



AMHERST COLLEGE LIBRARY ARCHIVES  
AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

This reproduction of an item in the Amherst College Library is not to be reproduced or published, in whole or in part, nor sold or given away, without written agreement of the Library.

Not for commercial use without paid prior permission from the Robert Frost Library,  
Amherst College, Amherst, MA 01002

[archives@amherst.edu](mailto:archives@amherst.edu)

This material may be protected by copyright law. (Title 17, U.S. Code)

---

**DESCRIPTION OF REPRODUCED ITEM:**

Adams & Roy Consultants, Inc. Porter-Phelps-Huntington House Historic  
Structure Report, 1988. In: Porter-Phelps-Huntington Family Papers, box 178.

## LIST OF PHOTOS

### Main Text

1. Porter-Phelps-Huntington House from east, showing main portion, north ell, south ell, and guest house
2. Main Portion, east elevation
3. Main Portion and North Ell, south elevations
4. Main Portion, second story, west elevation
5. Main Portion, first story, west elevation, showing overhang
6. North Ell, north elevation (western half)
7. South Ell, east elevation, showing south kitchen, cheese room, woodshed
8. South Ell, east elevation, corn barn section
9. Clapboards, south elevation of Main Portion (typical), probably c. 1799
10. Clapboards, north elevation of Main Portion, showing disparity in reveal; lightning rod left-center; water table and rusticated skirt board below
11. Rusticated Siding beneath clapboards on south elevation of Main Portion above door (typical)
12. Close-up of rusticated siding just above door, showing vertical score-marks imitating flat arch (foreground)
13. Close-up of overhang between first and second story
14. Plank frame beneath rusticated siding
15. Segmental arch over first-floor window
16. Weathered flush-board siding, west elevation of Main Portion, from attic of north ell
17. North Ell Attic adjacent to rear wall of main portion showing excavated area
18. Excavated area on rear wall of Main Portion identified in photo 17

19. Same as 18, but below overhang
20. One of two early entrance doors, now in bedroom/pantry of north ell.
21. Roof frame of gambrel (1799), at intersection of queen post
22. Attic story showing girt and summer of gambrel, framed over earlier floor
23. Plate of original roof frame
24. Attic floor cavity in location of original south chimney showing summer
25. Same location as photo 24 showing edge of casing
26. Main Staircase, central hall
27. Newel and balusters, Main Staircase, central hall
28. Central Hall, second story looking west
29. Central Hall, first floor
30. Closet under Main Staircase
31. Closet under Main Staircase
32. Central Hall, second floor
33. Central Hall, second floor
34. East First Floor Bedroom, east wall
35. East First Floor Bedroom, north wall
36. East First Floor Bedroom, southwest corner
37. East First Floor Bedroom, fireplace wall
38. Bishop's Study, west, north, and fireplace walls
39. Bishop's Study, fireplace wall
40. Bishop's Study, east and south walls
41. Back Hall, looking south
42. Wainscot and chair rail in Back Hall
43. Long Room, facing west
44. Long Room, northwest corner
45. Long Room, facing west

46. Long Room fireplace and surround
47. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, northwest corner
48. Close-up of plaster line shown in photo 47
49. Present partition between Southeast and Southwest Bedrooms from attic above
50. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, east wall
51. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, southwest corner
52. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, south wall
53. Northeast Bedroom, second floor, south wall
54. Northeast Bedroom, second floor, west wall
55. Northeast Bedroom, second floor, northwest corner
56. Attic of North Ell, showing rafters
57. Attic of North Ell, showing original (1771) chimney stack
58. Looking up flue of North Kitchen fireplace, added c.1799
59. North Ell, evidence of early kitchen fireplace in brick floor of cupboard
60. Dining Room, looking west
61. Dining Room, southeast corner
62. Dining Room, northwest corner
63. Dining Room closet in northeast corner
64. Dining Room, cupboards
65. Vestibule, northeast corner
66. Vestibule, north wall
67. Pine Room, east wall
68. Pine Room, south wall
69. Close-up of partitioning, north wall of Pine Room
70. North Kitchen, looking west
71. North Kitchen, southeast corner



