

Architectural And Historic Survey



Identification

STREET ADDRESS: 605 Preston Place
 MAP & PARCEL: 5-111
 CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK: 2-502
 PRESENT ZONING: R-3
 ORIGINAL OWNER: Sally Ann McCoy, et al
 ORIGINAL USE: Residence
 PRESENT USE: Rental Property (4 apartments)
 PRESENT OWNER: Preston Court, Inc.
 ADDRESS: c/o Mrs. J. L. Hartman
 Box 254
 Charlottesville, Virginia

HISTORIC NAME: Wyndhurst
 DATE / PERIOD: 1857
 STYLE: Vernacular
 HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES: 2 storeys
 DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA: 100' x 171.7' (18,880 sq. ft.)
 CONDITION: Good
 SURVEYOR: Bibb
 DATE OF SURVEY: Winter 1980
 SOURCES: City/County Records
 Mrs. J. L. Hartman

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Wyndhurst is a typical 2-storey, 3-bay, double-pile white weatherboarded house with Greek Revival details. It is set on a high foundation of brick laid in 5-course American bond. It has a low-pitched hip roof covered with standing-seam metal with projecting eaves and boxed cornice. Capped chimneys centered between the two rooms on each side of the central hall serve fireplaces in all the original rooms. Windows are double-sash with architrave trim and black louvered shutters, 6-over-9 light at the first level and shorter 6-over-6 light at the second. A one-storey entrance porch covers the center bay of the facade. It has a low-pitched hip roof with boxed cornice and plain frieze, four square pillars with inset panels, and a simple balustrade. The 4-paneled Greek Revival style entrance door has sidelights over panels and a rectangular transom. Interior doors are also 4-paneled with architrave trim. Ceilings are quite high. A 3-flight open stair with turned newels and simple balustrade rises from the extremely wide central hall. A small one-storey addition with bowed end covers the south (front) bay of the east elevation. Its windows are 6-over-6 light. A one-storey enclosed sun parlor with wide 8-over-8 light windows covers the north bay of the east elevation. These two additions are connected by a one-storey hyphen and both have foundations of brick laid in stretcher bond. A complex series of one- and two-storey additions covers the rear elevation. They are weatherboarded and set on cinderblock and concrete foundations. Some windows are 2-over-2 light. There is one circular-headed window at the second level.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

In 1857 Sally Ann McCoy et al purchased a 102½-acre tract that had been part of the Opie Norris estate (ACDB 56-214). Tax records indicate major construction activity, probably this house, in 1857. She sold the entire farm to Thomas L. and Anna M. Preston in 1863 (ACDB 61-156). The house was raided by Union soldiers during the brief occupation of Charlottesville in March 1865. The farm was subdivided in 1892, (Preston Heights plat ACDB 97-346), reserving ten acres with the house. After the deaths of Colonel and Mrs. Preston, that was also subdivided (City DB 34-28 and 478). The house had four owners between 1919 and 1930 when it was purchased by Charity S. Pitts (Mrs. William Pitts) (DB 70-489). For many years Mrs. Pitts operated a popular boarding house for University students. The east side additions and the first two-storey rear addition had been made by the Prestons; most of the others were probably made by Mrs. Pitts. Preston Court, Inc., which had built Preston Court Apartments on what had originally been Wyndhurst's front lawn, bought the house when Mrs. Pitts retired in 1970 (DB 314-104) and divided it into four apartments, retaining most of the original fabric. Additional References: ACDB 106-139, 126-130; ACWB 32-95; City DB 30-396, 34-349, 35-305, 57-334, 58-358, 59-485.

SIGNIFICANCE

Wyndhurst was the manor house of the 100-acre farm now comprising the Preston Heights section of the city. It was raided by Yankee soldiers during the brief occupation of Charlottesville in March 1865. It is a large vernacular structure with Greek Revival details.

LANDMARK



SURVEY

Bibb / Winter 1980

IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: *605 Preston Place*
 Map and Parcel: *5-111*
 Census Tract & Block:
 Present Owner: *Preston Casert, Inc*
 Address: *10 Mont L Hartman, box 254*
 Present Use: *~~apartment~~ Rental Property (4 apartments)*
 Original Owner: *Sally Ann McCoy*
 Original Use: *Residence*

BASE DATA

Historic Name: *Wyndhurst*
 Date/Period: *1857*
 Style: *Vernacular*
 Height to Cornice:
 Height in Stories: *2*
 Present Zoning: *R-3*
 Land Area (sq.ft.): *100' x 171.7' (18,580 sq ft)*
 Assessed Value (land + imp.):

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

GRAPHICS

CONDITIONS

Good

SOURCES

*City/County Records
Mrs G L Hartman*



VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

HISTORIC DISTRICT SURVEY FORM

Page 1 of 2 (see also attached sheet)

File No. 104-130

Negative no(s). 7218

Street address **605 Preston Place**

Town/City **Charlottesville**

Historic name **Wyndhurst**

Common name

- Material
- wood frame (siding: weatherboard, shingle, aluminum, bricktex, _____)
 - brick (bond: Flemish, stretcher, _____-course American, _____)
 - stone (random rubble, random ashlar, coursed ashlar, _____)
 - log (siding: weatherboard, shingle, aluminum, bricktex, _____)
 - stucco
 - concrete block
 - enameled steel
 - other: _____
- cast iron
 - terra cotta
 - glass and metal

