

THE MABLE HOUSE

Mableton, Georgia

Historic Structure Report

Prepared by:

Conservation of Historic Building Materials Class
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Cover photo:

Mable Family ca. the late nineteenth-early twentieth century

Curtesy of:

The South Cobb Development Authority, Mable Property Rural Preservation Plan: Utilization and Implementation: Jaeger/Rayburn Inc. 1989

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mable House property is located at 5239 Floyd Road SW, Mableton, Ga., 30126, and consists of the main house, smokehouse, kitchen house, corn crib, blacksmith shop, sweet potato house, garden, and cemetery for the Mable family and their slaves. The main house is a Plantation Plain type structure consisting of six finished rooms (four on first floor and two on second floor).¹ The first and second floors contain a central hallway. Presently, the property is owned by descendants of the Mable family and leased to the Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department.

The main house, smokehouse, and kitchen were constructed under the supervision of Robert Mable in 1843. This site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988, and on the Cobb County Register of Historic Places the following year. This report addresses the history, conditions, treatment, and recommendations for the main house.

The treatment recommendation for the main house is a Rehabilitation, which is the process of enabling a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, and architectural values.² Recommendations for treatment of the main house can be found starting on page 113. Overall, the building remains in good condition. However, there are significant issues that require attention. Many of the building's problems stem from water intrusion into the basement. A gutter system, including downspouts and splash blocks should be installed to move water away from the building.

Moisture is also present in the interior. The air conditioning unit should be run periodically and the temperature throughout the main house must be controlled. The chimneys are capped with cement, which could be trapping moisture in the house. The secretary desk in room 102 should be moved away from the air conditioning vent, as this is blocking air from circulating throughout the building. In addition, it is recommended that the Mable House have an energy audit conducted to measure the energy efficiency and output of the building. **All repairs and maintenance should be performed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (See Appendix F).**

Currently, the house's interpretation does not focus on one specific time period. Interpretation should be based on themes surrounding the Mable family, such as how the family earned its living and what activities took place on the property. Interpretative details, such as

discussing the Georgia Gold Land Lottery of 1832 and its relevance to the Mable family, could be emphasized. Highlighting the schoolhouse, which was located in a log cabin originally on the site, would address the Mable's contribution to educating the surrounding community. The Land Lottery, the sawmill and farming are topics that would address the Mable family's livelihood. These themes should be connected to the visitor experience by asking questions about how certain practices, such as storing food, are done in the visitors' lives. Resources like 'Teaching with Historic Places' on the National Park Service website should be consulted for further insight.³

¹A Plantation Plain Type house is defined by the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as having "a two-story block at the front, with either a central hallway or hall parlor plan, and a one-story range of rooms at the rear, consisting of either three rooms or, more commonly, a short rear hallway flanked by a pair of rooms. The rear section is typically shed-roofed, the two-story block is usually gabled, and there is most often a full-width, one-story porch."

²National Park Service. "Archaeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines." Accessed November 20, 2014.

http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_10.htm.

³National Park Service. "Teaching with Historic Places." Accessed November 20, 2014.

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/>.



Figure 1. (Photo 1) Looking southwest: Kitchen house (foreground), garden, main house (center building), smokehouse



Figure 2. (Photo 2) Looking west, L to R: smokehouse, main house, kitchen house

PART ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Background and Acknowledgements

The Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Mable Historic Site was produced by students in the Conservation of Historic Building Materials Class within the Masters of Heritage Preservation Program at Georgia State University. The purpose of the HSR is to provide thorough documentation of the Mable House history, development, and present conditions to assist the Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department and the Friends of the Mable House in determining the most effective options for treatment, ongoing maintenance, and interpretation. This will benefit visitors by providing an experience that is historically accurate while preserving the property for years to come.

The Mable House property is situated on sixteen acres in Mableton, Cobb County, Georgia, approximately fifteen miles northwest of Atlanta. Mableton is a low-density suburban area with a population of approximately 37,000. The main house is oriented towards the west, facing Floyd Road. Floyd Road is a main thoroughfare that runs north and south along the property and contains various commercial businesses. The site consists of the historic main house, the historic smokehouse, the rebuilt and relocated kitchen house, relocated corn crib, relocated sweet potato house, well, and the cemetery for the Mable family and their slaves. There is also a hearthstone near the southwest corner of the house that marks where the Mable's log cabin once stood. The site's modern structures include a well house and a modern-built replica of a blacksmith shop. This HSR focuses on the documentation and recommended treatment of the main house. A Conditions Assessment Report was previously completed on the smokehouse. The remaining outbuildings have been relocated, substantially rehabilitated, or are new constructions that lack historic integrity; they are not documented in this report.

This report includes the history of the Mable House Historic Site, a history of the Mable Family, a physical description, analysis of current conditions, recommendations for repairs, treatment and interpretation, and routine maintenance. The class divided into groups tasked with writing and documenting different portions of the report.

The Developmental History group researched the archives at the Mable main house, the Cobb County Census, genealogy documents, and other primary and secondary sources. (See Bibliography in Appendix H). A chronology of the property's development, local history,

and background of the Mable family history was investigated for this section.

The team charged with the physical description took exterior and interior measurements of the main house. The measurements were used to create floor plans of the basement, first, and second floors that included the length and width of each room, as well as the measurements of each fireplace and the exterior facades. Diagrams of the floor plans and site map were created using AutoCAD.

The Conditions Assessment team investigated and documented areas of deterioration throughout the interior and exterior, while the Treatment and Interpretation team drafted methods to address the conditions and worked with the Friends of the Mable House to determine a more accurate interpretation plan. The Maintenance Plan team developed a list of ongoing maintenance procedures.

Two photographers used digital cameras to document the overall site, facades, and interior rooms. The Appendices team compiled plans and drawings keyed to photographs, along with maintenance schedules, historic photographs, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, a glossary, and the bibliography. The Graphics team was charged with the layout of the report, along with the photograph arrangement on each page.

Primary, non-invasive investigations took place on October 25 and November 8, 2014. Additional investigation occurred on November 22, 2014.

Special thanks are extended to: Cobb County Preservation Planner Mandy Elliott for her insight on the Mable House history; the Mable Family; Tom Little, architect from Surber, Barber, Choate & Hertlien for his structural and conditions analysis; Maryellen Higginbotham and Jean Spencer for providing the paint analyses; Barbara Hollis and Mary Hill for sharing their knowledge on the Mable family history and the site's interpretation program; the Georgia State University Department of Anthropology for allowing the use of their Geometrics magnetometer; Vince Macek of TRC Solutions Corporation for his valuable assistance with the Site Plan and Elevation Drawings; the Friends of the Mable House and Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department for the opportunity to document and provide feedback on the preservation and future use of this historic site.

Summary of Recommendations

Moisture and imprecise interpretation are critical issues for the Mable house. The following is a summary of recommendations that will be further explored within this report:

- Install gutters, downspouts, and splash blocks that are removable and do not detract from the historic integrity of the building. Extension leaders to move water further from the foundation should also be considered.

- Check the grade surrounding the house. Water flooding in the basement is creating moisture problems for the entire house. Fill in any low spots to establish 6" of fall within the first 10' surrounding the house.
- Conduct an energy audit on the house through a company such as Southface Energy Institute, to determine its energy consumption and ways to increase its environmental sustainability.
- Replace the furnace in the attic (room 204), above room 101B (see floor plan, page XX). The evaporation pan designed to collect water from condensation has previously been filled and then overflowed.
- Remove the cement covering chimney top openings and install vented chimney caps to all chimneys. Vented, low-profile chimney caps should be selected.
- Address the two major bulges in the foundation on the west facade as soon as possible. These areas are collecting water and creating further damage to surrounding materials.
- Ensure the foundation grilles are adequate for ventilation in the basement.
- Trim back or remove shrubs and trees along all facades as these are trapping moisture near the house.
- Remove and reposition the handicap rail to eliminate further damage to the historic siding.
- Determine the frequency with which the HVAC systems should run. Certain temperature and humidity levels are contributing to moisture problems on the interior. To mitigate moisture in the house, a climate control system could be installed that activates the furnace or air conditioner when the house reaches a certain relative humidity level.

Interpretation of Main House/Overall Site

- Maintain all objects in main house that reflect the agreed-upon interpretation year. Make them the focus of the interpretation.
- Install interpretive panels throughout property to describe what each structure's purpose was and where each building came from (if it is not original to the property).
- Highlight location of the log cabin and its hearthstone using appropriate landscaping.
- Base interpretation on themes such as the Gold Rush, farming, slavery, the schoolhouse, and tenant farming (all of which can connect the site with the community of Mableton).
- Relate the Mable family's experience to visitor experience (especially for school field trips). For example, when discussing Mable kitchen house, involve students in the preparation of dinner in the manner the Mable family slaves would have prepared it.

All recommendations and repairs must adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings (See Appendix H).

PART TWO:

HISTORY

Historical Background

The first contact between Native Americans and European explorers in north Georgia occurred in 1540. Between that time and the early 1800s, the area of modern day Cobb County, including Mableton, were occupied by the Creek and Cherokee Tribes. Two Native American villages, Sweet Water Town and Nickajack, were located in what is today south Cobb County. Sweet Water Town, a Cherokee village named for Chief Sweet Water, was located on a high hill on the east side of Sweetwater Creek, near the junction of Old Alabama Road, Cardell Road and Maxham Road.⁴

The Cherokee and Creek both claimed land in south Cobb County. The two tribes did not fight over this territory, however, because the area was so swampy – especially along Sweetwater and Nickajack Creeks. Supposedly, both tribes brought their sick to Deer Lick (Bowden Lithia Springs) and Gunpowder Springs (Powders Springs) to drink the waters, which were believed to have healing powers. Legend has it that at a “ball play” between the two nations ownership of south Cobb County land was wagered on the outcome of the game, which was won by the Cherokee.⁵

In 1827, the criminal jurisdiction of DeKalb County was extended over today’s Cobb County territory. In 1828, this territory was added to DeKalb and the laws of the State of Georgia extended over it. In 1829, a survey was completed and south Cobb County was declared to be Creek Indian Territory, belonging to the State of Georgia according to a 1739 treaty between Georgia and the Creek Nation. However, in 1830, it was declared to be half Creek and half Cherokee territory, with the Creek half belonging to the State of Georgia. Later in 1830, the state ordered another survey and in 1831 the land in question became part of the Cherokee County.

Gold was first discovered in north Georgia in the summer of 1829. No one knows for certain who made the first discovery, but it was noted in a Milledgeville newspaper that the gold region of North and South Carolina seemed to extend into Georgia.⁶ By late 1829 north Georgia was still part of the Cherokee Nation. Northeast Georgia was flooded by thousands of prospectors in search of gold. Gold mining took place throughout the region and even extended into portions of Cobb County. *Niles’ Register* reported in the spring of 1830 that there were four thousand miners working along Yahoola Creek alone.⁷ The sudden influx of miners into

the Cherokee Nation was known as the Great Intrusion. One writer in the *Cherokee Phoenix* noted, "Our neighbors who regard no law and pay no respects to the laws of humanity are now reaping a plentiful harvest... We are an abused people." But there was little the Cherokees could do.⁸

When a national mint went into operation in the North Georgia community of Dahlonega in 1838, many saw it as a national confirmation of Georgia's efforts over the preceding decade. To the area's residents, this federal establishment was a seal of approval and a promise of future prosperity.⁹ But it was a prosperity that was to be denied the native Cherokees. Between 1805 and 1832 the state of Georgia held lotteries to distribute land seized from

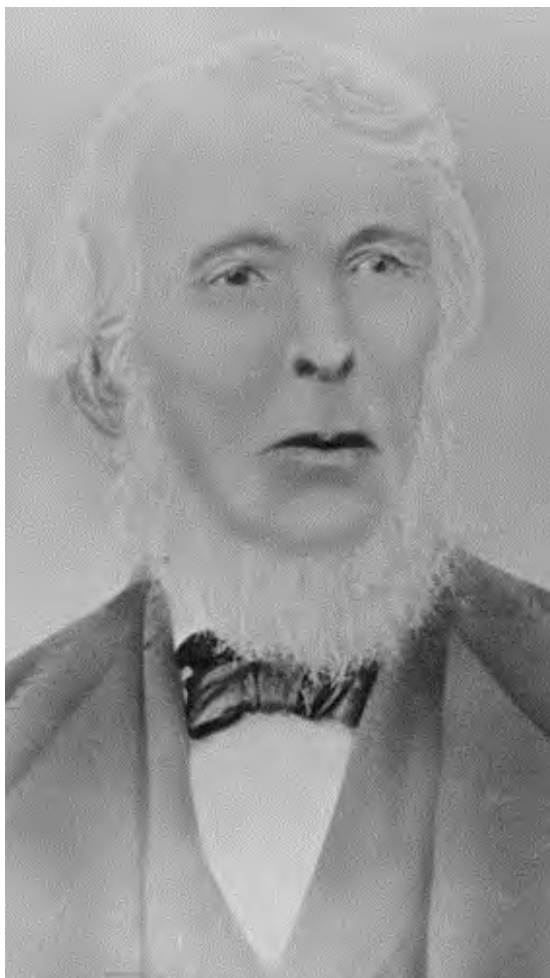


Figure 3. Drawing of Robert Mable, date unknown

Source: Georgia Department of Archives and History. "Drawing of Robert Mable, Mableton, Cobb County, Georgia, not after 1885" Digital Publisher Athens, Ga. : Digital Library of Georgia, 2004 . Vanishing Georgia. http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/meta/html/dlg/vang/meta_dlg_vang_cob742.html?Welcome&Welcome

the Cherokees and Creeks. Nearly three quarters of the land in Georgia was allocated by the lottery system, opening up the area, including Cobb County, to white settlement.¹⁰ Finally, the U.S. Army drove the Cherokees northwestward to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma. Deprived of proper food and clothing, at least 4,000—one-fifth of the entire Cherokee population—died on the journey. The forced migration became known as the Trail of Tears.¹¹

Robert Mable (1803 – 1885) purchased 300 acres of land in the Coxes District from Denson C. Melton on September 11, 1843, in Land Lots 33, 34, 39, 40, 106, 112, 177, and 185 of the Seventeenth District.¹² He is recorded as having received title to Land Lot 176 in the Seventeenth District of Cobb County on July 2, 1845. By 1850, Robert Mable owned at least 400 acres in the Mableton area.¹³

Prior to purchasing the land, Mable first moved to the property in the late 1830s, renting a two-room log cabin from Denson Melton on land to the west of where his plantation house now stands. When his antebellum plantation house was completed in 1843, the old log cabin became the Mable School where two of his daughters were teachers. It was a private school that charged students 10 cents a week when it first



Figure 4. 1960s aerial photograph showing the location of Mable House property and Robert Mable's original sawmill.