72. Passage between North Kitchen and Pine Room, showing whitewash with blue sponge decorations
73. Shelved Room off North Kitchen
74. "Prophet's Chamber", northwest corner

#### Maintenance and Repair

- P-1 Wooden gutter, north wall of North Ell
- P-2 Base of north wall, North Ell
- P-3 Northwest corner of Main Portion
- P-4 Close-up of sink-holes, junction of North Ell and Main Portion
- P-5 Silt in basement of North Ell
- P-6 Rot and corrosion of metal in First Floor Frame
- P-7 Leaking pipes in Basement
- P-8 Leaking roof scuttle, bathroom, North Ell
- P-9 Junction of North and South Ells
- P-10 Rotten wood at base of Portico
- P-11 North chimney of Main Portion
- P-12 Bird damage, east wall of South Ell
- P-13 Crack between bake oven and stack of North Ell Chimney
- P-14 Peeling latex paint on plaster of Back Hall

#### Historic Photos

- HP-1 Porter-Phelps-Huntington House c.1880, from a stereoview
- HP-2 South Ell, Chaise House and barn, c.1925
- HP-3 South Ell, c.1925, showing Chaise House and barns/sheds
- HP-4 South Ell, c.1925, rear (west elevation)
- HP-5 South Ell, c.1925, rear (west elevation)
- HP-6 Chaise House, c.1925, rear (west elevation)
- HP-7 Chaise House, c. 1925, east and south elevations

- HP-8 Area of rusticated siding above main entrance door,  
east elevation, exposed in 1938 during portico  
rebuilding
- HP-9 Same as HP-8
- HP-10 East First Floor Bedroom, 1930's
- HP-11 Dr. Huntington supervising repair of back porch,  
1950's

Hardware Photos

- HW-1 Suffolk Latch
- HW-2 Suffolk Latch - latch side
- HW-3 Pointed Suffolk Latch
- HW-4 Signed Spring-Latch
- HW-5 Spring Latch
- HW-6 Norfolk Latch
- HW-7 Wooden Stock Lock and Suffolk Latch
- HW-8 Box Lock
- HW-9 Box Lock, Latch and Shim
- HW-10 Brass Box Lock
- HW-11 Brass Box Lock, keyhole side
- HW-12 "H" Hinge
- HW-13 Cusped "H" Hinge
- HW-14 "H-L" Hinge
- HW-15 Strap Hinge
- HW-16 Nineteenth-century Iron Pump

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION AND INTERPRETATION

A number of recommendations for further investigation and/or physical changes which would aid in the building's interpretation have been made in the text. These have been gathered below for purposes of review, and supplemented by other recommendations not previously presented. The following is intended as an agenda for further discussion rather than a work list.

1. Exposure of the rusticated siding and overhang. Given that these are among the house's most unique and important physical features, it would be unfortunate to have them remain ever hidden from view. Exposing a section of the original wall would not only aid in the building's presentation to the general public, but would increase visitorship by scholars. The opening should be in the form of a "window" through the house's clapboards, flush with or slightly recessed into the existing wall plane. The natural location for such a "window" is the north elevation, where it would not interfere with the main views of the house from the south and east. The clapboards and planking could be removed from a rectangular area between window bays - starting just above the overhang and proceeding down a few feet below it. The rectangle would then be framed out and covered over with one or more pieces of lexan, which would provide a clear view of the original wall while preserving it from the elements. Each piece of lexan would have to be properly vented above and below to prevent the entrapment of moisture. An architect or draftsman should be engaged to prepare detailed drawings of the proposed assembly before any work is attempted. Lexan "windows" in exterior walls have been successfully in place for many years at the Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, N.H. and other historic building museums throughout the region. ✓
2. Measured drawings of the exterior c. 1752. Equally important to the public's full understanding of the house's physical history are the preparation of exterior measured drawings. The discoveries relating to the house's original exterior appearance are extraordinary, and scholarship alone demands that they be translated into a reliable image. The perspective drawing which we have prepared for this report is intended to aid the reader, but should not remain as the definitive image of the original house. Only measured elevation drawings prepared to HABS standards will prove acceptable to scholars. These would undoubtedly be widely published and bring the museum much overdue recognition. Enlarged, they would also be valuable in explaining the house's early appearance to visitors, and could even be reproduced on brochures, signs and other material. Much of the information which would be required by a draftsman has already been gathered, but the exposure of a section of the north wall to create a "window" (see above) would provide an extended opportunity for the study of the rustication and overhang which should ✓

