

# FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

78-132C	Lexington	AU	LEX.413
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NR IND 10/14/1976

**Town/City:** Lexington

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):  
North Lexington

**Address:** 331 Bedford Street

**Historic Name:** Joshua & Abigail Simonds House  
Simonds Tavern

**Uses:** Present: single family residential

Original: single family residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1795, ca. 1810

**Source:** archival sources, deeds, visual assessment

**Style/Form:** Federal/ 2-sty gable block

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard, brick / wood

Roof: asphalt single

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Garage, early 20<sup>th</sup> c.

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

none

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.60

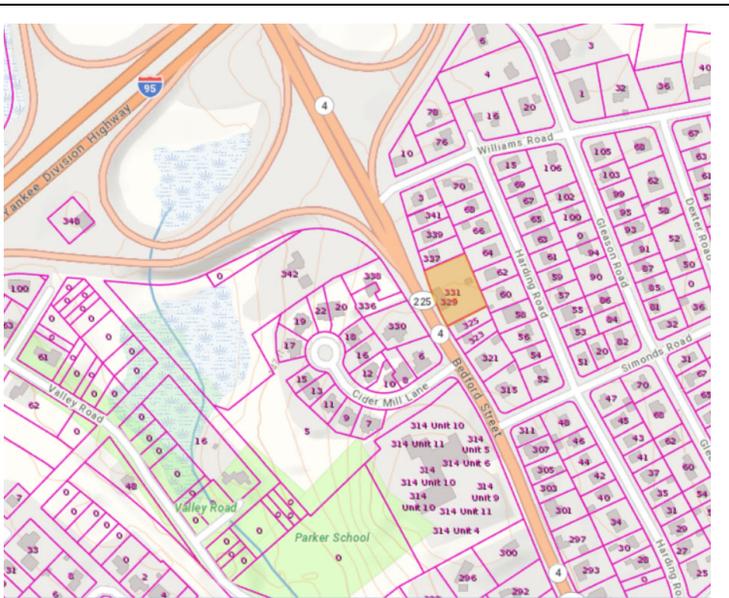
**Setting:** The property is located on a major thoroughfare built out with closely-spaced houses from a broad period of development.

## Photograph



View from west.

## Locus Map



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer.

**Recorded by:** Neil Larson, Walter R. Wheeler, Kathryn Grover  
Neil Larson & Associates

**Organization:** Lexington Historical Commission

**Date:** July / 2021

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

LEXINGTON

329-331 BEDFORD ST.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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 Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Based on fieldwork by Walter R. Wheeler &amp; Neil Larson

The two-story wood frame multiple dwelling at 331 Bedford Street is comprised of two sections, one with a traditional center-chimney plan, built ca. 1795, and an addition with a side-passage plan and a brick end, built ca. 1810. Construction dates for both sections are undocumented and should be substantiated by dendrochronology.

The front (west) and north sides of the house appear to retain original clapboard siding with narrow exposure, and doors and windows are intact. The front façade is composed of a five-bay section with a center entrance aligned with the chimney and a three-bay section with an offset entrance. The entrances to both sections were finished with nearly identical features; the 18<sup>th</sup>-century manner of their design suggest that the doorway of the addition was constructed to match that on the original center-chimney house. The doors are framed with crosseted moldings and enclosed in a Classical architraves composed of fluted pilasters surmounted by entablatures with narrow friezes, dentil bands and bracketed cornices. First-story windows on the front and all windows on the north end are distinguished with cornices, while second-story windows on the front are positioned tight against the roof cornice continuing across both sections consistent with 18<sup>th</sup>-century practice. That shallow cornice is decorated with a dentil band. The end wall has no eaves.

The south end of the house was constructed of brick with two end chimneys flanking a parapet at the top of the gable. With two fireplaces and chimneys located on this end, brick may have been a practical solution to the extent of masonry involved, as well as a fire-prevention measure. However, it also reflects a fashion for brick ends on wood frame houses with end chimneys in the period, of which there are a few other instances in the town. There are three windows on the first story with an indication of a fourth window or doorway near the rear corner, which would balance the arrangement leaving two spaces for end chimneys. Three windows are evenly-spaced across the second story and one attic window is centered between the chimneys. The fenestration on rear (east) elevation is varied and altered as the result of 20<sup>th</sup>-century alterations following the removal of rear wings. A continuous cornice with a dentil band survives at the eave line.

The older section of the building is a remarkably well-preserved example of a center-chimney dwelling from the late-18<sup>th</sup> century. Assigned a conjectural construction date of 1794 based upon a marriage at that time, it could predate that event by some years. Apparently initially occupied as a private residence, it was the centerpiece for a large, productive farm established early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Interior finishes in the front two rooms, particularly the northwest parlor, are intact with cased corner posts and summer beam, plastered ceilings, fireplaces with paneled walls, wainscot, closets, doors and hardware. The conservative style (for ca. 1795) of these features are suggestive of an earlier date of construction; however, the late decades of the 1700s, following the Revolutionary War, was a transitional period both in terms of taste and building practices. The center room in the rear of the plan retains a cooking fireplace and oven; it is flanked by smaller spaces in the traditional domestic manner, with that on the south end adapted to contain a bar that opens on a public room in front of it and a back stair connecting to the basement and the second floor. It is not clear if the tavern function is original to the house or a factor of later alterations. The plan for this tavern is repeated in another tavern of similar date in Northampton suggesting that it was not uncommon for the center-chimney plan house to be used in this manner in the late 1700s (see plan of Warner's Tavern below).