Source: United States. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. Aerial Photography Division. "Cobb County, 1960: ASCS indexes and aerial photographs. JL-1AA-140." Black and white contact print. Scale 1:20,000. Athens, GA: Digital Library of Georgia, January 15, 1960. University of Georgia Libraries Map Collection, Athens, GA. http://dlgcsmlib.galib.uga.edu/StyleServer/calcrn?browser=ns&cat=gaph&wid=740&hei=740&style=default/gaph_lg.xsl&item=/cobb/1960/jl-1aa-140.sid.

opened, though Cobb County records indicate teacher pay was subsidized by tax money for the last few years of its operation. The school remained open until it burned down around 1900. Ruth Mable, Robert's daughter, taught at the Mable School and other schools in Mableton until her death in 1942.¹⁴

Robert Mable helped construct various mills around the Mableton area during the nineteenth century, including Ruff's Mill located near the covered bridge off Concord Road, and the Concord Woolen Mill, which burned during the Civil War. He built his own sawmill across from his house on present day Floyd Road (see aerial photo on opposite page).¹⁵ In addition to being a millwright, he was listed in census records as a farmer, owning a 470-acre plantation. His primary crop was cotton but he also grew corn, potatoes, and sorghum. The sorghum was refined to make syrup in one of the mills on his property.¹⁶ Mable was a slave owner and owned between eleven and forty-eight slaves by 1860.¹⁷

In July of 1864, the Union Army occupied the Mable House as they passed through

Mableton on their way to Atlanta. The first floor was used as a hospital and the second floor remained the living quarters of Mrs. Mable and her children. (Robert Mable had absconded to South Georgia.) Two soldiers died in the home during its time as a hospital and are buried in an unmarked location across Floyd Road from the Mable House.¹⁸

After the Civil War, there were sharecroppers and tenant farmers on the Mable property; some were former slaves or descendants of former slaves. This continued through the early part of the twentieth century.¹⁹ Crops grown were similar to those grown before the war, including corn, potatoes, and sorghum. Cotton was grown on the property until the boll weevil blight began in 1915.²⁰

In 1881, the Chief Engineer of the Georgia Pacific Railway boarded in the home while the railroad depot was being built on the south side of the railroad tracks on the corner of Bankhead Highway and Lowe (present-day Church) Street. Much of the land the railroad ran across in Mableton belonged to Robert Mable. The Chief Engineer erected a sign on the north side of the depot reading "Mableton," named for Mable. The first train from Atlanta reached town just before Christmas of 1881.²¹

On June 28, 1882, the Mableton Post Office was established with W.N. Pace as postmaster.²² Mableton was an incorporated town from 1912 to 1916 with a population of roughly 200. Dr. H.A. Glore served as the first mayor of Mableton.²³

Development of Property

When Robert died in 1885, his sons Alexander and Joel executed his will. Sections of the Mable Plantation farm passed to each of his children.²⁴ Upon her death in 1942, Ruth Mable, Robert's daughter, set aside the Mable House and grounds in a trust under the supervision of Felton Barns, Eugene Ruff, and John Ruff. The house then was the home of Mrs. Lucy Mable Ruff, Robert Mable's granddaughter, through the 1960s. In the 1940s, many modernizations were made to the home including the installation of an indoor kitchen and bathroom on the first floor. The National Register of Historic Places nomination form photographs taken in 1986 show the location of the bathroom in the main house (photo in Appendix E). The walls were painted and electricity was added in 1942.²⁵ The cookhouse was no longer used for its historic purpose after the installation of the indoor kitchen in the 1940s. Part of the historic cookhouse burned in the 1950s, and it was rented to a gardener, "Old Man Green," in the 1960s. He lived in the house and took care of the grounds. The smokehouse was used for storage during this time. Lucy Mable Ruff died in 1968 and her son, J. M. Ruff, then rented the house as a private residence to the principal of Mable Elementary, Millard Jones, and his friend, Joe J. Lyons.²⁶

The house underwent changes on the exterior during this era, as well. A newspaper

article dated September 13, 1969 shows contemporary diamond-shaped shingles on the roof – likely asphalt or asbestos (see Appendix E). Before this time, the roof was constructed of slate tiles (possibly original to the structure). The current roof, synthetic faux slate shingles, was installed in the most recent renovation after the Arts Center opened in 1999.²⁷ The 1969 photo also shows the front porch screened-in. The porch remained screened in until at least 1981, when a report for the South Cobb Improvement Association recommended its removal.²⁸

The South Cobb Improvement Association was formed in 1981 by a group of South Cobb citizens with the assistance of then-State Senator Roy Barnes. Barnes' family lived across Floyd Road from the Mable House during the 1920s. The group leased the Mable House for use as the association's headquarters. A state grant of \$10,000 from the Department of Natural Resources in 1981 was used to rebuild the kitchen interior, build a fence around the cemetery, and provide maintenance of the property and house. The South Cobb Development Authority was formed in 1982 and a 20-year lease was formed for the property.

In 1984, the South Cobb Arts Alliance opened the Sweet Water Arts Gallery in the Mable House. In 1987, the South Cobb Development Authority acquired a new 99-year lease from the trustees of the Mable Estate.²⁹ The house and 16 acres of land belong to the Mable Family while the Cobb County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs holds the lease. The Mable House was listed on the National Register for Historic Places on July 22, 1988, and listed in the Cobb County Register of Historic Places on April 11, 1989.³⁰ During the 1990s the house was also used for meetings, a tearoom, and as a small community center.³¹ New plumbing, wiring, heating, air conditioning, storm windows, and roofing were installed during this time.

The National Register of Historic Places registration form from 1988 lists additions to the house since it was built in 1843. In addition to the indoor bathroom and kitchen, the attic space was added, and the four chimneys were stuccoed (the exact dates are not mentioned). The original kitchen was turned into an art studio.³²

The sweet potato house, constructed in 1920, was moved from the Williams' farm in 1990. The Williams' farm was located next door to the Mable House during the 1900s. The corncrib was moved to the property from a farm on Concord Road in Smyrna, and was moved to the property in 2004-2005. A. F. Daniell established the Daniell Blacksmith Shop in Mableton in 1883. The blacksmith shop was constructed on the property to replicate the Daniell blacksmith shop.³³

State government funding was used for repairs and maintenance during the late 1990s, and to remove the 1940s bathroom and kitchen. The South Cobb Arts Alliance and the Arts Center staff moved to the new Arts Center when it opened in 1999. In 2000, Governor Roy Barnes wanted to provide Mableton with an outdoor amphitheater, and helped develop one

on the Mable property along with the Cobb County Board of Commissioners. Employees of the Cobb Parks Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department oversee the property. The Friends of the Mable House hosts a Storytelling Festival, school field trips, tours, and summer heritage camps on the site.³⁴

Mable Family History

The owner of the Mable Plantation property, Robert Mable, was born in Clifton Court, Scotland in 1803 to John Mable (d. 1834) and Agnes Stevenson (d. 1826). He was the eldest of five children. His siblings were Mary (1804-1869), Janet (1806-1872), James (1812-1896), and Alexander (1810-1898).³⁵ In 1820, Robert violated the Scottish Game Law of 1772 by trapping white rabbits.³⁶ At the time, poaching was a very serious offence and the family quickly decided to immigrate to America. They first landed in Quebec, Canada then traveled to Delhi, New York.

Against his father's wishes, Robert ventured on his own down the Delaware River to New York City and eventually sailed to Savannah, GA. As a result, Robert's father removed him from his will.³⁷ In Savannah Robert worked at Fort Pulaski under head engineer Robert E. Lee.³⁸ It was there that he learned the trade of millwright and began amassing a wealth by building various types of mills across Georgia and South Carolina.

On December 14, 1837 Robert Mable married Pheriby Lane Aycock in Covington, Ga.³⁹ Together, Robert and Pheriby had seven children whose birth and death dates can be found in the family Bible: Nancy (1838-1865), Joel (1841-1907), John (1843- 1911), Margaret (1845-1923), Alexander (1847-1936), Robert (1850- 1857) and Pheriby Lane (1851-1889).²⁹

Robert's first wife died as a result of complications with the birth of Pheriby Lane.⁴¹ On March 8, 1855, he remarried Almeda Aycock Hodge, first cousin of Pheriby.⁴² Almeda is listed as being a seamstress in the 1860 census.⁴³ She already had two children from a prior marriage and they accompanied her to the Mable household.⁴⁴ Together, Almeda and Robert had three more children: James (1859-1930), Ruth (1857-1942) and Sarah (whose name may have been later changed to Sallie)⁴⁵(1863-1921).⁴⁶ Ruth was the last of Robert's children to live in the house.⁴⁷ She did so with her niece Margaret, who is listed as postmaster general.⁴⁸ The last of the Mable line to reside in the house was Lucy Mable-Ruff.⁴⁹

When Robert died in 1885, his sons Alexander and Joel executed his will. It appears that pieces of the Mable Plantation farm passed to each of his children.⁵⁰ Alexander also owned almost 200 acres adjacent the plantation, upon which he grew pecans, peaches, and sorghum, and operated a sorghum syrup mill.⁵¹ Tenant farmers grew cotton, potatoes and corn on the land they rented from Alexander.⁵² The 1900 census lists Alexander as a farmer.⁵³ Upon his death in 1936, his son Robert and eldest daughter Ruth executed the will until 1939.⁵⁴

The Mables were a family highly concerned with education. The 1880 census found Joel to be teaching in Douglasville, Georgia and John in Irvine, Georgia. Joel was also at one time a teacher and the principal of the first grammar school in Atlanta.⁵⁵ Margaret and Ruth both taught at the Mable log cabin school.⁵⁶

Robert Mable was a Presbyterian, and was instrumental in the formation of two area Presbyterian churches. He was also responsible for building wooden benches for a local Baptist church.⁵⁷

According to the 1860 Cobb County Census, five children from the Petty Family resided at the Mable house. They are listed by their initial, age, and sex: GH, male, 8 years old; I (or J) S, male, 7 years old; MM, female, 6 years old; NP, female, 4 years old; EA, female, 1 year old.⁵⁸ There is no known relation between the Petty and Mable Families.

