out ye Pipe of the stove in the chamber, & poured water in there, which deadened the fire." The very next day<sup>25</sup> "...We Sweep all our Chimneys by means of a Bunch of Spruce, with a Line, one man on the House, another below, which Answers exceeding well. They were very foul..."

Close to the corner of the house, at the fireplace end of the room, is a blocked-up doorway in the rear wall. Could this be the exterior doorway through which Simeon Perkins' business associates entered the office, or was this the entry to the watchmaker's shop of Moore French Agnew?<sup>26</sup> The latter is more reasonable as there is little reason for Perkins to have need of a separate entry if it was a bedroom, and even when it was an office there was an easy alternate route through the kitchen. But most of Perkins' legal and business work was conducted at his office at the store or waterfront, and only at the house late in life and then only for the very cold winter months. As the doorway was located in the



Two samples of wallpaper removed from the parlour. The left hand piece appears to be a heavy lining paper and the right hand piece is thinner and has been painted green. It would appear that the Parlour should have been painted in 1949 rather than the Office.



The Office. When alterations were made in 1949, the built-in cupboards were removed from a rear vestibule to this location; an electrical heater was added later in 1952.

very corner of the house it seems unlikely that this was put in by Perkins, as he shows considerable sensitivity to the house fabric and structure in all the alterations which he initiated, whereas the door at the corner destroys the structural integrity of the shell.

Alterations to the room can be seen in the flooring at the east end. Repairs to the flooring were necessary in 1949 when the rear stair and east wall were relocated. In 1949 the new end of the room was filled with the large cupboards which had been removed from the rear vestibule. The cupboards are later additions and there is no precedent for their present location.

One story about the east wall is of interest which took place in the summer of 1867.<sup>27</sup> At this time it is believed that the staircase was in the rear position and backed on to the east wall, of this room. Apparently Caleb Seely hired a carpenter to fix a handrail to the staircase without mentioning it to his son-in-law. On the back of the same wall to which the handrail was being attached were hanging Moore French Agnew's chronometers and watches. The wall was no more than plaster on 25mm vertical plank. The hammering of the carpenter did considerable damage to the time pieces before he could be stopped.

Because the room is long and narrow, and the chimney shared with the parlour, the fireplace is forced into the corner and is not

very conveniently placed for radiating heat throughout the room.  
Two cupboards adjacent to the fireplace are early and add to the  
charm of the room.

6 Office Room. Footnotes.

- 1 Diary, III, 1793-06-19 where "...painting ye Small Parlour Blue", was interpreted by Raddall and Reside to be the office rather than the parlour, where they found traces of the blue paint.
- 2 Wallpaper sample removed to the N.S.M. See Parlour, Footnotes # 21 & 22.
- 3 Raddall, op.cit., 1948-06-14.
- 4 Diary, III, 1792-01-11 and passim.
- 5 Diary, III, 1793-02-12.
- 6 Diary, III, 1792-01-11.
- 7 Diary, IV, 1798-02-24.
- 8 Diary, IV, 1797-04-29.
- 9 Diary, III, 1793-02-12, 1796-01-22, IV, 1797-01-12, 1797-04-29, 1798-01-26, 1800-03-01, V, 1804-02-09, 1806-01-14 and passim.
- 10 Diary, IV, 1798-11-19.
- 11 Diary, IV, 1800-04-29.
- 12 Diary, IV, 1803-11-02.
- 13 Diary, IV, 1800-09-02.
- 14 Diary, IV, 1800-09-04.
- 15 Diary, IV, 1800-09-09.
- 16 Diary, IV, 1800-09-11.
- 17 Diary, IV, 1800-09-12.
- 18 Diary, IV, 1800-09-13.
- 19 Diary, IV, 1800-09-29.
- 20 Diary, IV, 1800-10-07,
- 21 Diary, IV, 1800-10-13.
- 22 Diary, IV, 1800-10-18.
- 23 Diary, V, 1804-03-31.
- 24 Diary, III, 1792-01-11.
- 25 Diary, III, 1792-01-12.
- 26 Caleb Seely, Estate Papers, P.A.N.S. A 521 RG 48, Reel 1129.
- 27 As #26 above.

### 7 Kitchen (1792 Addition)

In 1949, this room became a museum.<sup>1</sup> Partition walls and the central stove and flue were removed. When it was added in 1792,<sup>2</sup> the extension housed a new kitchen, presumably in the portion closest to the house, with a central fireplace for cooking.

On Tuesday June 5, 1792, Perkins wrote<sup>3</sup> "Miles and Drew git my Kitchen Frame ready, remove the stoop & raise the Kitchen." On July 18th<sup>4</sup> he wrote "Wm. Brocklesby begins to Lath my New Kitchen. By August 1st<sup>5</sup> the new kitchen was in use. Marks exist in the walls of the kitchen which suggest there was a transverse partition at roughly the midway point of the room as it now exists.<sup>6</sup> This does not fit with the surveyor's drawings of 1947.<sup>7</sup> These drawings are relatively inaccurate as noted above, but the location of the wall can be fixed by other evidence, a change in the flooring. It would seem that in this case the 1947 drawings are accurate. At some time between 1792 and 1947, this other wall had to have been built, possibly during Perkins' time, thought that is unlikely, as no diary references seem to fit with what would have been a relatively large alteration. What is definitely known is that by 1947, there were three rooms, a kitchen with a stove, an entry and a woodstore.

Initially, the chimney had been built with an open fireplace.<sup>8</sup>

In June and July of 1803 it was demolished and rebuilt with considerable care.<sup>9</sup> Presumably overheating had taken place behind the original fireback as plaster and slate<sup>10</sup> were now used to protect the wooden partition behind the fireplace before any brickwork was relaid. The second chimney was built with a hearth,<sup>11</sup> which does not include the use of a metal stove.

At some time prior to 1947 this second chimney must have been removed, for a brick chimney for a stove was located behind the wall, not in front of it, or alternatively the wall may have been moved, relative to the chimney. Because the 1781 brick oven was removed from the Back Parlour in 1800,<sup>12</sup> an alternate oven is likely to have been built in brick, until this was all replaced by a stove with integral oven.

The reference to the oven in the diary entry of Saturday, 1st September 1792,<sup>13</sup> "Gordon repairs or alters my flue oven.", does not solve the problem because a specific location is not given. But we may infer that it was the new oven as the diary entry for the previous day, Friday 1792, August 31,<sup>14</sup> reads, "Stephen Snow arrives from Shelburne. Brought me 500 bricks." The term 'flue oven' is different from that of 'bake oven' used to describe the oven built in 1781,<sup>15</sup> and again suggests a different oven in a different location. The use of the words "repairs or alters" for work on the oven also suggests a later rather than earlier oven. As the oven in the former kitchen was not removed until 1800,<sup>16</sup>



The Back Kitchen looking south. Note staircase to the attic space over the kitchen. In 1949, a washroom was installed to the right. An external door can be seen to the left.

The Kitchen Addition, 1792.

a) 1792

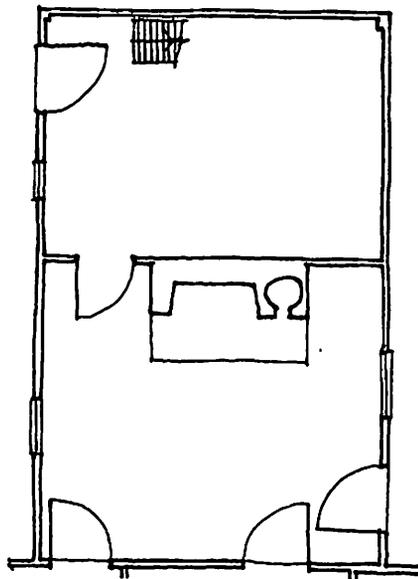
When first built there was a brick chimney and oven, but no mention is made of what goes on in the rest of the space. Presumably space for servants, possibly dairy or food storage, and clothing for riding or working would have a place here.

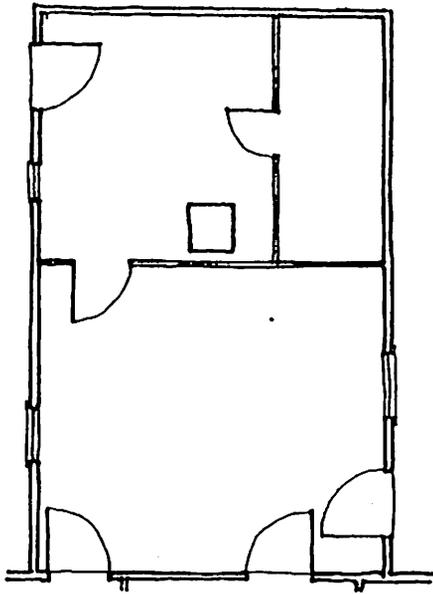
b) ?

At some point in time an iron stove was installed which required a different flue. It would seem that the wall was moved and the kitchen enlarged at this time.

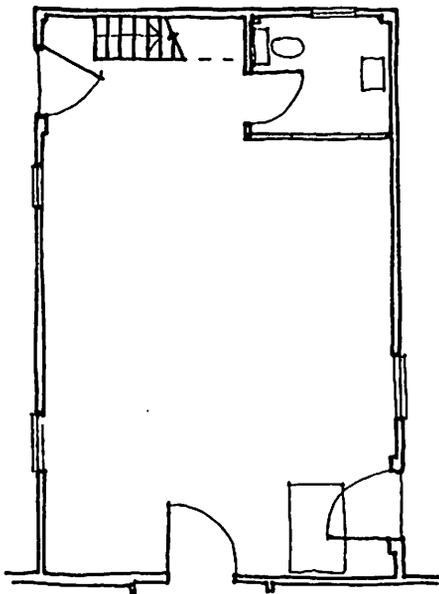
c) 1949

A museum space was required and this was made out of the Kitchen by simply removing the internal walls and the stove chimney. This was an act of considerable faith as it took away most of the structural stiffening to the extension. A small washroom was added in the corner.





b)



c)





The Kitchen Addition looking north. The central door leading into the main house was installed during the 1949 alterations, replacing two separate doors. At the left is an external door and beneath the crib is a trap door giving access to the cellar.

it is difficult to interpret with any certainty, but new bricks, especially 500 of them, suggest a substantially new oven in the new kitchen, a month after it started to be used.

Plaster was used on the walls from the start,<sup>17</sup> unlike the first kitchen, and suggests a more settled family and financial situation.

The size and location of the windows give a fair indication of where the main functions took place within the space. The large windows close to the house were obviously in the kitchen, and the small window lit the entry. (See p 224 ) The door closest to the house seems to be the most convenient one to have given access to the barn and well. But there were two wells, as Perkins writes during a drought<sup>18</sup> "I have been digging my small well deeper, & have ten inches of water in it. Cannot well git any deeper for the rocks." On 22 July 1803 he writes,<sup>19</sup> "I lay a platform of Stone at my back Door by the well, git my hay into the Barn..." From the diary entry of 1 Mar 1798,<sup>20</sup> a man was seen from the back parlour window stealing firewood. The reference also suggests that the "barn", "dungheap" and "little yard" could be seen from the same window. As a small well still exists outside the southeast door of the kitchen addition,<sup>21</sup> and as the firewood was also visible, it may be assumed that the woodshed was later located close to the woodpile. (See p79 )

On Friday night 15 Aug 1777,<sup>22</sup> Perkins had an accident. "Last evening I met with a very bad hurt in my left eye. By stepping to the well to draw water, the well pole stood pointed in my way, and the end being small it stuck into my eye..." Two things are apparent about draining water from the well, the mechanism and the fact that Simeon Perkins drew water himself, but the location is not stated.

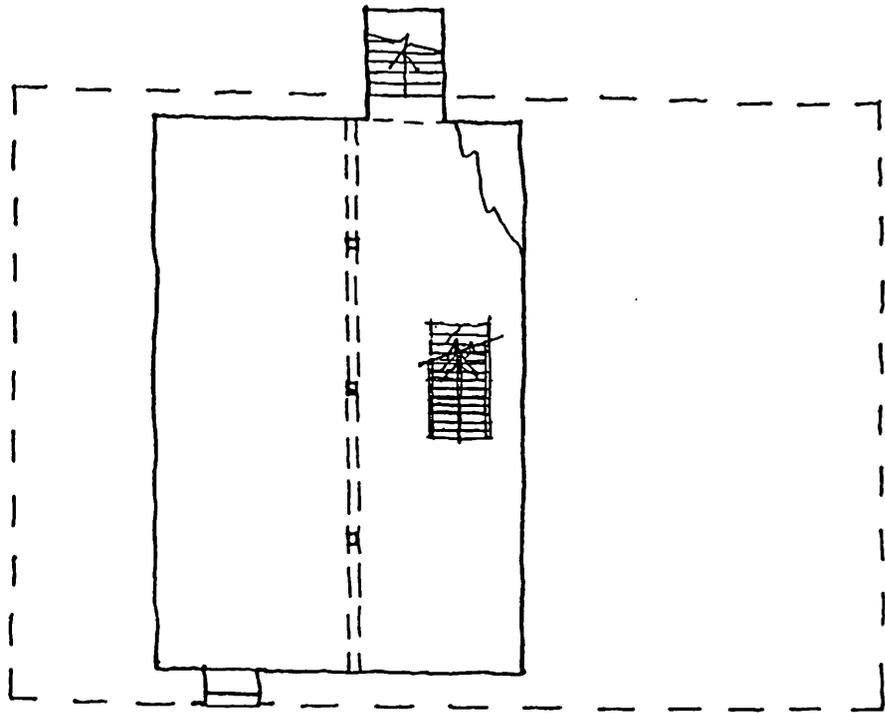
Entry to the cellar below is at present through a trap door in the floor just inside the exterior door, close to the house.<sup>23</sup> The wooden cellar stair appears to date from 1949,<sup>24</sup> whereas the stone walled enclosure is believed to be very early, if not original. Entry to the Attic above is by narrow steep stairs and a trap door in the ceiling, located at the south end of the room. A washroom for staff and visitors was installed in 1949.<sup>25</sup>

A question remains about the original exterior doorway to the house, as well as the location of doors into the kitchen. The drawings of 1947<sup>26</sup> (p 131) show two doors in quite different positions from the single door which now connects the house to the extension. It seems that in the alterations of 1949 two door openings were exchanged for one when the stair was removed from the back vestibule. This vestibule was itself reduced in size in order to increase the Office area.<sup>27</sup> Pre-1840 arrangements are purely a matter of conjecture, as can be seen in the drawings (pp 224, 225 ). Even in a house this small, the complexity and

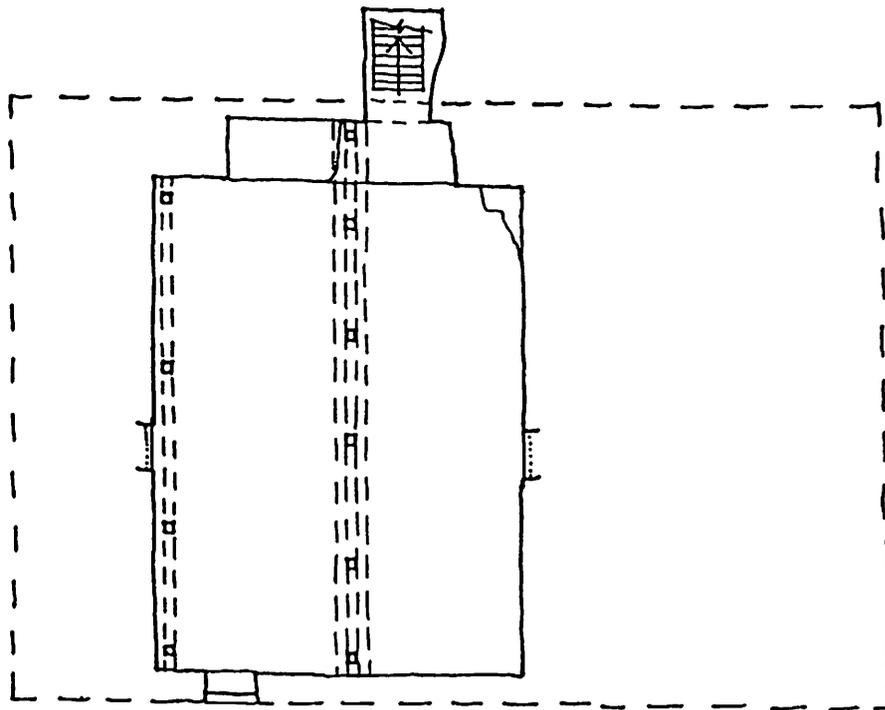
subtlety of change and repositioning of elements is surprising and confusing. Despite many attempts to understand the sequence of events, the author remains frustrated. There may be opportunity in the future to 'see' beneath the plaster in non-destructive investigations, which may be able to solve some of these problems, but there is no better way than to make a record at the time of change, both written and graphic. As no known photographs, drawings or written instructions have been found, it can only be assumed that Raddall and Reside saw a previous door opening, which they reinstated.

## 7 Kitchen, Footnotes.

- 1 Raddall, op. cit. 1949-05-31.
- 2 Diary, III, 1792-06-05.
- 3 Diary, III, 1792-06-05.
- 4 Diary, III, 1792-07-18.
- 5 Diary, III, 1792-08-01.
- 6 Observations made on site.
- 7 Drawings by B.L.Parker, see p 161 Footnote 15.
- 8 Diary, III, 1792-07-04.
- 9 Diary, IV, 1803-06-20, 25, 26, 29, 30, and 1803-07-01, 04, 05
- 10 Diary, IV, 1803-06-27.
- 11 Diary, IV, 1803-07-04 & 05.
- 12 Diary, IV, 1800-04-28.
- 13 Diary, III, 1792-09-01.
- 14 Diary, III, 1792-08-31.
- 15 Diary, II, 1781-08-07 to 15.
- 16 Diary, IV, 1800-04-28.
- 17 Diary, III, 1792-07-18.
- 18 Diary, IV, 1800-08-09.
- 19 Diary, IV, 1803-07-22.
- 20 Diary, IV. 1798-03-01.
- 21 Diary, IV, 1803-07-22. It was some time after the author's first visit to the house that he discovered that the well was not a fake. There is no sign of a wellhead in the Doty photograph of 1947.
- 22 Diary, I, 1777-08-15.
- 23 During the time that the author has visited the house, the trap door has always been partially camouflaged by the rug and child's crib which have been over it.
- 24 As the stair rests on top of the concrete floor of 1949, the stair is most likely to be contemporary with it.
- 25 Raddall, op. cit. 1949-05-31.
- 26 B.L.Parker drawings.
- 27 B.L.Parker drawings.



Cellar Plan, 1767, conjectural.



Present

## 8 Cellar

In 1766 the cellar was built with dry stone walls and an earthen floor.<sup>1</sup> It measured 4.5 x 6.0m and therefore was about half the floor area of the house, inset from each end but reaching to both front and back walls. Similar partial cellars exist in Connecticut and Massachusetts in houses built at this time.<sup>2</sup> The main diary references to the cellar cover attempts to inhibit rats by pointing the dry stone walls<sup>3</sup> and laying a plank floor.<sup>4</sup> Other references are to frost penetration<sup>5</sup> which in one case damaged root vegetables and presumably created a hardship for the family who had difficulty in replacing staple foods during the winter.

A curious double wall exists at the southern end of the cellar. (See p 239 ) Various alternative solutions have been tried to justify the location and shape of this wall, but all seem unsatisfactory unless the wall was built as a support or buttress to the original cellar wall.