Number of Stories	Roof Type	Roof Material
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2½ <input type="checkbox"/> 1½ <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> mansard <input type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> gambrel <input type="checkbox"/> pediment <input type="checkbox"/> parapet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> hipped <i>low</i> <input type="checkbox"/> flat <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> slate <input type="checkbox"/> tile <input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle <input type="checkbox"/> pressed tin <input type="checkbox"/> composition <input type="checkbox"/> not visible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> standing seam metal <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Dormers	Number of bays — Main facade
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> shed <input type="checkbox"/> hipped <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> gable <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> pedimented	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <i>main block</i> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> _____

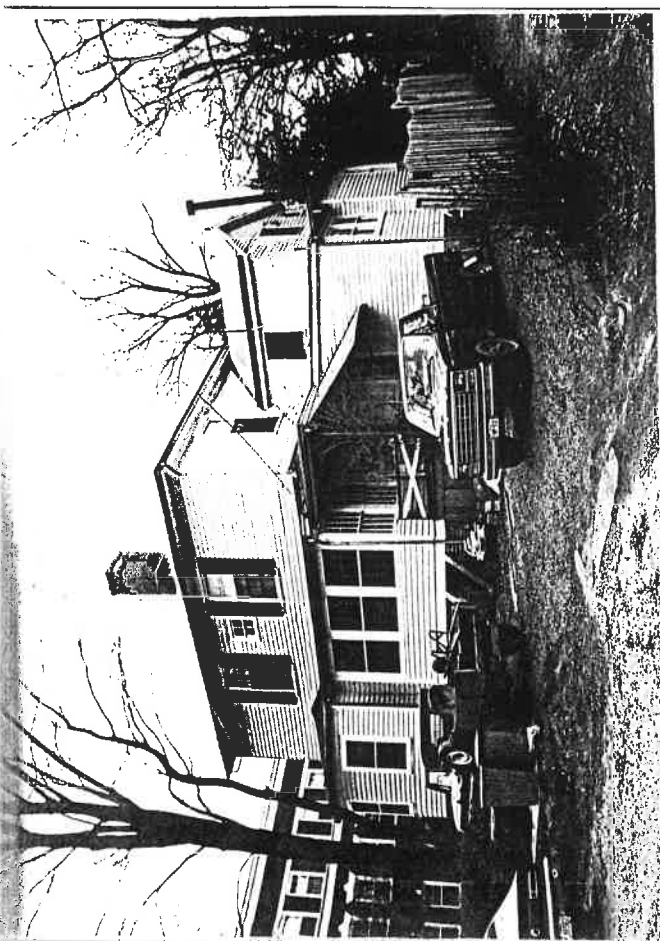
Porch	Stories	Bays	General description
<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (center) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 (side) <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Half-length front veranda with <input type="checkbox"/> four square wooden posts and <input type="checkbox"/> flattish roof.

Building type

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> detached house	<input type="checkbox"/> garage	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
<input type="checkbox"/> detached town house	<input type="checkbox"/> farmhouse	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (office)	<input type="checkbox"/> school
<input type="checkbox"/> row house	<input type="checkbox"/> apartment building	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial (store)	<input type="checkbox"/> church
<input type="checkbox"/> double house	<input type="checkbox"/> gas station	<input type="checkbox"/> railroad	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Style/period **Vernacular** Date **c. 1857** Architect/builder

Location and description of entrance **Central entrance with top- and side-lights.**



Miscellaneous descriptive information (plan, exterior and interior decoration, cornice/eave type, window type and trim, chimneys, additions, alterations)

The original main block is one of the earliest buildings in the Rugby Road Historic District. Built c. 1857, it conforms to the standard "I-house" form, having two interior brick chimneys and a double-pile central-passage plan. The north end wing with curved end dates to the early 20th century. Several additions extend at the rear.