~~not be overlooked.~~ Evidence exposed on the north wall should also be fully recorded by a professional photographer. ✓

3. Exposure of interior wall fabric. The interpretation of the interiors of the main house and north ell would be greatly aided by access to their original wall material, much of which lies below a single layer of late plaster or woodwork. While all of the early wall material is interesting, some areas - namely the original pantry walls in the north ell, which are covered with blue sponge decorations over whitewash - are almost as unique as the exterior rustication, and would prove of extraordinary interest to scholars and the public alike. The exposure of these surfaces could be done discretely and sensitively; in the main house, squares or rectangles of plaster might be cut out behind paintings or other wall hangings, which could then be hinged to an adjacent batten, so as to swing away during tours. The locations would have to be chosen carefully - some of the walls in the east first floor bedroom and long room might prove most conducive to this treatment, though further investigation of unexamined wall cavities should proceed before any final decisions are reached. Sections of baseboarding in the dining room and Bishop's Study, for instance, should be carefully removed to determine whether these rooms also contain vertical wall-board. The sponge-decorated walls in the small room off the north kitchen should certainly be exposed, perhaps in their entirety. These are covered with planed 1" boards which would have to be pried or cut loose with the greatest care taken not to loosen or damage the whitewash below.
4. Repainting select interior spaces to mimic early paint schemes. This has already been done in a number of rooms by Dr. Huntington with a good degree of success, particularly in the north kitchen, long room, and northeast bedroom. Given the brilliance of the early schemes in the remaining spaces, the Foundation should consider continuing Huntington's program of re-creation. The central hall and east first floor bedroom are the most natural candidates for repainting, as their present colors bear little resemblance to their earliest schemes. The first Georgian hall color - an almost robin's egg blue - would doubtless surprise and delight many visitors, particularly if it was also covered with a verdigris (or imitation verdigris) glaze. Neither the hall nor east bedroom colors should be recreated without their glazes, as the application of the color alone would leave a false impression. Because so few museums bother to recreate glaze layers, their appearance at the Porter-Phelps-Huntington House would register all the more strongly with visitors. Color cards recording the most important of the house's earliest woodwork colors are presented and explained in the appendix to this report.