If the stone had been used for a staircase, there would have been insufficient headroom under the central beam to make it practical. There are precedents in Connecticut for stone stairs in cellars, but not for stairs suitable only for children.<sup>6</sup>

If the stone had been used to increase the thermal resistance of the cellar, why was it only built at the southern end, and not at

the equally significant northern end?

If the stone was the remains of a chimney base, there would have been no way to connect the flue to the existing signs of a hole in the roof, as the horizontal distance would have been too great.<sup>7</sup>

It is therefore believed that the purpose of the stonework is as a buttress. At the southwest corner of the cellar, the west wall of the early external entry has partially collapsed inwards at low level, (See p234 ) and the stones are being partially supported by the stair of 1949.<sup>8</sup> The secondary wall is neither the full width of the cellar, as the early entry passes through it, nor is it all full height, but only in the two southern corners. In the middle of the original south wall there appears to be a bulge, which is now concealed by the newer low wall.

It would seem that the original stone walls of the cellar had suffered from frost damage early in their history and have continued to do so, as instanced by the recent north wall collapse and rebuilding of 1982.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately the wall had to be partially demolished so that not all the information exists for a definite interpretation. Photographs taken in 1978 suggest that the walls were still original at that time, albeit a little sagged.<sup>10</sup>



The Cellar looking south. To the right of the steps can be seen a bulging wall, which the author believes to have been the result of external pressure. The recess behind the steps is of early construction and most probably was the original external access, although the steps appear to date from 1949. Between the steps and the post, which also dates from 1949, can be seen the location of a door frame or partition. Typical electrical wiring of the 'out of sight, out of mind' sort can be potentially dangerous to the investigating architectural historian. The wiring was tidied up in 1982.



The Cellar. The stone outcrop seen in the southwest corner may be part of the reason for limiting the cellar size. A concrete floor was installed in 1949. Access is to the left.

In 1949<sup>11</sup> a new concrete floor was laid and the main wooden floor above was given a new support system, and also repaired. Due to this considerable reconstruction work there is no more evidence towards the location of the original cellar access. Of the two alternatives, internal or external, nothing can be clearly stated. There could have been either or both, which would not conflict with Connecticut precedents.<sup>12</sup> In the diary entry for December 24, 1801,<sup>13</sup> the removal of the wall to the "range" of the cellar door is likewise vague, though it is possibly more reasonable to presume that it was visible within the Back Parlour, which implies an internal entry.<sup>14</sup> At the present point of entry to the cellar there is a definite clue to the location of an early door or wall at cellar level, for the mortar still remains on the stone wall and it is of clay rather than cementitious material.<sup>15</sup> (See p 234 )

Drawing a conclusion from New England precedents<sup>16</sup> it is possible to assume that the house was originally provided with both internal and external access. Present evidence at the house only confirms an external entry which is thought to have been enclosed and built over when the 1792 extension was built, but the diary reference to a "cellar door", above, cannot be ignored even if no evidence exists to substantiate it at present.

An outcrop of rock in the floor of the cellar at the southwest corner suggest that there was a practical reason for not extending

the cellar further. (See p 235 ) Recent ventilation holes<sup>17</sup> have been put in the side walls to protect the underside of the floor, which is very convenient as they also provide a visual access to the space under the floors, where can be seen not only rubble from rebuilt chimneys dating from 1781,<sup>18</sup> but also round log supports to the log floor joists dating from 1949,<sup>19</sup> when the floor was rebuilt. This is not strictly true, because Reside, in his file, includes one remarkably interesting comment about the reconstruction work at this point,<sup>20</sup> "In some areas the lower floor joists were rotting, and rather than disturb the wide pine floor boards (up to 22") we tunnelled under from the outside to replace the joists. When making these excavations many old empty case & other bottles were found, a reasonable discovery since it was normal when the house was built to pay labour in money, goods, gin and rum!" (p 238 ) As no moisture barrier was inserted at this time another rebuilding will presumably be required in the future. One piece of wood looks remarkably like a tree stump, and if it is, gives some indication of the speed of erection, and to the attitude of the builders towards unseen niceties. There are even Connecticut precedents for this form of site clearance!<sup>21</sup>

By 1949 there was considerable deflection in the floor over the cellar, so that a new system of supports was built in to replace the original posts and beam. A whole new row of posts near the east wall, with a separate beam, was located under the Keeping Room floor to provide safety for visitors. The process of



The Cellar looking west under the parlour floor. The new floor supports were installed in 1949. What appears to be a tree stump, left centre, may really be one! If so, it supports the theory that speed of construction was important, and no time or expense was wasted on grubbing out tree roots.



The Cellar. The double wall has given trouble in its interpretation. For a long time the author thought that the stones carried another meaning, as a staircase to the Kitchen above, but following the collapse of the north wall, it is now believed that the extra stone is really a buttress to prevent the collapse of the south wall. The original wall shows some bulging and the walls to the access stair show even more. At the extreme right can be seen a new post holding up the old beam. Extra timber has been added either side to strengthen the beam.

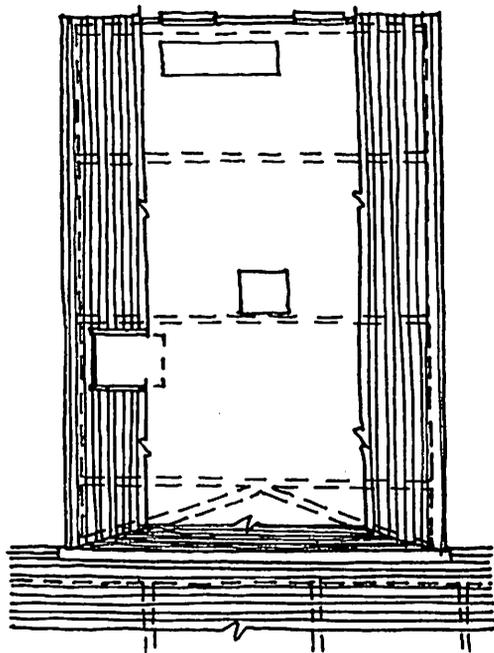
deterioration of the floor had been hastened by the placing of a large and heavy safe in the entry, over the cellar.<sup>22</sup> The floor was sagging badly in 1949 when the safe was removed, but unfortunately the enthusiasm of the workmen to remove the sag resulted in the floor above being given a hump.<sup>23</sup>

Since the concrete floor was laid, the original headroom in the cellar cannot now be ascertained. Presumably it was quite similar to the existing as otherwise earth would have had to have been excavated.

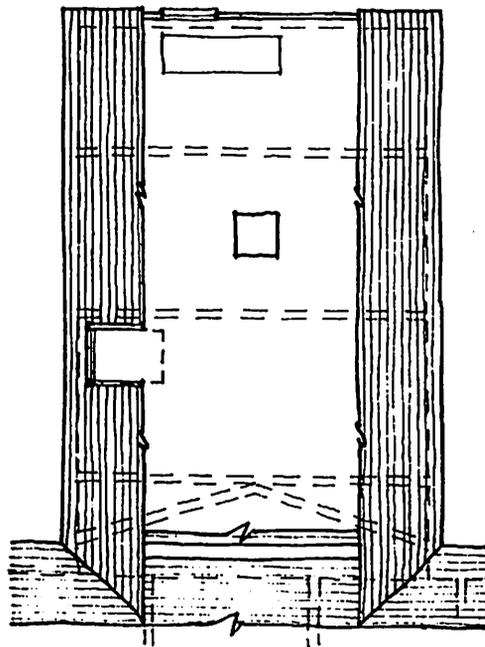
At the present point of entry to the cellar can be seen the original sill and vertical board sheathing. The sill is 230 x 230mm, the floor joists are 100 x 150 mm, and the vertical boarding is 30 x about 250 mm. It is impossible to see if the vertical boards are pegged into the sill, as they would have been in New England.<sup>24</sup>

## 8 Cellar, Footnotes.

- 1 Deduced from argument below.
- 2 Verbal communication from Ed Friedland.
- 3 Diary, II, 1788-08-05, which refers to lime mortar being used on the walls as pointing to the dry dry stone walling.(ie. stones without cementitious material between them.)
- 4 Diary, II,1788-10-28, which refers to the laying of a plank floor
- 5 Diary, II, 1780-01-30 and III, 1790-01-06.
- 6 Verbal communication from Ed Friedland.
- 7 See Roofspace, below.
- 8 See Kitchen, above.
- 9 Related to the author by Alan North of Government Services, Halifax, and by Gary Hartlen of the Queen's County Museum, Liverpool, N.S.
- 10 Photographs taken by the author.
- 11 Raddall, 1949-05-18 or thereabout, in response to the problems created by the safe as noted by Raddall, 1947-04-24.
- 12 Verbal communication from Ed Friedland.
- 13 Diary, IV, 1801-12-24.
- 14 See Back Parlour above.
- 15 It would be reasonable to assume that a partition wall divided the cellar into more than one space until the alterations of 1949. The lack of damage to the bedding mortar behind a previously removed jamb, suggests its removal at a recent date.
- 16 Kelly, p69, which refers to an external access only of 1740 and figs. 2-20, inclusive, which show plans with internal access. See also Isham and Brown, passim.
- 17 The evidence suggests a construction date of 1949.
- 18 Diary,II, 1781-08-06, ff.
- 19 Raddall, 1949-04-11.
- 20 Reside, Newspaper clipping from 1950-01-12, and Lecture notes for a talk presented at Yarmouth before 1973-07-20, p 9.
- 21 Verbal communication from Ed Friedland.
- 22 See footnote 11 above.
- 23 This is still visible from the floor above, but is partly hidden by the centrally placed dining table.
- 24 Kelly, p 41.



a)



b)

- a) 1792.  
Note the formation of the valley gutter. With three windows the space could have been divided to make separate quarters for several servants.
- b) 1947. The chimney was removed in 1949.

## 9 Attic over Kitchen

This room is hardly more than an unfinished shed, and yet it contains one of the most interesting parts of the house dating from 1792;<sup>1</sup> a part of the roof from that time. Originally the south wall contained two symmetrical windows. One of these has been removed and blocked up.<sup>2</sup> (p 247). With the dormer window there would have been three windows altogether, all at floor level, in a crudely finished space. Could this have been used for sleeping quarters? If intended for storage only, it would have been unnecessary to have provided so many windows. It seems very likely that servants,<sup>3</sup> slaves<sup>4</sup> and other people would have been quartered here.<sup>5</sup> In the roof planking and purlins can be seen the location of the chimney removed in 1949.<sup>6</sup> As the blocked up hole in the roof is not vertically above the obvious repairs to the main floor where the fireplace and hearth were removed, it is possible that the roof boarding is not original, but more likely that the flooring repairs are for the fireplace chimney which at some time was replaced by a stove chimney.<sup>7</sup>

The roof has a steeply pitched hip at the northern end. This was required at the time of the addition in 1792, because the main house had a dormer window on the south slope in Bedroom 2. If the roof of the addition had been carried into the main roof it would have blocked the light to this dormer window (p 245 and see Bedroom 2 below). On the outside of this roof slope, but covered

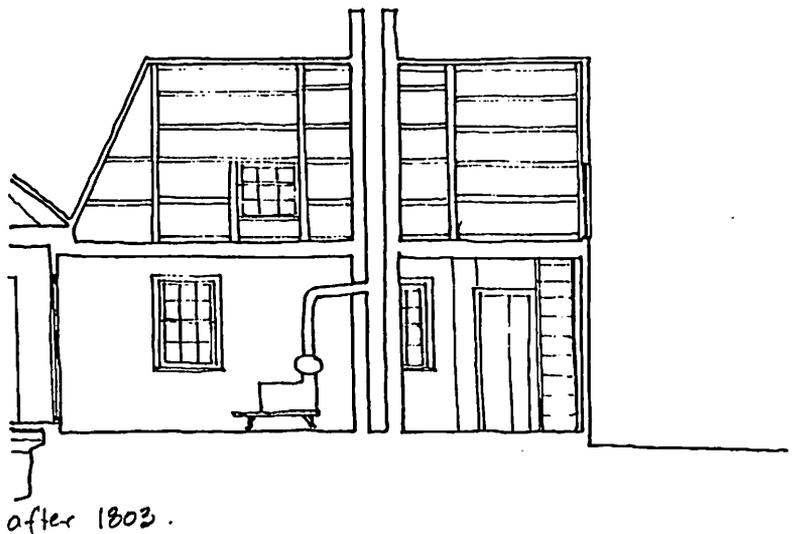
by the later connecting roof, are the original shingles of the 1792 addition. (See p 248 ) They are well worn, and exhibit all the signs of having been on for several years before the valley between the roofs was finally covered in.<sup>8</sup> Retaining the dormer window on the main roof slope generated an unfortunate valley gutter which would have been subject to water penetration from collectd snow. In order to windproof the roof as far as possible, canvas strips were tacked over the butt-jointed horizontal sheathing boards before the wood shingles were applied.<sup>9</sup>

As major alterations were carried out at the house when the stair was moved, possibly about 1840 (see p 159 ), the dormer window in Bedroom 2 may have been removed and the roof junction completed at this time. (see p 277)

The roof construction clearly shows a complex history of repair in the different wooden members and in the variety of sizes and surface textures in the wood used for repair.<sup>10</sup> It would appear from this variety that the roof to the extention of 1792 has been more of a maintenance problem than the main roof. Nevertheless all the rafters appear to be original.



1792



after 1803.

#### Cross Section.

Initially built in 1792, the valley gutter was formed by building simply and making the least effort. Retention of the south facing dormer window suggests that Bedroom 2 may have been divided at this time.

A cast iron stove was installed between 1803 and 1947, with the expectation that it was not put in before 1812 as there is no Diary entry for it, and it is unlikely that it was put in after 1900.



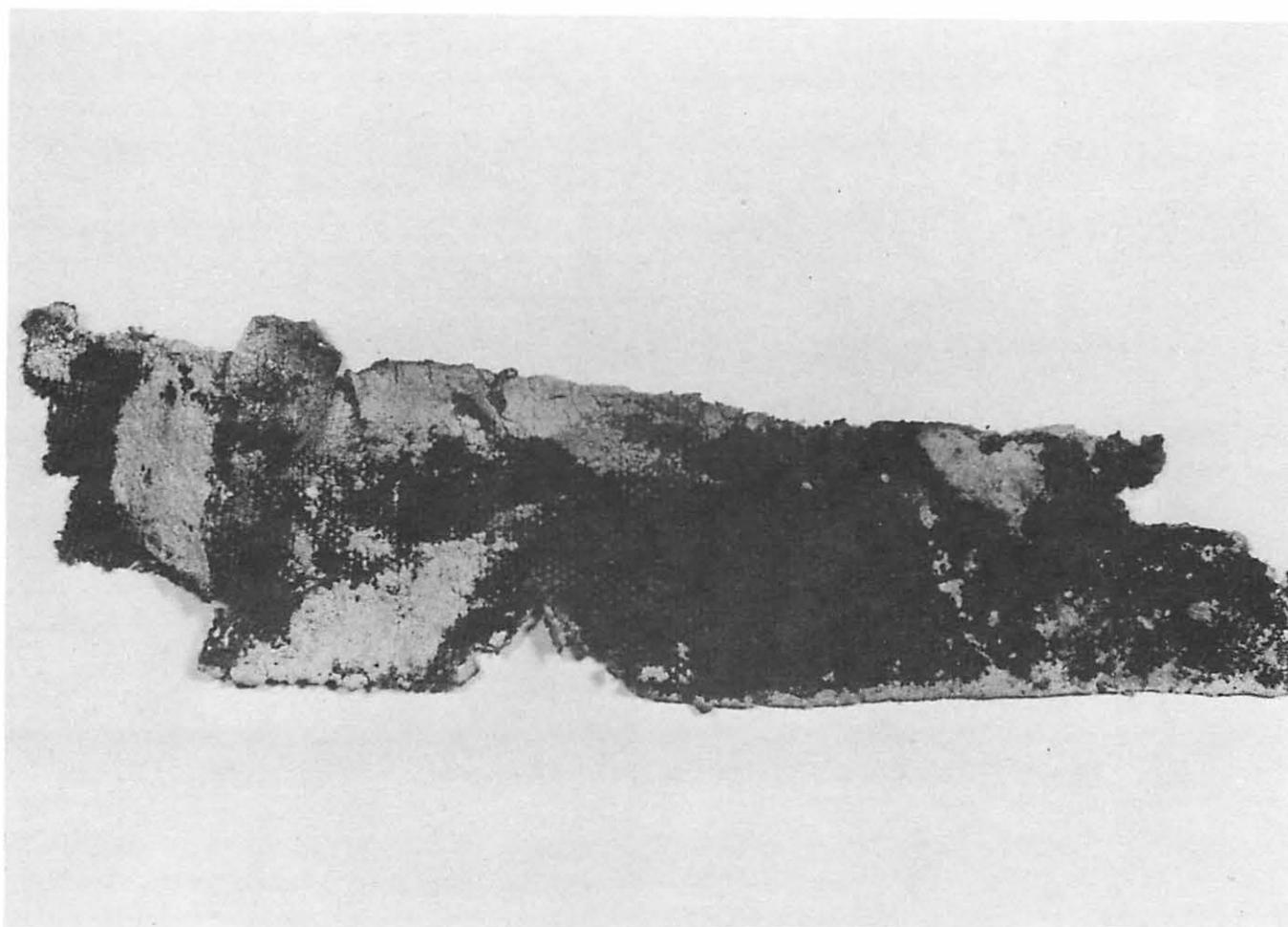
The Kitchen Attic looking north. Note the low dormer window height and the high roof space. At the far end is the 1792 roof slope with horizontal boarding. In the foreground can be seen the patch in the flooring where the brick flue was located prior to 1949. Substantial reconstruction of the roof has taken place as modern purlins and boarding show.



The Kitchen Attic looking south. Note the second south facing window, which has been filled in to the right, and the low window height.



The Roof Junction. The original roof can be seen on the left with some shingles still in place at the bottom of the slope. As these are above the valley gutter, the shingles themselves must date from 1792. The shingled roof of 1792 is on the right. The surfaces have been whitewashed at some time.



A Piece Of Canvas. Found beneath the shingles on the 1792 roof slope to the attic over the Kitchen Addition, this piece of cloth, possibly cut from an old garment, was found nailed to the sheathing under the shingles, presumably to reduce the air flow into the attic. The author found no signs of birch bark being used.



The Kitchen Attic. At the bottom is the original roof sheathing. In the centre is the break in the boards where the dormer was located until after 1792. At the top is the infill roofing, with horizontal boards possibly installed around 1840.

## 9 Attic over the Kitchen, Footnotes.

- 1 Diary, III, 1792-06-04, ff.
- 2 There is nothing to indicate when this window was removed, except that the earliest known photograph of this end of the house was taken in 1947, by Doty.
- 3 Diary, II, 1783-12-20, Anthony and Hagar.
- 4 Diary, II, 1784-06-22, when Frank died.
- 5 Diary, see III, 1792-08-23, A girl from St. Margaret's Bay, III, 1792-08-31, William Robinson, a boy, lived at the house for several weeks, III, 1794-09-05, Barbara Tullock works for 11 weeks, III, 1795-11-20, Don MacAdam, a hired servant, III, 1795-04-20, Anthony and Donald, III, 1796-09-24, Leckie from Shelburne, where we see that there were long term as well as transient workers staying at the house. Anthony had been employed as early as 1783, though we cannot tell if it was continuously.
- 6 Raddall, 1949-05-31, which suggests that the chimney was removed prior to this date.
- 7 The chimney referred to in Diary IV, 1803-06-20, with the flue oven of Diary, III, 1792-09-01, had been replaced by a stove chimney prior to the photograph (Doty) and the drawings of 1947 (Parker).
- 8 A cursory inspection of the fibres in the shingles and the belief that this part of the roof was never reshingled, suggest a life which was moderate in length.
- 9 From site observations made in 1978. The use of birch bark to reduce air movement is more common than canvas, but nowhere has any sign of birch bark been found in the original fabric, though not a great deal of the original can still be seen.