Before the addition of a new attached dwelling in the early 1800s, portions of the house were reserved for the family. The best room in the northwest corner of the first-floor, could have served this purpose along with the front chambers, both decorated, on the second. The public would have entered the house and be directed to the public room in the southwest corner. The front stairs would have been part of the family zone, with lodgers using the stairs in the back corner to access assembly and sleeping rooms in the rear of the plan and in the attic. The kitchen would have been a shared space. Unlike most examples of houses of this type, there is no evidence that there was a stair to the basement located under the main staircase. First floor joists are uninterrupted in this area, making it unlikely that such a stair ever existed. Evidence for an internal stair to the basement at the southeast corner of the house has been obscured by overlays of later materials on the floor and the basement ceiling. There is some evidence, though, that a stair in this location rose from the first to the second floors, and was removed when a bathroom was installed in the second floor. A new stair was then installed in the area formerly occupied by the bar, and a stair to the

*Continuation sheet 1*

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basement was cut through the floor of that feature. The original back stair did not extend to the attic level. The present enclosed stairs that serve that function appear to be contemporary with the initial construction of the tavern.

Conjectural original partitioning of the east range of rooms at the first and second floor levels of the older portion of the building are indicated by dashed lines on the field-drawn plans. The present owner identified the location of a hatch in the floor of the northeast room. This connects to a room in the basement that retains indications of once having had a plastered ceiling. The purpose of this room is presently unknown. The remainder of the basement was unfinished and unpartitioned. A huge, arched brick chimney base is intact.

There is some evidence that a door presently located in the original south wall of the tavern in the small back hall behind the bar predates the construction of the addition. Such a door may have communicated with an attached storage area or barn, or with a covered porch on the south face of the house. Remains of the original south gable end wall are extant in the attic. These indicate that there were two window openings in the south gable, similar to those which remain in the north gable end wall. Evidence of partitioning of the north end of the attic survives in the form of a fragment of a horizontal plank wall and a door saddle, both located in line with the central chimney mass. A brick masonry wall separates the two sections of the house in the basement. Recesses for shelving were created on the south side of the wall.

The roof consists of principal rafters and common purlins supporting vertical roof boards and has a substantial ridge beam. In the older portion of the building, purlin posts are mortised into beams aligned with the rafter pairs, forming a truss. This technique was not followed in the construction of the addition; in that part of the building purlin posts (recycled lengths of electrical transmission pole cross arms, with holes for insulators) were added at an unknown date, possibly to compensate for insufficient resistance to snow loads. Both portions of the roof have diagonal bracing connecting the rafters to the ridge beam, and additional diagonal wind bracing, connecting the rafters to purlins at strategic points. The older portion of the roof has more bracing.

## Ca. 1810 addition

A date of 1810 has been forwarded for the construction of the addition, but the source for this date is unknown. Nevertheless, the date is plausible, based upon the construction details and surviving interior woodworking. After a review of available source material, only dendrochronology will resolve the matter.

The addition extends the full depth of the earlier structure, and its basement and attic are connected to the earlier part of the building. The attic is only accessible from stairs in the back of the original section of the building. The plan of the addition is essentially that of a side-passage rowhouse, with a straight run stair in a hall that extended through most of the depth of the house and two large rooms at each level occupying the remainder of the plan. A small room appears to have been originally located at the east end of the stair hall, and at the second-floor level small rooms are located to the east and west of the stair hall. Doors providing communication to the tavern portion of the structure are located in the wall shared by the two sections. At the first-floor level, doors are located both in front of and behind the stairs giving access to the bar room and the rear stairs of the tavern, respectively. At the second-floor level, two doors are in the same locations in the shared wall.

The high level of finishes in the front parlor suggests that this wing was constructed as a private dwelling, rather than as additional tavern space, although the second-floor doors connecting the two point to the possibility of bedchambers in the newer portion of the building having been pressed into service for hospitality when needed, or conversely, that the family may have continued to use rooms in the tavern. (Ten persons were enumerated in Joshua Simonds household in the 1810 census.)

A curious detail of the new section is the decision by the builder or owner to have the first-floor ceilings shorter in height (7'-7 1/2") than those of the second-floor rooms (8'-4 3/4"). These heights are at variance with the ceilings in the tavern portion of the building, and result in the need to have steps to negotiate the difference in floor levels between the two portions of the building at the second-floor level. Because the elevations of the window sills were kept the same across both parts of the building, windows were placed unusually high on the rear walls of the second-floor rooms, and the first-floor rooms feel uncharacteristically compressed. It is not known why this decision was made, but it does suggest that the second-floor doors that connect the tavern and dwelling may have been an afterthought.

A large post projects from the face of the east and west walls of the addition to the tavern. They divide the frame into two roughly equivalent bays, but do not determine interior partitioning. As in the earlier section of the building, corner posts are cased; but unlike that building, ceiling beams are entirely hidden within the plastered ceilings.

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The present owner indicated the location of what she and her late husband understood to be a door, at the east end of the first floor of the south elevation of the addition. It can be seen that the brickwork has been modified in this location; if not a door, then certainly a window was formerly located there. That the opening is not directly aligned with the window above lends credence to the notion that it served as a door.

## Twentieth-century alterations

The majority of the windows on the east wall in both the original house and the addition have been enlarged. This is evidenced by the interior trim for these openings, which are of simple board type. Some have projecting sills and aprons, and several interrupt pre-existing chair rails and wainscot. These alterations, which date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (ca. 1910-1930) may have occurred following the removal of service appendages to the building at that time. It was noted in the National Register nomination for the building (1976), that "Sheds and outbuildings to house animals were attached to the building and have since been removed." The construction of a two-bay garage at the east side of the property was likely undertaken at the same time as the removal of the "sheds and outbuildings"; it contains 19<sup>th</sup> and possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century material in its construction, including feathered clapboarding and may have made use of materials from the demolished structure(s).

## Alterations ca. 1900-1920

The modernization of the kitchens in both portions of the house occurred in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and may have been contemporary with the removal of the "sheds and outbuildings." This work resulted in the loss of portions of the original partitioning at the first-floor level in both portions of the building. At the south end of the addition, the original cooking fireplace was replaced by an alcove and flue for a range, and built-in cabinets were constructed in the north and south walls. Closets constructed with beaded boards were built in the rear bedroom (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), and in the kitchen. A small closet with paneled door was installed to the west of the fireplace in the rear bedroom of the addition and a range of three closets with plastered walls was constructed in the front bedroom, providing storage accessible from the bedroom, the stairhall and from the small chamber over the hallway. Finally, a small closet was introduced into the first floor of the hallway.