Historical information

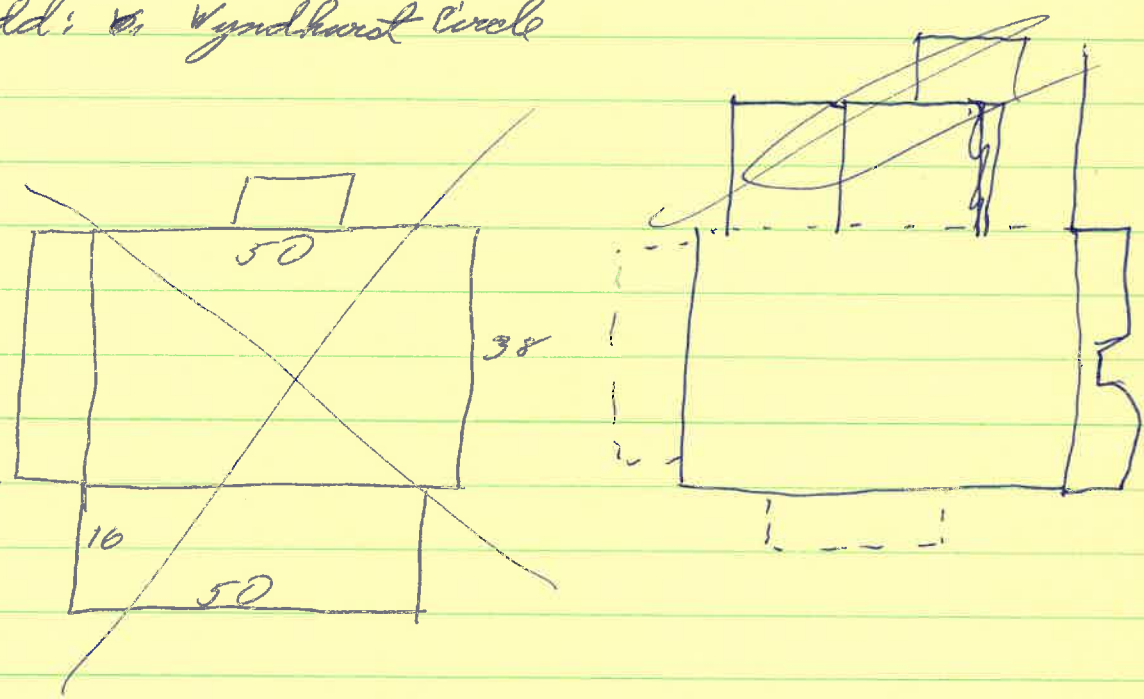
Known as Wyndhurst in the 19th century (?), this building was used as a boarding house by a Mrs. Pitt from c. 1930-1970.

Ch'ville City Directories; tax books; Eugenia Bibb. Source

605 Preston Place

314-104	Preston Court, Inc	1970	\$36,800	plat 40-490
40-489	Charity S Pitts	1930	18,500	
	Jane N.B. Hildreth			" ACDB-34-478

brick found, wood, comp shing
 built 1800
 11 rooms, 4 baths, basement
 good const
 old add: Wyndhurst Circle



→ If this M^c Coy - Preston - Pitts house = Wyndhurst,
 name of Preston house should be changed to Wyndhurst *Rowan's Question*

M^c Coy 1858 - 1863 = 5 years
 Preston 1863 - 1919 = 56 years
 Pitts 1930 - 1970 = 40 years

Mrs Hartman

3-9665

is it old Preston house, or built by later owner?

date ~ not know

changes Mrs Pitts made

" they made - c. 10yr ago, ^{just before her husband died} few changes, 4 apte.
Pitts brochure - thinks inaccurate
old pictures