J.W.Reside, in his lecture to the Yarmouth Historical Society in 1973 states, 'The outside wall studs were installed sideways making a very thin wall. Split laths and plaster were on the inside and birch bark and shingles or clapboards on the outside. Corner bracing was on the inside.' From my observations there never were any studs in the outside walls, either vertical or horizontal, which therefore puts some doubt on the presence of birch bark. It is necessary to remember that

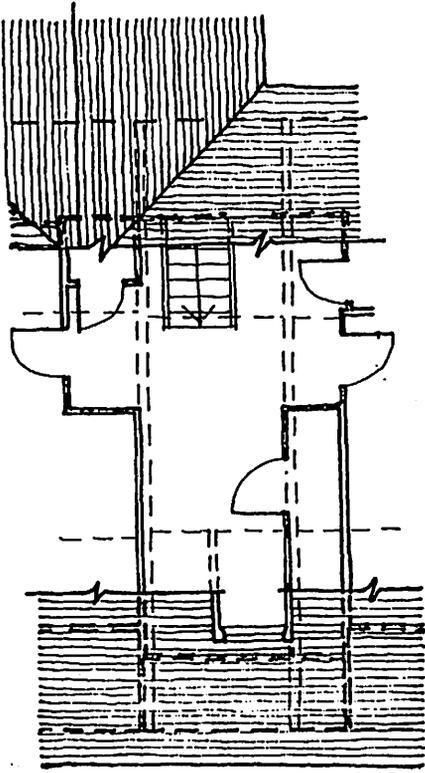
9 Attic over the Kitchen, Footnotes, Contd.

Reside was also, talking 26 years after the event so that memory may not have been reliable. Birch bark may still be present in the walls and there may be a chance to find it in the future (See Reside file, NSM.).

- 10 There are three types of purlin to be seen. The earliest and probably original is rough log, whereas the latest is rough sawn 2"x4" dating from 1949. Sheathing shows the typical parallel sawcuts of the water-powered sawmill in the earlier wide boards and the circular-saw cuts on the face of the later narrow boards. The original rafters are axed or adzed.

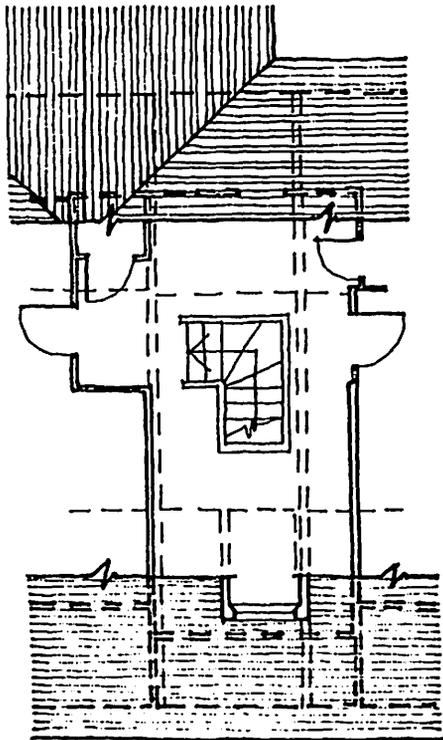


Kitchen Attic looking down on the original valley gutter of 1792. At the middle left can be seen the tree-nail at the joint between the rafter and horizontal tie beam which acts as a floor joist. In the immediate foreground is a purlin. The hole at the top leads into the attic roof space over the kitchen. This space is beyond the reach of visitors. At the top left are the 1792 shingles.



a) c1840.

The staircase in the rear position. Although the only information comes from the 1947 drawings of the house, it seems unlikely that changes were made after Caleb Seely so dramatically changed the position of the main stair.



Stair Landing plan.

b) 1949.

When the staircase was rebuilt at the front position it was based on marks left in the woodwork from the previous staircase. We can only assume the accuracy of the craftsmen to faithfully follow the pattern.

## 10 Stair Landing

This space is rather complex in shape and its various stages in development are also complicated. In its present form it dates from 1949,<sup>1</sup> but it possibly resembles the original space of 1797<sup>2</sup> with some minor modifications.

As the dormer window is not centred over the front door, it is unlikely that it dates from 1767<sup>3</sup> but is a later addition.

Contemporary houses of similar form in New England did not have dormer windows as a rule.<sup>4</sup> Although the entry was changed in 1787,<sup>5</sup> the front door was not moved as it is still on the centre line of the original facade. (See p 121 a) It may be assumed that the dormer window was added at the time of the extension of 1781,<sup>6</sup> when the addition to the east would have blocked off the gable windows in Bedroom 2, making the central bedrooms windowless. Some support for this date may be gained from the similarity of sash in the dormer windows and in the end windows of the 1781 extension,<sup>7</sup> as both use 8/8 panes, whereas the end windows in the bedroom built in 1767 are of 6/6 panes. Over the lifetime of the house, the sashes may have been changed, but the similarity remains. On the other hand, it is unsettling that Simeon Perkins does not mention building dormer windows in his diary. At this time the diary entries are quite cryptic, and a lack of definite information may be interpreted either way.<sup>8</sup> As there was a dome window in Bedroom 2 by 1804<sup>9</sup> it is a

reasonable assumption that the domers are contemporary with the 1781 extension, which was when they were needed.

A number of changes can still be seen in the ceiling. A roof access hatch over the head of the stairs has been hidden by later plaster.<sup>10</sup> This plaster work presumably dates from 1949<sup>11</sup> when the stairs were again moved and a vertical post was carried up to the ceiling to increase staircase rigidity. A small piece of vertical boarding which predates the 1949<sup>12</sup> alterations, suggests that there was a partition at first which made the Landing a rectangular room. It is located on the rafter just outside the door to Bedroom 2. ( p 257 ) A large cupboard, adjacent to the wall of bedroom 1 appears in the drawings of 1947. (p 132 ) The position of the cupboard door can still be clearly seen in the paint marks on the floor.<sup>13</sup> (p 260 )

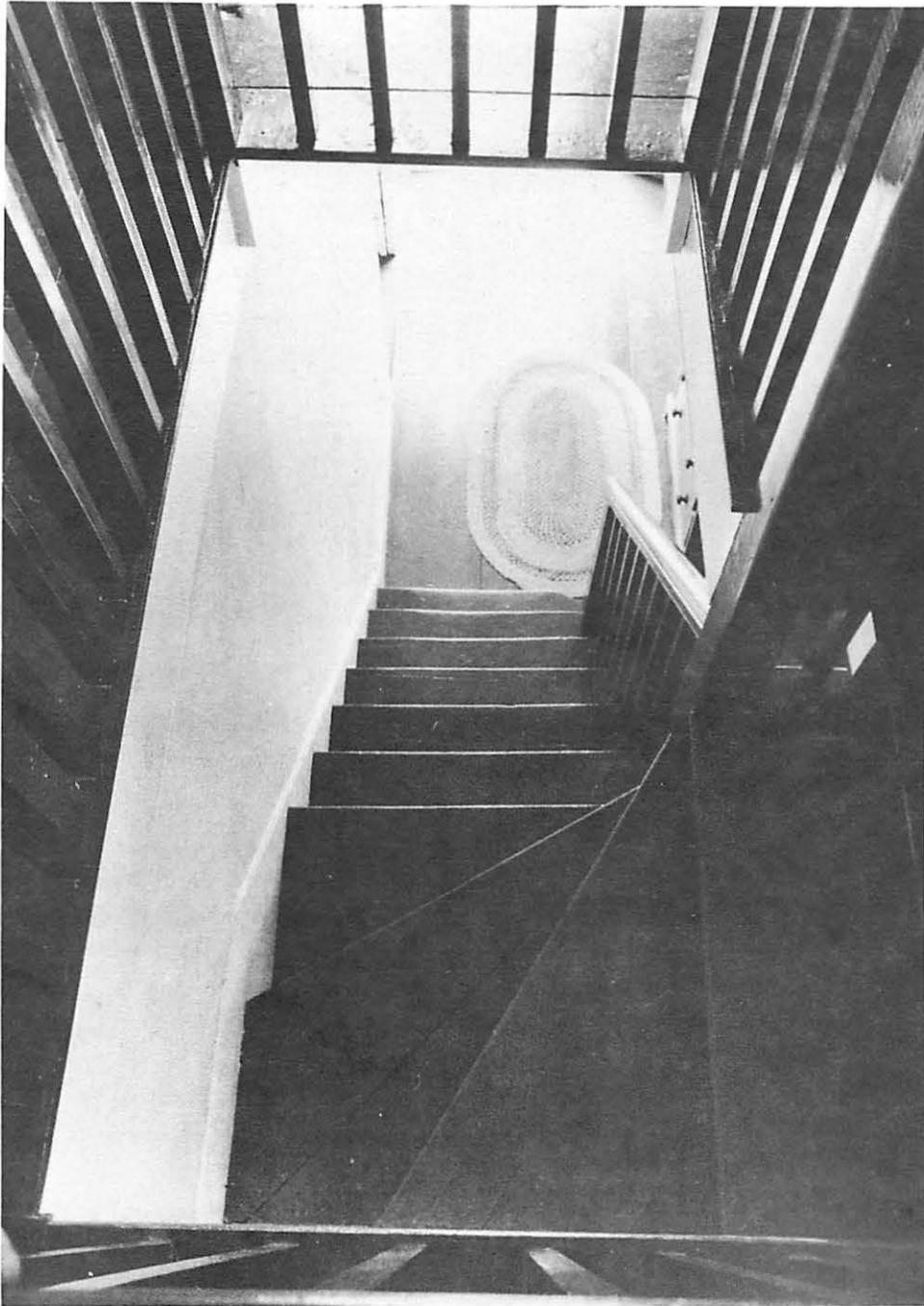
Major renovation work was carried out at the house in 1949 using materials taken from the Freeman house next door which had recently been dismantled. ( p 15 )<sup>14</sup> The house was known as 'Elmwood'.<sup>15</sup> Authentic old materials make it much harder to discern new work from old or original. When the stair was rebuilt in 1949<sup>16</sup> repairs to the flooring and walls were carried out in these old materials and only the drawings of 1947<sup>17</sup> (p 131 ) give an indication of which parts are new and which are of earlier date. The stair and handrail are both clearly from 1949, though identical in design to the rear stair photographed in 1947.<sup>18</sup>



The Stair Landing. This photograph was taken by Hedley Doty in 1947 showing the rear location of the staircase, with Bedroom 2 as it appears today.



The Stair Landing ceiling 1979. Some traces of change can be plainly seen in the plaster ceiling, while others, for example an access hatch, have been hidden by it. The marks of the adze can be clearly seen in the ceiling beam.



The Stairs looking down. Built in 1949, the design of the staircase repeats the dimension of that believed to have been built in 1766 and removed about 1840.



The Stair Landing Floor. The location of an old closet door can be traced in paint markings on the floor. The closet was removed in 1949. The joints in the original flooring show where a beam is located below. In order to prevent sagging between the widely spaced joists a double layer of floor boards is used, which has the added advantage of reducing noise transfer and is the eighteenth century solution to the need for tongued and grooved boarding. It suggests a system of construction in process of development and an ability to use wood extravagantly.

(p 257) Presumably the design can be attributed to the wishes of Raddall and Reside. p 257

Questions remain unanswered. Was the landing at any time a bedroom? How was the space first used? Was it ever used primarily for storage; or was it an open space for storage or a dormitory, or has it always been a central landing with a bedroom on either side? It is probable that the latter condition existed in 1775 when Perkins remarried.<sup>19</sup>

Ceiling and door heights are low, with one door only 1.7m high and the clear height under the beams of the ceiling only 1.8m.<sup>20</sup>

With no building code to establish minimum standards, convenience balanced with economy alone dictated the size, and in this case the functional headroom. Connecticut houses have ceiling heights which are typically 2.2m (7'-2")<sup>21</sup> whereas in this house it is 1.9m (6'-4").<sup>22</sup> It is unlikely that the people were substantially shorter when the house was built than people are today, but attitudes have definitely changed, as present building codes reflect, both for safety and convenience.

It is hard to believe that the staircase could have ever been in the position which it now occupies, as it is so very inconvenient and out of character with the rest of this common-sense house.

(See p 254 b) Until such time as major renovations are required, when plaster might be removed from walls and ceilings to disclose



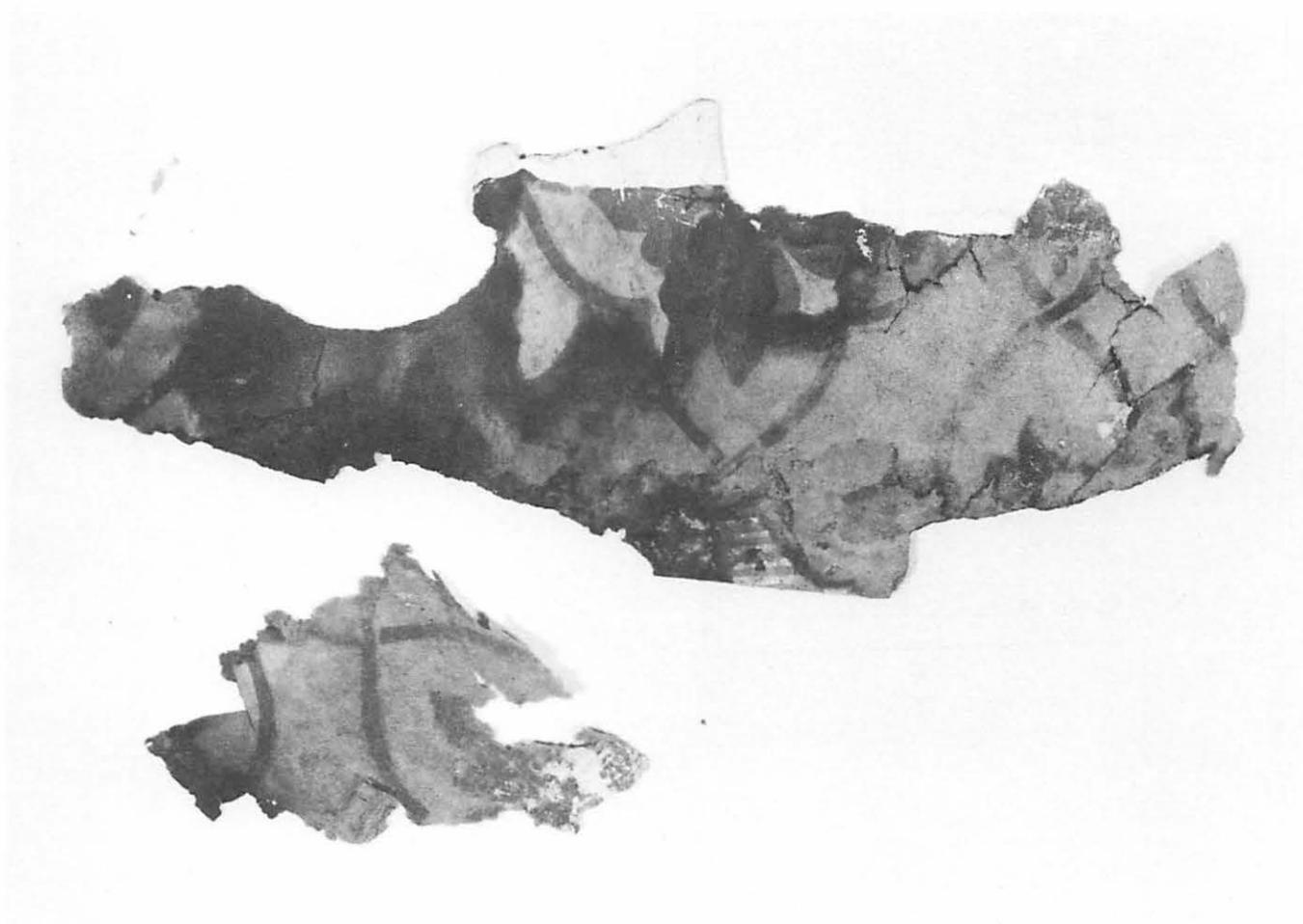
## 10 Stair Landing, Footnotes

- 1 Raddall, 1949-04-22
- 2 Diary, III, 1796-12-14
- 3 Diary, I, 1767-04-18
- 4 This conclusion has been reached after extensive searches in the collections of photographs of the American Antiquarian Society, the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and the New Haven Colony Historical Society as well as books such as Kelly, Isham and Brown, and Williams.
- 5 Diary, IV, 1787-10-29
- 6 Diary, II, 1781-07-18, ff.
- 7 Calculated from site measurements
- 8 As the Diary is incomplete it is not possible to eliminate by lack of reference, nor are the entries in the Diary consistently complete.
- 9 Diary, V, 1804-01-04
- 10 From an on-site inspection, having crawled through the roof space from the access hatch in Bedroom 3.
- 11 Raddall, 1949-05-18 or before.
- 12 Drawings by B.L.Parker.
- 13 Although adding successive layers of paint without adequate preparation is normally anathema to architects, in this case the paint marks not only reveal the position of the cupboard wall, but also the door. It may be assumed that the cupboard was built at the same time as the stair was removed and was itself removed when the stair was reinstated at the front.
- 14 Raddall, 1949-04-11
- 15 Radall states that 'Elmwood' was built by Joshua Newton, Perkins' son-in-law, but there is some dispute over this. Newton built the house on the other side of the street, 114 Main.
- 16 Raddall, 1949-05-18, "Repairs to the floor continue."
- 17 Drawings by B.L.Parker in the J.W.Reside file, NSM.
- 18 Raddall, 1949-04-22, states that "Therefore we had the middle set of 'back' stairs transferred to their original place at the front." This is again confusing as the stairs both have

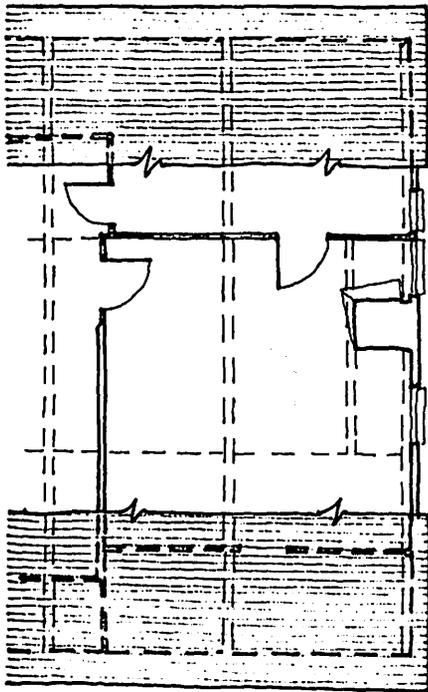
10 Stair Landing, Footnotes, contd.

open strings, but on opposite sides, making it impossible to re-use the strings, although the treads and risers of each step might be re-used. Even here there is a real problem as there is an open string on one side, making it unlikely that the treads were turned over to be re-used.

- 19 Diary, I, 1775-09-10
- 20 From measurements taken on site.
- 21 Verbal communication. Ed Friedland.
- 22 Measurements taken on site.