Two of Robert's sons fought for the Confederate cause during the Civil War. Joel was a sergeant major.⁵⁹ Alex, who joined up at age 17, worked at Andersonville prison.⁶⁰ During the war, Robert Mable hid out in south Georgia, taking some of the older children with him. Almeda and the younger children remained living in the second story of the house while Union forces occupied and used the first floor as a hospital. One of the trusted Mable family slaves, Ike, was left in charge of taking care of the family.⁶¹

Slavery on the Mable Plantation

Most records indicate that Robert Mable owned between 11 and 48 slaves.⁶² One of the slaves, Celia, was believed to be inherited by Pheriby Aycock from her brother.⁶³ Another, Mary, belonged to Robert's second wife Almeda.⁶⁴ The slaves most likely lived just to the east of the cemetery. Georgia slaves in the mid-19th century usually occupied one or two-room log and daub cabins with dirt floors.⁶⁵ It was said that Robert freed his slaves even before the government ordered him to do so. Oral interviews indicate that he was a fair and kind master and that he educated the younger slaves alongside his own children.⁶⁶ They also attended the same church services. Against customs that prevailed well into the 20th century, nine of his former slaves are buried in their own section of the family cemetery. Additionally, a few remained on the property and on Alexander's property as sharecroppers after the emancipation. One of them was Drew Mathis, whose postbellum shack still stands on Alex Mable's property.⁶⁷ John Mathis, likely a relative of Ike and Drew, worked as a servant for Alex Mable for at least 20 years.⁶⁸ Births of the slaves were listed in the family Bible. During the war, Ike Mathis hid out in a barn on the property and shot Union soldiers that were attempting to search for Confederates on the property.⁶⁹

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- ⁴L. Harold Glore, "Bicentennial History of South Cobb County" [ca. 1976], Mable House Collection, Mableton, Georgia. 1
- ⁵Ibid, 1
- ⁶David Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush: Twenty-niners, Cherokees, and Gold Fever* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 7-10.
- ⁷Ibid, 12
- ⁸Ibid, 21
- ⁹Ibid, 105
- ¹⁰Ibid, 107
- ¹¹Ibid, 115-116
- ¹²L. Harold Glore, "History of Mableton, Georgia 30059, a town in Cobb County, U.S.A." [ca. 1968], Mable House Collection, Mableton, Georgia. 15
- ¹³L. Harold Glore, "Bicentennial History of South Cobb County" [ca. 1976], Mable House Collection, Mableton, Georgia. 4
- ¹⁴Glore, "History of Mableton, Georgia", 15
- ¹⁵Barbara Hollis and Mary Hill, interview by Rick Dreger, Julia Lorenc, and Ashley Shares, November 8, 2014.
- ¹⁶Hollis-Hill Interview.
- ¹⁷Conflicting information between personal interview/various other sources and the 1860 census records.
- ¹⁸Hollis-Hill Interview
- ¹⁹Ibid.
- ²⁰Final Returns Alex Mable Est. Robert Mable, dec'd, October 15th, 1918, Robert Mable Will and Estate Papers, Probate Court of Cobb County, Marietta, Georgia.
- ²¹L. Harold Glore, "Bicentennial History of South Cobb County" [ca. 1976], Mable House Collection, Mableton, Georgia, 6
- ²²Ibid, 6.
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PART THREE:

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Setting and Site

Landscape

Located in the unincorporated community of Mableton, Cobb County, Georgia (Figure 5), the Mable House property on the east side of the road at 5239 Floyd Road includes: the 1843 Plantation Plain house; the smokehouse; the relocated and rebuilt kitchen; the cemetery; the original well covered in a modern brick housing and a modern well house; the relocated sweet potato house; the modern replica blacksmith shop; relocated corn crib; and hearthstone from the demolished log cabin. The property is part of a 16-acre tract of land located along highly traveled Floyd Road that comprises the Mable House complex, the Arts Center and Barnes Amphitheatre. Surrounding land uses are predominantly commercial, with housing to the north and south (Figure 6). With all of these changes to the original 300-acre farm, the Mable House property does not truly convey its historic agricultural setting, which featured fields, orchards, and woodlots.

The lot itself gently slopes away from the house in all directions, with mature trees to the west and north (Figure 8, Photo 3). A small tree line separates the Mable House property from the Amphitheatre to the east (Figure 9, Photo 4). When the overall purpose of the site changed from agricultural and residential to educational and recreational, the vegetation along the southern portion of the Mable House property was removed and paved parking added (Figure 10, Photo 5). The house itself is located approximately 100 feet east of Floyd Road. The domestic supporting structures of kitchen and well are located in the immediate vicinity of the house, approximately 40' northeast and 27' north, respectively. The smokehouse is located approximately 36'-6" south of the house (Figure 11, Photo 6). Three supporting agricultural buildings—the sweet potato house (not original to the site), modern replica blacksmith shop (constructed on site), and corn crib (not original to the site)—are located between 90' and 170' east and northeast of the east facade of the house (Figure 12, Photo 7). The family cemetery, including a section for slaves, is located 106' east of the house in the southeast corner of the property (Figure 13, Photo 8).

The hearthstone from the demolished log cabin is located 31'-1½" to the southwest of the southwest corner of the main house (Figure 14, Photo 9). Now in two pieces, the stone was originally one large piece of fieldstone measuring 1'-9 ⅝" wide x 2'-5 ½" long. The stone

runs in a southwest-northeast direction. A Geometrics magnetometer was used to determine the possible location of the burned structure that extends to the northwest as shown on (Figure 14, Photo 9).

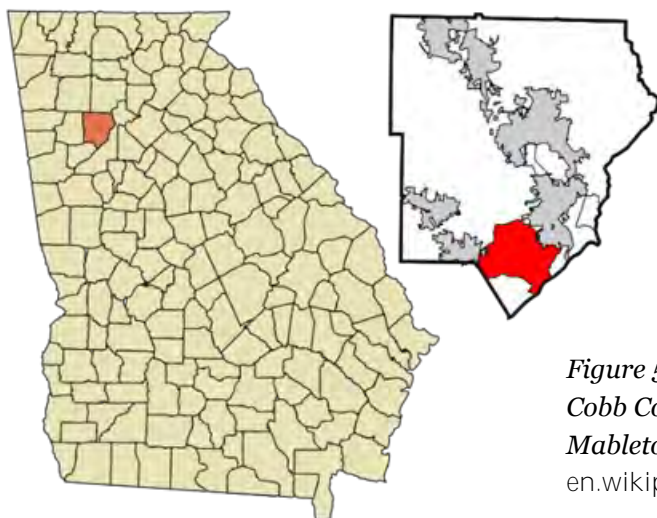


Figure 5. Location of Cobb County in Georgia (left); Cobb County with Incorporated Areas in Grey and Mableton Highlighted in Red (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mableton,_Georgia)



Figure 6. Location of Mable House property in relation to surrounding buildings (source: Google Earth)

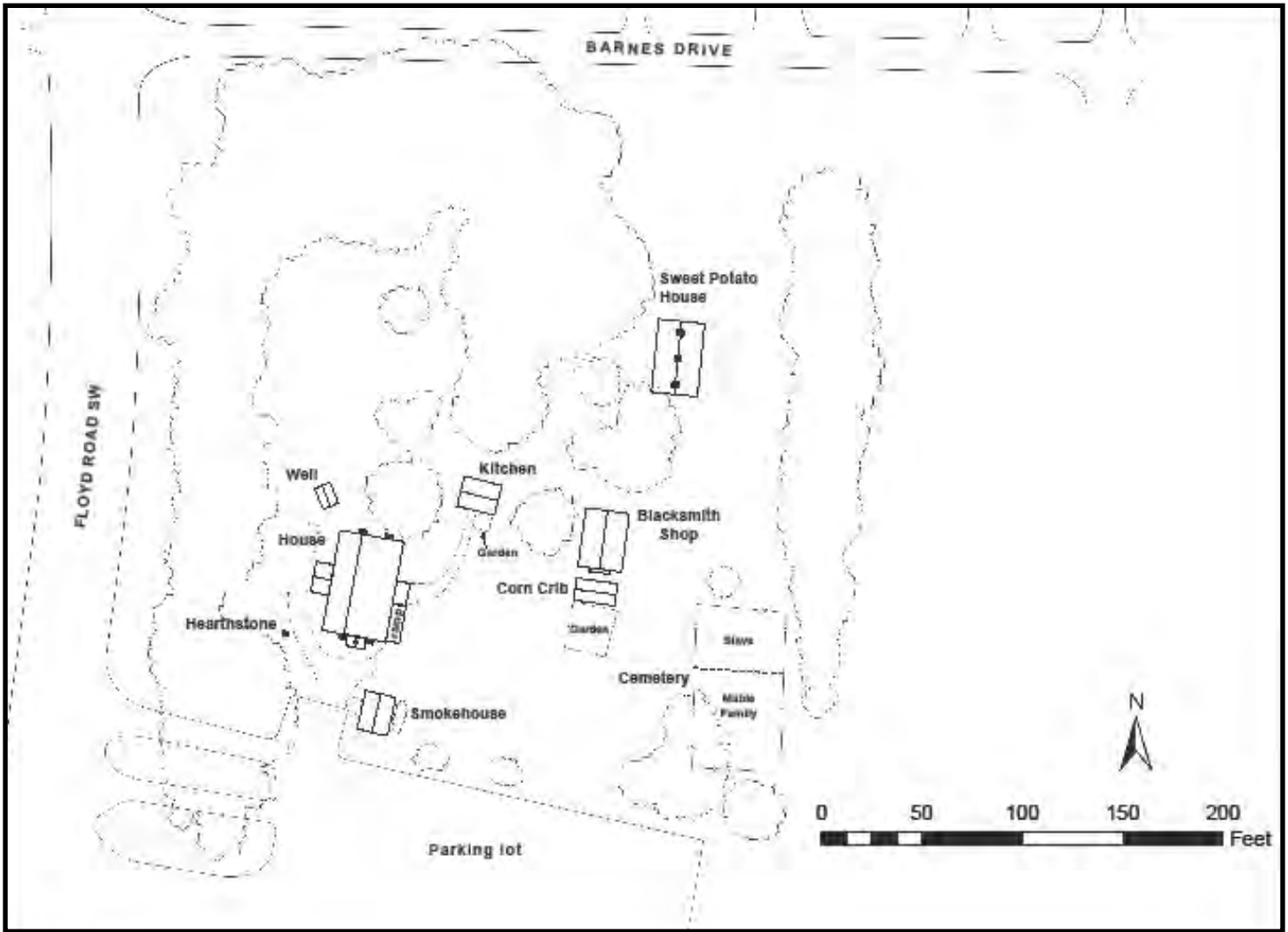


Figure 7. Mable House Property: Site Plan



Figure 8. (Photo 3) View of Mable House and outbuildings through mature trees from northwest corner of property, looking south



Figure 9. (Photo 4) View of tree line separating Mable House property (to west) from Barnes Amphitheater (to east); looking south for north end of property



Figure 10. (Photo 5). View from parking lot at southern border of property with Smokehouse on the right



Figure 11. (Photo 6) View of the Main House west facade from across Floyd Road



Figure 12. (Photo 7) View of west facades of outbuildings from Main House; from left to right: sweet potato house, blacksmith shop, corn crib and garden



Figure 13. (Photo 8) Mable family cemetery from east side of property looking west; Mable House and outbuildings visible in background



Figure 14. (Photo 9) View of cracked hearthstone, looking southeast

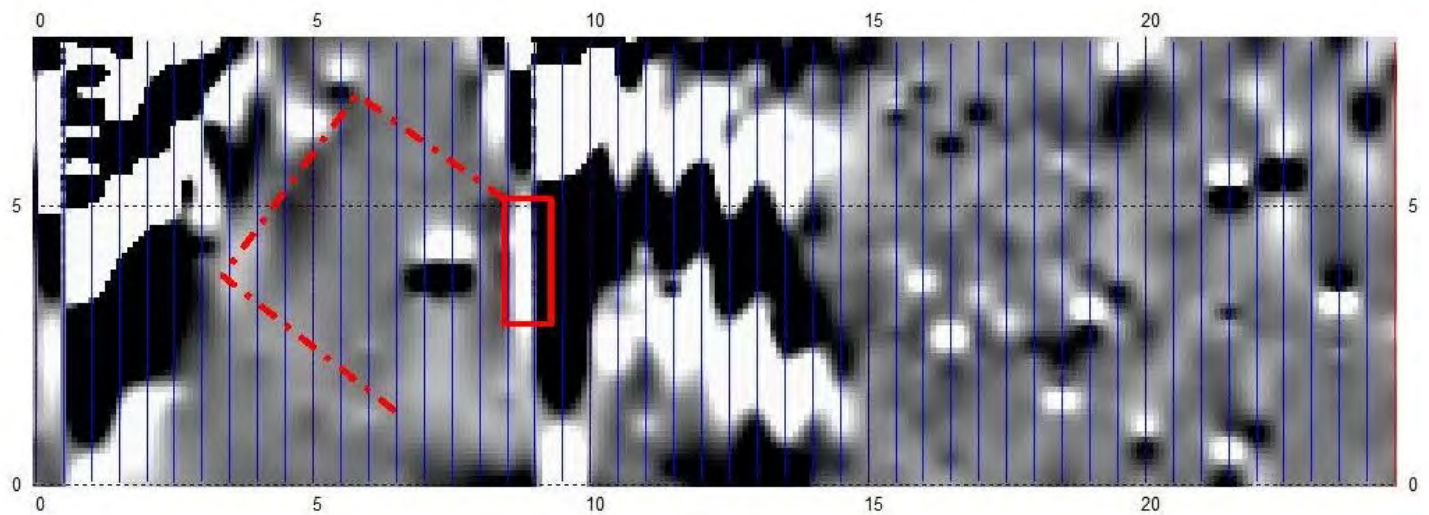


Figure 15. Results of magnetometer study of demolished log cabin Site. Solid red line delineates the hearthstone location and dashed line shows possible outline of foundation based on changes in soil density and composition.

Outbuildings

There are several outbuildings on the property and are not addressed in terms of conditions. The smokehouse, located southeast of the Mable House is the only outbuilding on the site in its original location. As such, a separate conditions assessment was conducted for this building. The kitchen was once located directly behind the house and was later connected to the east facade entrance by a covered lattice walkway. It was relocated and rebuilt. Other outbuildings and structures include the original well, which is covered in a modern brick housing and sheltered by the modern well house; the relocated sweet potato house; the relocated corncrib; and a blacksmith shop that was rebuilt on the site.

PART FOUR: ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Summary

Set on a parged brick foundation,⁷⁰ the 1843 Plantation Plain-type house is of wood-frame construction with a central-hall plan. The exterior is covered with weatherboard siding with a 5" to 5-½" reveal and fastened with machine cut nails, common in the mid-nineteenth century. The two-story section of the house has a 7:12 pitched roof clad with modern faux slate. The one-story section of the house, which extends off the rear façade to the east, has a 5:12 pitched shed roof. There are four exterior parged brick chimneys located at the gable ends of the south and north facades that are centrally placed along the north and south facades of the one story extension. The tops of all four chimneys have been capped with concrete coping. There are three entrances to the first story of the building: double-leaf doors on the west and east facades and a single-leaf entrance on the south facade. A sloped wall entrance on the north facade provides access to the basement. Each of the first-story entrances are sheltered by porches supported by tapered posts with carved panels.