## Installation of bathrooms, ca. 1930

As noted previously, the installation of a bathroom, ca. 1930, in the older portion of the house entailed the removal of the back staircase. At the same time, the lower steps of the stairs to the attic were removed and the south door in the middle room of the east range of rooms was moved to the west, to accommodate the bathroom, which was wider than the stair it replaced. The present back stair was cut into the second floor and through the bar area, although the majority of the shelving and bar were left intact. A door was installed in the east wall of the south chamber, to facilitate access to the new bathroom. In the addition, a bathroom constructed in the room at the top of the stairs at the second-floor level (presumably at the same time as the other bathroom) does not appear to have involved changes to the floor plan.

## Later 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations

The kitchen in the older portion of the dwelling has been remodeled at least twice during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; these changes have resulted in the expansion of the kitchen into areas formerly occupied by the rear hall and stair. More recently (within the past 10 years), at the north end of the first floor, a bathroom has been constructed to facilitate one-floor living by the present owner. This work entailed the removal of some built-in cabinetry that was located in the southeast corner of that room; it was relocated to the west wall of the same room. The entire room, and the outside walls of the bathroom, is sheathed with molded vertical boards. Expansion of the kitchen in the added section resulted in the removal of partitions in the east end of the hall bay. It is not known when this work was accomplished. Similarly, a closet was constructed along the north wall of the chamber above the north parlor of the house at an unknown date.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Researched and written by Kathryn Grover

The house at 331 Bedford Street, for twenty-six years known as Simonds Tavern, was probably built about the time that Joshua Simonds III (1770-1858) married Abigail Cutler in 1794. He was a fourth-generation descendant of Joseph Simonds (1652-1733), who came from Woburn to Lexington with his father-in-law John Tidd about the time he married Mary Tidd in 1680/81, in Lexington. One of the two earliest surviving recorded deeds from Joseph Simonds, both dated 1722, sold to his son Joshua (1686/87-1768) for three hundred pounds "one certain messuage" in Lexington that included "one Mansion House and Barn" and

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ten acres on the east side of a highway and bounded elsewhere by Reed family land and other land of Joshua Simonds. Joshua had married Hannah Poulter by 1721, and he probably acquired the property for his wife and prospective family. Between 1725 and 1760 he acquired at least nine other parcels, together nearly 150 acres, in this North Lexington area.<sup>1</sup>

On one of these parcels one of Joshua Simonds's grandsons, also named Joshua (1770-1858), is said to have built the earliest part of 331 Bedford Street at the time of his marriage to Abigail Cutler in 1794.<sup>2</sup> His father, a Minuteman during the 1775 Battle of Lexington, died in 1805, and the 1810 census lists the younger Joshua Simonds in a household of ten persons.<sup>3</sup> Simonds had earlier operated a tavern at the foot of Fiske Hill, on Massachusetts Avenue (the Monument Street) west of Lexington center, and in 1802 he opened a tavern at his 331 Bedford Street house.

Like the many other taverns in town—including one operated by Joshua Simonds's brother William (1774-1850) on the Concord Turnpike from 1810 to 1828—Simonds's tavern catered largely to drovers moving sheep, cattle, and turkeys from the north and west to Boston slaughterhouses and markets. In March 1813 the *New-England Palladium* and *Boston Commercial Gazette* both reported the death at Joshua Simonds's Lexington house of Vermonter Abner Holbrook, who had been on his way to Boston "with a load of pork" when he died at the age of forty-two.<sup>4</sup> In 1810, four years after Bedford Street was completed west from Lexington center, Simonds built an addition on the south side of the existing house and placed the bar room where the old and new houses joined. In an 1889 paper he read before the Lexington Historical Society, Edward P. Bliss described the Simonds tavern on Bedford Street:

Up in North Lexington there is a neighborhood of well-built white houses. Across the road from the two centuries old cottage is the Simonds Tavern, built with brick ends. It has two large chimneys and two front doors, between which was the bar-room, doubly easy of access. There were two kitchens; and there must have been good business here, for it was enlarged at the southern end. There was a large room which could be used as a dance-hall, in which was a double row of beds. In the parlor at the northern end the antiquarian will enjoy the panelling, the heavy cornice, and especially the chimney mantelpiece, high and narrow, and under it a generous fireplace, framed in blue and white Dutch tiles with Bible pictures.<sup>5</sup>

The 1820 census lists Joshua Simonds in this neighborhood (between the Christopher and Mary Reed households) with eight in his household, three of them working at farming. He and his wife Abigail had six children between 1795 and 1810—Joseph, Abigail, Franklin, Joshua, Hannah Maria, and Otis. In 1828 Simonds is said to have stopped operating 331 Bedford Street as a tavern, though his 1830 household included ten persons (two more than comprised his family), and the building reverted to residential use thereafter.

In February 1844 Joshua Simonds conveyed his real property to his sons Joshua Jr. (1801-74) and Otis (1810-77) for ten thousand dollars. The first of twelve parcels he conveyed was his Lexington house and one hundred acres of land. On the same day father and sons executed an indenture leasing part of what was "called the Tavern House" to Joshua Sr. Their father was to have use of the south end of the house, "including all the new part so called and cellar under same," as well as a horse, a cow, a

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Simonds, Lexington, to Joshua Simonds, Lexington, 19 January 1722, MSD 33:361 (365 in index); Joseph Simonds to Joshua Simonds, 4 February 1725, MSD 33:362 (366 in index, and including a dwelling); Joseph Simonds to Joshua Simonds, 29 July 1730, MSD 33:364; Lemuel Simonds to Joshua Simonds, 27 February 1760, MSD 57:495; Joseph Hill, Billerica, to Joshua Simonds, 1 June 1759, MSD 57:494; Samuel Raymond, Cambridge, to Joshua Simonds, 18 August 1760, MSD 58:97.