Samples of wallpaper removed from behind some loose plaster above the stairs. The pattern suggests a date of 1840, which neatly fits in with the change of the stair location when substantial alterations would make redecoration sensible. It may be wishful thinking of course.



Bedroom 1, 1767, plan.

This room appears little altered from when it was built. It is believed to have been the "pretty" room referred to in the Diary in 1776 when it was freshly wall-papered.

11 Bedroom 1 (?) (1776) Chamber (1792)

Possibly used as a bedroom from the start, this bedroom has charming roof beams but now lacks a stove. (Compare p 270 with p 271 ) On August 8, 1776 Simeon Perkins wrote<sup>1</sup> "Paint my bedroom, etc." and on September 14, 1776<sup>2</sup> "I begin to paper my chamber", and on September 20, 1776,<sup>3</sup> "John West finishes papering my chamber. It makes a pretty room." It is reasonable to assume that these references apply to this room upstairs and that it was not yet plastered.<sup>4</sup> A chamber was plastered in October 1800,<sup>5</sup> but because Simeon Perkins refers to it as "a" and "ye" it is unclear to which room he was referring. Nevertheless earlier in 1800<sup>6</sup> it would appear that the Counting Room together with a Chamber at the store was being worked on. This reference therefore applies to another building. As the Entry, Parlour, Keeping room and office were probably plastered initially,<sup>7</sup> and the chamber in the 1781 extension was plastered in 1782,<sup>8</sup> the 1776<sup>9</sup> diary entries most logically apply to this room. The date of 1776 for finishing the room is significant in that having married in 1775,<sup>10</sup> his need for a "pretty" bedroom rather than a boarded one had possibly been pointed out to him by his new wife. We can be definite that it was in this room that water was poured into the flue through the stove pipe access to help put out the office chimney fire in January 1792.<sup>11</sup> This reference also tells us that there was a stove in this room at this time. In the photograph of 1947,<sup>12</sup> (p 270 ) the flue pipe opening can still be seen. As the chimney connects two flues from below, the shape of

the chimney stack becomes not only twisted in elevation but also in plan. This manipulation of the flues prevented the chimney from blocking one of the bedroom windows and allowed the flue to project through the peak of the roof.

The structure of the roof is visible with exposed rafters and collar beams every 2 m. The ceiling beam immediately adjacent to the chimney is only a trimmer and is unsupported except for the ceiling planking. In the closets at the eaves (p 272 ) the vertical roof boarding can be seen spanning between horizontal purlins, which in turn span between the main rafters.

Historically this appears to have been derived from the construction technique developed for thatched roofs, but here in a late stage of development the rafters are widely spaced with shingles applied over boarding from the start. During repairs carried out in 1979,<sup>13</sup> the author was told that there were two layers of boarding on the roof, presumably to increase rigidity and permit wider purlin spacing. Two opportunities to check the accuracy of this statement while maintenance was being carried out have been missed by the author. The accuracy is questionable as the last shingle repairs caused the points of the nails to protrude through the sheathing and plaster to appear in the bedroom ceiling surface!<sup>14</sup>

The wall between the stair and bedroom discloses the building technique at the time. Vertical boarding, which forms the



Bedroom 1 looking southeast. The low headroom, further reduced by the beams, gives a cosy feel to the upper floor, but should not be construed to imply that the Perkins family were necessarily short people. The 1781 door, made from just two pieces of board, is curiously hung with the battens on the outside.



Bedroom 1. Photograph of 1947. A cap over the stove pipe connection is a reminder that Simeon Perkins poured water in here to douse a chimney fire started in the office below. This is only possible because the three fireplaces shared a common flue.



Bedroom 1 looking west. The structural frame and chimney are visible with the 2 flues from the Office and Parlour gathering into one to eject smoke close to the peak of the roof.

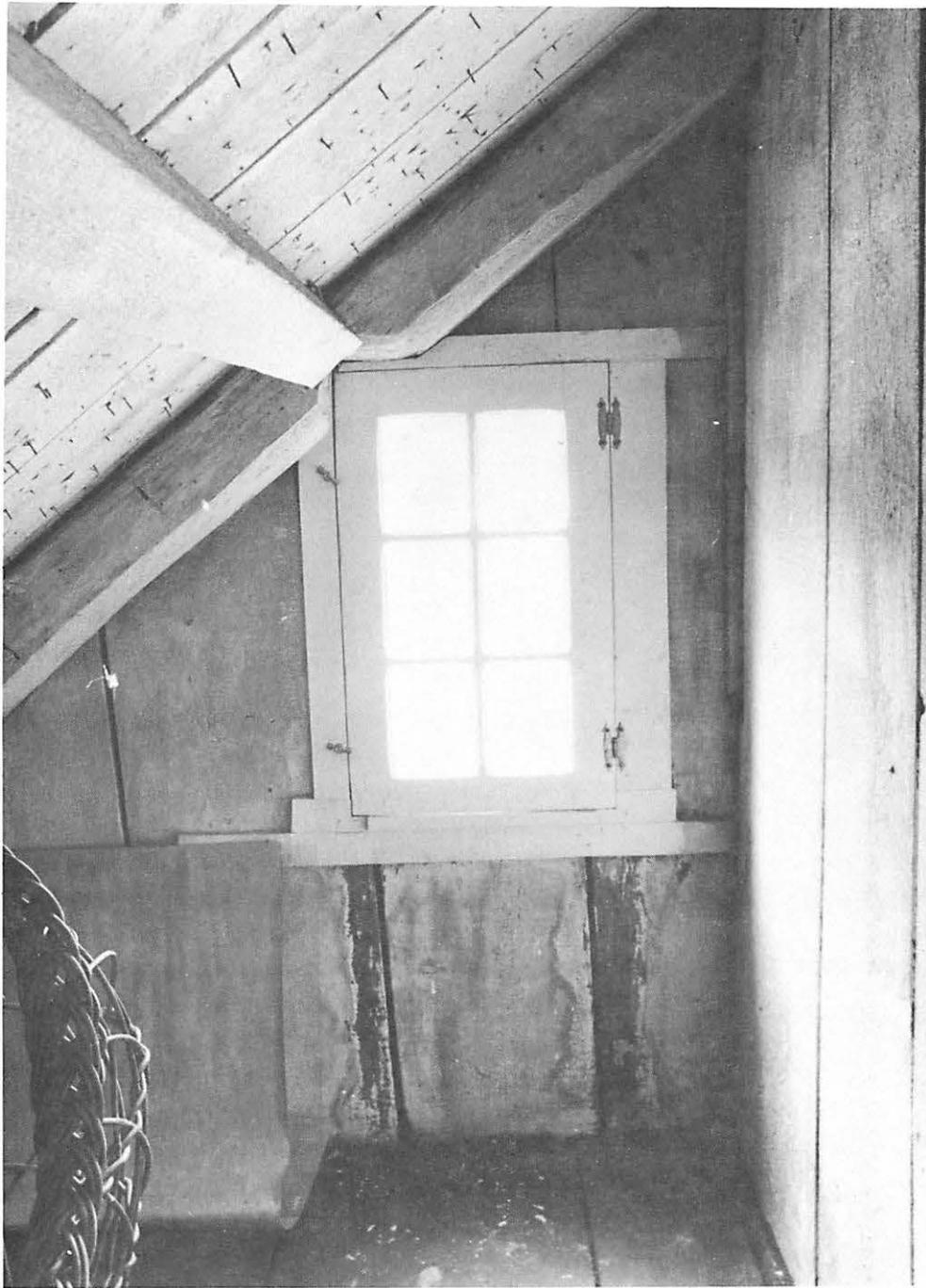


Bedroom 1 Closet looking south. The horizontal purlins spanning between the rafters and vertical boarding can be clearly seen through the open doorway. In contrast to the original boards, those used in 1935 are much narrower. See next photograph.

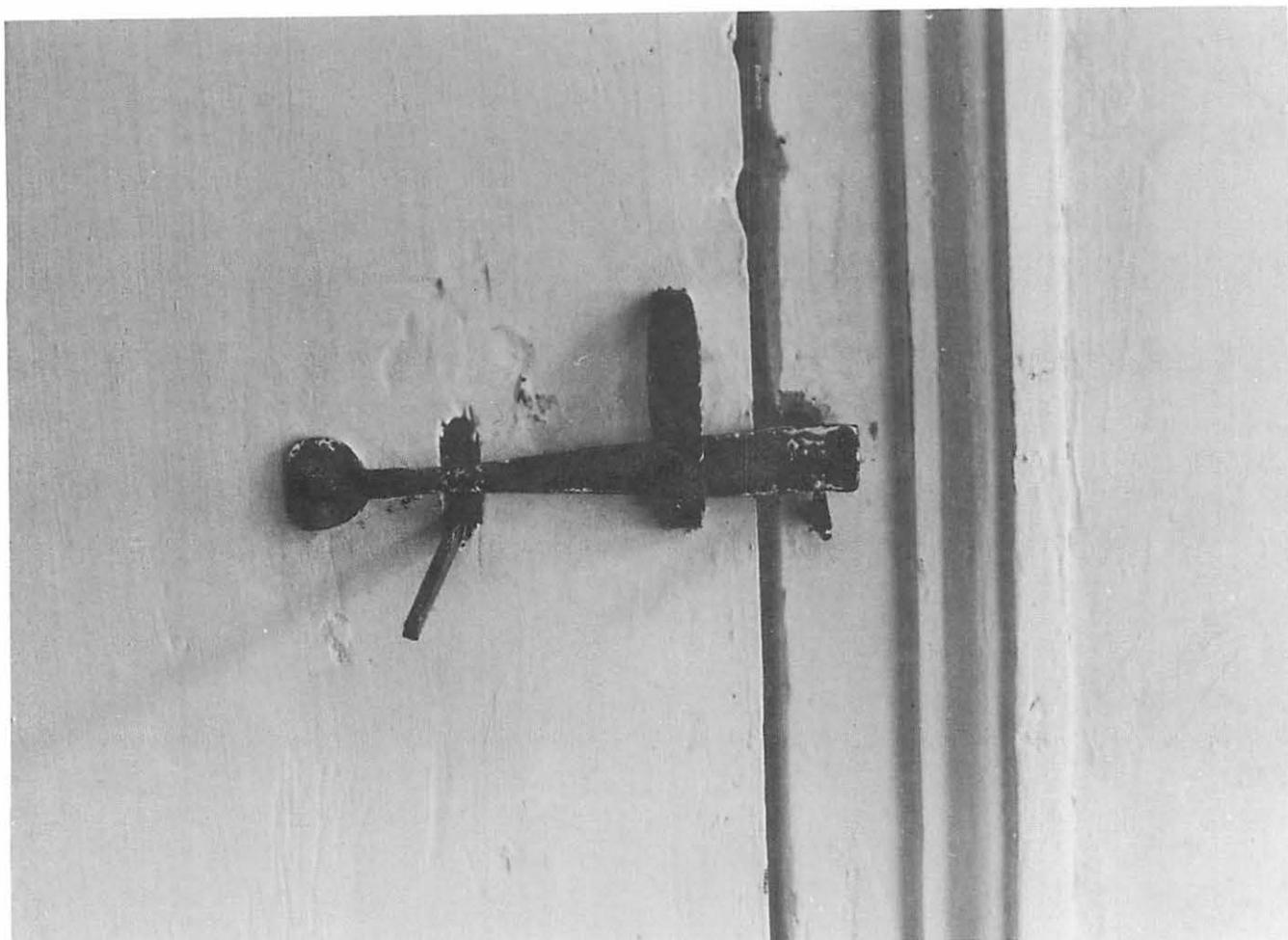
partition, is nailed into woodstrips attached to the wooden floor and ceiling. Vertical joints in the boarding are a simple half lap joint.<sup>15</sup> Split laths,<sup>16</sup> nailed on horizontally to provide more stiffness, are then plastered over. In the wall to the south closet space the wall is plastered on one side only, whereas between this bedroom and the landing the wall is plastered on both sides to give an overall thickness. Connecticut precedents used vertical boarding for internal walls where the boards were given a bead at the joint and left without plaster.<sup>17</sup> An example of this can be seen in the door to the south closet. (See p 276 ) Presumably the whole room was finished in this way until papered in 1776.<sup>18</sup> Although plaster may have been a status symbol it would have greatly improved audio privacy but not thermal insulation, except for a reduction in draughts. In the large closet to the south there is an added window which appears to have been installed this century. (p 275 ) No functional requirement for this window can be found, except to permit ventilation to lower the temperature under the south-facing roof slope during the summer. Typical examples of this form of house from New England have smaller windows in these locations, presumably for the same reasons.<sup>19</sup> ( p98 )

11 Bedroom 1, Footnotes.

- 1 Diary, I, 1776-08-08.
- 2 Diary, I, 1776-09-14.
- 3 Diary, I, 1776-09-20.
- 4 The confusion caused by the use of the words 'bedroom' and 'chamber' is problematic. The two references to the chamber in footnotes 1 and 2 above have the appropriate gap in time for the activities and benefit by having the word 'chamber' applied to them. 'Chamber' was the usual word for an upper level sleeping space and bedroom for a ground floor space.
- 5 Diary, IV, 1800-10-13 'my chamber' and 1800-10-18 'ye chamber'.
- 6 Diary, IV, 1800-07-26 and 1800-09-09 to 13.
- 7 Diary, I, 1767-04-18.
- 8 Diary, II, 1782-09-21, 22, 27, 28.
- 9 Diary, I, 1776-09-14 and 20.
- 10 Diary, I, 1775-09-10.
- 11 Diary, III, 1792-01-11, which incidentally proves the 'office room' was in the house.
- 12 Raddall, 1947-05-19.
- 13 Personal observation, 1979, September.
- 14 Personal observstion, 1979, September.
- 15 Inferred from the south wall, see below,
- 16 Raddall, 1949-05-10.
- 17 Kelly, p 145. Other early Nova Scotia houses are built this way, for example the Samuel Warne house of 1783 in Digby County, brought to my notice by Elizabeth Ross in 1983.
- 18 Diary, I, 1776-09-14 and 1776-09-20.
- 20 Williams, op cit., pls 28 and 30, also Poor, A.E., Colonial Architecture of Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, Dover, NY, 1970, plates 2, 4 and 12, also the Noah Burr House p 98 , and the Lane House p 99 , both in Killingworth, CT.



Bedroom 1 Closet looking west. Inside the closet a window opening of recent date can be seen, probably installed to improve ventilation. Note how the main rafter has been cut at the top left-hand corner to allow it to open.



Bedroom 1 Closet Door Latch. What appears to be an original latch on an original door.

As a middle bedroom with doorways leading to two alternate stairs, there is only one small dormer window which tends to make this 'L' shaped room darker than the other bedrooms. Entry to this room from the stair landing is now through a recess which appears to be of later origin than the south-facing dormer window.<sup>1</sup> If the recess were removed, this dormer window would have had a similar relationship to the interior walls as the other two windows have now.

In 1804, Perkins wrote,<sup>2</sup> "The Wind at S. Blows very hard. Some Scaffolding about my Kitchen Chimney Blowed off & fell against one of the Dorman Windows in my Daughters Lodging Chamber. Broke the Sash & Glass. Mary age 7 was at the Window & in Some danger. The Snow is mostly gone." From the direction of the wind and the location of the Kitchen chimney in the extension of 1792 there is only one possible dormer window which fits the circumstances described, and this is a south facing dormer window in this location. In the sloping ceiling in the southwest corner, behind the door, the framing for the south-facing dormer window can still be seen. (See p 283 ) This dormer window would have been partially blocked by the completion of the roof to the extension of 1792<sup>3</sup> which took place some time after 1804<sup>4</sup> and possibly about 1840.<sup>5</sup> (see Attic, p 244)

From the roof space which was an open valley at least between 1792<sup>6</sup> and 1804,<sup>7</sup> the joints can be seen in the original roof

boarding where the dormer opening was filled in.<sup>8</sup> Neither canvas strips nor birch bark can be found in the original construction.<sup>9</sup>

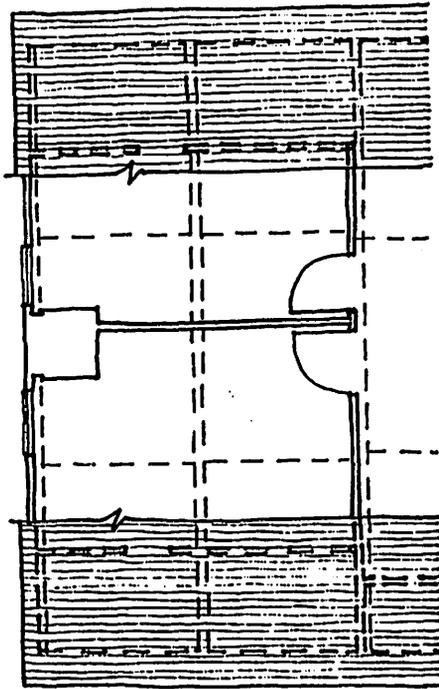
Comparing the north-facing dormer window in this room to that in the stair landing, one sees that the sills are quite different widths due to the location of the knee-wall below. This suggests that the dormers were built later than the walls, which helps to confirm the external evidence of positioning. ( p 121 & p 280 above).<sup>10</sup> Although there are differences in detail it cannot be assumed that the dormer windows in this room and the stair landing were built at different times. There was no need of a dormer window in this room while there were windows on either side of the chimney in the east end gable wall. When these were blocked by the extension of 1781<sup>11</sup> the dormer windows became necessary as the only alternative means of gaining light and ventilation.

It would appear quite reasonable to interpret "...one of the Dorman Windows..." as a clear indication that there were at least two windows in the room by 1804.<sup>12</sup>

The 1804<sup>13</sup> quotation permits another deduction to be made. It would seem reasonable to interpret the reference to "...my Daughters lodging chamber",<sup>14</sup> as meaning all his children, rather than just Mary. If this were true, then five girls lived here in 1804.<sup>15</sup> Bed spaces were always at a premium in this



The joints in the floor boards show where the original 1767 kitchen fireplace chimney was removed. In 1781 it was rebuilt the other side of the original end wall, allowing the fireplace to merely penetrate the wall, and so provide a larger bedroom.



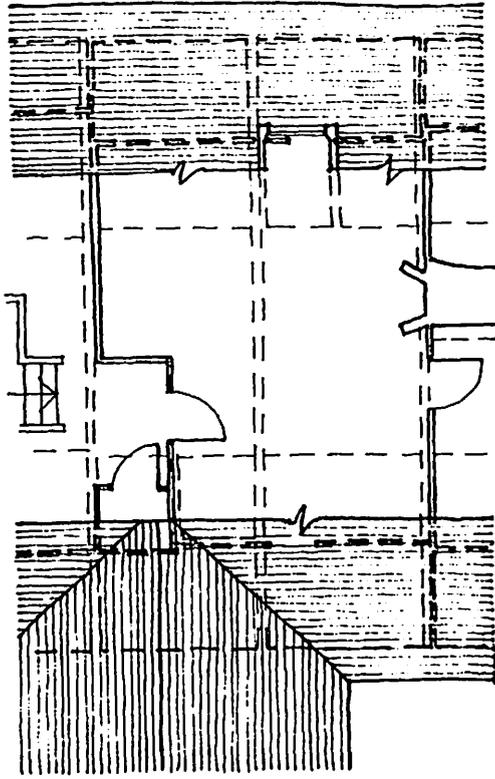
a)

- a) 1767, conjectural.  
Before the house was extended, a chimney flue penetrated this floor in much the same way as it still does in Bedroom 1. The room may have been divided.
- b) 1781, conjectural.  
After the addition was built there would have been no light in the bedroom and so dormer windows were required. Rebuilding the chimney outside of the room gave more space, though as there was only one access route through this room, privacy was diminished.
- c) c1840 or later.  
Once the kitchen addition roof had been extended to meet the main roof, the south facing dormer had to be removed, making a division impractical.