Figure 16. (Photo 10) Mable House front, west façade looking from southwest corner of property



Figure 17. (Photo 11) View of architectural shingle on ridgeline and east slope of roof



Figure 18. (Photo 12) View of concrete cap on northwest chimney

Exterior Description

Foundation

The load-bearing brick foundation is three wythes thick (averaging at 12'-3/4") and set above a granite damp course. On the exterior the brick is parged with Portland cement based stucco and averages from 1' to 1'-6" above ground. Along the west and east walls are four 16" openings for ventilation that have historic wood strips nailed into the sill above and notched board below with machine cut nails on the interior, intended to keep larger animals out of the basement. In the twentieth century, these openings were infilled with a one wythe thick course of modern cored brick. Working metal vents were also added. The porches on the west and south facades are historic and the foundation extends outwards to support the deck. The porch on the east facade is not historic, and the 10'-7-1/8" opening along the foundation has been filled in with concrete masonry units.



Figure 19. (Photo 13) View of foundation

West Façade

The west façade features the primary entrance, accessed by the porch with pedimented front-gable roof. The central double-leaf doors are topped by a six-light transom and flanked by six-light sidelights with recessed panel. The tapered porch supports have Tuscan caps and have recessed panels with curved details. On either side of the entrance are replacement nine-over-six vinyl sash windows with square surrounds and drip molding on the lintel. The second story features fixed nine-light wood windows, likely replacing pivot windows at an unknown date.



Figure 20. (Photo 14) View of west façade

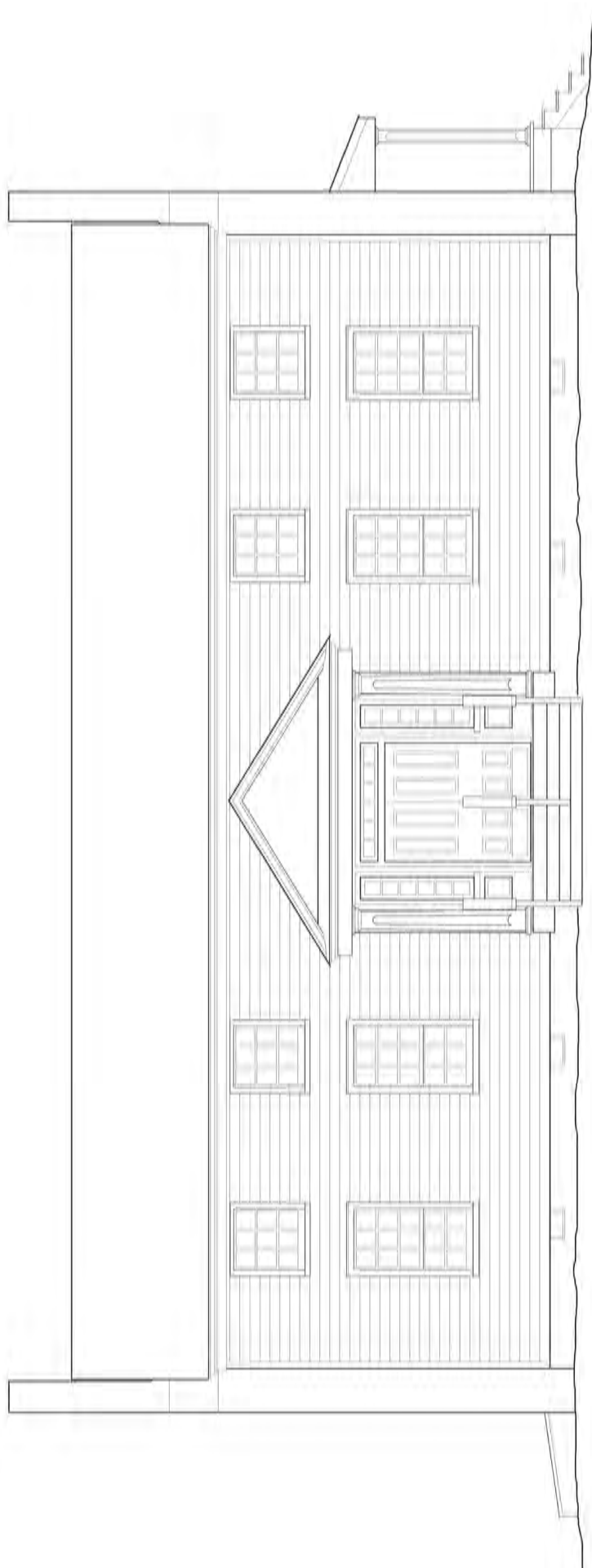


Figure 21. West elevation

South Façade

The south façade faces the parking lot of the Mable House site. A concrete sidewalk lined with shrubbery leads up to an entrance into room 102. The entrance has a shed roof and tapered posts that are similar in design but on a smaller scale than the west façade. The windows on the two-story section are replacement nine-over-six vinyl sash on the first story and replacement six-over-six vinyl sash on the second story. A parged brick chimney that is not fully attached to the building separates the windows.

The south façade extends at a 5:12 pitch from the two-story section of the house to the one-story section on the rear. The window on this section of the façade is six-over-six replacement wood sash. A similar parged brick chimney separates the window from the shed-roofed porch. The southwest chimney is $\frac{1}{4}$ " over 4' out of plumb to the south at the base. The flue encasement is $\frac{1}{4}$ " over 4' out of plumb to the south. The southeast chimney is $\frac{1}{4}$ " out of plumb to the south at the base and the flue encasement $\frac{1}{4}$ " over 4' out of plumb to the east.



Figure 22. (Photo 15) View of south façade

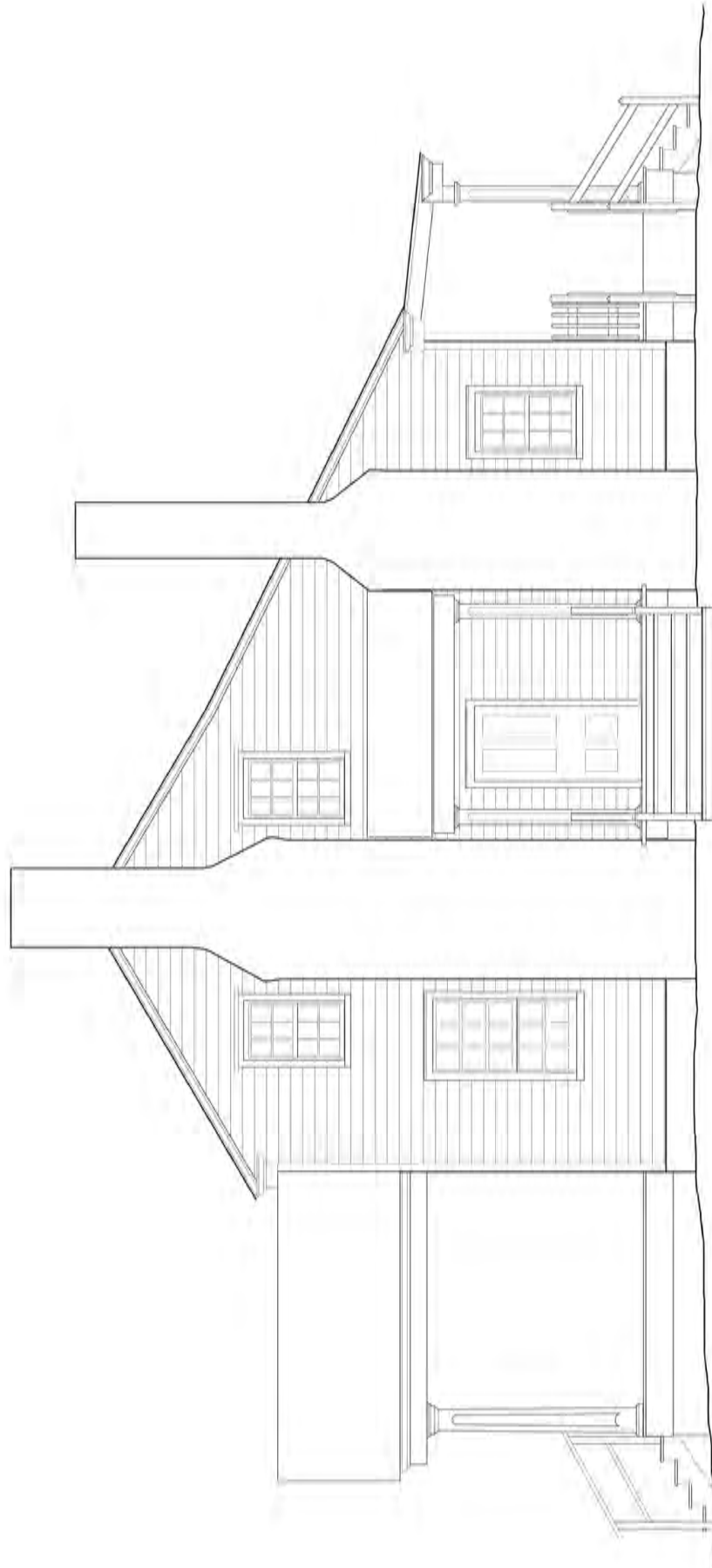


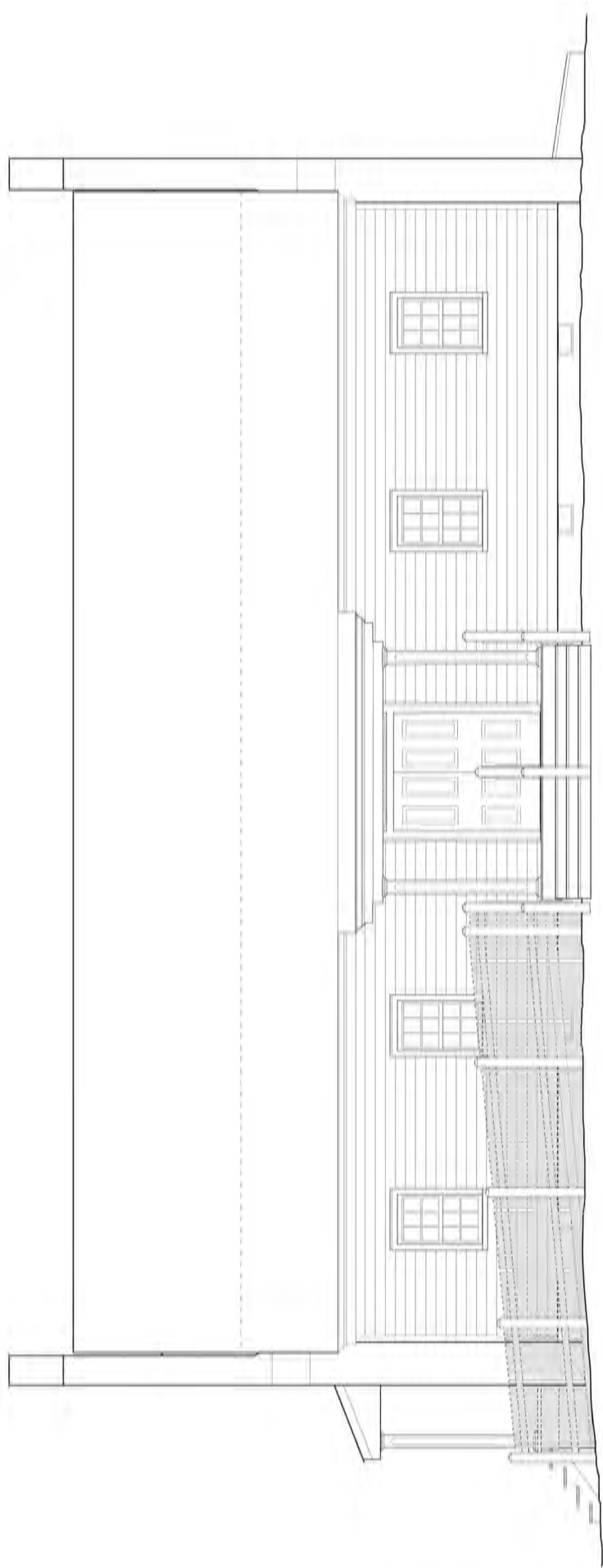
Figure 23. South elevation

East Façade

The east façade of the building coincides with the one-story unit of the house. The width of the façade is two rooms wide divided by the central hallway. At one point a single-leaf door, the entrance to the central hallway has modern replacement double-leaf doors and six-light transom to replicate entrance on the west facade. A modern shed-roofed porch provides a third access to the building and is connected to a handicap ramp leading to the south-west corner. Two Goodman air conditioning condensers are located north of the porch and enclosed with a picket fence. The windows are six-over-six replacement wood sash.



Figure 24. (Photo 16) View of east façade



10 Feet

Figure 25. East elevation

North Façade

The north façade contains the entrance to the basement accessed by the standing-seam metal, double-leaf door on a sloped-wall foundation. Like the south façade, the windows on the two-story section are replacement nine-over-six vinyl sash on the first story and two replacement six-over-six vinyl sash on the second story. A parged brick chimney that is not fully attached to the building separates the windows.