Coperton - slave quarters

some of Bernard Chamberlain's people lived there } ask them

Manuscripts 4795-a

The Old Preston House, ~~Pres~~ 11930

tel. 467 Preston Place

picture fr W, across terrace

Mrs William Pitts

room & board \$23 - \$35 wk, \$50 suble

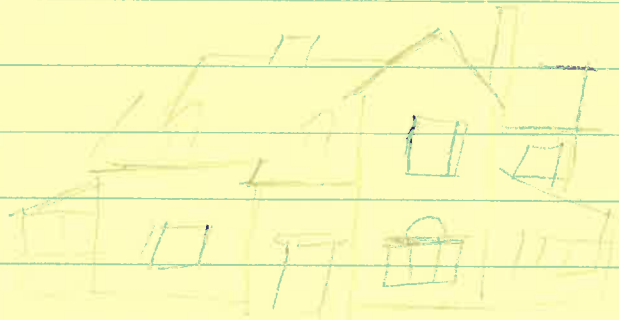
extra for fireplace wood, extra milk

b 50¢, 2 \$1.00, d \$1.25; \$14.00 wk

picture ext hall, furnished

French doors on landing

Cottage apt adjoining the old Preston House

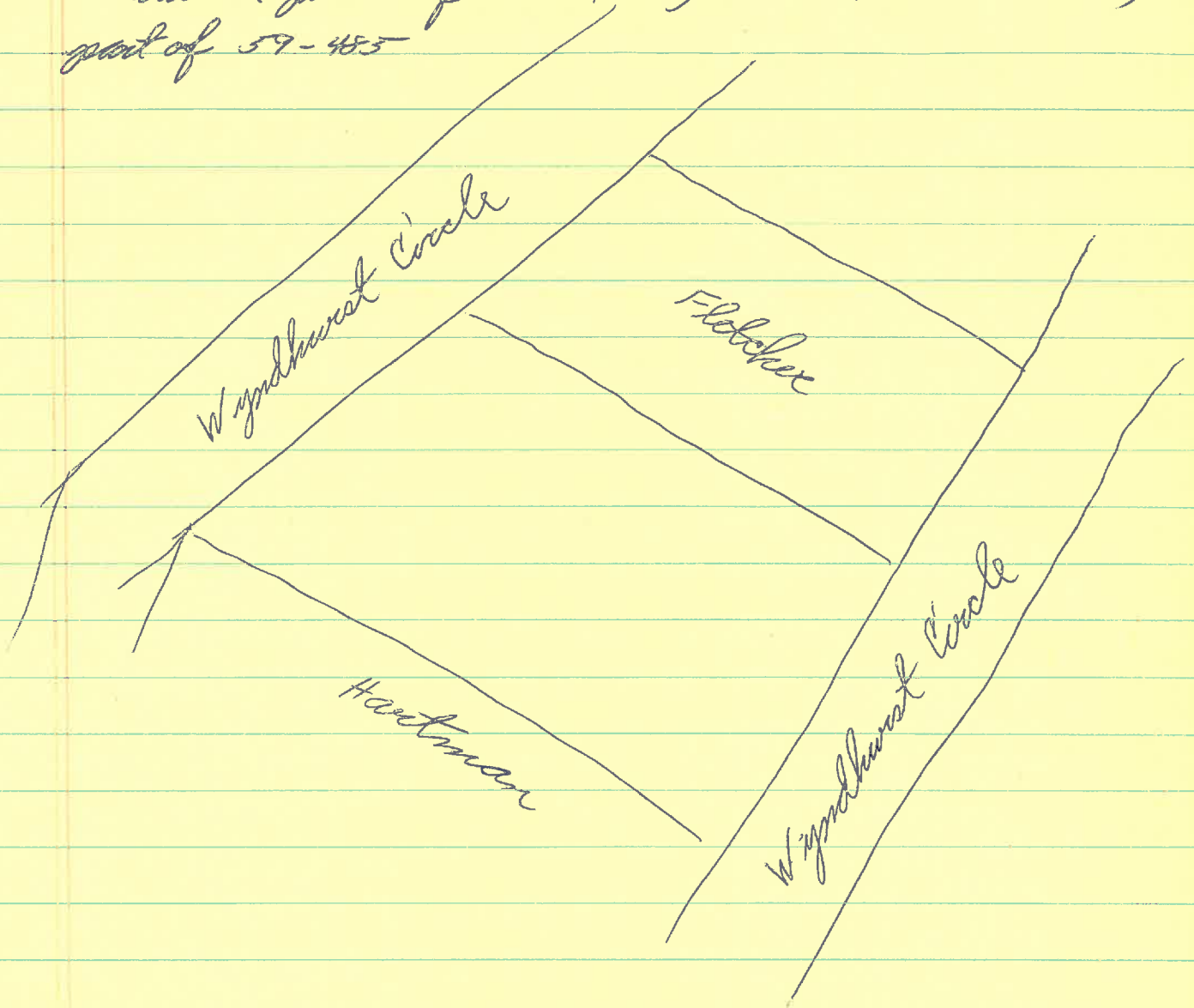


2 letters 1864 for ~~J. B. Swearingen~~ E. B. Swearingen
J. B. Swearingen

Swearingen

Preston House

70-489 Jane N. Haldroth, wid → Charity S. Fille \$18,500
 9/27/1930 property in Preston Hgts
 northern 10' of lot 25426
 southern portion of lot 24 } (see plat of Preston Place)
 part of 59-485



59-485 57-336 7/14/1927 Albert S Bolling → A W Walsh, Lemuel F Smith,
 2/10/1928 + W Allan Perkins, trustees, lot in Preston Hgts w/
 large frame dwelling & other imp'ts, being lot 24 + northern
 10' lot 25426 on Preston Pl plat (34-478)
 34-349 12/27/1919 Preston Place Corp → Albert S Bolling (not)
 35-305 4/12/1920 " " " " (10' x 26)
 57-334 7/15/1927 Albert S Bolling → Percin Shaw, Trs
 lot 23 w/ imp'ts (part of 35-305)
 58-358 10/1/1927 Albert S Bolling → John S Battle & John S White
 (transfer to settle debt) & 23424, 10' x 25426
 Battle & White → Madame NB Haldroth \$22,500

34-349 Preston Place Corp → Albert S Boling \$10,000
12/27/1917 "all of those 2 certain lots or parcels of land, w/ improvements thereon consisting of the old Preston Mansion known as 'Wynthurst'"
part of 34-28
Boling to insure house for not less than \$6,000