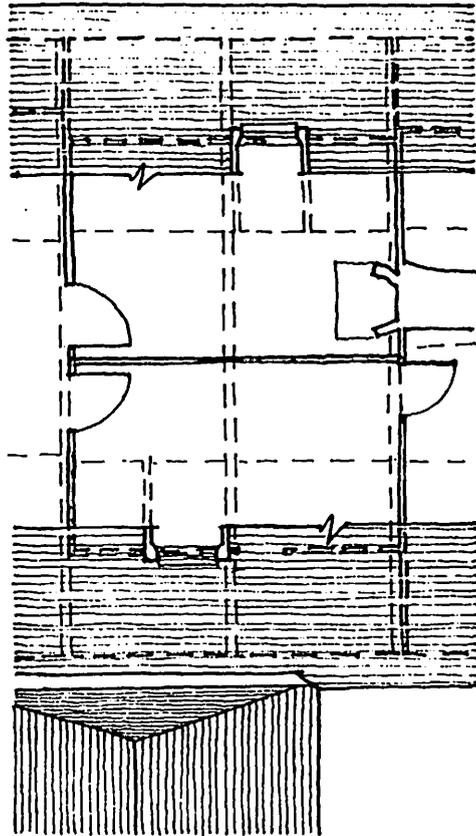
Bedroom 2, plan.

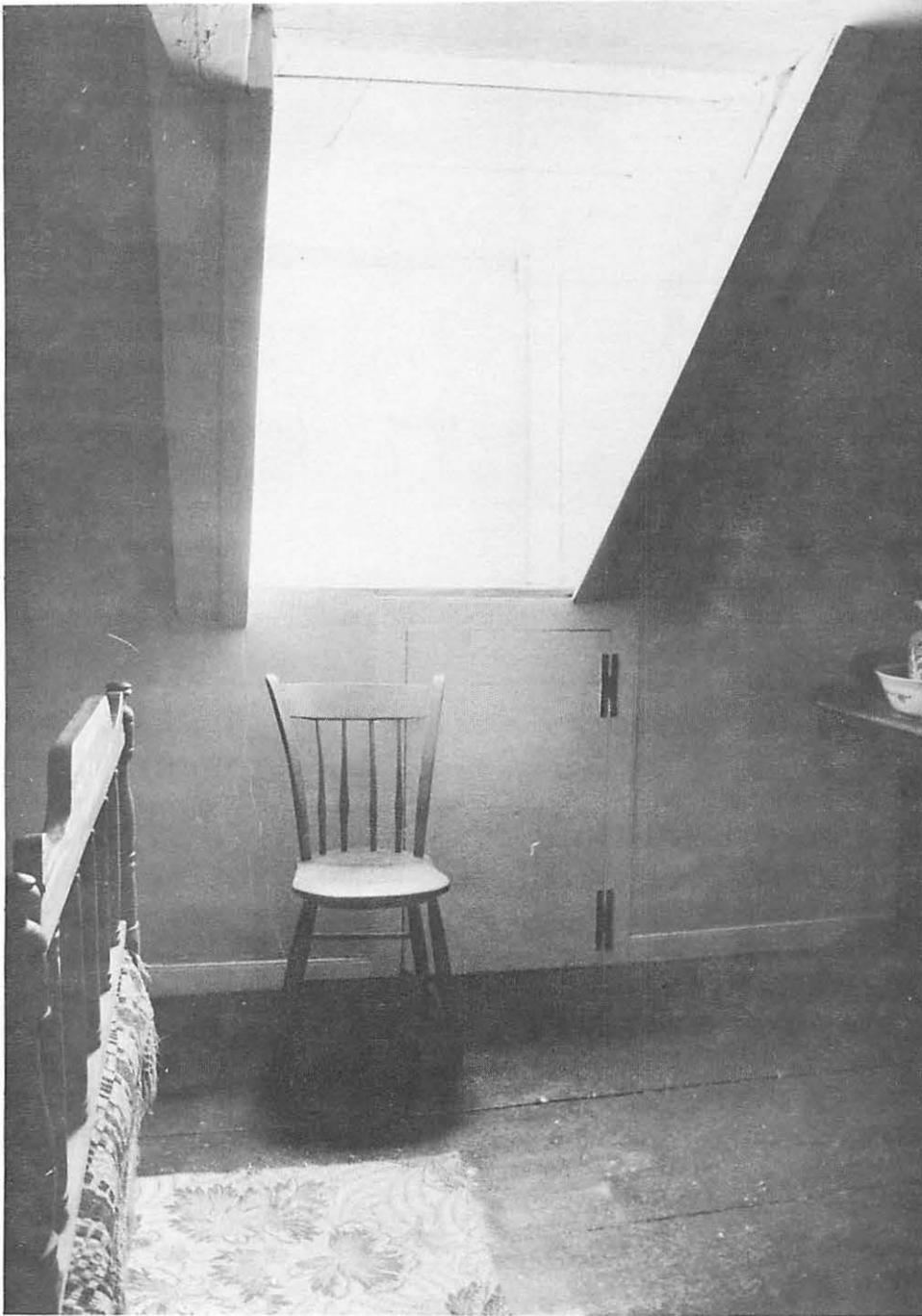
281

(g)



(g)





Bedroom 2. Dormer facing north, believed to have been installed in 1781. A door can be seen giving access to the eaves closet.



Bedroom 2. The filled-in dormer window in the southwest corner. Not required until after 1781, when the end windows would have been blocked by the addition, the dormer was in use after 1792 when the kitchen wing was added. It is not known when it was removed but presumably it could have been taken out when the stair was altered about 1840.



Bedroom 2 looking east. The original end wall and curious fireplace which is the only one on the upper floor. This fireplace probably dates from 1782 when the whole chimney was rebuilt.

house, though the second extension<sup>16</sup> may only have provided sleeping room for servants. With a family of eight children, odd relatives, long term visitors, some paying guests as well as live-in servants, the household could have numbered seventeen people,<sup>17</sup> although some may have slept in other places, such as the chamber at the store.<sup>18</sup>

The most noticeable feature in the room is the fireplace. This was not built until 1781<sup>19</sup> when the chimney was re-built through the wall in Bedroom 3 thus necessitating a new fireplace in Bedroom 2. From marks in the floor boards we can get some idea of where the previous chimney flue of 1767<sup>20</sup> came up from the kitchen below. (See p 279 )

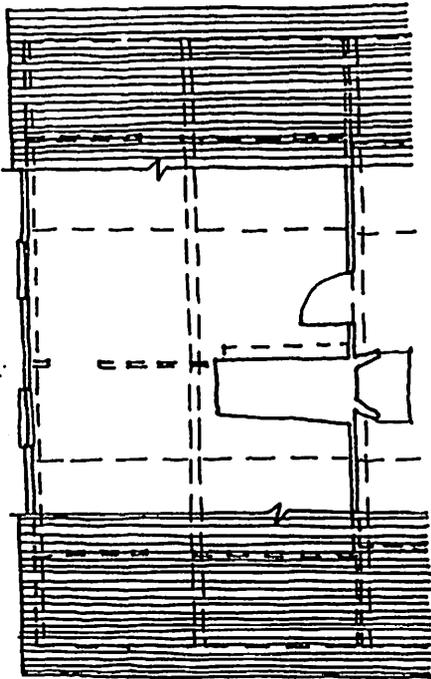
The 1781<sup>21</sup> extension created a need for access to Bedroom 3. For a whole year,<sup>22</sup> until the 'garret stair' was built, that access was gained through this bedroom, hence the door beside the fireplace.

12 Bedroom 2, Footnotes.

- 1 See discussion under Stair Landing above p.
- 2 Diary, V, 1804-01-04.
- 3 Diary, III, 1792-06-05.
- 4 Diary, V, 1804-01-04.
- 5 See Entry and Stairlanding above, pp.
- 6 Diary, III, 1792-06-05.
- 7 Diary, V, 1804-01-04.
- 8 See p.
- 9 From observations on site.
- 10 The position of the dormer window over the front door is not so dramatically displaced that it is immediately noticeable, but whereas the doorway is very accurately centred in the original wall, the dormer is off centre by 170mm.
- 11 Diary, II, 1781-07-18.
- 12 Diary, V, 1804-01-04.
- 13 Diary, V, 1804-01-04.
- 14 The lack of an apostrophe does not assist in the accuracy of the deduction, but the argument may stand on the basis of common sense.
- 15 Diary, V, 1804-01-04. The number of girls is calculated from their birth and death dates, see Simeon Perkins above, Footnote 92 and the chart p. , where it can be seen that Abigail had already married and left home.
- 16 Diary, III, 1792-06-05.
- 17 Diary, passim and the author's calculations.
- 18 Diary, III, 1800-07-26.
- 19 Diary, II, 1781-08-06, ff.
- 20 Diary, I, 1766-06-19 and 1767-04-18 establish the limits within which the original chimney must have been built.
- 21 Diary, II, 1781-07-18.
- 22 Diary, II, 1782-10-04.

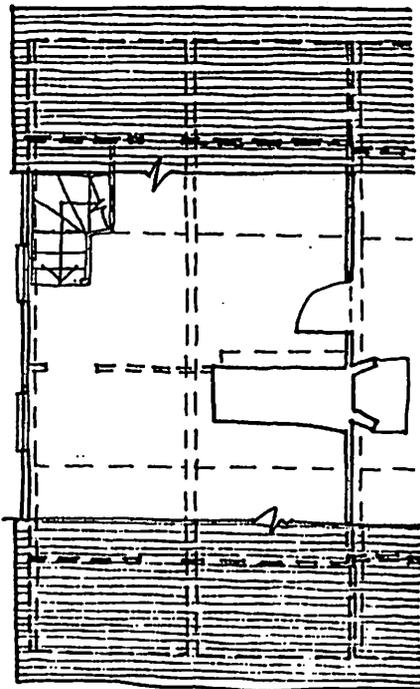


Bedroom 3 looking east. Marks in the end wall and ceiling suggest a partition has been removed, which would have divided this room into two rooms, each with a window.



a) 1781.

Note that there is no staircase, which was not built until a year later. Prior to this the only access must have been through the bedroom next door.



b) 1782.

Note that the room has been divided at some time, most likely during the tenure of the Perkins' family when so many people slept here.

13 Bedroom 3

The curiosity of this "garret"<sup>1</sup> is that it has its own staircase and a chimney breast which nearly divides the room in half.<sup>2</sup> Marks on the wall plaster suggest that this room was earlier divided by a wall from the chimney to a point between the windows to form two small rooms.<sup>3</sup>

What is invisible to the visitor is actually a much greater curiosity. The original clapboarding and the first chimney location can still be seen, although getting into position to view them is not at all easy. In the north eaves closet at the front of the house there is a small area of the original sheathing and cladding still in place on the end wall of the 1767<sup>4</sup> gable. (See p 293 , p 294 ) It is clapboarding of the same pattern as that on the front of the house today.<sup>5</sup> As a relic of the original house it is extremely interesting because Perkins writes about "clapboards"<sup>6</sup> and "shingles"<sup>7</sup> on the exterior of the house by which he undoubtedly means that the clapboards on the walls and shingles on the roof. The soft-wood clapboarding is 106mm (4 1/4") wide and is exposed 75mm (3"),<sup>8</sup> as compared to about 100mm (4") exposure in Connecticut for early oak clapboards.<sup>9</sup>

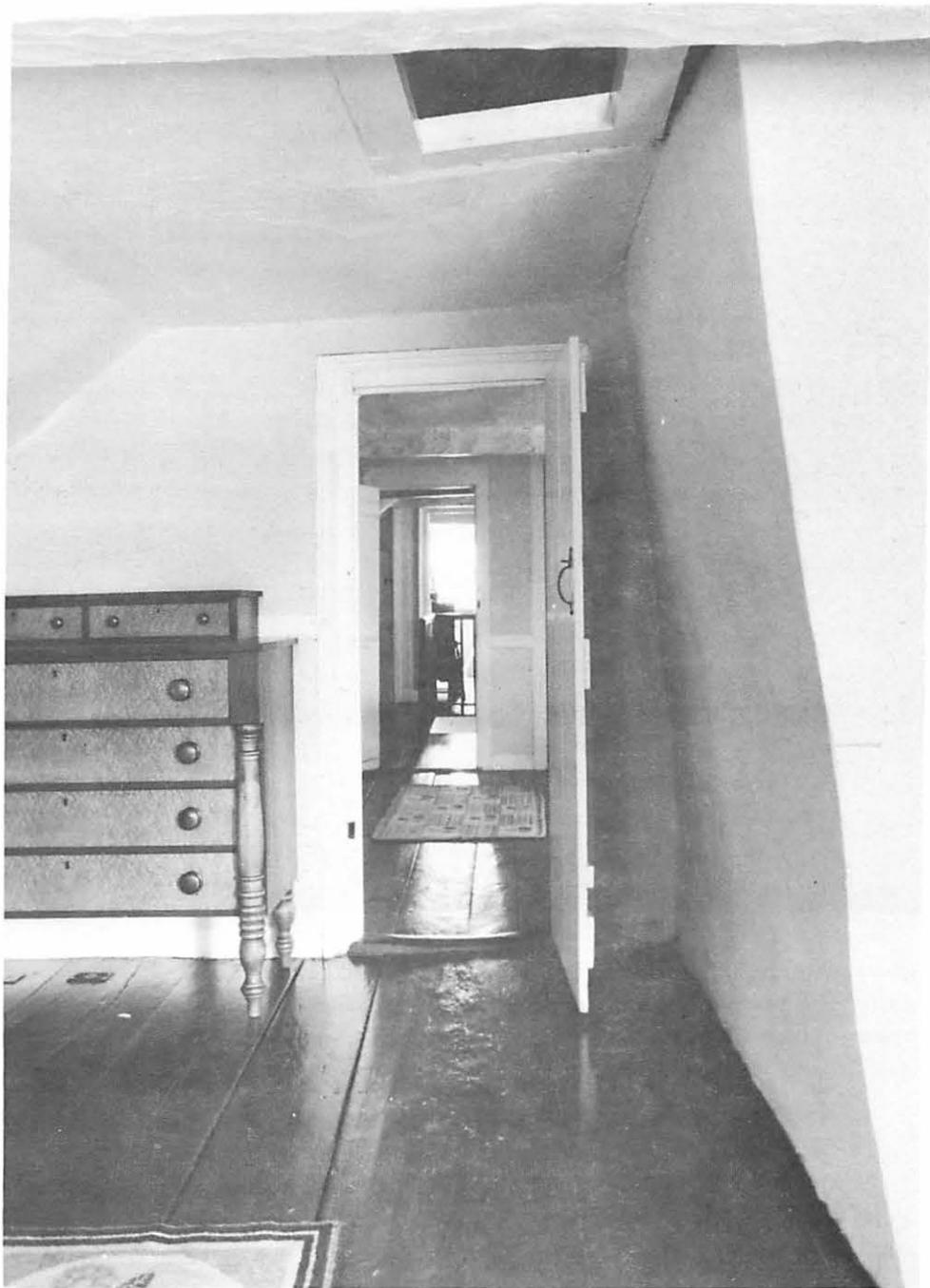
Through the roof access hatch can be seen the other item of

interest, which is the exact location of the first kitchen flue.  
(See 'Attic' below)

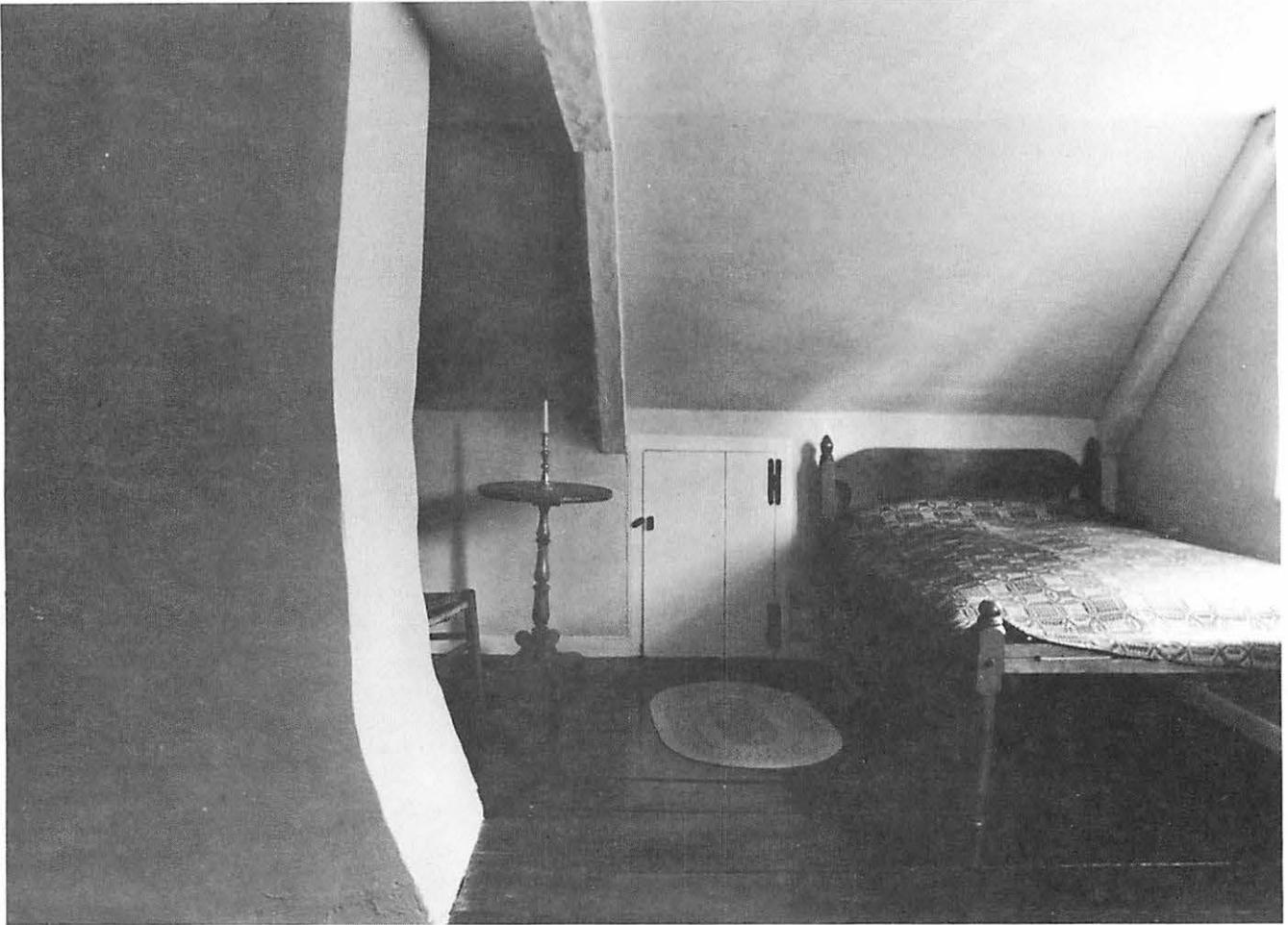
During the one year interval between construction of the extension and the provision of the second stair,<sup>10</sup> this room had no other access than through Bedroom 2.<sup>11</sup> During this period the inhabitants of Bedroom 2 lacked privacy, hence the second stair.