The north façade extends at a 5:12 pitch from the two-story section of the house to the one-story section on the rear. The window on this section of the façade is six-over-six replacement wood sash. A similar parged brick chimney is located on the rear (east) section and the previously mentioned entrance to the dugout cellar is in between the two chimneys. The northwest chimney is $\frac{3}{4}$ " out of plumb over 4' to the north at the base. The flue encasement is $\frac{1}{4}$ " out of plumb over 4' to the west. The northeast chimney is 1'-1/8" of plumb to the north at the base and the flue encasement is square. A louvered wood vent is located in the attic section adjacent to the chimney on the rear (east) section.



Figure 26. (Photo 17) View of north façade

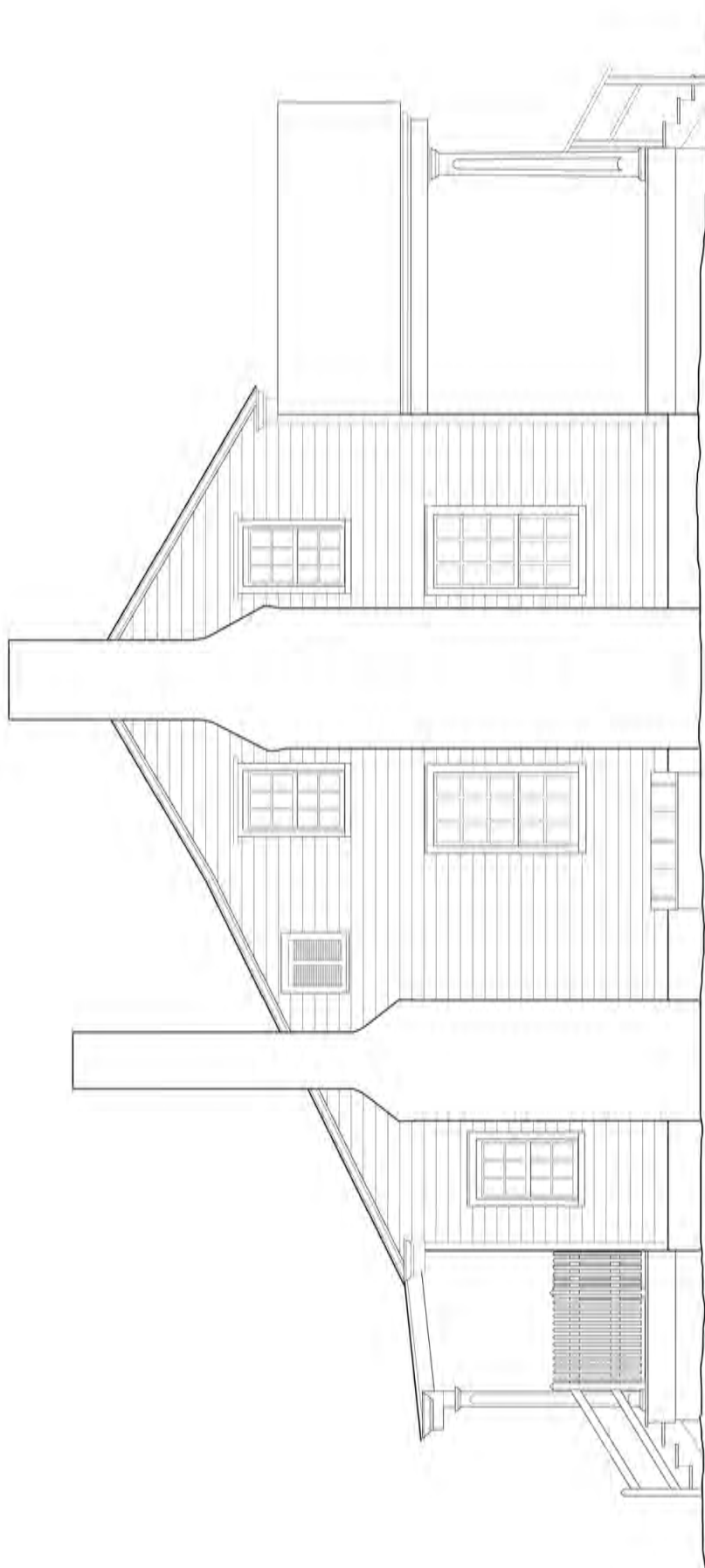


Figure 27. North elevation

Roof

The house has a side-gable roof clad with faux slate shingles and changes from a 7:12 pitch to a 5:12 pitch over the one-story portion. The boxed cornice features overhanging eaves and returns with cyma recta-profiled crown molding. The chimneys abut the edges of the roof, but are not attached to the building along the roofline and the tops have been sealed closed with concrete caps.



Figure 28. (Photo 18) View of architectural shingle on ridgeline and east slope of roof



Figure 29. (Photo 19) View of Cornice Return



Figure 30. (Photo 20) View of concrete cap on northwest chimney

Interior Description

Basement

The majority of the Mable House sits over a dirt crawlspace approximately 22" tall. The basement of the house is a dugout room beneath the northwest corner of the building, measuring 19' x 15' 3", with a small alcove measuring 6'8" x 5' 9".

The entrance to the basement is on the north façade. The steps leading into the basement are natural stones set into the ground. The floor and majority of the basement walls are also earth. The height of the basement at its entrance is 5' ¾". At its tallest point, the basement room is 7' ¾".

The north and west walls of the dugout basement feature masonry walls composed of field stone and capped in historic brick. The north wall is approximately 4' 3" tall. The west



Figure 31. (Photo 21) North and west walls of dugout basement, constructed with field stone and historic brick and previously whitewashed

wall is shorter, approximately 3' 10 ½". The walls have been previously whitewashed, indicating use as a functional space,⁷¹ likely food storage as a root cellar (Figure 31, Photo 21).⁷²

The structure is supported by various means throughout the basement and crawlspace. Historic brick piers with evidence of whitewash support a large hand hewn beam (11 ½" x 9 ½") that runs north to south in the center of the structure. Modern 6" x 6" wood posts on modern concrete footers support floor joists in the dug out portion of the basement. Elsewhere in the crawlspace, wood posts support the structure with only thin metal sheets separating the posts from the ground (Figure 32, Photo 22). The crawlspace also contains piers of modern cement masonry units. Visibility of the extant structure is severely limited by the HVAC ductwork and modern insulation that lies on the ground throughout the crawlspace.

The framing for the first floor is exposed and visible in the basement. Hand-hewn sills (11 ½" x 9 ½") sit atop the brick pier foundation (Figure 33, Photo 23). Primary joists (9 ¾" x 4 ½") and reciprocating sawn secondary joists (9 ¾" x 2") extend from the center beam and run east to west. The joists are spaced approximately 24" on center. There is no subfloor; the flooring above sits directly on the joists.

All of the modern systems are present in the basement. A water line enters the house under the foundation on the west façade and connects directly to the sprinkler system. A copper water line is also evident, supplying the spigot on the east exterior.

A 100,000 BTU Rheem gas furnace sits directly on the ground in the southeast corner of the dugout portion of the basement, and services the first floor of the building. Steel gas lines run from the southwest corner of the building to the furnace. Insulated ductwork runs from the unit throughout the crawlspace. The condensate and coolant lines run from the furnace unit through a vent in the foundation of the east wall to the Goodman cooling units on the exterior.

A sump pump has been placed at the low point of the basement floor to remove water from the basement. This investigation did not occur during any periods of rainfall, however, an extensive



Figure 32. (Photo 22) Modern 6" x 6" wood posts on modern concrete footers support floor joists



Figure 33. (Photo 23) Framing for first floor and original hand hewn sills visible from basement



Figure 34. (Photo 34) Sump pump in earth floor of dug out area

amount of moisture is evidenced by staining on the pipe that carries water from the sump pump to the exterior of the building (Figure 34, Photo 24)

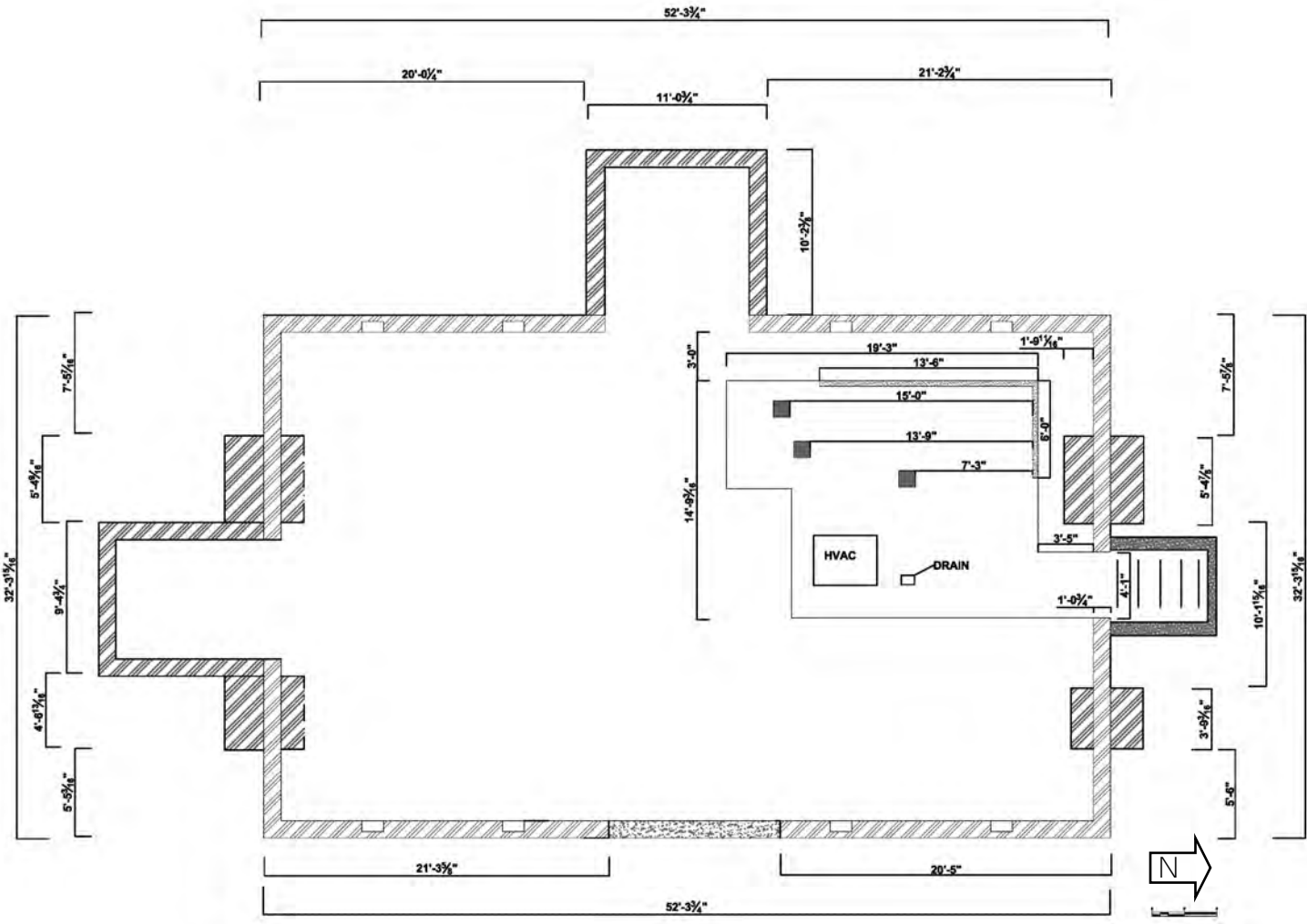


Figure 35. Basement Floorplan

An electrical service panel is attached to a wood support posts near the furnace and sump pump. There are two keyless lights in the basement, one on a switch at the door, one on a pull chain in the center of the room. Modern electrical wiring in aluminum-sheathed conduit runs throughout.

Interior Summary

The interior of the Mable House follows the traditional Plantation Plain-type, with one room on either side of a central hall on both floors, with a one-story shed portion with rooms to the rear of the house. Robert Mable, the original owner of the house, was the owner of a lumber mill as well as a joiner. He and his slaves carried out much of the work when constructing the house.

The Mable House features tongue and groove heart pine floors, as well as tongue and groove board walls and ceilings, with boards measuring approximately 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " - 6". The first floor includes paneled wainscoting measuring approximately 31" in height. The house has plain wood baseboards measuring approximately 5" in the rooms where wainscoting is not present. The walls, ceilings, wainscot and paneling, are currently painted beige and white in all rooms except for room 103 which is being interpreted as a parlor, and features green trim, wainscoting and a fireplace. None of these elements were painted until the 1940s, however paint analysis provides evidence of ochre paint on the floor when vent grates were removed. The interior of the double doors on the west facade (D1) also shows evidence of graining. The interior doors are four paneled, tongue and groove, wood doors, typical of the house's period of construction and Greek Revival style.

Please refer to door and window schedules in Appendix D.

Floors, Walls and Ceilings

The Mable House's flooring consists of heart pine boards, each measuring approximately 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ " - 6" wide, with tongue and groove joinery. Because Mable was a joiner in addition to owning a lumber mill, it is possible that he joined these boards himself. The flooring throughout the Mable House is consistent from room to room with the exception of the finish.