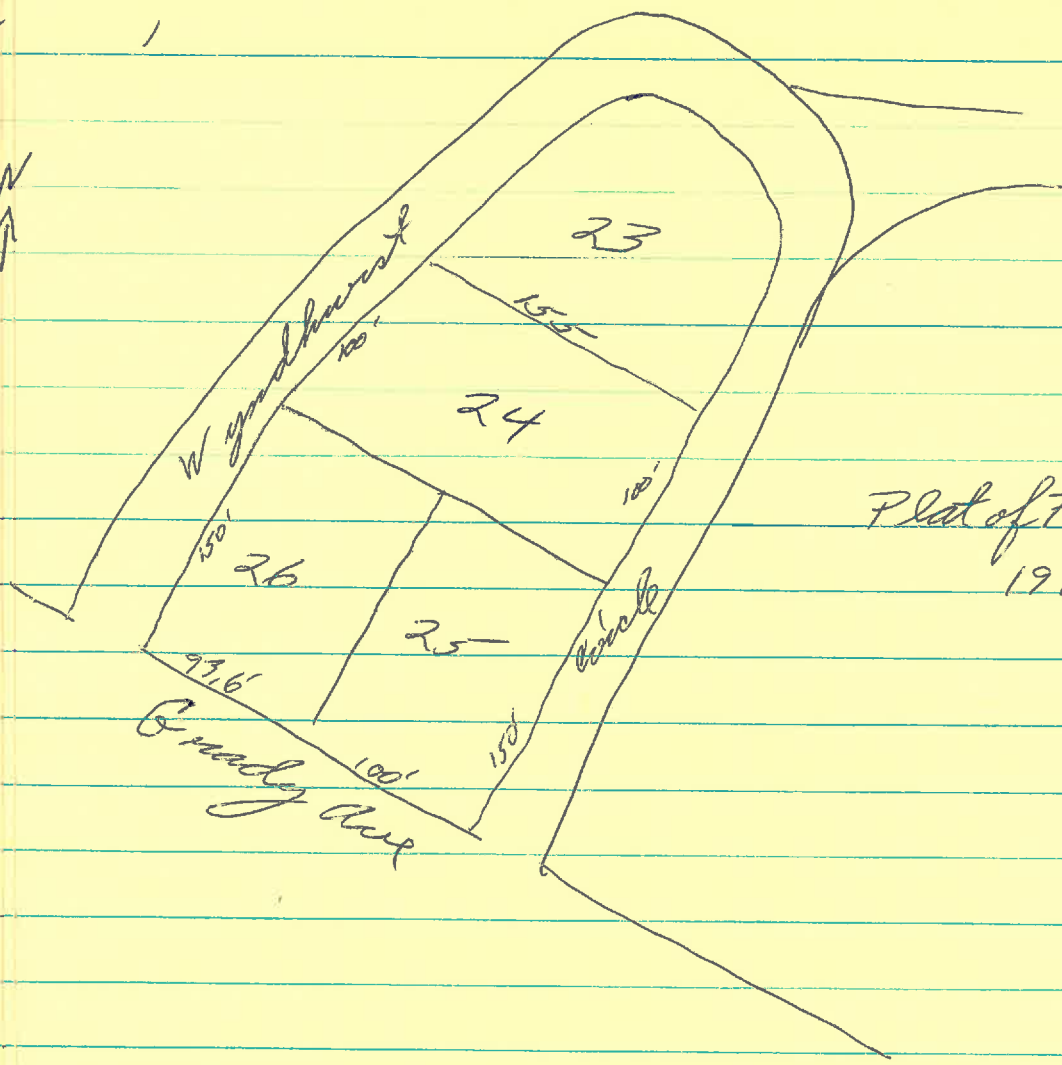
34-28 Anna P & Geo R Lockwood, of St Louis → Preston Place Corp
9/12/1917
"tract" whereon Anna M. Preston resided at the time of her death, near U Va, which tract is marked 'Preston Recreation' on map of 'Preston Hgts' ACDB 97-346
ACDP 126-130 3/30/1903 Peter Saunders, Jr, Tx → Anna M. Preston
" 126-170 5/7/1903 1/2 int → Geo R & Anna P. Lockwood
AC WB 32-95 (Anna M. Preston) 1/2 "
#30-396 7/1/1916 Geo R → Anna P Lockwood, all int

~~126-130~~ ACDB Peter Saunders, Jr, of Franklin Co → Mrs Anna M. Preston
126-130
3/30/1903 7/7/1859 deed in Smyth & Washington Counties bet Thos L & Anna M Preston, & Robert Bibbony, Tx, set up trust fund of \$25,000 for her, "untrammelled by the obligations & free fr the control of her husb & not liable for any debts her sd husb might then owe or herein after contract", w/ Saunders as trustee
ACDB 106-139, 7/21/1896, Anna M & Frank Preston, & Peter Saunders Jr returned control to Prestons
(this ratifies that)
"tract" whereon Mrs Preston resides near U Va in Alb", marked "Preston Res'n Preston Hgts map 97-346, 1892
210-11 ac
part of 61-156, remainder sold