When the staircase was built by Mr. Bangs in 1782,<sup>12</sup> one year after the room was built, he found it necessary to cut through the end framing member, called a girt, to increase the space on a narrow and steep stair, which is very reminiscent of a ship's companionway. This nautical quality is understandable, as Joseph Bangs was the designer<sup>13</sup> and builder<sup>14</sup> of Simeon Perkins' schooner "Betsey" launched in 1784.<sup>15</sup> Presumably his attitude to a major structural member in a ship would have been different from that shown in the house, and perhaps the house framing members, especially the girts, were initially over-sized.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, this attitude is rather daring. That the instinct of Mr. Bangs was correct is borne out by the apparent stability of the house two hundred years later. His simple stair is an elegant solution to the problem, showing remarkable economy in wood and space.<sup>17</sup>

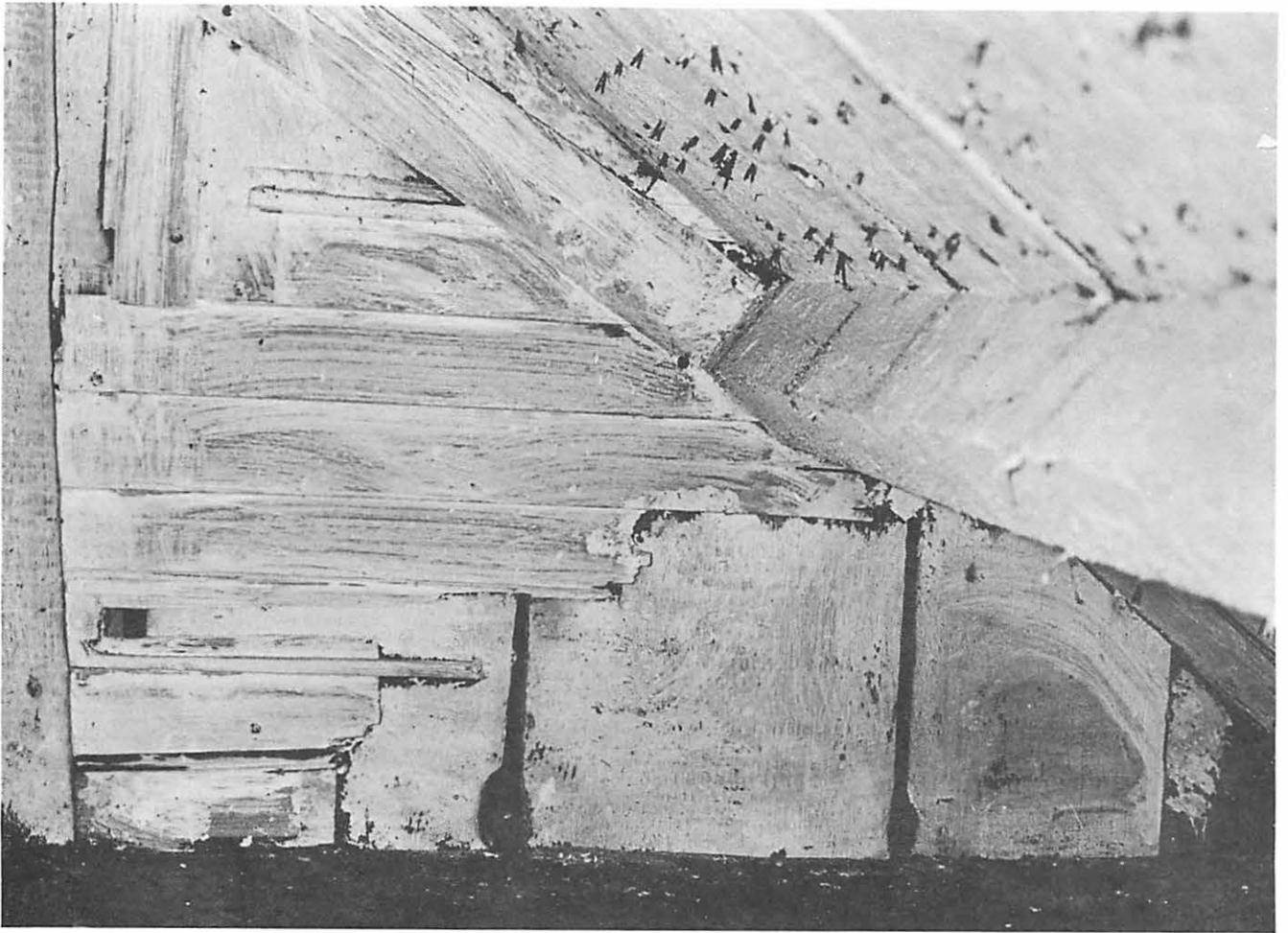
From diary references it may be inferred that this room was plastered in 1800.<sup>18</sup> If so, it is after a long delay, and



Bedroom 3 looking west through length of house. The lack of privacy can still be experienced throughout the upper floor. The large chimney at the right is for the 1782 kitchen fireplace. It leans to the left in order to exit through the ridge of the roof.



Bedroom 3 looking north. The original clapboarded end gable wall shown in the next photograph can be seen by looking to the left through the eaves closet door.



Bedroom 3. Clapboarded gable wall from 1767. This is definitely original as it was left untouched when the 1781 addition covered it over. The vertical boarded wall can be seen with mice holes gnawed at floor level. These original clapboards match those on the front or north elevation which supports the idea that the front is still the original cladding.



Bedroom 2 Closet. The inside of the original 1767 gable wall shows no sign of birch bark or other draught-proofing materials behind the clapboards. The vertical boards clearly show the saw marks from the water powered saw mill, whereas the rafter shows the less regular surface of the adze or broad axe. The purlin on the left is recent, from 1935 or from 1949.

inevitably the reason must be sought, but in this case no reason can be found, unless it is purely economic.

13 Bedroom 3, Footnotes.

- 1 Diary, II, 1782-10-04.
- 2 See plan, p.
- 3 From observations on site.
- 4 Diary, I, 1767-04-18 or earlier.
- 5 From measurements and observations on site.
- 6 Diary, III, 1790-09-20 and IV, 1803-07-26, which generates some confusion. Finding some clapboards still in place on the east wall suggests that Perkins was not precise in this case.
- 7 Diary, IV, 1803-07-28, ff.
- 8 From measurements on site.
- 9 Kelly, op. cit. pp 82-86. No reference to later clapboard materials is made so that we do not know if Perkins' house is odd or not.
- 10 Diary, II, 1781-07-18 and II, 1782-10-04.
- 11 See Bedroom 2 above.
- 12 Diary, II, 1782-10-04.
- 13 Diary, II, 1784-06-30.
- 14 Diary, II, 1784-06-30 to 1784-10-14 passim. See Diary II, 1784-08-10 when Mr. Bangs cuts his foot.
- 15 Diary, II, 1784-10-14.
- 16 The girt, unlike the main floor joists, is supported throughout its length by the vertical boarding of the end wall.
- 17 To view the stair properly, it is necessary to look at it from above and from below. The storage room beneath the staircase is not open to the public. See p.
- 18 Diary, IV, 1800-10-13 to 18.

#### 14 Roofspace

Access to the roofspace in the original house of 1767 was presumably achieved through the hatch over the stair landing,<sup>1</sup> which was big enough to allow large items to pass through it.<sup>2</sup> The floor of the attic is of two layers of boards,<sup>3</sup> and appears to have been lathed and plastered on its underside except in Bedroom 3<sup>4</sup> where it seems to have been plastered long after construction. It must have also supported storage as there is nowhere else in the house to put any, except the cellar, and as we have seen this was not rat proof.<sup>5</sup> At the east end, in the addition of 1781, there is a small window in the gable end, but it seems unlikely that there could ever have been any intention to use the space for accommodation as the headroom is so low and the access so inconvenient. The only access to the roof space at present is through a small hatch in the ceiling of bedroom 3. This provides necessary ventilation during the hotter months via the roof space and gable end window.

Roof sheathing was largely replaced in repairs to the roof in 1936,<sup>6</sup> 1949<sup>7</sup> and 1979.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore all the more remarkable to find the location of the original kitchen chimney still visible in the boards remaining on the north slope at the ridge.<sup>9</sup> This helps to confirm the location of the first kitchen fireplace built in 1766-7<sup>10</sup> and pulled down in 1781<sup>11</sup> when the extension was built.<sup>12</sup> It also ties in with the location immediately below in Bedroom 2 where the flooring was altered.<sup>13</sup>

From the scant evidence, it would appear that the flue was similar in size to that at the other end of the house, which fits in with other New England examples,<sup>14</sup> where the end chimneys are of similar size despite different functions. It also suggests that the original kitchen flue was made of brick and was located inside the end frame of the house on the line of the ridge. (Compare the plans of 1767 and 1781 in p 134 & p 141 )

Damage from water penetration to the roof structure had been considerable prior to the purchase of the house by the Queens County Historical Society and in October 1936, \$200 was borrowed to make immediate repairs to the south slope.<sup>15</sup> On April 11, 1949<sup>16</sup> "The rear slope of the roof was very bad, almost to the point of collapse." Not only were shingles and sheathing replaced, but so were purlins;<sup>17</sup> the new purlins being both larger and more numerous than the originals.<sup>18</sup> (See Bedroom 1, p 268 above).

It was noted on April 14, 1949<sup>19</sup> that, "The east chimney was in a dangerous state, with loose bricks between the bedroom ceiling and the roof." It was rebuilt.

The technically demanding job of making a (waterproof) joint between the dormer window and the roof slope seems to have been generally successful, although some water stains can be seen.<sup>20</sup> At the junction between the chimney and the roof, the traditional



The Attic. At the top centre can be seen the position of the chimney up until its removal in 1781, when it was relocated beyond the original end frame in the new extension. Because the planking on the roof slope to the right was replaced in 1935 the visible clues occur only on the left-hand (north) roofslope.



The Attic. At the middle-left can be seen the top of the access hatch which has been plastered over at some time on the ceiling below. The purlins and boarding on the left-hand roofslope date from 1935.

method was used providing a corbelled course of brick above the shingles to form a drip.<sup>21</sup> Problems were met in other ways as well, for example in 1804 Perkins writes<sup>22</sup> "We are pointing the chimneys. They leaked very bad in the late Storm. I put tea Lead around the Chimneys first a bed of Mortar & then the Lead tacked to ye Cleat then plaister over it." However leaks occurred even after the 1949 repairs. On 29 February 1952, officials of the Department of Public Works inspected the property.<sup>23</sup> "They found a bad leak around the east chimney, paint flaking from the walls in several places..."

Despite their age and the obvious deterioration of the roof sheathing over the life of the building, the framing members of the roof show no signs of weakness. Rather, the neat joints, with their precisely carved Roman numerals and long round wood pins give every indication that the roof framing is good for many years to come. ( p 299 ) The overall taper of the rafters becomes apparent as well as the marks of the adze or broad axe in shaping the wood. ( p 300 ) As this is the only location in the whole building where the framing members can be clearly seen with their joints exposed, the normal visitor misses one characteristic of the house, which is its elegant and sensible structure, neatly made.

14 Roofspace, Footnotes.

- 1 See Stair landing, above p.
- 2 Measured on site as 750x1200mm.
- 3 Observations on site.
- 4 Diary, IV, 1800-10-13 to 18.
- 5 Diary, II, 1788-08-05 and 1788-12-28.
- 6 Raddall, 1936, '... In October 1936 the Society borrowed \$200. from the Royal Bank of Canada to pay for the most urgent roof repairs.'
- 7 Raddall, 1949-04-11.
- 8 Observation by the author, 1979 september.
- 9 The lack of evidence in the south roof slope is due to the replacement of the sheathing either in 1936 or in 1949, see footnotes 6 and 7 above.
- 10 Diary, I, 1766-06-19 to 1767-04-18.
- 11 Diary, II, 1781-08-06.
- 12 Diary, II, 1781-07-20.
- 13 See Bedroom 3, above.
- 14 See Stair Landing, above, Footnote 4.
- 15 Raddall, 1936 October.
- 16 Raddall, 1949-04-11.
- 17 Observation by the author.
- 18 Deduced from a comparison of the north slope with original materials and the south slope with repairs.
- 19 Raddall. 1949-04-14.
- 20 Observations on site.
- 21 Observations on site.
- 22 Diary, IV, 1804-11-08.
- 23 Raddall, 1952-02-29.

### Conclusion

To write an accurate description of a house, there must be a reliable source of information. Because Simeon Perkins kept a diary<sup>1</sup> to go with his house, the primary sources of data for this study of Perkins' house are excellent in quantity, quality and reliability during the formative first fifty years.<sup>2</sup> However, though much can be deduced from his writings, the references to the house are often afterthoughts and are tantalizing in their brevity and ambiguity.<sup>3</sup> The diary helps us to understand something of paint colour<sup>4</sup> and the progression of the interior finish from bare board to paint,<sup>5</sup> wallpaper<sup>6</sup> and plaster,<sup>7</sup> but does not adequately provide proof of which rooms were treated and in what sequence, in what colour and at what date. Without original drawings we are frequently forced to conjecture the shape, size, direction, location and adjacencies of stairs, windows, rooms and whole buildings, especially during the early years of development of the house and its site.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, we can be reasonably certain that the present house is substantially similar to the house of 1812, the year in which Simeon Perkins died.<sup>9</sup>

We are less fortunate in our knowledge of the house during the years following Perkins' death. There is an almost total lack of information about the house between the years 1812<sup>10</sup> and 1909<sup>11</sup> when the Queens County Historical Society took an

interest in it. But for a chance visit to Liverpool, the author would not have seen the photographs taken about 1900 (pp 6, 14, 16)<sup>12</sup> which yielded invaluable evidence of the house at this period. However, in 1929,<sup>13</sup> Thomas Raddall picked up the historical thread and recorded in his personal diary the events of the ensuing years when the Queens County Historical Society purchased the house<sup>14</sup> and initiated the restoration process.<sup>15</sup> Once again, although Raddall gives us much basic information about the changes undertaken, and although some photographs were taken<sup>16</sup> and drawings made<sup>17</sup> prior to reconstruction, it is evident that a detailed and systematic recording of the entire process of reconstruction was not made.<sup>18</sup> To give the QCHS their due, at the time such things were not thought necessary. Raddall was President of the QCHS<sup>19</sup> and took active leadership in the restoration work. Thomas Raddall,<sup>20</sup> together with James Reside,<sup>21</sup> seems to have initiated both the drawings of the building as well as the photographs.<sup>22</sup> As records, both are instructive to us as warnings. The drawings were made by a public land surveyor, holding the post of Liverpool Town Engineer,<sup>23</sup> not by an architect. They were inaccurate.<sup>24</sup> One room is shown with no doorway to get into it, whereas in another place a room is drawn with two doorways where there was really only one. Even basic information like room shape is inaccurate. No sections or elevations were drawn. The photographs on the other hand did not cover all the elevations, nor the setting, and internally not all the rooms were recorded.<sup>25</sup> Thirty five years later,<sup>26</sup> the

errors and omissions are part of the history of frustration in not being able to make categoric statements or interpretations of even the very recent past.

James W. Reside was a Provincial Engineer with special or extra responsibility for overseeing the restoration work carried out in 1949,<sup>27</sup> but planned two years earlier.<sup>28</sup> Reside kept a private file on his activities.<sup>29</sup> In reading his notes one is impressed by the care and attention of both Raddall and Reside for historic accuracy,<sup>30</sup> by their humility in recognising their lack of knowledge on technical matters,<sup>31</sup> but also by the lack of a detailed record of the nature and extent of the work which they authorised. For example, quoting from a memorandum from Reside to the Hon. Merrill Rawding, Minister of Public Works, of 1949-04-26, "...Mr. T.H. Raddall and I are in agreement that the interior decorating should be done by someone who knows more about houses of this period than we do."<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately the built up layers of wall paper had been removed and destroyed,<sup>33</sup> there were no records in photographs of the progress of either stripping or rebuilding of the staircases, and only one reference to paint colour.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand Reside tries to secure old materials for the reconstruction work from a house being demolished at Tusket, including paying children to collect up old nails.<sup>35</sup> To balance this there is the item in the estimates for "plowing", "harrowing"

and "removing sods" which would just about ensure that any information on the original layout of the grounds would be destroyed.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, we have to admire Thomas Raddall's immense energy and patience in getting the Perkins' House opened as a museum.<sup>37</sup> In the context of the 1940's, the attitudes to architectural preservation are not unusual.

Thomas Raddall wrote on May 10, 1949:<sup>38</sup>

"Raddall & Reside spent most of the day at the Perkins House. The exterior carpenter work is all done, with the exception of minor repairs to window-shutters, etc. On the inside, the carpenters have stripped away sheets of wall board installed in the past thirty or forty years, and all the layers of old wallpaper, revealing everywhere the original boards or plaster. Among other things revealed by this is an interesting cupboard built into a side nook of the old kitchen chimney. Much other interesting old work was revealed; the split laths (not sawn); beams and boards showing the typical marks of ancient vertical saws as used in the Sawmills of Perkins'

time; wall boards scored and roughened to hold a thin coat of plaster, etc. Cost of the work so far is about \$2,500, about half of the appropriation for this year. Reside is satisfied with this, and says it won't matter if the cost runs over \$5,000, as this is an election year.

Although political attitudes may not have changed, architectural restoration is now carried out with greater care to document each layer of wallpaper, and to achieve a more complete picture of the process through photographic documentation.

No photographs were taken during the 1949<sup>39</sup> re-construction to show chance finds, such as the state of rotted sills, the depth of excavation or even to record the evidence of saw cuts and nail holes on which the decision to move the staircase was based. We know that a bathroom<sup>40</sup> and a chimney<sup>41</sup> were removed and the main staircase was moved or copied in another location,<sup>42</sup> but no definite information about their location and state was collected before the changes were made. Despite a sense of frustration created by these deficiencies, however, we are still fortunate in having what must be considered an unusual amount of information about the house, especially during the first fifty years, and this information becomes critically important in helping us make an accurate study of its evolution and existing status. In

considering the future care of the house, it becomes evident that meticulous records must be kept of any future changes made, however slight. Even the work done in 1982 is improperly built and unrecorded.<sup>43</sup>

The complexity of change in any house over the years is subtle and fascinating. Rooms are seldom left alone for long. Repairs are made involving replacement of original materials,<sup>44</sup> roofs are reshingled,<sup>45</sup> mouldings and trim are scraped and repainted.<sup>46</sup>

In 1949 alterations were made which were very subtle indeed. Reside wrote<sup>47</sup> "One of the carpenters had in his possession some old tools and could match the mouldings, and materials of the same period were available from the 'Elmwood' next door which was being demolished." Yet if insensitively done, over time these small incremental changes alter the spirit and form of the original building as radically as a sudden major change like a new extension to the house. Vigilance is therefore required to prevent Perkins House from gradually acquiring a different profile through the inevitable process of future repairs and maintenance.

This vigilance has recently been tested. The new Simeon Perkins Museum has already been built.<sup>48</sup> But we can now assume that the kitchen extension to the house might well be emptied of its museum contents and then the question of restoration to its former state will follow. Someone will have to make a choice of whether to

restore the kitchen to its 1949 state, for which drawings exist,<sup>49</sup> or to push back to the original state of 1792<sup>50</sup> for which no drawings exist. Another alternative is to endeavour to unify the whole house to a date of 1800, or more significantly 1812, the year that Simeon Perkins died, and to recognize that this must be done mainly by conjecture rather than from factual record. The integrity of the restoration is inevitably of major concern. Those making the decisions must be guided by historical and architectural precedent in order to ensure the quality of the restoration. But, as has happened at Perkins House before,<sup>51</sup> the decision may be more a matter of politics than architectural history.