5. Exposing the decorative painting around the fireplace in the northeast bedroom. The flat area surrounding this fireplace was originally marbelized or grained, and this finish is still well-preserved beneath later paint layers. Luckily, the layer directly atop the decoration is very loosely attached, and can be easily flicked off using a scalpel. The work must still be done with the greatest care, and preferably by a trained conservator. Before the fireplace surround is exposed, however, the rest of this bedroom should be fully examined by a paint analyst to determine the full extent of the decorative work. Preliminary analysis indicates, for instance, that portions of the interior surround of the room's entrance is also decoratively painted. An additional day or two of microscopy should be sufficient to reveal the extent and character of this work.
6. Preserving the whitewash and sponge decorations under the staircase and on the back of the cheese room door. These valuable finishes are loosening and falling off in both locations. The finish on the board under the stair is being undermined by vibration, while the <sup>carved</sup> ~~eulprif~~ in the cheese room is both vibration and abrasion, the latter caused by the hanging of objects on the back of the door. As vibration cannot easily be controlled in either location, the best preservation strategy may be to consolidate the whitewash - i.e. chemically strengthen and bind it more tightly to the wood. The use of consolidants on masonry-related materials is a specialty of the Consulting Services Dept. of the S.P.N.E.A., who have pioneered in applying these techniques to historic house museums. Morgan Phillips of the S.P.N.E.A. should be consulted as to the possibility of conserving this material and, if possible, hired to do the work. Should he determine that the material cannot be conserved, or should the cost of conservation prove prohibitive, the door, at least, might be removed from its hinges and exhibited elsewhere in the house. The board beneath the stair probably cannot be removed without delaminating the finish, so should be professionally photographed if further damage cannot be prevented.
7. Cleaning the grained paint layer in the vestibule of the north ell. The grained paint layer in the vestibule is covered with a badly yellowed clear coating which is not water soluble. It may be possible to remove the coating without damaging the paint below, though the consistency of both paint and coating must first be identified, and the work carried out by a trained conservator. ~~The material might be analyzed in conjunction with the analysis of the whitewash problem discussed above.~~



1. Porter-Phelps-Huntington House from east, showing main portion (A), north ell (B), south ell (C), and guest house (D).