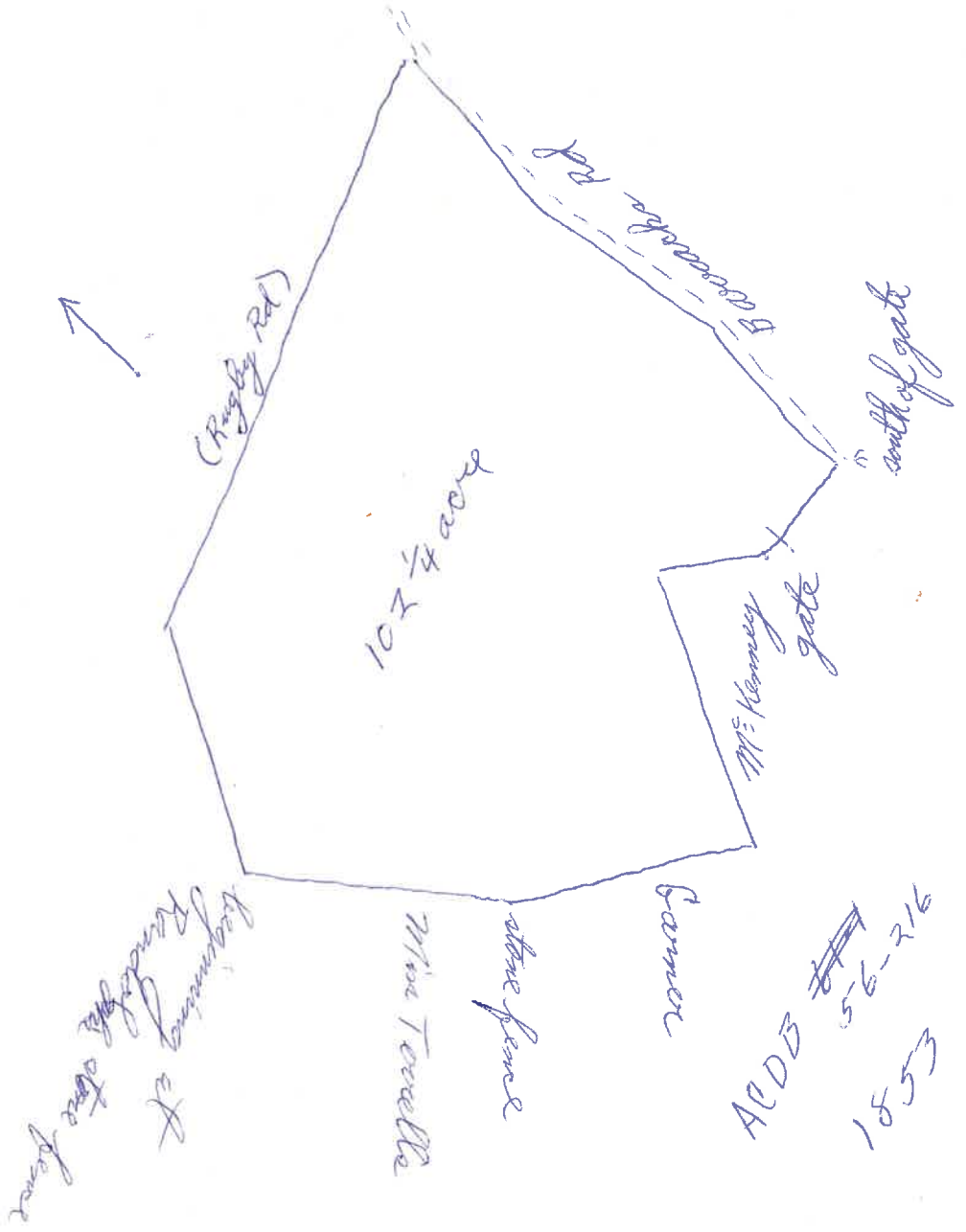
34-478

1

N
↑



Plot of Preston Place
1919



61-156 Sally A. McLoe, Henry P.R. McLoe, & Caroline E. McLoe
1/3/1863 McLoe → Thos S & Anna M Preston \$12,000
→ Peter Saunders, Tr

all that tract of land lying north of U Va in Alb Co
^{conveyed} bought 6/26/1857 (56-214) by Sally A. McLoe
by Wm T McLoe (in own right & as trustee) & Mary
E. Towell, wife of Eleanor Towell
102 1/4 ac, belonged to estate of Dixie Morris; sold
to McLoe by conveyance (see plat 56-216)

56-214 McLoe & Towell → Sally Ann McLoe \$6,300
6/26/1857 tract bought for Morris est
bounded by Thos J Randolph, Wm B. Garner, & P M Keen
est, & others
begin at stone fence bet Randolph & John ~~Stacy~~ ^{Stacy} Davis
at intersection of stone fence bet " & Morris est

69-611 Preston → L C Turner \$180
1875 1.85 ac (part of tract for McLoe)
bet NE corner land ^{Thos bought for} Eugene Davis, SE to CH Haman lot

~~69-548 Preston → John Davis Watson \$500
1875 8 acres (part of 253 ac tract) adj W W Flanagan, Maj Mason,
John Cochran
Flanagan line in Schanks Branch
(must be Hard Bargain)~~

~~69-458 Preston → Mason Gordon \$1985
1874 51 acres (part of 253 ac tract)
Barracks Rd ... lot upon which Mason Gordon resides~~

~~69-³⁴¹454 Preston → John Cochran \$191.25
1875 1/4 acre on Cochran's Mill Rd~~

20 mins

Preston house

1862, '61, '59	Mrs Helen M ^{rs} Coy etc	102 ¹ / ₄ a. well near 1/2 NW	^{36 24} + 2800 = 5624
1856	Wm T. M ^{rs} Cooley	" " ¹ / ₂ "	+ 300 = 2147
1857	" "	" " "	+ 3068
1858	Mrs Helen M ^{rs} Coy etc	" " "	" = "

∴ built 1858 by Helen M^{rs} Coy

1872	Chas Thos L. Preston	102 ¹ / ₄ a Ch'or	1 NW + 2800 = 4601.50
1882	" "	147 "	" + 0 = 3675
"	" "	100 ¹ / ₄ "	" + 1000 = 2000