Unfortunately the current attitude towards heritage matters by Government is still one of low priority, although there are encouraging signs with new legislation.<sup>52</sup> Public buildings are too often altered at minimum dollar cost. As a matter of government fiscal policy, building work is usually let to the lowest bidder. While this may be a reasonable procedure in the case of new buildings, it is not necessarily satisfactory for an older one where actual historical damage may be incurred by repairs done without the services of an expert restorer or craftsman and especially where the lowest bidder has to cut corners to make a profit.<sup>53</sup> If we send our old paintings to a specialist for maintenance and repair, surely we should behave in a similar way with our old buildings which are often worth far

more than the paintings,<sup>54</sup> buildings which may even be used to house the paintings. The Province of Nova Scotia possesses a collection of historic buildings, including Perkins House, which is unique in Canada.<sup>55</sup> Such a collection merits the expenditure of adequate funds for the proper maintenance of these historic buildings.

In addition to enlightened government administration, however, support is required from the general public as well. Recent trends have happily shown a tremendous upsurge in some areas of heritage work.<sup>56</sup> However, members of the general public need continuing encouragement to become better informed about architecture and building. Fidelity in display and interpretation will only receive the impetus for improvement if the visiting public become more discerning in their appreciation.<sup>57</sup>

Even as late as 1982<sup>58</sup> significant alterations have been made to the fabric of the house. During the previous winter excessive ground water and freezing temperatures had contributed to the displacement of the north wall of the cellar. It had collapsed inwards about 600mm.<sup>59</sup> When it was rebuilt, it was laid in modern cement mortar, whereas the original had been dry jointed, and merely lime pointed on the inside. Unfortunately the alignment of the stones is now proud of the north wall of the house, and the mortar has been struck off at an angle to ensure rainwater flow.

The excessive modern cement mortar

is all too visible at the front door as one enters. It is now a blatant anachromism, due to crude craftsmanship and insufficient site supervision which ultimately must stem from the attitudes of the officials administering public funds.

The other alteration is even more visible, but more acceptable. An alarm system has been installed at the house,<sup>60</sup> with small boxes installed in the rooms. There is no reason to presume that the general public cannot discriminate between historical fabric and necessary modern surveillance equipment. Unfortunately, the installation required many holes to be drilled for cables, which are generally concealed, but at the junction of the two roofs, original sheathing, and 1792 shingles and flashings were cut and removed in order to ease access for the installer to work.<sup>61</sup> The damage is partial but irreparable. When the house was wired for electricity in 1949 other holes were cut which should have been adequate for the smaller new wires. This raises the question of how much incremental damage is acceptable in the name of preservation and protection? It would appear that those maintaining the house have lost sight of the reason for its existence.<sup>62</sup>

Fortunately for us, Perkins House has still fared rather well in its more than two centuries of existence. The responsibility for how it will make out during this present generation is ours and ours alone. We may enjoy the house only as long as it remains the

true house. Once eroded it will truly be gone. It is hoped that this book has helped explain what is true at present and will provide a better base for making judgements in the future, so that a building of fidelity remains for future generations to enjoy. May you, the reader, now gain more enjoyment from the house itself.

Conclusion, Footnotes.

- 1 See footnote 2, Preface.
- 2 The Diary covers the years 1762 to 1812, with several gaps, some of significant length.
- 3 Ambiguities abound as for example references to the 'store' which remain unqualified and could be one of a number of different locations.
- 4 Diary, III, 1794-06-19.
- 5 Diary, I, 1776-08-08, where 'my bedroom' is insufficient to locate the room.
- 6 Diary, I, 1776-08-06, 07 , and I, 1776-09-14 to 20.
- 7 Diary, II, 1782-09-12 to 28.
- 8 See above, especially Entry and Kitchen (1781).
- 9 Simeon Perkins died 1812-05-09.
- 10 The last Diary entry is dated 1812-04-13.
- 11 Raddall, op. cit., the first entry which refers to the Perkins House is dated 1929-09-04.
- 12 Photograph album donated to Q.C.H.S. by Mrs. Seth Bartling Snr.
- 13 See footnote 11 above.
- 14 Raddall, op. cit., p. 2, 1936 September.
- 15 Raddall, op. cit., p. 2, 1936 October.
- 16 By Hedley Doty, 1947-05-19.
- 17 By B.L.Parker, 1947-03-10 and later,
- 18 Conclusion reached after discussion with Thomas Raddall, the Raddall diary entries and the files of J.W.Reside and the Department of Government Services.
- 19 Raddall, passim.
- 20 Raddall, passim.
- 21 Raddall, passim, and 1947-03-10.
- 22 Raddall, passim., and footnotes 16 & 17 above.
- 23 Raddall, p.5. 1947-03-10.
- 24 Reside file has blueprint drawings together with corrections which are presumably by J.W.Reside
- 25 The only known photographs are those at the P.A.N.S., which are limited in number to 15.
- 26 At the time of writing.
- 27 Reside file, passim., which includes a letter from Merrill Rawding, M.L.A., for Liverpool and Minister of Highways and

Conclusion, Footnotes, Contd.

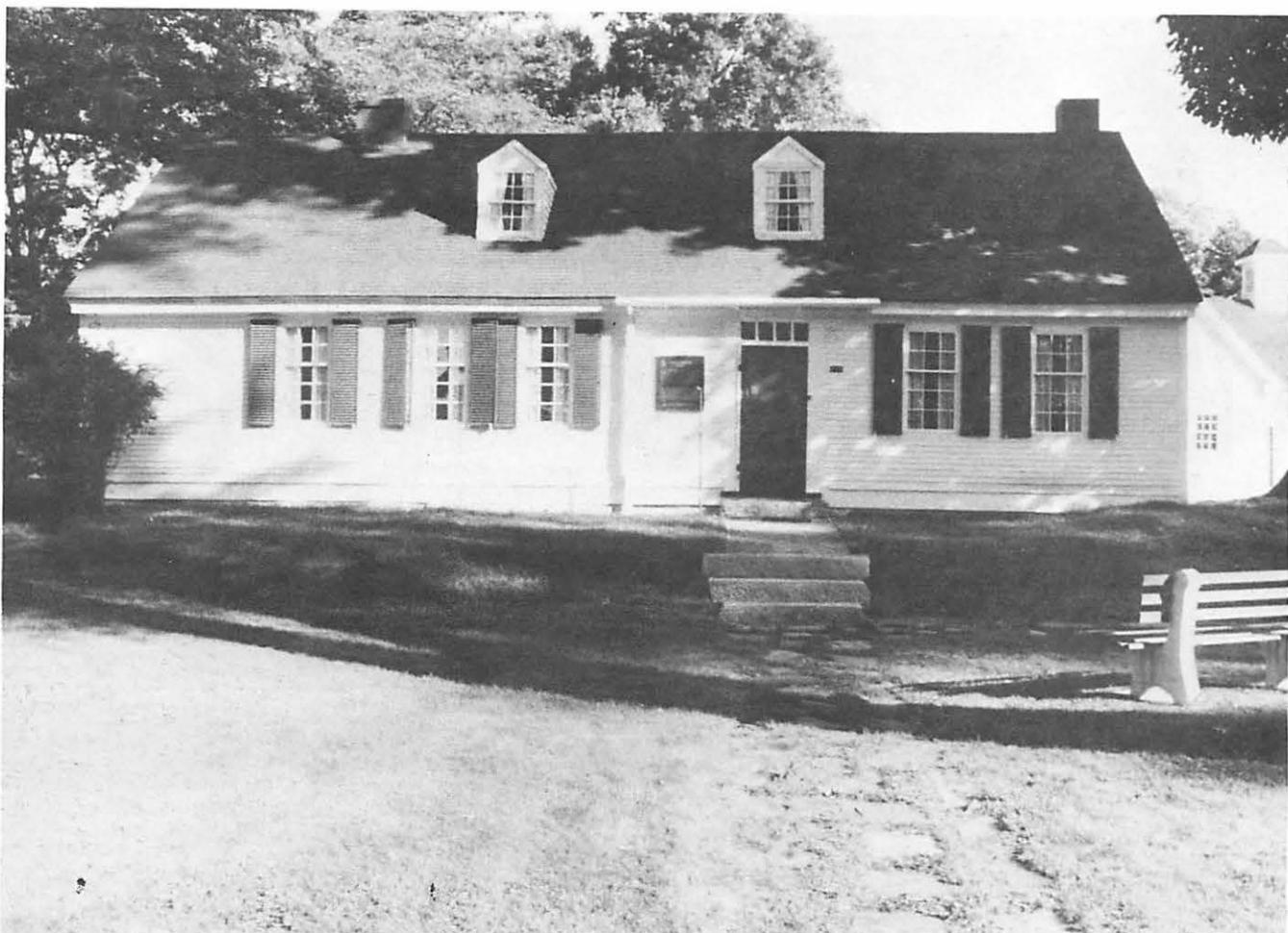
- Public Works dated 1947-05-27, setting out the role that Reside is to play in the restoration as well as commenting on his other duties.
- 28 Raddall, 1947-03-05.
- 29 Deposited with the N.S.M. in 1982.
- 30 Reside file, memo to M.D.Rawding from J.W.Reside, 1949-05-09, and Reside, passim.
- 31 Reside file, memo to M.D.Rawding from J.W.Reside, 1949-04-26, '....Someone who knows more about houses of this period than we do.'
- 32 As footnote 31, above.
- 33 Raddall, 1949-05-10.
- 34 Raddall, 1947-05-21 & 22.
- 35 Reside file, 1949-05-09.
- 36 Reside file, n.d. but in another form dated 1949-08-17 and referred to by Raddall 1949-08-11.
- 37 Raddall, passim.
- 38 Raddall, 1949-05-10.
- 39 Reside file, in which there is mention of showing slides of the construction work both before and after, but being unable to because the 'after' ones were lost due to a camera malfunction, leaving the question about where are the 'before' or 'during' photographs?
- 40 Comparing the B.L.Parker drawings to the subsequent state.
- 41 Comparing the drawings of B.L.Parker with Raddall 1949-05-31.
- 42 Raddall, 1949-05-18.
- 43 Author's observations. No specific requirement is made of Government personnel nor of building contractors carrying out their instructions to adequately document findings which will be lost to view through new work.
- 44 For example, the clapboards on the front elevation immediately above the ground.
- 45 Apart from references in the Diary, the author has witnessed shingling in 1978 and it was previously re-shingled in 1949.
- 46 Author's observations.
- 47 Reside file, Lecture given at Yarmouth before 1973-07-20.
- 48 The Simeon Perkins Museum, now the Queen's County Museum was opened 1980-09-17.

Conclusion, Footnotes, Contd.

- 49 B.L.Parker drawings.
- 50 Diary, III, 1792-08-01, after the second extension had been built.
- 51 See footnote 38, above.
- 52 The Heritage Property Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia 1980, Chapter 8, An Act to Provide for the Identification, Preservation and Protection of Heritage Property. Nevertheless, this act only deals with the superficial and does not penetrate beyond the facade. The result may very well be a total destruction of the building whilst retaining the merest shell. At this point the integrity from an historical point of view is totally destroyed. Interiors are not included within the scope of the act.
- 53 The problem does not lie with the normal building contract processes, but with the degree of experience. The author has witnessed considerable damage to the fabric of the house by each successive contractor carrying out his work in an acceptable way for works other than historically significant ones in which there is no sense of the special quality of the context. True conservation of an historic artifact which due to size must be left out all year in all weathers, is both complex and subtle in the details of maintenance. If history is not going to be eroded by the casual workman who is merely trying to do his job efficiently, much different techniques of control are going to have to be employed to stop the erosion of history and its replacement with new materials.
- 54 It is significant that in Canada at the present time there is no complete programme in building conservation at any university school of architecture, although there are two conservation bodies in Ottawa. Buildings seem to fare poorly in comparison with furniture.
- 55 The N.S.M.
- 56 Memberships in historical societies, Heritage groups, evening courses, and the number of magazine articles and television and radio programmes are able to attest to more interest.
- 57 Although there is considerable interest there is also a lack of commitment. The largest local newspaper never mentions architecture, except from the viewpoint of development.
- 58 Observed in 1958.

Conclusion, Footnotes, Contd.

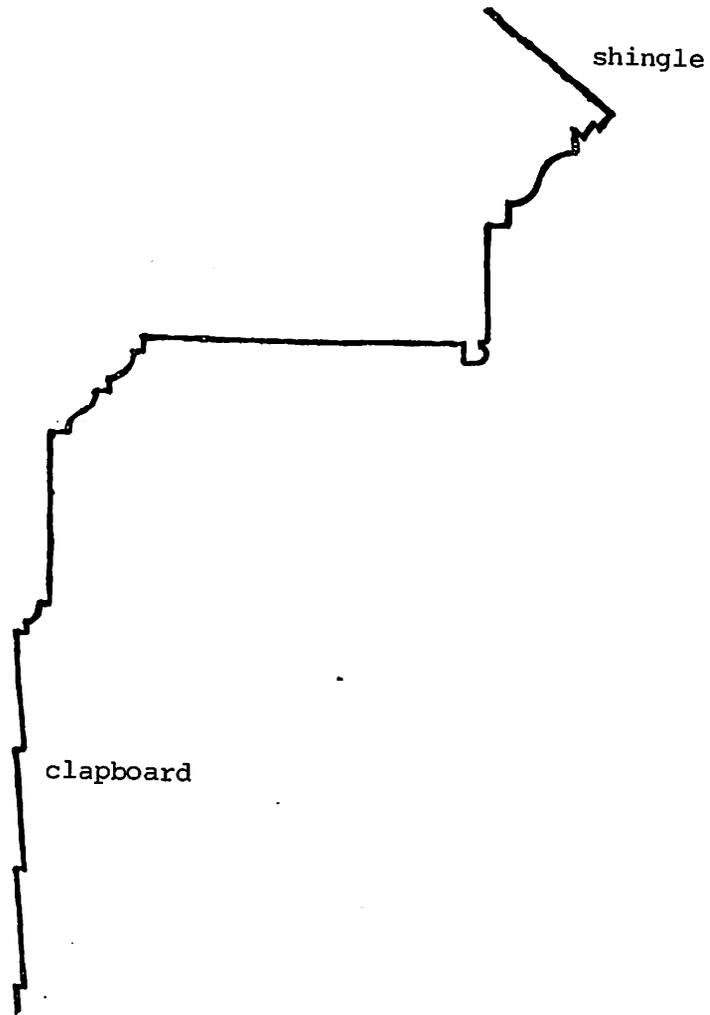
- 59 Verbal communication from Alan North of Government Services.
- 60 Fire alarm system added in 1982.
- 61 Observations of the author having visited the spaces both before and after the work was carried out.
- 62 Much of the work is invisible to the casual visitor, but to the professional researcher the change is alarming as he crawls through holes in the roof spaces and peers into closets.



The house in 1982. The bench in the foreground detracts from the quiet grace and elegance of the old house. The relatively less distracting paving and steps replacing the wooden ones in 1982 are nevertheless questionable in the light of the Diary entry suggesting that there was a 'show garden' here. Maybe this needs interpreting.



The house in 1982 with the new Queen's County Museum built beside it. The size and proximity of the latter are an aggressive and unfortunate intrusion, diminishing the house.



EAVES MOULDINGS, North Front.

Scale 1:5

## Appendix A

### Sizes of the members used in the construction.

All dimensions are given in mm. All sizes refer to members used in the original house of 1767 unless otherwise stated.

#### Legend.

(v) varies  
h height  
w width  
t thickness

Sill 185 h x 240 w.

Corner posts 180 x 190.

150 x 180 in the extension of 1781.

Longitudinal wall beams 200 h x 140 w.

End girt 185 h x 160 w.

Floor joists, ground floor, approximately 150 diameter, tapering.  
and flattened on the top.

150 h 100 w replacements in 1949.

Floor joists, upper floor, 180 h x 165 w at 950 on centre.

Rafters 170 x 170, tapering to 130 x 130 at the ridge.

135 x 135 in the extension of 1781.

Collar beams 125 x 125.

Diagonal corner post braces 68 w x 125 h, in the extension of 1781.

Wall sheathing 38 t x 330 w (v) although some are as much as 50 t.

Roof sheathing 25 t x 150 w to 460 w (v).

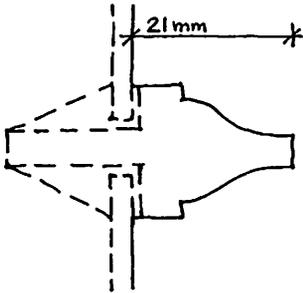
Interior walling 25 t x up to 480 w (v)

Flooring, sub, 25 t x 430 w (v) rough sawn on both sides,

finish, 21 t x 375 w (v) planed on the top face only.

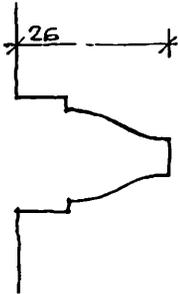
Roof shingles 8 t x 120 w x 450 to 500 long, split with some  
shapins. Clapboard 110 h x 10 t tapering to 0 t, typically  
in pieces 1000 long with a tapered joint, nailed at about  
every 450.

All the windows illustrated retain considerable amounts of old glass.



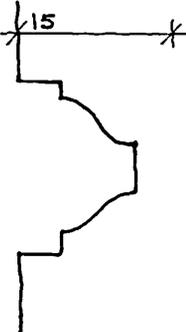
Keeping Room, possibly the original sash from 1767.

6/9 8" x 10" panes.



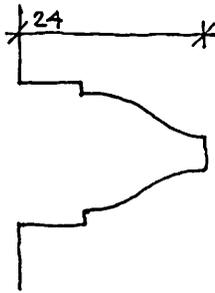
Kitchen Addition, possibly original sash from 1792.

4/4 7" x 9" panes.



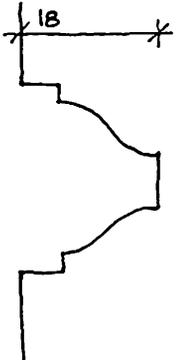
Kitchen Addition, possibly original sash from 1792.

8/8 6" x 8" panes.



Dormer window, possibly original sash from 1781.

8/8 6" x 8" panes.



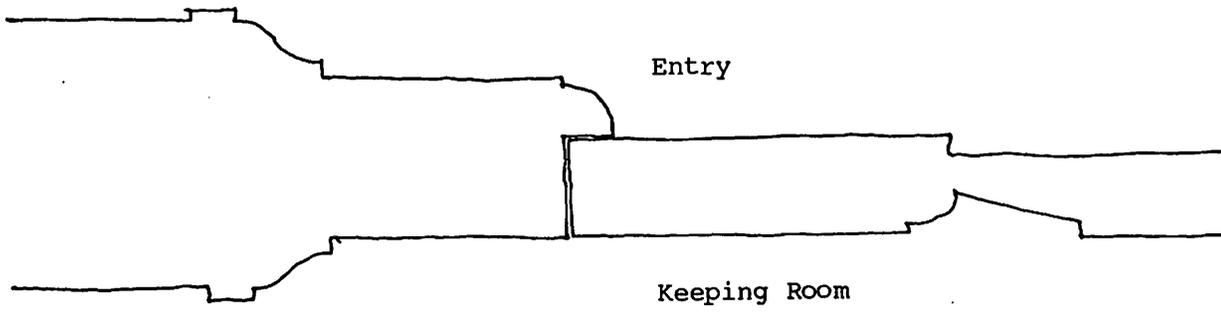
East end Bedroom 3 window, possibly from 1781 or re-used from 1766.