<sup>2</sup> The construction is stated in MHC building inventory form filed in 1976, and in a 15 November 1976 article from the *Waltham Times* appended to that form. The first Joshua Simonds (1686/87-1768) left a very large estate to his widow Hannah and his children Joshua, Joseph, Sarah (Bowman), Hannah (Brooks), and Elizabeth (Reed), including one tract with buildings, 19 acres of woodland, land on "Mine Hill," half his sheep pasture on the Woburn town line; half of his clothing, livestock, and cash; to son Joseph he gave his dwelling house except that part left to his widow. His son Joshua (1736-1805) died intestate with seven parcels totaling more than 90 acres valued at \$9120; his son Joshua as administrator paid \$828.77 to each of his six siblings.

<sup>3</sup> Joshua Simonds (1736-1805) had been one of four Lexington men who, upon learning of the imminent arrival of British troops, went to the town's meetinghouse to refill their stocks of powder, and they had moved two quarter casks from the upper loft to the first gallery and opened one when the troops appeared in front of the meetinghouse. The British killed one of two men who tried to escape the meetinghouse, while Simonds lay down beside the open cask, propped his gun on top of it and "determined, as he afterward frequently declared, to blow up the house, in case any of the regulars had come into the gallery." See "Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775," *Congregationalist*, 22 April 1875, 3; see also *Christian Watchman* 29 September 1859 and *True Flag* (Boston), 22 October 1859.

<sup>4</sup> *New-England Palladium*, 5 March 1813, 3; *Boston Commercial Gazette*, 8 March 1813.

<sup>5</sup> Edward P. Bliss, "The Old Taverns of Lexington," *Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society* 1 (1889), 78, 81-83.

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chaise and sleigh, the yard at the end of back of the new part of the house, a garden and wood shed, and the Hill lot where he could cut wood for fuel. Sons Joshua and Otis retained the other part of the property. The three executed a third agreement that day in which the sons agreed to pay five thousand dollars to their father if they should fail to provide him "a good support and maintenance in sickness and health."<sup>6</sup> Joshua Simonds Sr. died in 1858, by which time these two sons had disagreed about the partition fences between their lands, and by 1860 Otis and his wife Ellen Crosby had moved to Wilmington to live with his married sister Abigail and her husband Michael Crosby, who in the early 1850s had lived just south of Joshua Jr. on Bedford Street.<sup>7</sup>

Joshua Simonds Jr. apparently rented the Simonds Tavern property. In 1860 Maine native and farm worker John M. Hanscom very likely lived in the house with his wife Nancy, daughter Mary, and a Scots immigrant farm worker, and he was living there in 1862 when the farm was to be sold at auction. On May 6<sup>th</sup> of that year auctioneer William A. Lane advertised "the old Simonds Tavern Farm, on Bedford Road," and offered a full description of it in *New England Farmer*:

This well known farm is only 1 ¼ miles from the Lexington Depot, schools, churches, post offices, stores, &c., 11 miles from Boston; considered one of the best farms in town, 70 acres in one parcel, bounded on the one side by the new Bedford road, and on the other side by the old Bedford road, divided by good stone walls, into mowing, meadow, tillage, orcharding, pasture, &c., well supplied with never-failing springs of water, a fine growth of wood, a valuable meadow, a large apple orchard which has produced 700 bushels in a season, and a variety of other kinds of fruit; this farm produces a large amount of best English hay, is a superior milk farm, and in every sense of the word a 'Farmer's Farm,' and is well known in Lexington, having been in the Simonds family over 60 years; located between two roads, having a large frontage on both sides, would make two good farms; 2 ½ story house, brick ends, convenient for two families; carriage-house, wood-sheds, two barns over 40 by 60 feet, supplies with water by aqueduct. . . . The farm will be sold in one parcel.

The advertisement of the farm auction in Boston Morning Journal noted that it "will be sold cheap," at \$5500 though its assessed value was then \$6700.<sup>8</sup> Whether the farm sold at auction is unclear. The 1865 census lists Joshua Simonds as a 69-year-old farmer in this neighborhood and living with his wife Lucy J. Winn, a native of Salem, and their children Marcus and Abby. By 1872 the Simonds property was divided into at least five lots, and Joshua Simonds sold the house and 42 acres for \$7850 to Carrie L. Barton, wife of carpenter and builder Charles Fletcher Barton of Somerville; she transferred it the same day to Alvan Whitaker (1818-1902) of Weare, New Hampshire, for \$8250.<sup>9</sup> The 1875 Lexington map attaches the name A. Whitaker to the 331 Bedford Street house.

Alvan Whitaker was a farmer, and he and his wife Elizabeth M. Hadley (or Headley), also from Weare, had four children, Emma E., Eliza Adelaide, William H., and Elizabeth Esther. The 1880 census lists Whitaker in this neighborhood with his wife, daughters Esther and Emma, and Emma's husband Elbridge W. Glass, who had married the same year. The agricultural census for 1880 lists Whitaker with 28 tilled acres and 15 acres of meadow and a farm value of \$8500.

In 1898 Alvan Whitaker deeded 331 Bedford Street to his son William and went to live with his daughter Emma Glass on Parker Street; he died in Lexington in February 1902.<sup>10</sup> William H. Whitaker, who had married Annie Flora Wetherbee in 1880, was a grader and jobber and is listed in 1890s Lexington directories as living on Bedford Street in the fourth house north of Hancock Street. The 1900 census lists him and his wife with their daughters Bertha E. and Ethel F. in the Bedford Street house with three boarders, one a Vermont-born driver, another a farm laborer, and the third a day laborer. In 1907 William Whitaker's wife Annie died, and in 1908 he married Susie Goss Green, a Philadelphia-born widow who had married twice before. Whitaker and his family lived on Bedford Street but in a house they rented from Charles F. Smith; in 1910 that house was destroyed by fire, and he may have moved back to the 331 Bedford Street. By 1913 he was probably living there with his second wife and daughters

<sup>6</sup> Joshua Simonds to Joshua Simonds Jr. and Otis Simonds, 23 February 1844, MSD 437:514; Joshua Simonds Jr. and Otis Simonds, indenture with Joshua Simonds, 24 February 1844, MSD 624:225; Joshua Simonds Jr. and Otis Simonds to Joshua Simonds, 23 February 1844, MSD 624:226.