2. Main Portion, east elevation.



3. Main Portion and North Ell, south elevations.



4. Main Portion, second story, west elevation.

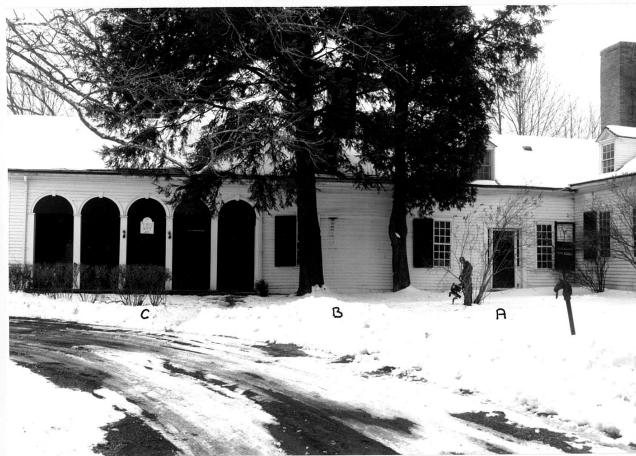


5. Main Portion, first story, west elevation, showing overhang.



6. North Ell, north elevation (western half).

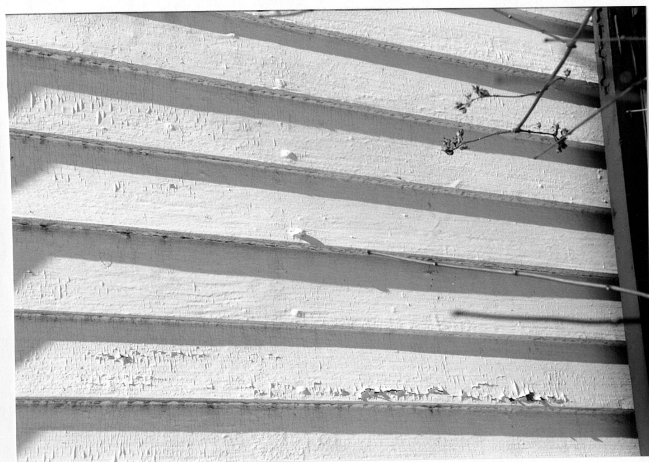




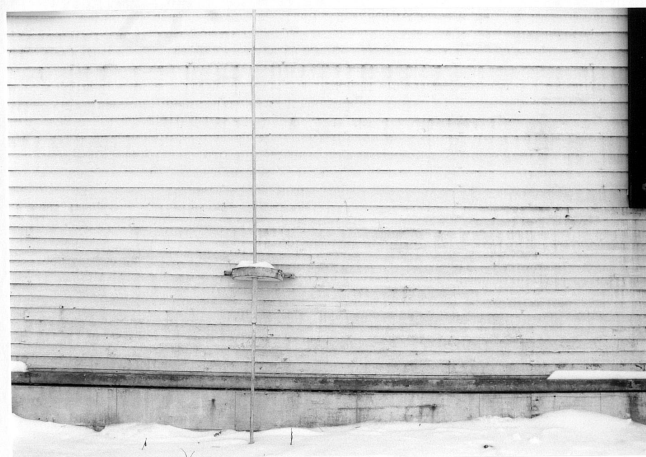
7. South Ell, east elevation, showing south kitchen (A), cheese room (B), woodshed (C).



8. South Ell, east elevation, cornbarn section.



9. Clapboards, south elevation of Main Portion (typical), probably c.1799.



10. Clapboards, north elevation of Main Portion, showing disparity in reveal; lightning rod left-center; water table and rusticated skirt board below.



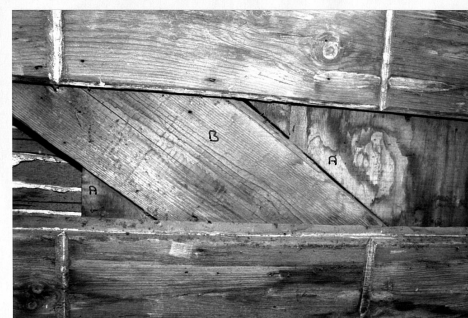
11. Rusticated Siding beneath clapboards on south elevation of Main Portion above door (typical); white paint visible in joints; overhang occurs at (A).



12. Close-up of rusticated siding just above door, showing vertical score-marks imitating flat arch (foreground).



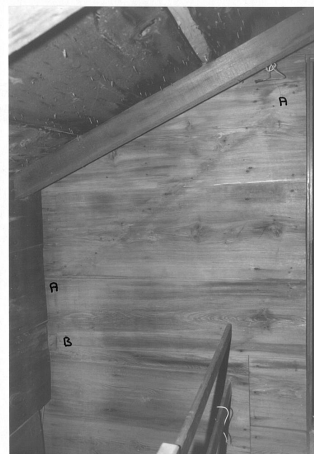
13. Close-up of overhang between first and second story, showing last rusticated board of second story (A); bead at bottom edge of board (B); cove moulding within overhang, covered with red, sanded paint (C); rusticated board of first story (D); and vertical plank used to support first-story clapboards (E).



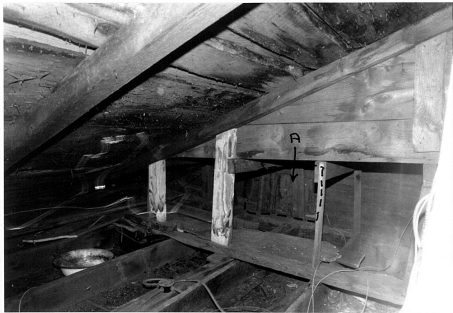
14. Plank frame beneath rusticated siding, showing vertical plank (A); plank brace (B); split-board lathe of southwest bedroom (C); segmental arch above first-floor window (D); notice white paint in joints.



15. Segmental arch over first-floor window

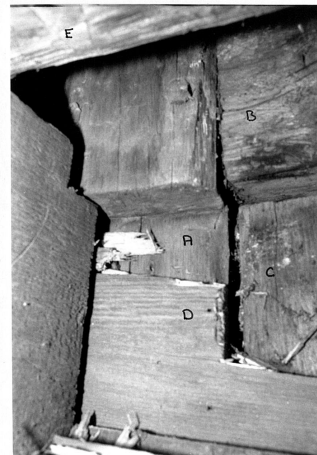


16. Weathered flush-board siding, west elevation of Main Portion, from attic of north ell; diagonal line (A) indicates original pitch of north ell roof; window sill (B) belongs to opening closed up when original north ell added.