Like the flooring, the walls are constructed out of heart pine using tongue and groove joinery. The walls in several of the rooms including 103, 102, and partially 104 and 105, also feature a paneled wainscot measuring approximately 31" from the floor with the top edge measuring 1" deep.

The ceilings in the Mable House also consist of tongue and groove, heart pine boards with a painted finish.

Doors and Windows



Figure 36 (Photo 25) Room 105 door viewed from inside the room.



Figure 37 (Photo 26) The mortise and tenon construction method is visible on the door's edge, as seen in the photo to right.

The Mable House features four-panel, mortise and tenon doors (Figure 37, Photo 26) with the exception of the central hall and access to the attic space. These doors, seen in rooms 105, 103, 102, and 104, as well as 202 and 203 on the second floor, are typical of the Greek Revival style and are consistent with the time of the house's construction. The doors measure approximately 34" wide.

The first floor central hall (room 101) features two sets of double doors. One features the same mortise and tenon assembly seen throughout the Mable House, however, the double doors on the east side of the hall are modern. The west doors (D1) have recessed panels



Figure 38. Room 101 facing east showing where bathroom was once installed but later removed, photo by James R. Lockhart in 1986



Figure 39. (Photo 27) Upstairs window W15

windows to allow for ventilation on the second floor. It is possible that these extant nine-light windows were the original sashes for the historic first floor windows. The second floor also features six over six, double hung vinyl sash, replacement windows.

Doors and windows are surrounded by similar trim with the exception of the upstairs windows, where a piece of shoe molding has been added (Figure 39, Photo 27). The door and window trim measure approximately 4" wide and ½" deep.

Hardware

Hardware in the Mable House includes doorknobs, rim locks, light fixtures and other accessories related to the house's fire suppression, electrical, HVAC and security systems.

A number of the interior doors feature rectangular rim locks and agatewear (ceramic) or metal (possibly brass) doorknobs (Figure 40, Photo 28 and Figure 41, Photo 29), with the exception of D2, which has only a doorbar on the interior side. The doors swing on modern hinges, and exterior doors such as D3 have modern hardware including a deadbolt lock.

on the interior and raised panels in the exterior. A photograph from the 1986 National Register of Historic Places nomination shows that a single leaf door was once present on the east wall of 101 (Figure 38). Both sets of double doors have four panels and rectilinear, six light transoms. Only the west double doors (D1) features sidelights.

The windows of the Mable House are modern replacements, installed at an unknown time. The first floor features double-hung windows with either nine-over-six (seen on the west wall of room 103) or six-over-six lights. The second floor windows differ from the first floor with tier inclusion of nine-light, fixed windows that are flush with the floor. Historically, these windows would have possibly been pivot casement



Figure 40. (Photo 28) Metal rim lock and doorknob, D7



Figure 41. (Photo 29) Agatewear (fired clay) doorknob, D6



Figure 42. (Photo 30) Light fixtures in room 104



Figure 43. (Photo 31) Light fixtures in room 103

The rooms of the Mable House are illuminated by modern metal and glass light fixtures, possibly meant to convey a historic aesthetic (Figure 42, Photo 30 and Figure 43, Photo 31).

The floors, walls and ceilings have modern plastic or metal switch-plates, electrical outlets, vents, sprinkler heads and motion detectors.



Figure 44. (Photo 32) Fireplace surround and mantel in the Room 103 displaying the brick firebox and hearth



Figure 45. (Photo 33) Sealed firebox in Room 105



Figure 46. (Photo 34) Added white trim to the front façade of the firebox in Room 102



Figure 47. (Photo 35) Smaller and simpler fireplace surround and mantel in Room 203.

Mantels

The fireplace surrounds and mantels in the all of the rooms are typical for early nineteenth century modest houses in that they consists of vernacular, plain surrounds and pilaster elements which stem from classical architecture (Figure 44, Photo 32). The fireplaces and mantels differ in sizes depending on their location in the house. Both of the front rooms, Room 102 and 103, have the largest fireplace surrounds and mantels, while Rooms 104 and 105 located in the back of the house are smaller in execution (Figure 45, Photo 33). However, all of them retain the same design elements.

Room 102 is the only Fireplace surround to be altered; a thin wood frame was added to the front of the brick firebox (Figure 46, Photo 34). Rooms 102, 104 and 202 are the only fireplaces that have brick fireboxes; all the others have been sealed off. Another key difference is that the fireplace surrounds and mantels on the second floor in Rooms 202 and 203 are the smallest out of all the others in the house. They also have thinner and simpler mantels and pilasters that are missing the sprouting capitals found on the other fireplace surrounds (Figure 47, Photo 35).

See molding profiles in Appendix C .

Finishes

One of the most interesting discoveries is that, at one point in time, trompe l'oeil or "trick of the eye" decorative painting, very popular during the period in which the house was built, was employed on some of the architectural elements. The front door and the mantels in both Room 102 and 103 (parlor) are believed to have used a wood-grain finish that would have imitated a richer, more expensive and colorful type of wood. According to Maryellen Higginbotham's Paint Analysis, (see Appendix F) the doors to these rooms were grained and/or varnished and the mantels were painted black and grained or varnished before the walls were painted. This is a common practice for households in the nineteenth century: to paint the mantels black in order to hide smoke discoloration. A less in-depth paint analysis was done for room 104, room 105, and the second floor. This revealed that both the doors and mantels in room 104 and 105 received the same treatment as the previously mentioned room, however, the second floor did not; neither the doors nor mantels were grained or varnished. In the future, a more in-depth analysis should done for room 105, which was the former kitchen, room 104 and room 101b, where the bathroom was, to see if any significant and interesting developmental changes in the finishing for these room could be uncovered.

Unfortunately, all of the faux painting discussed has since been covered over. Currently, the architectural elements of the house such as the mantels, fireplace surrounds, window and door trims, doors, wainscoting and baseboards have been painted white, except for the parlor, room 103, which has been painted a lime green (Figure 49, Photo 37). The wainscot for



Figure 48. (Photo 36) Room 102, an example of the painted white architectural elements of the house



Figure 49. (Photo 37) In room 103, architectural elements are painted green

rooms 103 and 102 featured an original tan paint color. Room 103 was later painted a light blue-gray before it became lime green. The ceiling is also painted white throughout the house; however, the walls in each room are given varying colors of peach, yellow or white.

The floor is currently stained an amber color in all of the rooms except for those at the back of the house, rooms 104 and 105 and those on the second, rooms 202 and 203; those have been painted a dark brown (Figure 50, Photo 38 and Figure 51, Photo 39). The interior of the house, however, remained unpainted until 1942. There is a “witness” panel that demonstrates what the house looked like before it was painted. (Figure 52, Photo 40). Also evident from the interior of the staircase closet, the floor was most possible once painted an ochre color (Figure 53, Photo 41).

First Floor

Room 101 (Central Hall)

Room 101 is the central hallway of the house; it measures approximately 31’ x 11’, including the staircase (Figure 54, Photo 42). The front portion of the central hall and both Rooms 102 and 103 have a ceiling height of 10’-6 ¼” while the rear end of hall, where the shed roof begins, has a height of 7’-0-½”. The door trims, like the doors themselves, are simple in design and execution. Both the staircase and door casing design are typical for modest houses built in the 1840s.

There are six doors in room 101: D1 is the front entry door, which leads out to the front porch, on the west wall (Figure 55, Photo 43); D2, the back door on the east wall, leads to the back porch and the handicap ramp (Figure 56, Photo 44); D6, to the left of the front entry door, leads to room 103 which is the formal parlor; D5 sits directly across from the third door and leads to room

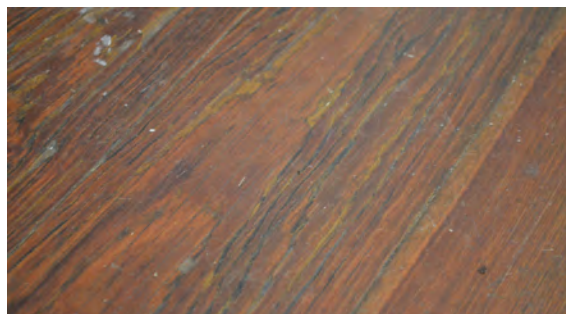


Figure 50. (photo 38) Stained pine flooring in the central hall (room 101)



Figure 51. (photo 39) Painted dark brown floor near the fireplace on the north wall in Room 105



Figure 52. (Photo 40) Witness panel in the central hall (room 101)



Figure 53 (Photo 41) Room 101, the interior of the staircase closet shows an ochre painted floor.



Figure 54. (photo 42) Room 101, central hall.



Figure 55. (photo 43) Front entry doors on west wall, room 101



Figure 56. (photo 44) Back doors on east wall, room 101.

102, a bedroom; D7, to left of the back door leads to room 105; and D8 leads to a broom closet that resides under the staircase on the south wall.

D1 has a rim lock and a brown agateware knob, typical of the period of the Mable House's construction (Figure 57, Photo 45). However, the hinges of the double doors are modern — this is visible by examining the larger footprint left behind by the historic hinges. Other modern pieces added to the front entry doors are a security system on the left door, a door jam, and weather stripping. D8 is a four-paneled door has the same knob and lock system and is of mortise and tenon construction similar to D1, however, it has more unrefined finish on the inside of the door.

The central hall features heart pine wood tongue and groove ceiling, floor, and walls. The heart pine floorboards vary between 5 ¾" and 6" in width and run horizontally from the north wall to the south wall. Some quarter sawn wood floorboards are visible, which have possibly hand-headed nails. There is also evidence that some of the boards were replaced at one point in time. Where the floor and the wall intersect is an off-white, wide beaded baseboard that measures 10 ¼" in width and runs throughout the entire room except for the stair-



Figure 57 (photo 45) Rim lock and brown agateware doorknob for front entryway (room 101)



Figure 58. (Photo 46) The wide beaded baseboard in Room 101.



Figure 59. (Photo 47) Paint analysis performed on the exposed wall switch on the north wall near the hall parlor door.

case which has shorter beaded baseboard of 6 3/8" that may have been a later addition (Figure 58, Photo 46).

The walls are painted white in the central hall; however, a paint analysis done behind a light switch revealed that the wallboards in the past were painted a yellow color (Figure 59, Photo 47). On the ceiling are three sprinklers from the house's fire suppression system, a security system, two electric lights that are non-historic, and cloth wiring above the back entry doors. Ghost marks of the bathroom (installed in 1942 and removed later when the building was turned into a house museum) can be seen near the same back door. Marks from a 6" beam reveal that the bathroom wall was about 7' wide and 5' long and stopped at the beginning of the bedroom door on the north wall. The same 1986 National Register of Historic Places nomination photograph of the Mable House showed a single back entry door on the east wall.

Room 102 (Bedroom)

Room 102 is entered from the right of the front entry doors in the central hall (Room 101) and is approximately 19' x 19' (Figure 60, Photo 48). The heart pine tongue and groove flooring, ceiling, and wallboards are the same width as the central hall. D5, the four paneled mortise and tenon door that leads into the room, has a brass knob and rim lock. Residing on the south wall, is D3, another four-paneled door that leads outside; it has a modern doorknob with a deadbolt and alarm system sensor.



Figure 60. (Photo 48) Room 102, bedroom.

Instead of having beaded baseboards like those found in the central hall, this room has white painted, wood paneled wainscoting of a height of 31" with a 2' trim. The ceiling was done in white as well; it has a modern brass light fixture that is not original to the building. The wallboards of this room have the same thickness as those in the central hall and were painted a peach color at a later date.

The room contains four windows: W1 and W2 can be found on the west wall and W13 is on the south wall near the fireplace. There is a fireplace situated between a window and the side entry door on the south wall. The chimney for this fireplace surround and mantel is completely open: there is no damper. Accompanying the fireplace is a stone hearth.

Room 103 (Parlor)

The room in the northwest corner of the Mable House, immediately to the left of the main entrance (D1) is currently interpreted as a parlor and includes a number of Mable family pieces including an Empire style sofa. This room displays the similar wainscoting, flooring, walls and ceiling as other rooms in the Mable House.

Leading from the entrance hall into room 103 is a four-panel door (D6) with a fired clay doorknob (Figure 61, Photo 49). The flooring in room 103 consists of the same tongue and groove wood boards seen throughout the Mable House, with openings for the modern HVAC system.

The walls of room 103 are similar to the other interior walls in the first floor of the Mable House, with beige painted tongue and groove boards and a paneled wainscot along all walls. However the trim and wainscot in room 103 are painted green as a part of the room's interpretation as a parlor, rather than white as seen in other rooms (Figure 62, Photo 50).



Figure 61. (Photo 49) brown agateware doorknob , room 103



Figure 62. (Photo 50) Room 103, Parlor



Figure 63. (Photo 51) Looking south, from room 103 into rooms 101 and 102

Room 103 also features the same wood, tongue and groove, board ceiling seen throughout the Mable House.

Along the north wall of room 103, between two windows, is a fireplace consisting of white washed masonry firebox and pilaster surround similar to those seen in 105 and 102. The surround and mantel in the parlor are painted green to match the trim and wainscot. This room features four windows, which are visible on the west and north facades, W3 and W4. All four windows are dressed with lace, “glass” curtains as a part of the interpretation of the room (LB took photo—on camera”). All four windows are also surrounded by trim molding, and meet the wainscot on the lower edge.