<sup>7</sup> See MSD 824:597 and 826:289 about this fence dispute and the resolution achieved by Lexington fence viewers.

<sup>8</sup> "At Auction. A Farmer's Farm at Auction!" *New England Farmer*, 3 May 1862, 3; see also "For Sale—A Farm in Lexington," *Boston Morning Journal*, 24 April 1862, 1. Interested parties were to contact Lane, "J. M. Hanscom on the premises," or William A. Prescott in Boston.

<sup>9</sup> Joshua Simonds to Carrie L. Barton, Somerville, 29 April 1872, MSD 1207:156; Carrie L. Barton, Somerville, to Alvan Whitaker, Ware NH, 29 April 1872, MSD 1242:488. John M. Hanscom had moved to Bedford by 1870 and died there in 1879.

<sup>10</sup> Alvan Whitaker, Lexington, to William H. Whitaker, Lexington, 18 November 1898, MSD 2716:314.

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Bertha and Ethel, all listed on Bedford Street.<sup>11</sup> By 1920 daughter Ethel had married dairy farmer George William Bean, and they appear to have been living at 331 Bedford with their two-year-old daughter Florilla. In 1921 her father William Whitaker died, but no account of his death or funeral ascribes a house number to the Bedford Street home in which he died.

In 1930 George William and Ethel Whitaker Bean were living at what was then numbered 241 Bedford with children Florilla and William. The Beans owned a great deal of property in this neighborhood and may have mortgaged 331 Bedford Street to Middlesex Institution for Savings in 1931 and mortgaged other parcels on both sides of the street totaling nearly 60 acres in 1940. In January 1936 the Beans defaulted on their local tax payments on two parcels, one of them more than 40 acres and buildings on the northeast side of Bedford Street and then numbered 553-559 Bedford, and another 27 acres on the southwest side of Bedford Street.<sup>12</sup> Though no deed has yet been located, the chain of title indicates that 331 Bedford Street must have been acquired about this time by piano manufacturer and real estate developer Hallie Carroll Blake, who lived on Merriam Street in Lexington until he died about five weeks later, in late February 1936.<sup>13</sup>

In his will Hallie Blake left the Simonds Tavern property to his wife Lulu M. Blake, who sold it in 1944 to Russell S. and Beulah P. Davenport of Newton; this deed is the first to identify the building on the parcel as "Simonds Tavern."<sup>14</sup> The Blakes had been acquiring property in Lexington since at least 1910, among them the Hayes estate on Hancock Street, large parcels in Oakmount Park (including their own home at 50 Merriam Street), and a "large old colonial mansion" at the corner of Hancock Street and Edgewood Road.<sup>15</sup> Russell S. Davenport (1902-69) was a wholesale florist who also served in the mid-1930s as secretary and treasurer of the New England Carnation Growers Association; he and his wife Beulah Plummer Davenport had five children. The Davenports owned 331 Bedford Street until 1952, when they sold it to Howard D. and Elizabeth F. Butler of Richmond, Vermont; they too owned it for less than a decade. In March 1959 the Butlers sold it to Frances E. Rahn, who four years later sold it to John J. and Jean D. Shanahan.<sup>16</sup> The Shanahans preserved much of the original detail of the historic house. In 2013 John J. Shanahan was living in Scituate when he deeded the property to his former wife in 1987. In 2013 Jean DeLeo Shanahan deeded the property to herself and two of daughters, Carol and Laura, as trustees of Shanahan Family Lexington Realty Trust. The trust was the owner of record of 331 Bedford Street in 2021.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Barely Escapes Death," *Boston Globe*, 30 July 1910, 2; "Friends Surprise Them," *Boston Globe*, 28 February 1911, 8, states that Whitaker and his wife were given a surprise party in "their new home in North Lexington," which may indicate that they were not occupying 331 Bedford Street.

<sup>12</sup> George W. and Ethel F. Bean, Lexington, to Middlesex Institution for Savings, 25 September 1934, MSD 5864:265; Town of Lexington, 24 January 1936, MSD 6013:125. The 1940 the census lists Beans at 354 Bedford Street. By then George Bean owned and operated a golf driving range, daughter Florilla was a file clerk, and son George, then seventeen, worked at a gas station. Ethel F. Bean to Middlesex Institution for Savings, 11 September 1931, MSD 5590:38; on the taking see MSD 6013:123 and 125 The town endeavored to sell both at auction, but when no bidder emerged for either property the town acquired both by tax title on 24 January 1936

<sup>13</sup> No grantee indexes for Middlesex County in these years is included among Middlesex registry records on FamilySearch, and the Southern Middlesex Registry was closed to the public during the research on this building.

<sup>14</sup> Lulu M. Blake to Russell S. and Beulah P. Davenport, Newton, 9 December 1944, MSD 6823:76.