17. North Ell Attic adjacent to rear wall of main portion, showing excavated area (A).

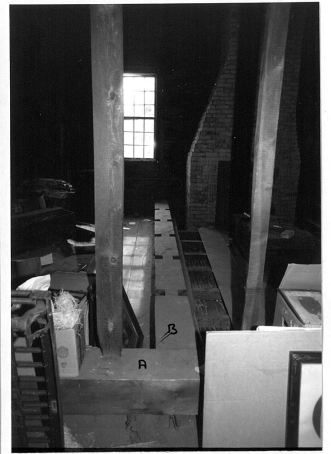
18. Excavated area on rear wall of Main Portion identified in photo 17, just above overhang, showing intermediate post (A); rear girts (B); plank frame of walls (C); corner of flush-board siding (D); plate of north ell (E).



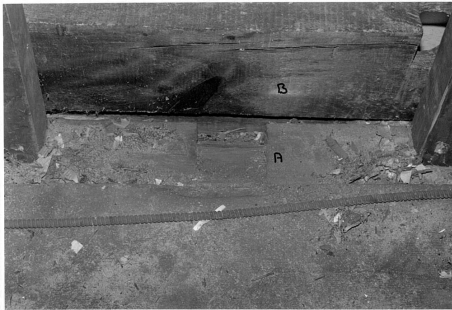
19. Same as 18, but below overhang, showing intermediate post hacked back to create overhang (A); rear girt (B); plank frame of walls (C); flush-board siding (D); plate of north ell (E).



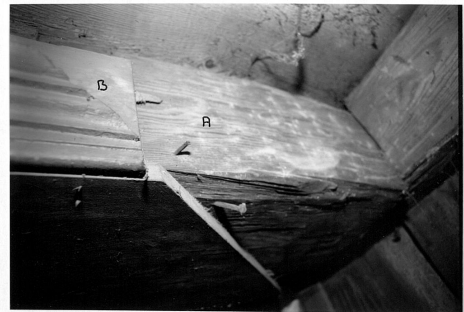
20. One of two early entrance doors, now in bedroom/pantry of north ell.



21. Roof frame of gambrel (1799), at intersection of queen post (A), purlin (B), and cross-tie (C).
22. Attic story, showing girt (A) and summer (B) of gambrel, framed over earlier floor; studs are also early.



23. Plate of original roof frame with rafter pocket (A); plate of gambrel (B).



24. Attic floor cavity in location of original south chimney, showing summer (A), and casing cut to accommodate corner fireplace in southeast bedroom below (B).



25. Same location as photo 24, showing edge of casing (A), whitewashed board next to original fireplace (B); plank frame of south wall of house (C).





26. Main Staircase, central hall.



27. Newel and balusters, Main Staircase, central hall.



28. Central Hall, second story looking west; window moved from original location (A) c.1771.



29. Central Hall, first floor; vertical feather-edged partitioning outside "Bishop's Study"; original door opening (A) filled with identical boards 1840.

30. Closet under Main Staircase; vertical feather-edged partitioning facing long room (A) same as that in photo 27; long room partition (B) built c.1799 using painted boards; boards under stairs (C) also painted.



31. Closet under Main Staircase; reused whitewashed board with blue sponge decorations, forming part of long room partition (c.1799).