Room 104 (Office)

This room can be entered through Room 102 and measures approximately 11' x 19' with a ceiling height of 8'-3-61/64" (Figure 64, Photo 52). The room is currently being interpreted as an office and a display area for miscellaneous educational and historical Mable House items. D4, the mortise and tenon door which leads into this room, is a raised four-paneled door instead of recessed like the others; it also has a rim lock with a brass knob. Unlike Room 102, the wallboards in Room 104 are painted yellow while the ceiling maintains the white color found throughout the house. The ceiling and walls show modern fixtures such as power outlets, a light switch and three brass ceiling lights.



Figure 64. (Photo 52) Room 104, office

The white paneled wainscoting exists on all the walls in the room except for the north and west walls that have a wide baseboard instead (Figure 65, Photo 53). There are three windows in Room 104: W12 resides on the south wall near the fireplace and W10 and W11 on the east wall. The fireplace has the same simple surround as Room 102; however, it has been sealed off and not investigated for this report. Accompanying the fireplace is a painted stone hearth.

Room 105 (Bedroom)

Room 105 of the Mable House is located in the northeast corner of the house, on the left side of the central hall (101) when entering from the front door (D1). The room is currently being interpreted as a bedroom. (Figure 66, Photo 54)

The flooring in room 105 consists of tongue and groove wood boards that are seen throughout the Mable House. The boards are currently painted brown, but there is evidence of ochre paint

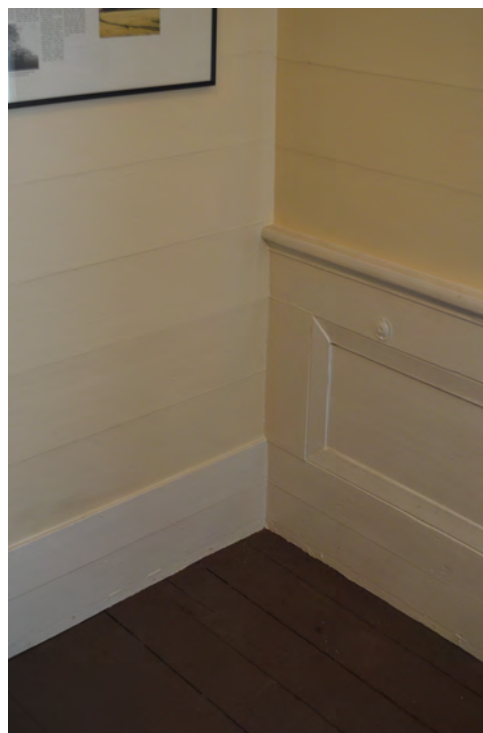


Figure 65. (Photo 53) View of the north wall without the paneled wainscotings, Room 104



Figure 66. (Photo 54) Room 105, bedroom

where the top layers of paint were removed. It is unknown when the floor was painted this color. Several vents and an electrical outlet are visible.

The walls of room 105 are comprised of the painted tongue and groove boards seen throughout the house as well as paneled wainscoting. However, the paneled wainscoting is only seen on the west and north walls. The east and south walls feature similar baseboards as seen in the central hall. Although the interior is believed to be unpainted until 1930, the crown molding, wainscoting, baseboards, and all wall features are now painted in beige and white. In addition to modern light switch panels, the wall also has a motion detector mounted in the southeast corner as part of the Mable House's security system.

Like the other rooms of the Mable House, room 105 has a painted tongue and groove wood board ceiling.



Figure 67. (Photo 55) Room 105, pilaster mantle with sealed opening



Figure 68. (Photo 56) Room 105, East window



Figure 69. (Photo 57) Room 105, agateware doorknob

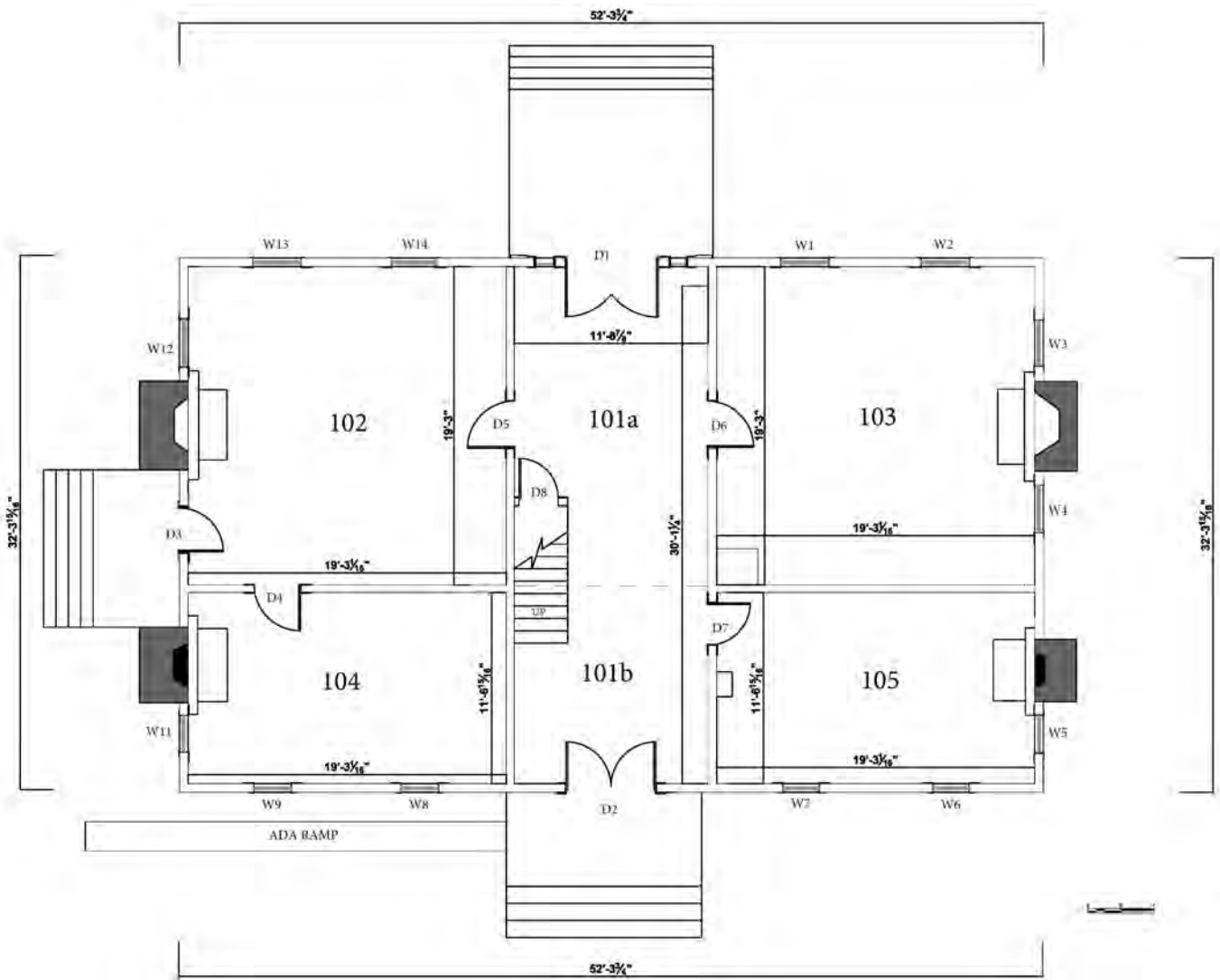


Figure 70. First Floor Floorplan

Room 105 features a similar pilaster mantel as seen in room 102. Rather than the open fireplace seen in room 103, the opening in room 105 is sealed off from the exterior with a board. (Figure 67, Photo 55)

Room 105 features three windows, one on the north wall, and two on the east wall. All window trim is painted white and the windows are dressed with sheer panel curtains (Figure 68, Photo 56).



Figure 71. (Photo 58) Simple square balusters



Figure 72. (Photo 59) From room 201 looking west, up stairs to room 201



Figure 73. (Photo 60) Turned detail on newel post

The historic door (D7) between the entrance hall (101) and room 105 is secured with a metal rim lock and agatewear doorknob (Figure 69, Photo 57).

Stairs

The Mable House stairs are constructed out of wood with trim on the edges of the treads, including the outer string. They have 9 ½” rise over 11” run. The treads, risers, and rounded handrail are painted green-gray, while the balusters and newel post are painted white, as is the outer string to match the wall. Like the railing visible in room 201, the handrail is supported by squared balusters and turned newel posts.

Second Floor

Room 201 (Upstairs Central Hall)

The upstairs central hall is currently being used for storage and does not serve as a part of the house’s interpretation. Room 201 has brown stained tongue and groove flooring, walls, and ceiling consistent with those seen in the rest of the Mable House, and features no win-



Figure 74. (Photo 61) D11, door to 202 from 201

dows. This room also shows a section of unpainted wall space, where a large piece of built-in furniture likely once stood. This section of unpainted boards demonstrates what the walls looked like before the 1942 when they were first painted.

Room 201 includes three doors, leading to 202 and 203 as well as access to the attic space in room 204. Access to the attic, room 301, is provided through the ceiling of room 201. Seen at left when ascending the stairs, leading to room 202 is D11 (Figure 74, Photo 61). On the north wall of the hall, is the entry to room 203 (D10). For access to the room 204, there is a small door on the east wall of the hall (D12) consisting of a single panel. Like the other doors, this door also features trim molding on the top and sides (Figure 75, Photo 62)

There is railing in the southeast corner of the upstairs central hall to separate the second

East Façade

Thick moss grows where the foundation extends beyond the wood siding on the south-east corner. This small ledge is catching and holding moisture, thereby allowing the moss to continue to grow. The earth is damp all along the foundation behind the accessibility ramp (Figure 114, photo 97). The east façade normally receives a high amount of sun exposure, however, the accessibility ramp and vegetation prohibit sunlight from reaching the ground, foundation, and siding behind them. A shrub on the southeast corner of the house also prevents airflow between the ramp and the building (figure 115, Photo 98). The presence of mildew directly coincides with shadows cast by the ramp and does not extend above the ramp.

North of the back porch is a fenced area that houses two HVAC systems and the only operational water spigot on the house. Moisture is also a concern for this area due to an accumulation of leaves as well as shade from the fence. A terracotta drainage hole is immediately north of the porch; this may have been used in an earlier drainage system (Figure 166, Photo 99). The corresponding corner to the south of the porch was inspected as well, but no remnants of a similar system were found.



Figure 114. (Photo 97) Large microclimate of microbial growth and damp ground behind accessibility ramp

A six-inch hole is located at the base of the foundation on the northern corner, and cold air can be felt coming up from the basement (figure 117, photo 100).

The wood elements of the back porch are in poor condition. The base of the northern column is severely deteriorated, especially on the east and south sides of the column that are most exposed to the sun. (Figure 118, Photo 101). The southern column is similarly deteriorated, though not to the extent of the northern column. Algae is growing on the porch edge and wood stairs directly beneath the drip edge of the roof. The porch floorboards and cornice returns of the porch roof are slightly angled down and towards the house, leading water toward the house.

All four windows along the east façade have been replaced with modern windows. Historic wood surrounds are intact, but modern vinyl and wood frames have replaced historic



Figure 115. (Photo 98) Microclimate behind accessibility ramp and bush on southeast corner of structure; foundation extends past siding, creating an opportunity for water to enter the building



Figure 116. (Photo 99) Terracotta drainage hole on east facade



Figure 117. (Photo 100) Hole on northeast corner of east facade that opens to the basement



Figure 75. (Photo 62) Room 201, Southeast corner with door to 204



Figure 76. (Photo 63) Room 201, staircase along south wall showing simple square balustrades and turned detail on newel post



Figure 77. (Photo 64) painted ceilings slope on the east and west sides, allowing for the pitch of the roof, but is flat in the center

floor from the flight of stairs. (Figure 76, Photo 63). The balustrades are painted white, square-cut wood, while the handrail is rounded and painted gray. The newel post is turned.

The tongue and groove, painted ceilings slope on the east and west sides, allowing for the pitch of the roof, but is flat in the center (Figure 77, Photo 64). The ceiling has a modern light fixture as well as sprinkler heads.

Room 202 (South Room)

On the second floor, to the south of the staircase and hall, is room 202 which measures approximately 19' x 19' with a ceiling height of 7'-8-13/32" then it angles out at 40 degrees for 4'-10 3/8" to a height of 4'-9 5/8" at the top of the partially revealed plate (Figure 78, Photo 65). D11, the entry door, has a rim lock with a black knob. There are four windows in the room: residing on either side of the fireplace on the north wall is W18 and W19, and on the east wall are W20 and W21 which are flush with the floor (Figure 79, Photo 66).

The wall under the plate is 4'-3 3/4" in height from the floor to the bottom of the plate. The ceiling has been painted white and contains four sprinklers in each corner and one brass light fixture, all of which are modern additions. The wall is painted yellow and also has a mod-



Figure 78. (Photo 65) Room 202, looking south



Figure 79. (Photo 66) W20 and W21 on east wall are set directly in contact with the floor

ern light switch. Like room 103, the fireplace has also been sealed off, and was not accessible for investigation. Accompanying the fireplace is a painted stone hearth.