1876, 77, 79, 80	" "	147 "	1 NW + 200 = 2646	off 8-75 R. Watson 51-77 Main Bldg
" 77, 79, 80	" "	100 ¹ / ₄ Under	+ 0 = 4006	44-77 John Bldg
" 77, 80, 81	L C Turner	1.136 "	+ 0 = 74	off 1 ¹³⁶ 100-77 L C Turner for T L Preston

1875	Thos L. Preston	210 ¹ / ₄ Ch'or	NW + 200 = 4205	off 37-77 Wm M ^{rs} etc
"	" "	102 "	" + 2800 = 4601	

1881	Preston	147	+ 1000 = 3675
"	"	100 ¹ / ₄	+ 0 = 2000

1876	John L Cochran	4.4 ac	+ 0 = 7650	for T L Preston
"	Mason Gordon	51 ac	+ 0 = 918	" " "
"	J D Watson	8	+ 0 = 160	" " "

1846	Preston	147	+ 200 = 2646
		100 $\frac{1}{4}$	4006
	Turner	1,136	74
	Cochrane	4.4	46.50
	Watson	51	918
	Borden	8	160
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		312	+ 200 7880.50

1875	Preston	210 $\frac{1}{4}$	+ 200 = 4205
		102	+ 2800 = 4601
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		312 $\frac{1}{4}$	+ 3000 8806

summary

1859-62	Mc Coy	102 $\frac{1}{4}$ ac	2824 + 2800 = 5624
1842-75	Preston	"	1823 + " = 4601
1876-80	"	100 $\frac{1}{4}$ ac	4 + 0 = 4006
1881	"	"	" = 2000
1882-84	"	"	+ 1000 = 2000
1885-	"	"	+ 1500 = 4006

1889, 86, 85 Thor & Preston 100 $\frac{1}{4}$ Union + 1500 = 4006

1896, 91 ~~Thor & Preston~~
An m. Preston's Tr 10 ac PH + 2000 = 2350

Summary

1858	M ³ Coy	102 ¹ / ₄ a	2768 + 300 = 3068
1859-1862	"	"	2824 + 2800 = 5624
1872-1875	Preston	"	1801 + " = 4601
1876-1880	"	100 ¹ / ₄ a	4006 + 0 = 4006 off 1760 ¹³⁶ → Turner
1881 1882	"	"	2000 + " = 2000
1882-1884	"	"	1000 + 1000 = "
1885-1889	"	"	"
1885-1889	"	"	2506 + 1500 = 4006
1891-1896	"	10ac	350 + 2000 = 2350

$$\begin{array}{r}
 17.65 \times 100 = 1765 \\
 102 \overline{) 1801.00} \text{ (1875)} \\
 \underline{102} \\
 781 \\
 \underline{714} \\
 640 \\
 \underline{612} \\
 580
 \end{array}$$

Price of \$180 for 1.85 ac proves Preston didn't sell house to Turner.

It could be an error in tax records, or it could have burned.

Will have to look for ridge board.

Fronton House

2-story, 3 bay, double pile

low hip roof, 55 ft, grey sawn, banded cornice

weatherboarded, white

high brick front - 5' in band

W. terminated to floor level & near end near front

2 int chimneys, 1 set rooms on each side, copped

1-story, end porch, cent bay facade

low hip roof, banded cornice, plain fringe,

4 sq pilasters w/ inset panels, angle balustrade.

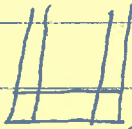
on a brick pier, wooden floor, & 8 wooden steps

windows, 6/9 lat level, 6/6 end, arch, stem,

black painted shutters

ent; 4-panel door, side light over panel, rest brown

4.8 + cornice



old glass

*

1 front, 2 in band end

of seat side; definite room in w/b brick; 6/6 window

small 1-story, side w/ band end over 5 (front) bay

small 1-story, ^{not} over porch side over N bay of seat side
 wide 8/8 window; hipped cornice & side; 2 front
 are attached

very wide cut back

3- fl open after w/ browned navel, simple bud, pointed under arch from a 4-paneled door, high ceilings

completed

locus of 142. storey near address

nb of egg house shown on inside of 2. storey wall

CB found, but asymmetrical



some 2/2 windows, 1 at upper level, 1 end of rear

Homes

A Cranky Pioneer Built It

By DAN FRIEDMAN
of The Progress Staff

Located in the Rugby Road vicinity, the home of Bernard and Mary Hill Caperton is so striking that at first it seems out of place.

In the heart of a "tony" neighborhood made up of grand brick structures imitating Jefferson's architectural style - a style which long since has been beaten to death - the rough and almost primitive feeling about the Caperton house makes it the neighborhood architectural anomaly.

It makes it the most refreshing house in the neighborhood - like an old familiar piece of Americana set in a neighborhood decorated entirely with gothic-revival.

In this neighborhood, this home has the longest pedigree on the block.

It all started in 1817, when John Kelly, a local merchant living above his store on Main Street, bought 500 acres which today would extend from Rugby Road to the railroad station. The Caperton house was built around that time to house Kelly's slaves, and that accounts for the apparent disregard for "refinement" in the building.