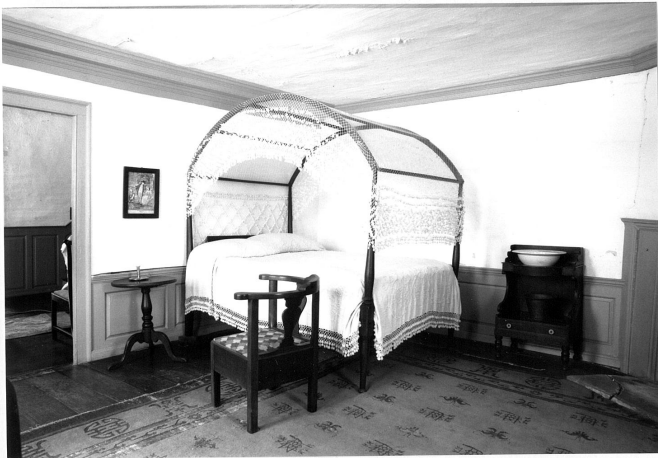
32. Central Hall, second floor; graining on inside of door to small office/study; door c.1799.
33. Central Hall, second floor; graining on inside of door to attic.



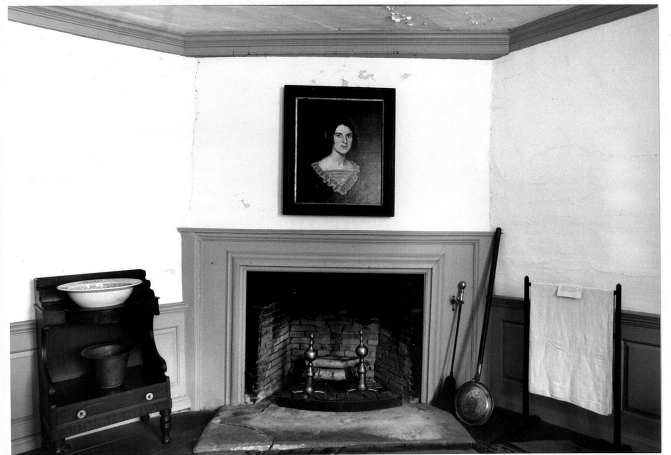
34. East First Floor Bedroom, east wall.



35. East First Floor Bedroom, north wall, showing sliding shutter.



36. East First Floor Bedroom, southwest corner.



37. East First Floor Bedroom, fireplace wall.



38. Bishop's Study, west, north, and fireplace walls.



39. Bishop's Study, fireplace wall.



40. Bishop's Study, east and south walls.



41. Back Hall, looking south.



42. Wainscot and chair rail in Back Hall, east wall (above), west wall (below). The woodwork on the east wall was probably pieced together c.1799, while that on the west wall may date from the 1770's/80's.



43. Long Room, facing east.





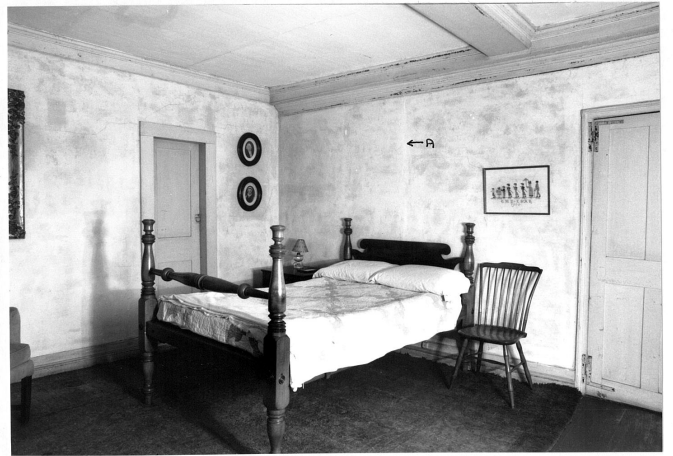
44. Long Room, northwest corner.



45. Long Room, facing west



46. Long Room fireplace and surround.



47. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, northwest corner; plaster line (A) signals location of wall before c.1799.



48. Close-up of plaster line shown in photo 47, also showing break in cornice.
49. Present partition between Southeast (A) and Southwest (B) Bedrooms from attic above, showing early vertical-board partitioning reused to support lathe. Note whitewash.



50. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, east wall.



51. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, southwest corner.



52. Southeast Bedroom, second floor, south wall; wall dates from c.1799, but door (A) was reused from an earlier location.



53. Northeast Bedroom, second floor, south wall.



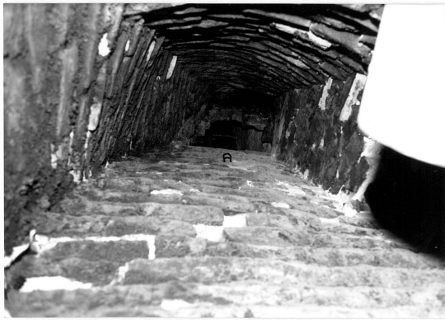
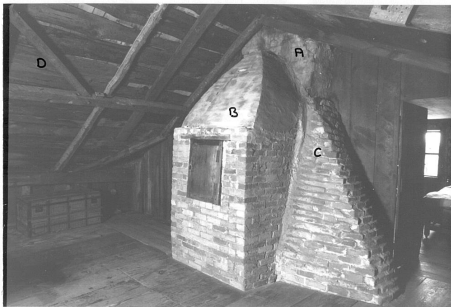
54. Northeast Bedroom, second floor, west wall; boards surrounding fireplace (A) have graining or marbelizing as first paint layer.



55. Northeast Bedroom, second floor, northwest corner.



56. Attic of North Ell, showing original (1771) rafters (right) and later (c.1799) rafters (left).



57. Attic of North Ell, showing original (1771) chimney stack (A), smoke oven (B), added flue or north kitchen chimney (C); rising brace in original portion of ell roof framing (D) is peculiar regional feature.
58. Looking up flue of North Kitchen fireplace, added c.1799, shows crude penetration of earlier chimney stack (A) above.



59. North Ell, evidence of early kitchen fireplace in brick floor of cupboard; back of firebox (A) and jamb of firebox (B) discernable; present dining room fireplace, which starts at (C) sits atop earlier opening.



60. Dining Room, looking west.



61. Dining Room, southeast corner.





63. Dining Room closet in northeast corner; painted boards used as nailers to close up door opening, early nineteenth century; paint line of chair rail in middle of central board.



62. Dining Room, northwest corner; closet door location (A) closed up in early nineteenth century.



64. Dining Room, cupboards.



65. Vestibule, northeast corner; wainscot baseboard and door casing (A) are painted on; vertical partitioning was cut at (B) and bottom section probably replaced c.1799.



66. Vestibule, north wall; cupboard door probably added c.1799; strip of wallpaper to upper left represents nineteenth-century treatment of space.



67. Pine Room, east wall; two door openings (A) closed up by Dr. Huntington 1943.



68. Pine Room, south wall; door in center of wall is nineteenth-century addition.



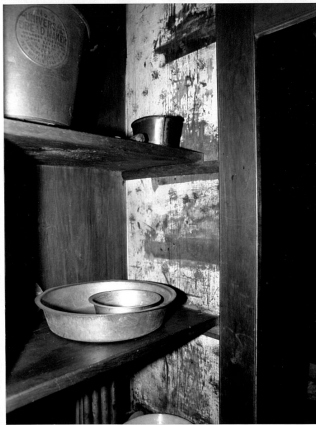
69. Close-up of partitioning, north wall of Pine Room (typical) showing residue of whitewash.



70. North Kitchen, looking west.



71. North Kitchen, southeast corner.



72. Passage between North Kitchen and Pine Room, showing whitewash with blue sponge decorations on backside of pine room partition; notice shadow lines of shelving.
73. Shelved Room off North Kitchen; removal of knot in present wall boards reveals whitewash (with blue sponge decorations) on earlier partitioning below.



74. "Prophet's Chamber", northwest corner; break in whitewash indicates location of earlier partition, removed in twentieth century.