8/8 6" x 8" panes.

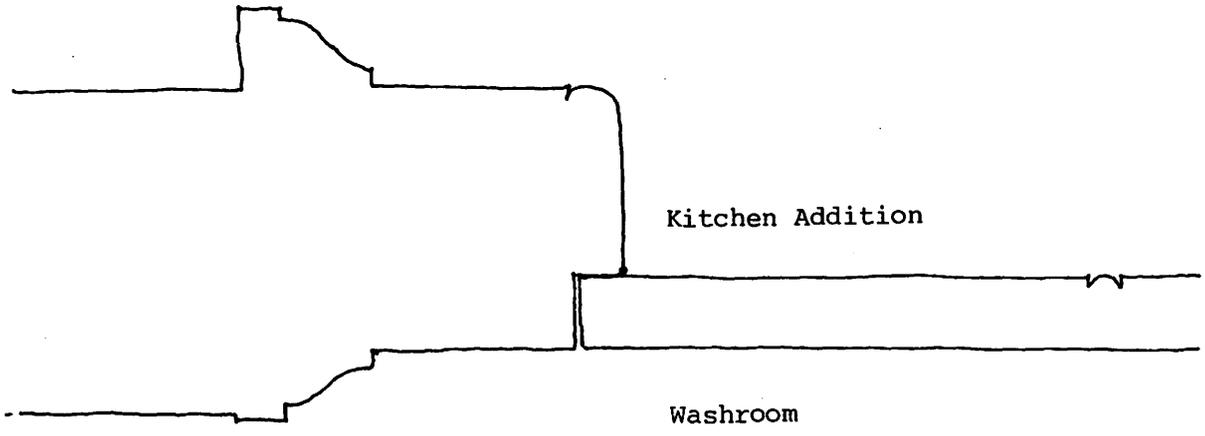


SOME GLAZING BAR SECTIONS

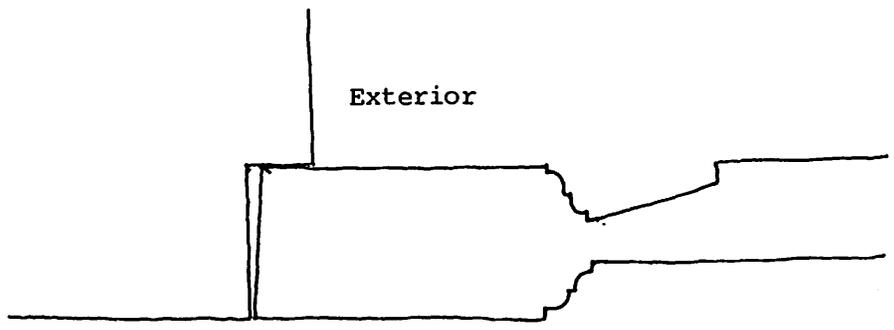
Scale full size



1787



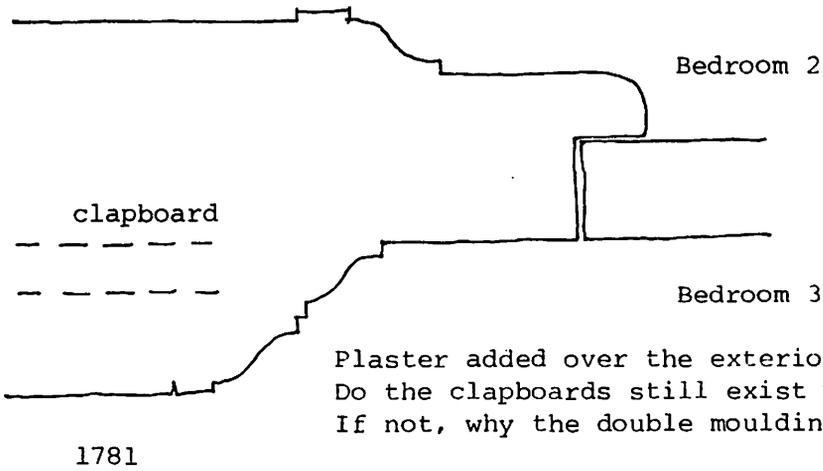
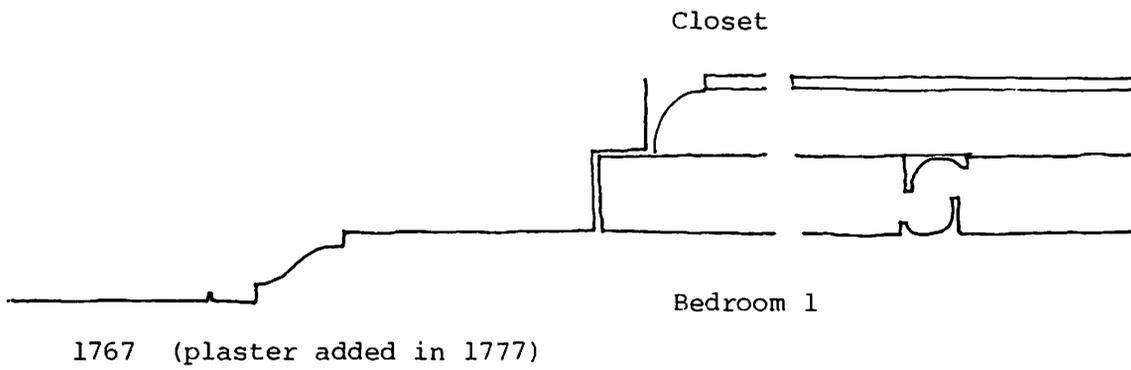
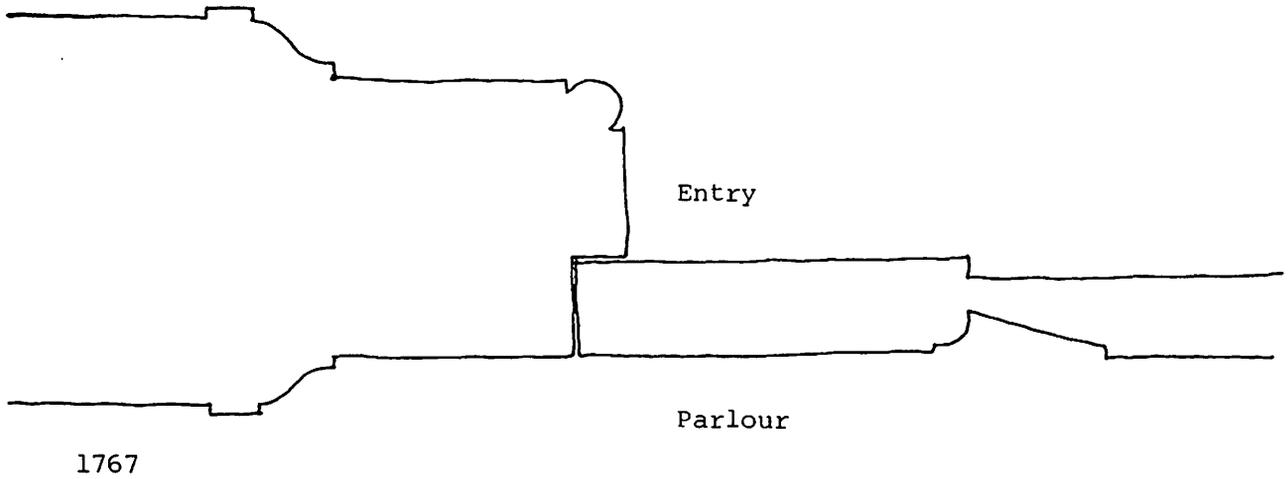
1949

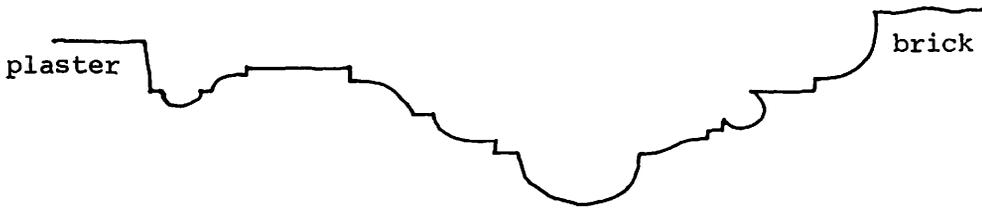


1767 ?

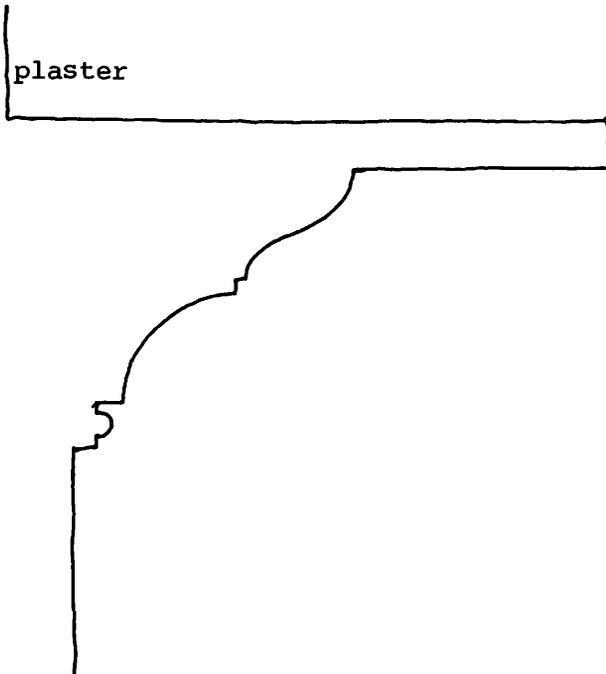
DOOR FRAMES

Scale 1:2

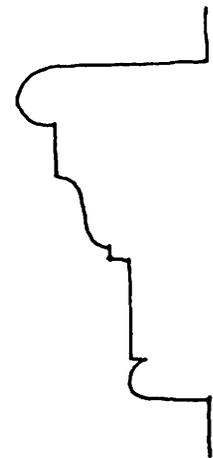




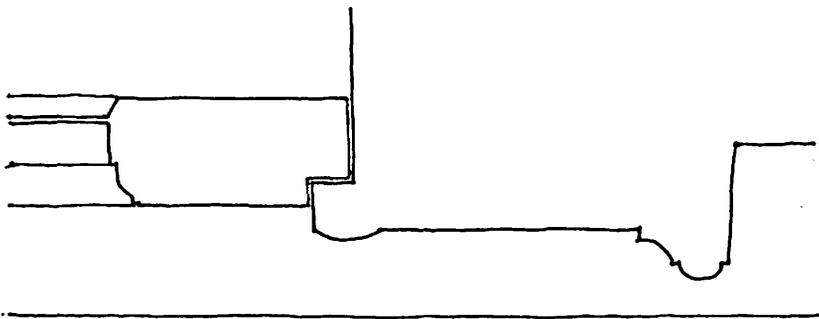
Plan through Fireplace Surround



Section through Mantlepice



Section through Chair rail,  
(believed modern)



Plan through Window

PARLOUR MOULDINGS

Scale 1:2

## APPENDIX B

### Glossary of Terms

Various glossaries and dictionaries are available to cover the technical vocabulary and this short list of words cannot possibly duplicate that sort of reference. What the list is intended to do is provide a quick source of information on the most common terms used in the text, so as to save time for the casual reader. For a deeper understanding there is no substitute for a more complete reference work.

Beam	horizontal continuous members spanning between posts and supporting upper floor joists and rafters.
Boarding	internal wall finish of vertical or sometimes horizontal boarding, usually with a lapped joint to create privacy and allow for shrinkage of the wood.
Brick	Bricks are made from burned clay, and were therefore imported to Liverpool, from elsewhere in NS or from the UK or US.
Chair rail	an applied strip of wood, usually moulded, attached to walls about 800mm above the floor level to protect the plaster wall from denting by chair backs. Early plaster was softer than modern plaster, and more susceptible to damage.
Clapboard	long (1 metre), narrow pieces of wood which are wedge shaped in section, laid on the wall sheathing to overlap the pieces below, with the thin edge to the top, nailed through the lower edge which gives a natural rain-shedding outer surface to a wall.
Collar beam	a secondary horizontal framing member of a roof system providing support to the rafter and often forming a ceiling support.
Doors	external doors comprise frame, door and often a window.
Dormer window	a window inserted in a roof slope, which then requires a small roof of its own. It is often a miniature of the main roof.
Eave	the overhang at the top of the wall and bottom edge of the roof.

Flashing	originally mortar, which did not last, and later metal eg. lead, which could be tucked into a joint in brickwork to protect the junction between eg, roof and chimney. The technology is complex to permit movement between the parts whilst maintaining protection. Usually achieved by open drainable overlaps.
Framing	heavy timber members which jointed together, form the main structural skeleton of the house.
Gable or gabled roof	where the end wall continues vertically to the ridge in the shape of a triangle - sometimes in the same plane as the wall, sometimes projecting beyond.
Girt	an end beam in a frame at the level of the intermediate floors.
Hip or hipped roof	where the roof slope is returned at the end of the roof, eliminating a gable.
Joist	flooring members spanning between sills or beams or supported on walls which support.
Knee wall	the low wall formed between the floor and sloping rafters, often providing storage space, but intended to reduce finished floor area without useful headroom.
Lath	thin, rough, pieces of wood - sometimes split saplings - but also split from logs or sawn - 7 x 27mm used as a key for plaster.
Lobby, vestibule	a second door is used to create an airlock at a perimeter floor, so that if one door is always kept closed draughts are reduced.
Mop board	base trim.
Mortar	a cementitious material to bind stones or bricks together. Before Portland cement, lime was used and before that, clay.
Open or cut string	having the tread overhang the string at each course, obviously not against a wall.
Paint	a decorative finish applied over wood and metal. A protective layer in emulsion form which when dry becomes a homogenous skin.
Plan	the horizontal extent of a building, which, when drawn to a scale shows the layout of the rooms and orientation as well as shape.

Plan shape	plans may start off being complex and can also be extended and added to. Typically, houses like Perkins house are added to with similar forms, sometimes as a simple extension or to form a T or L.
Plaster	processed gypsum mixed with sand and laid on the interior of a room to provide a continuous sanitary surface.
Pointing	a mortar finish in the joints which is more resistant to weather than the general mortar. It can be replaced.
Post	the vertical members at corners and intermediate locations to support beams and construction overhead.
Purlin	a roof member spanning horizontally between rafters, parallel to the eaves, which might be used to support the rafters or in Perkins House to support the roof sheathing in a similar way to heavy battens used to support thatch.
Rafter	the main sloped framing members of a roof spanning between eave and ridge.
Roof	the cover to a building, which may vary in shape but never in purpose, which is protection from the elements.
Ridge	the top edge of the roof.
Sheathing	boarding applied to the frame to enclose it, both on wall and roof.
Shingles	short (400mm) pieces of wood tapered in length, and laid with the grain vertical and thick end down, to shed water off a wall or roof surface.
Sill	the bottom member of a frame - resting on a stone wall foundation.
Soffit	the undersides of an overhang, usually a roof or porch.
Stairs	vertical steps including support and handrail, and may be of several different forms, including straight and bent.
Stone	stone walls in Perkins House used natural boulders found on site or close by, rather than quarried stone, which were carefully laid without mortar.

Stoop	from the Dutch "stoep", a porch - possibly covered but always with open sides. In New Jersey fitted with benches.
Storey	the vertical dimension of one room height. A half storey implies a half plan rather than a room for dwarfs.
String	the main bearers for the stair treads.
Trimmer	a short joist into which other shortened joists are joined to provide support at stair openings, hearths and chimneys.
Valley gutter	a gutter formed between adjacent roof slopes, which like any true valley can flood if the outlet is blocked or damaged.
Wainscot	applied wood - often in pine planing in N. America - laid horizontally or vertically according to extent or fashion and having a simple moulding at a lap joint. It may reach from floor to ceiling, or as low as floor to chair rail.
Wall	the ends of the treads are housed into the string which is attached to the wall.
Wallpaper	a decorative finish applied over wood board or plaster walls.
Whitewash	a decorative finish applied over wood or plaster.
Winders	wedge shaped stairs at a bend in the staircase.
Windows	frame, sash and glass which provides light and often ventilation.

## Acknowledgements

All the drawings used are by the author and all sources are included in the captions with the exception of those on pages 79 and 90 which were traced from the Topographical Survey from the N.S. Department of Lands and Forests.

Photographs fall into three groups, prints, photographs of prints and other illustrative materials by the author, and photographs by the author:

## PRINTS SUPPLIED

Nova Scotia Museum

page 9	N 10,195	Photograph by Gilbert Kempton, 1899.
10	N 10,200	" "
15	N 10,192	Photograph by N.D. Hammett, 1897.
18	N 8,246	Watercolour by J.E. Woolford, 1817.
23	N 8,244	" "
24	N 8,180	" "
29	N 10,916	Photograph c1900.
30	Acc. No. 75.120.50,	detail from a photograph by Gilbert Kempton.
33	N 10,191	Photograph, possibly by Gilbert Kempton, c 1898.
47	-	From a photograph on loan to the Queen's County Historical Society Museum.
60	-	"

Public Archives of Nova Scotia

Photographs by Hedley Doty for the N.S. Communication and Information Centre, all taken in 1947,

Page 17, N 1260; p 124, N 1275; p 129, N 1261; p 157, N 1264; p 191, N 1263; p 208, N 1268; p 257, N 1271, p 270, N 1270.

The New Haven Colony Historical Society

Photographs by the Rev. Hollis A. Campbell in 1895, pages 98 and 99.

National Air Photo Library, Energy Mines and Resources Canada,

page 38, K.A. 10.10. taken on 26 September 1923.

## PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR OF PRINTS AND OTHER MATERIALS

Queen's County Historical Society Museum

Copies of photographs on loan to the Museum,

Pages 2, 6, 13, 14, 16, 61, 69.

Various sources

Page 21 from a dyeline print from the N.S. Department of Lands and Forests.

Various sources, continued

- Page 22, from original copy in the house.
- 34, from Anthony Lockwood, A brief description of Nova Scotia with plates of the Principal Harbours, London, 1818, from a copy in the N.S. Legislative Library.
- 39 from an original watercolour in the collection of the Society for the Preservation of Historic Landmarks, York, Maine.
- 40 from a photograph in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia.
- 41 from an original letter in the PANS.
- 52 from the original Diary in the Royal Bank, Liverpool.
- 53 from an original watercolour in the collection of the Society for the Preservation of Historic Landmarks, York, Maine.
- 75 From an original oil painting in the Norwich Academy, Norwich, CT.
- 76 from an original copy in the Registry of Deeds, Queen's County, Liverpool.
- 86 from a photograph in the PANS.
- 91 detail from a vertical aerial photograph from the Maritime Provinces Resource Management, Amherst, N.S.
- 103 from an original watercolour by Edwin Whitefield in the collection of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston, MA.
- 107 "

## PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

Pages 1, 5, 25, 44, 45, 46, 62, 63, 92, 95, 110, 120, 130, 153, 158, 162, 163, 164, 169, 170, 173, 174, 180, 181, 182, 183, 187, 192, 193, 197, 200, 203, 204, 207, 210, 216, 217, 223, 226, 234, 235, 238, 239, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 253, 258, 259, 260, 265, 269, 271, 272, 275, 276, 279, 282, 283, 284, 287, 291, 292, 293, 294, 299, 300, 317, 318.