Room 203 (North Room)

Located in the northwest corner of the second floor, room 203 is of similar design as 202 on the other side of the central hall. Like 202 and 201, this room is also currently being used as storage, rather than interpretation, and is not open to the public.

Like the other rooms in the Mable House, this room has tongue and groove flooring, walls, and ceiling. The entry into room 203 is a four-panel door with a glass doorknob (Figure 80, Photo 67) and metal rim lock, similar to the locks seen on the first floor.

On the west wall of room 203 are two fixed windows (W14 and W15), which are directly on the flooring, as seen in room 202. The two double hung windows on either side of the north wall (W16 and W17) are surrounded by white painted trim and are dressed with single curtain panels. (Figure 81, Photo 68). It is unknown when these modern windows were installed.

The fireplace of this room features a wood pilaster surround, stone hearth, and is closed to the exterior with a board (Figure 82, Photo 69).

The painted, board ceiling slopes on the east and west sides, while remaining flat in the center, as seen in room 201, the upstairs central hall. The ceiling shows two sprinklers and a modern light fixture.



Figure 80. (Photo 67) Glass doorknob entering room 203 from 201



Figure 81. (Photo 68) The two double hung windows on either side of the north wall (W16 and W17) are surrounded by white painted trim and are dressed with single curtain panels



Figure 82. (Photo 69) Room 203, currently being used as storage



Figure 83. (Photo 70) From room 203, looking south, into rooms 201 and 202

Room 204

Room 204, an unfinished attic space, is accessed through a small paneled door on the east wall of Room 201. This space sits above the shed-roofed portion of the house. The room provides an excellent opportunity to study the underlying structure of the building, which can provide corroborating evidence for its era of construction. Through the access door, one must step down, as the ceiling joists for the shed-roofed portion of the first floor are lower than the joists in the two-story portion of the house. (This corresponds to the dropped ceiling height in Room 101.)

The framing is exposed in Room 204, allowing for an understanding of how the building was put together. Large studs (4" x 6" and 7 ¼" x 9 ¼") support the floor and ceiling joists, which are joined with pegged mortise and tenon (Figure 84, Photo 71). These features are indicative of brace frame construction, a variation of traditional timber frame construction.⁷³



Figure 84. (Photo 71) First floor ceiling joists visible from room 204, Large studs support the floor and ceiling joists, which are joined with pegged mortise and tenon



Figure 85. (Photo 72) Lowered vent and exposed weatherboard on the north gabled end house appears to be historic



Figure 86. (Photo 73) Weatherboards on the south gabled end appear to be modern replacements

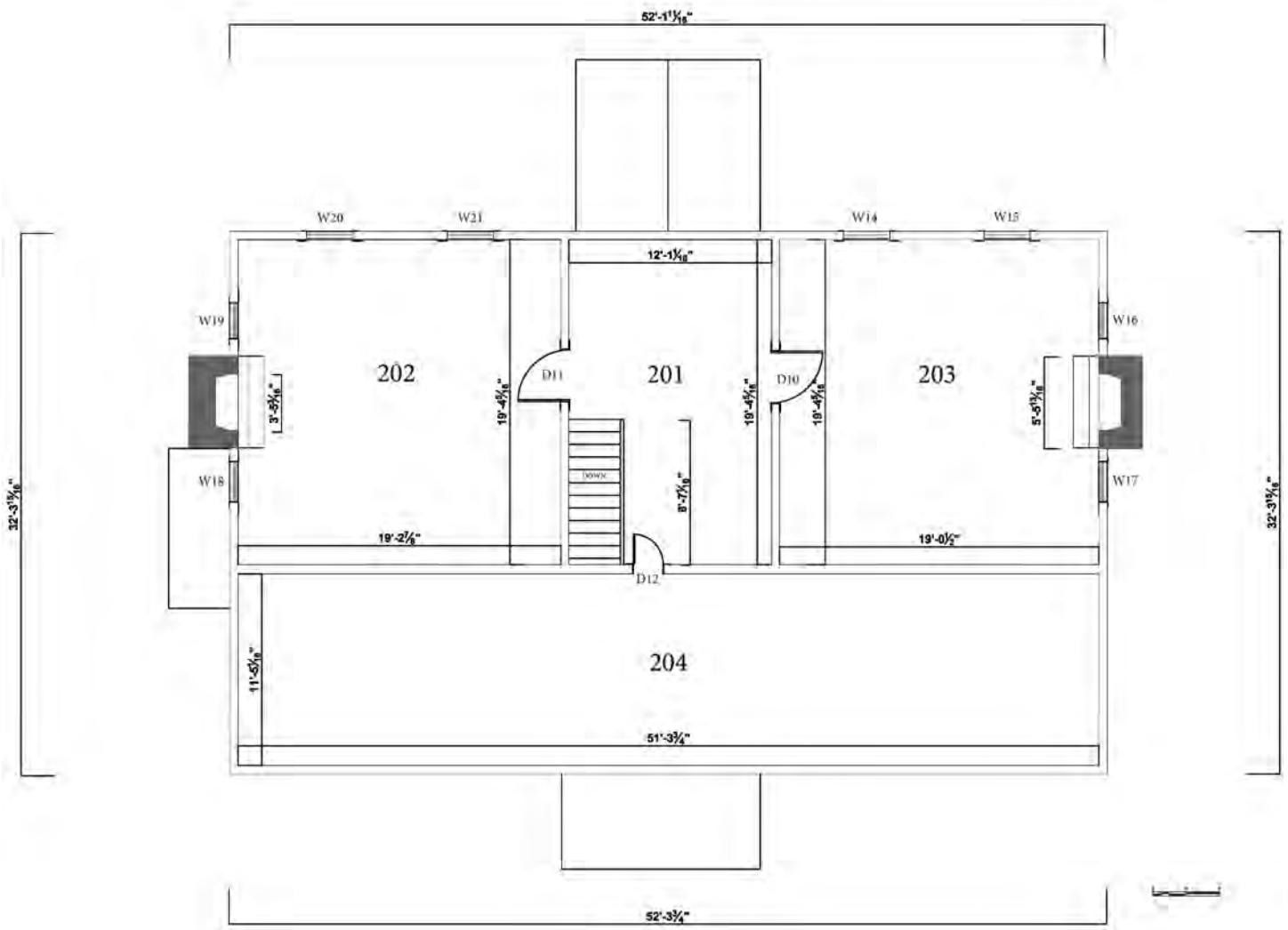


Figure 87. Second Floor Floorplan

The first floor ceiling joists are exposed in Room 204. The wood joists (9 ½" x 2") sit on the top plates of the first floor walls. The wood rafters (3 ¾" x 2") form a 5:12 pitch. There are vertical braces of varying dimensions supporting the rafters. A louvered vent sits in the north gabled end of the house. The exposed siding on the north gabled end appears to be historic (Figure 85, Photo 72), while several weatherboards on the south gabled end appear to be modern replacements (Figure 86, Photo 73).

Loose fill fiberglass insulation has been added in the joist bays. A 100,000 BTU Carrier gas furnace sits on a plywood platform directly in front of the door. There is a pull-chain, single keyless fixture and an electrical service panel opposite the furnace. There are two roof penetrations for furnace ventilation.

Room 301: Attic

The attic space above the two-story portion of the house, room 301, is accessed through a scuttle hole in the ceiling of room 201. The attic runs the full length of the house. (See floor plan for 301) The weatherboard siding is visible at the north and south gabled ends. The height of the attic is 31".

The roof system is easily accessed and visible in the space. Modern plywood is visible on top of wide planked-decking (7½" – 8½" width). The decking sits on historic rafters (3 ¾" x 2"). There is no ridge board at the peak of the rafters, nor is



Figure 88. (Photo 74) Looking south, Rafters in room 301; no ridge board or joinery at peak

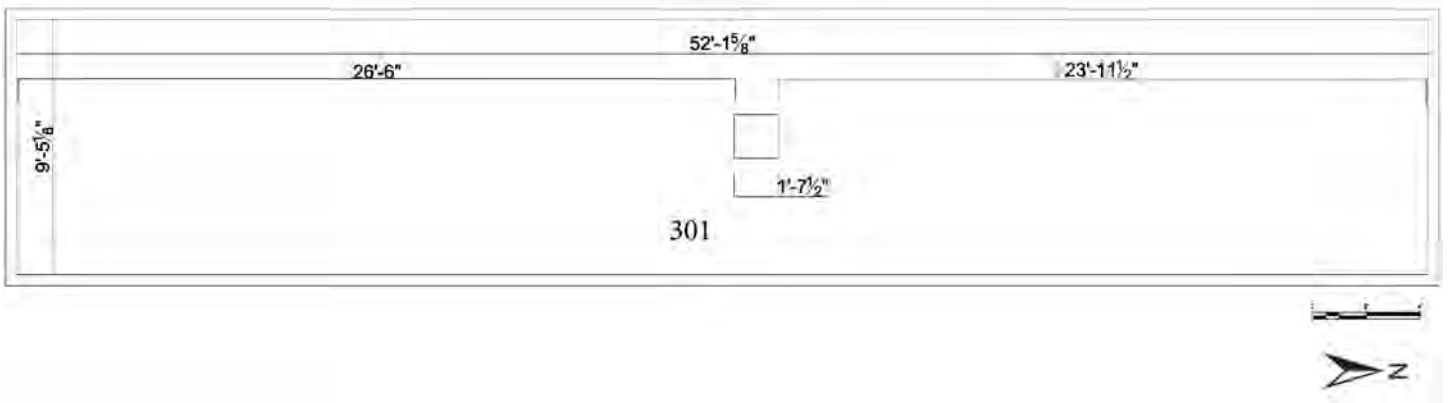


Figure 89. Attic Floorplan

there any joinery or fasters where the rafters meet; they are mitered and simply rest upon each other (Figure 88, Photo 74). The main roof is a 7:12 pitch. There are two modern vents penetrating the east side of the roof.

Where the rafters meet the ceiling joists, a variety of joinery is evident. Some rafters rest upon the top of the joists, others have lap joints, while others are toenailed. The ceiling joists are 2" x 6". The ceiling boards are attached to the joists from below. Both the rafters and joists have reciprocating saw marks, indicative of early sawmills in the first half of the 19th century.

The attic space has 1"-1½" of blown-in fiberglass insulation in the joist bays. Aluminum sheathed electrical conduit runs throughout the attic, as does the sprinkler system.

Systems

The Mable House is wired for modern electricity in all areas, except for room 301. The elec- tric ser- vice vice en- ters ters the house on the the



Figure 90. (Photo 75) Sprinkler system, modern electrical conduit, and fiberglass insulation visible in room 301.

west corner via overhead lines. All visible wiring in the attic and basement is aluminum-sheathed conduit. All rooms feature an overhead light and grounded outlets. There are two service panels — one in the attic and one in the basement.

A pressurized fire suppression sprinkler system runs throughout the building, connecting to the municipal water supply in the basement. From the basement the orange PVC piping runs through a chase built into the corner of room 103, in the joist bays between the

first and second floors, and in both attic spaces, 204 and 301 (Figure 89, Photo 75). Each room has multiple sprinkler heads installed through the ceiling, as does the basement. There are smoke alarms on both floors of the building — none of which were functioning. There is no plumbing for water or sewer on the interior of the house. Only one exterior spigot, on the east façade, is functioning.

There are HVAC systems for each floor of the house, including two furnace units: one in the attic space (room 204) and one in the basement. The attic furnace is a Carrier 100,000 BTU gas furnace (Figure 91, Photo 76). According to the serial number, this furnace was manufactured in September 1984. This unit serves the second floor, with a digital thermostat on the wall of room 201. Its coolant lines run to the basement via a chase in room 105. The basement



Figure 91. (Photo 76) Old furnace in room 204, servicing the second floor.

furnace is a Rheem 100,000 BTU gas furnace, manufactured in July 2010. Its supplies heat to the first floor of the house, with a manual thermostat on the wall of room 101. The condensers for the air conditioning units sit outside on the east side of the building, to the north of the porch.

⁷⁰The foundation and chimneys are parged with a Portland cement based stucco.

⁵⁸According to Elizabeth Cromley, a professor of architectural history at Northeastern University and author of *The Food Axis: Cooking, Eating, and the Architecture of American Houses*, more than 400 books instructed 19th-century Americans on how to plan a functional house with outbuildings, larder and basement root cellar.

⁵⁹Lisa Holly Robbins, writing in *Smokehouses and Root Cellars: Vernacular Architecture in Appalachia*, notes, “These utilitarian structures were vital to the survival, success, and maintenance of a farm. These basic structures are found on nearly every farmstead, regardless of race or wealth of the landowner or renter.”

⁶⁰Timber framing came to North America by way of Europe, where it had been in practice since medieval times. Timber frame buildings consist of large timbers, traditionally hand hewn and squared, that were held together with joinery rather than mechanical fasteners. The frame carries all of the weight of the structure. This method of framing requires a lot of raw material and highly skilled labor. It is also very labor intensive.

A transitional framing style developed in the Northeast (although it spread throughout the country) called braced framing. This evolution from timber framing included diagonal braces at corner posts and reduced dimensions for some of the framing members. The use of hand wrought nails is also common. The hand hewn sills and beams visible in the basement are indicative of these methods, as is the intricate joinery visible in the attic.

These methods were common during the middle of the 1800s, as modern framing techniques – which relied on mass produced standardized lumber and machine cut nails – were just coming into vogue in the Midwest.