<sup>15</sup> In 1936 Lulu Blake was involved in a dispute with the town over scores of insurance policies her late husband had placed in trust at Lexington Trust Company but taken from the bank and marked "withdrawn and void." The town claimed that Blake had meant for the policies to be used after his death for various town improvement projects, but Lulu Blake's claim that the policies, valued at almost \$600,000, was upheld in Suffolk County Superior Court in December 1936. See "Bank in Attempt to Enforce Trust," *Boston Herald*, 6 May 1936, 15; "Lexington Widow Fights Will Suit," *Boston Herald*, 8 Oct 1936, 17; and "Decision Costs Town \$600,000," *Boston Globe*, 15 Dec. 1936, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Russell S. and Beulah P. Davenport to Howard D. and Elizabeth F. Butler, Richmond VT, 26 February 1952, MSD 7868:259; Howard D. and Elizabeth F. Butler to Frances E. Rahn, 26 March 1959, MSD 9355:292; Frances E. Rahn to John J. and Jean D. Shanahan, 24 June 1963, MSD 10296:542. John Joseph Shanahan may have been the son and namesake of Lexington milk dealer John J. Shanahan, whose father Patrick began a dairy operation on Pleasant Street in East Lexington by 1922.

<sup>17</sup> John J. Shanahan, South Yarmouth, to Jean D. Shanahan, 331 Bedford Street, 16 October 1987, MSD 18789:137; Jean D. Shanahan, 332 Bedford Street, to Jean D. Shanahan and Jean D. Shanahan, Carol O. Shanahan, and Laura D. Shanahan, trustees Shanahan Family Lexington Realty Trust, 23 February 2013, MSD 61339:41. This deed identifies 331 Bedford Street and Lots 7, 8, 9 and Plan 343:1o of 5 June 1924, which is not currently accessible on the Southern Middlesex County Registry website.

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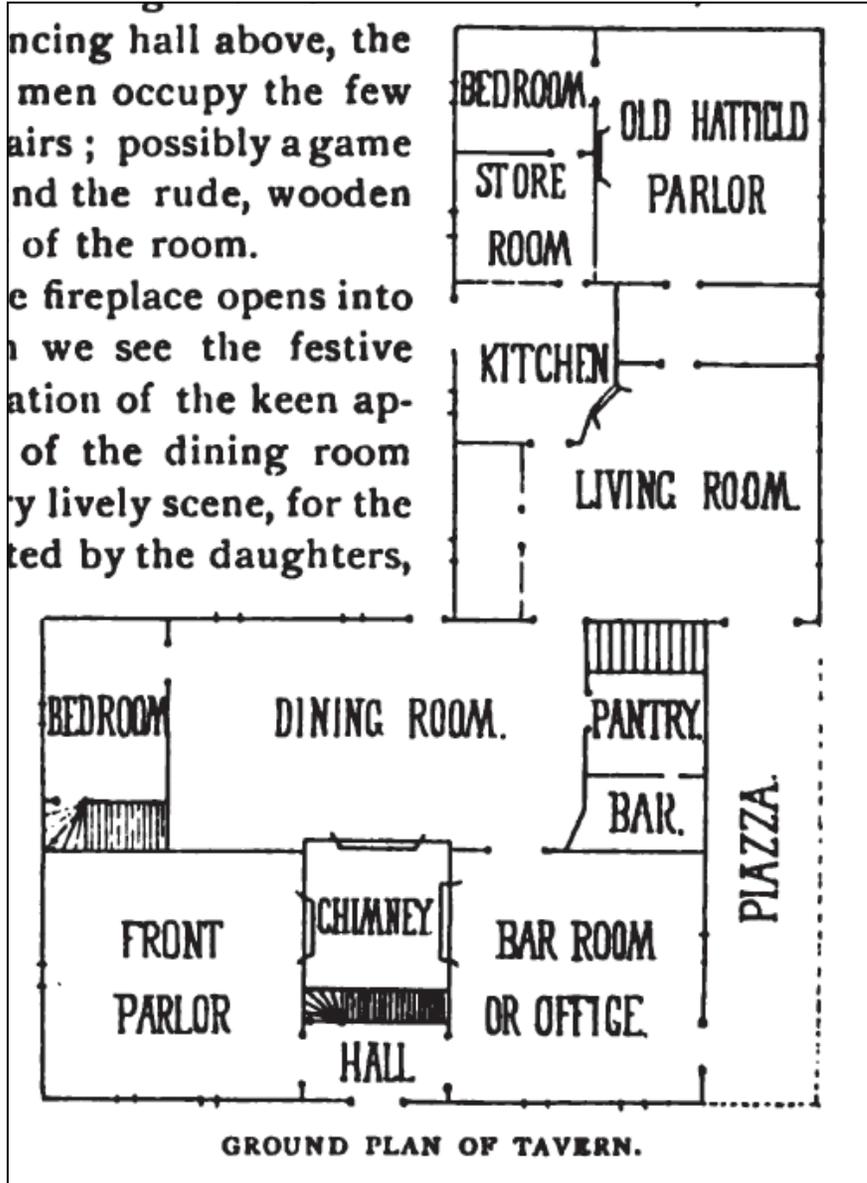
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**FIGURES**



Plan of Warner's Tavern, Northampton, 1812. From Charles A. Sheffield, *History of Florence, Massachusetts* (1894), 48.

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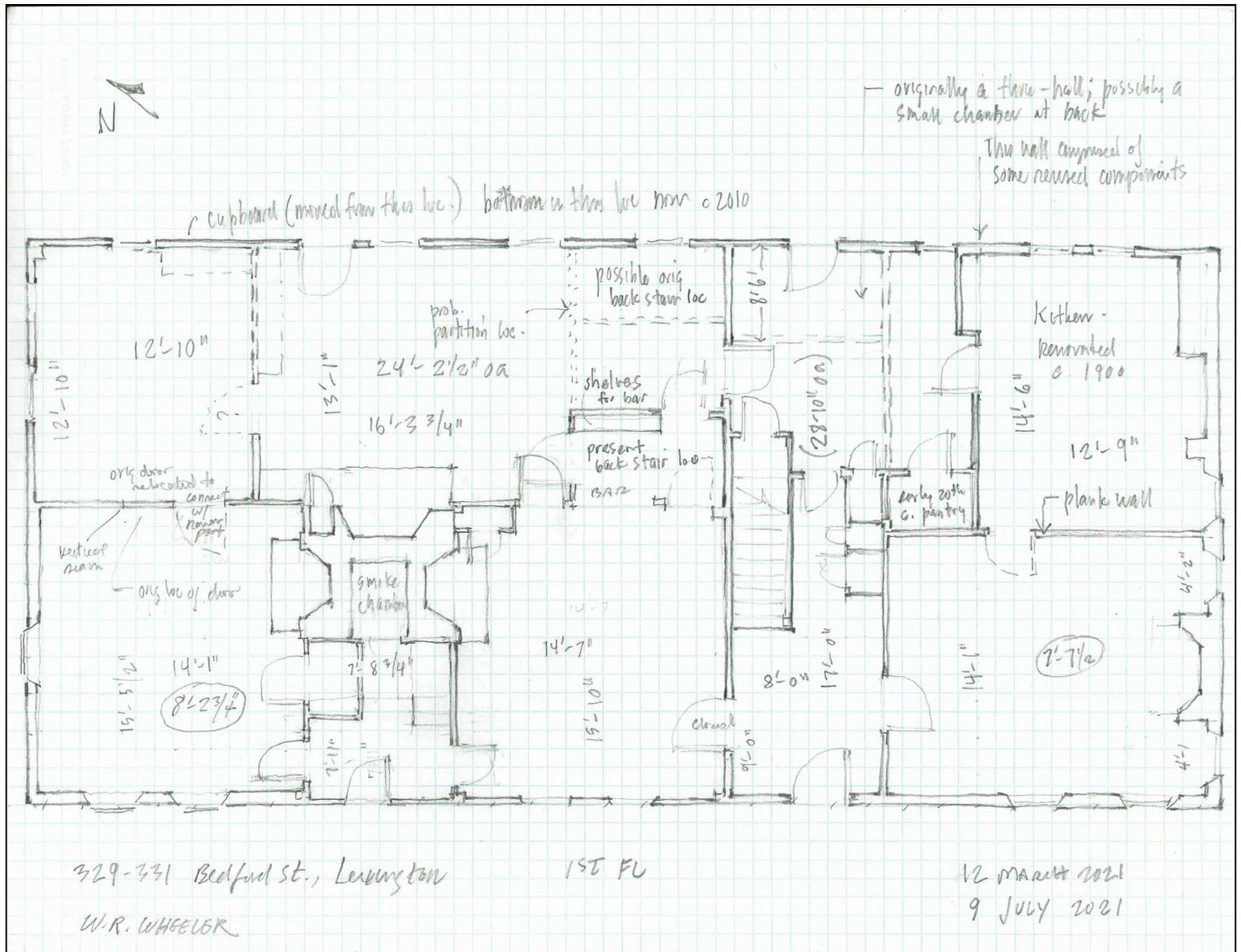
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First floor plan with field notes. Walter R. Wheeler, 2021.

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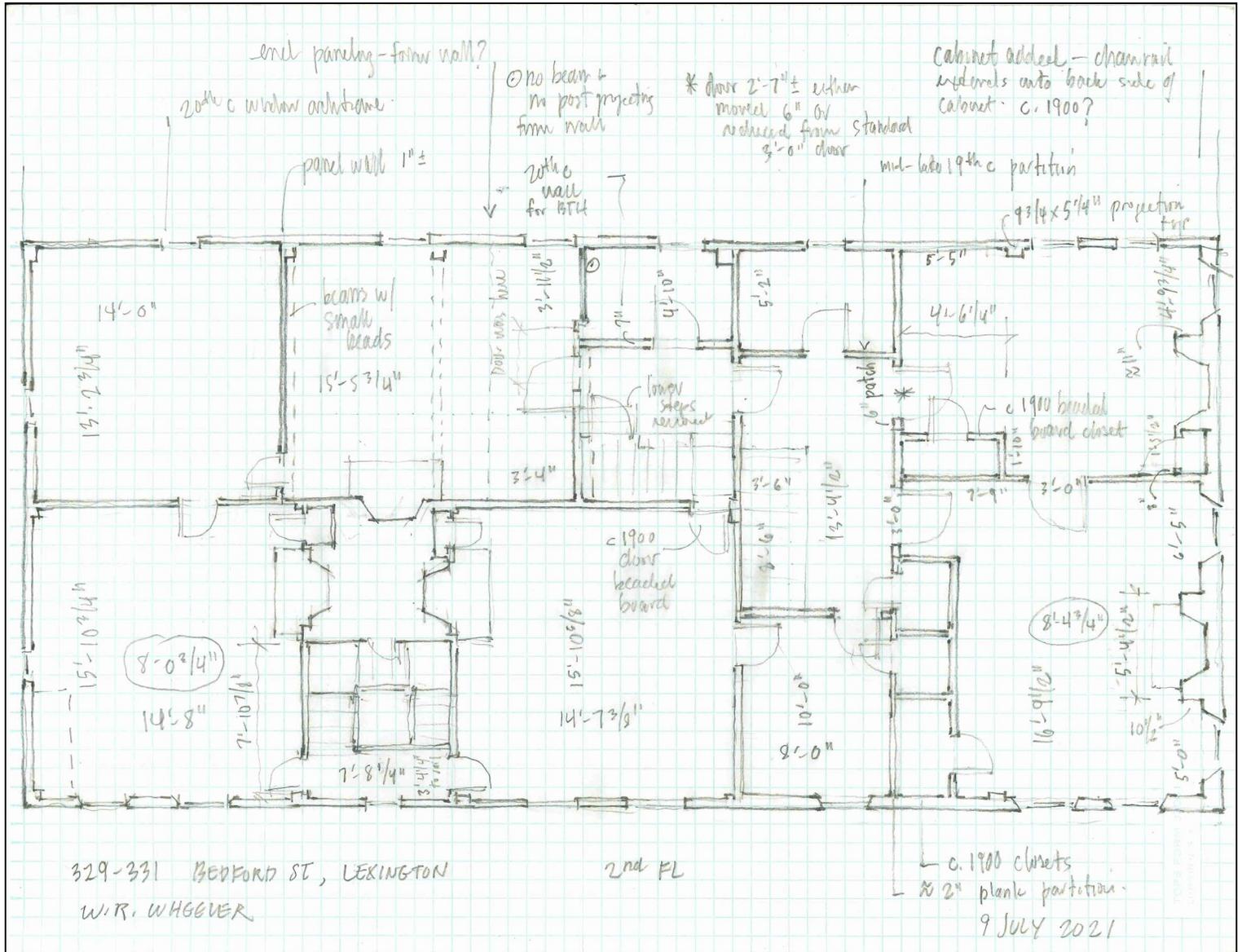
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Second floor plan with field notes. Walter R. Wheeler, 2021.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS (Credit Walter R. Wheeler, 2021)**



View from SW. Original ca. 1795 house/tavern with center chimney and five-bay façade on left with ca. 1810 addition with three-bay façade and brick end on right.



Detail of doorway into ca. 1795 house



Detail of door handle

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View from NE. Original clapboards and window cornices on end and front; altered on rear.



Detail of original clapboards with lapping ends.

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View from east. Elevation once had wings attached; removed in 20<sup>th</sup> century with fenestration altered.



View from SE. A first-story door or window once occupied space at rear of brick wall.

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NW parlor looking south showing chimneybreast and entry lobby and barroom through door.



Detail of window, NW parlor, showing wall thickness to conceal posts and cornice.

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Detail of window, NW parlor showing trim, paneling and chairrail.



Detail of chimneybreast, NW parlor.

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View of staircase in entry lobby in front of center chimney..

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Paneling on fireplace wall, SW barroom.



East wall SW barroom showing covered bar opening under mirror.

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SW corner of barroom showing corner post, wainscot and part of doorway connecting to addition  
With ca. 1810 trim.

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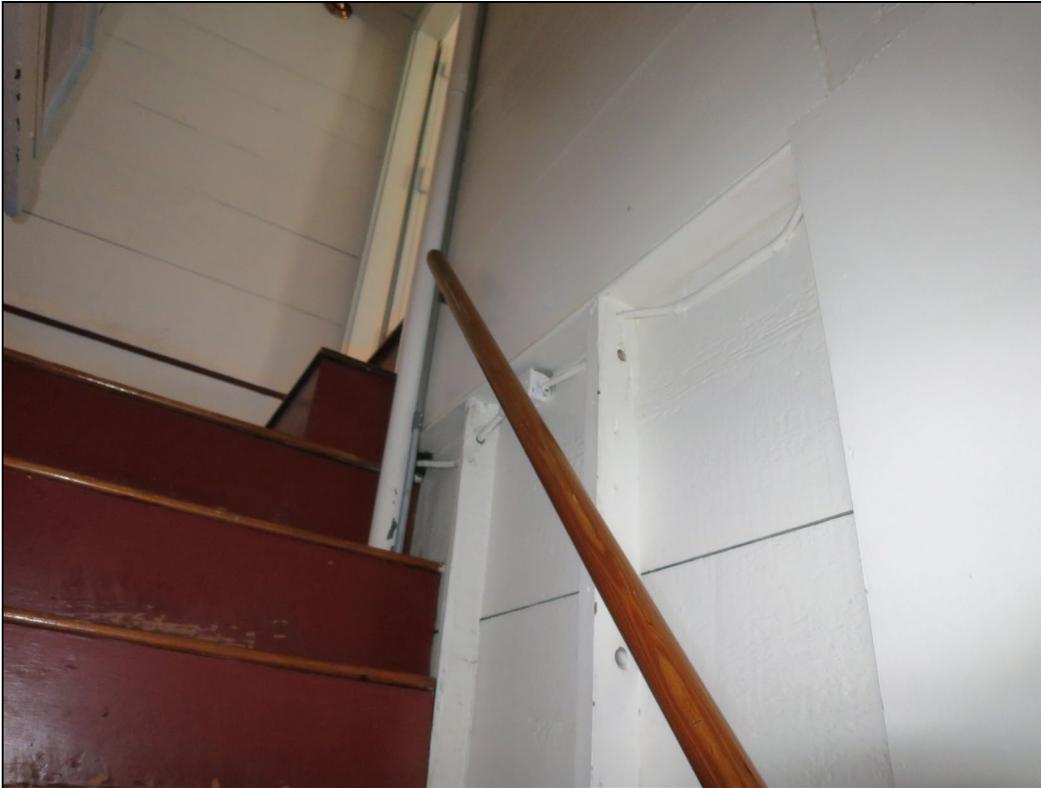
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Detail of interior of bar showing service opening on right and added stairs.



Interior of bar showing original shelves on left and added stairs on right.

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Kitchen looking north showing fireplace and oven; doorway to NE room in rear. Note beam exposed in ceiling.



Kitchen looking south with bar/stair enclosure on right; location of original back stairs in vicinity of refrigerator.

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NW chamber looking south.



SW chamber looking north.

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NE chamber looking south showing paneled wall between it and assembly room.



Rear chamber or assembly room looking west.

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Rear chamber looking south to enclosure once containing back stairs now a bathroom,



Side passage of addition looking west to front entrance.

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Side passage of addition showing stairs.

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Front parlor of addition showing details of mantel and chairrail



Rear kitchen in addition looking SE showing location of original cooking fireplace.

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Second-story front chamber in addition.



Second story front chamber in addition showing carved frieze on mantel.

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Second-story hall in addition showing room in rear and doorway to back of original house.



Roof framing and center chimney looking north.

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Roof framing in addition looking south.



West side of attic in addition looking north to framing for south wall of original house.

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Frame of original south wall of house looking south.



Basement of original house showing reinforced archway in base of center chimney.

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Addition basement showing arched base of front chimney and intact floor framing.