At one time the newly-wed home of Jefferson scholar Dumas Malone when he was a graduate student at the University of Virginia, the property under Kelly's ownership had an interesting history.

Kelly, according to Caperton, was not on the

best of terms with Jefferson, so when an assistant to Jefferson was helping him buy land for the future construction of UVa, Kelly said that he would see Jefferson "at the devil before he should have my property at any price."

Jefferson is reputed to have replied that Kelly "is a fool, but if we can't get the best site for the University, we must be content with the best we can get."

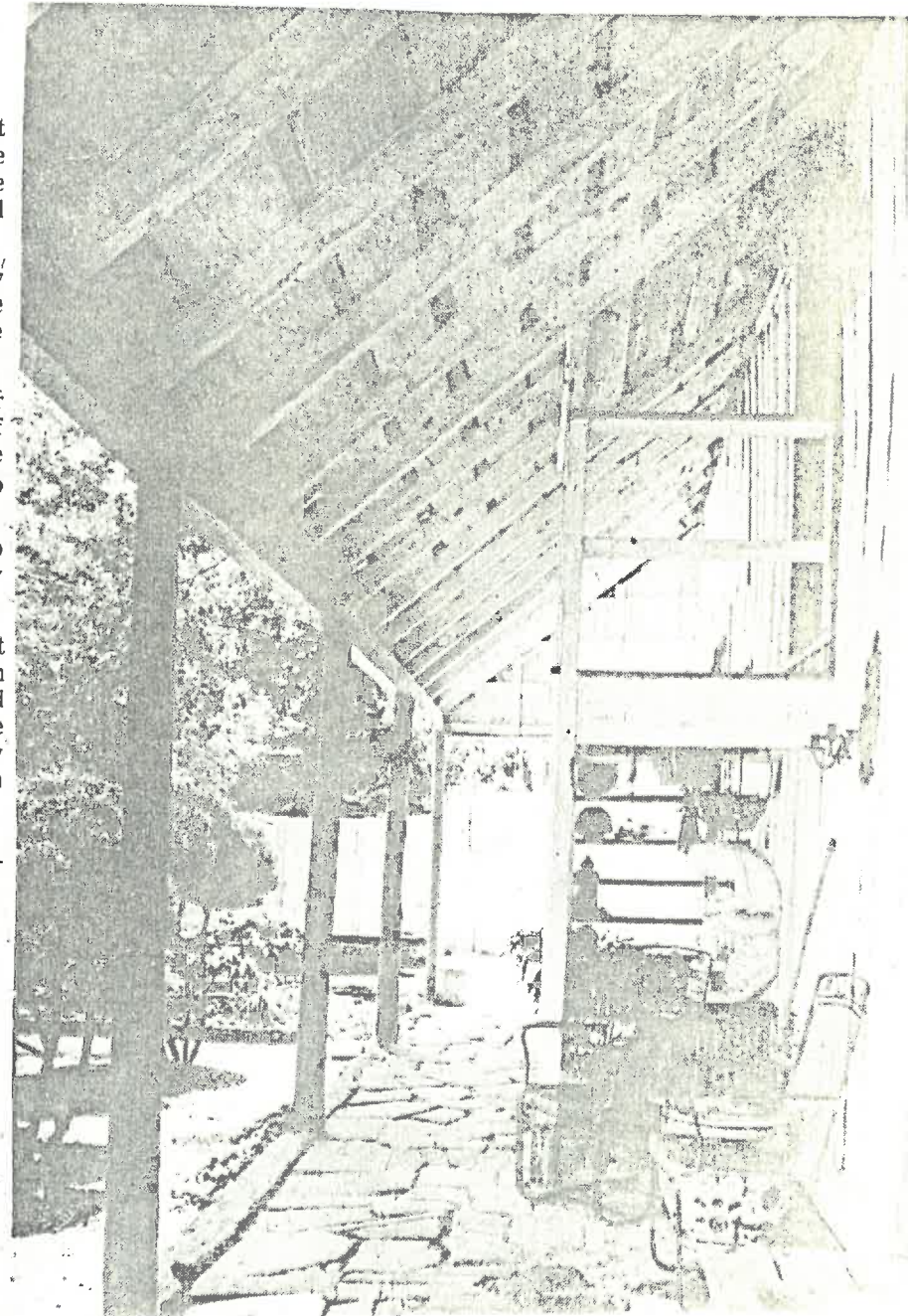
"If true," Caperton said, "this would account for the construction of the Rotunda on the low side of the hill instead of at the top of Rugby Road - the highest point - because stubborn Kelly refused to sell his land!"

Today, the old slave quarters never looked so good, and if the house looks rickety, that's only because appearances are deceiving.

The exterior is particularly deceiving because at first glance it looks like the house hasn't been painted in years. "We regularly paint the roof and trim," Mrs. Caperton said, "but we kind of like the effect of the whitewash which has worn away so beautifully." "I prefer to think of it as benign neglect," Caperton added.

Kelly said he would see Jefferson "at the devil before he should have my property at any price."

The inside hasn't suffered from over-scrupulous care either. There is a nice balance between the home as an historic structure and the home that is used everyday by a growing family. Consequently, there is



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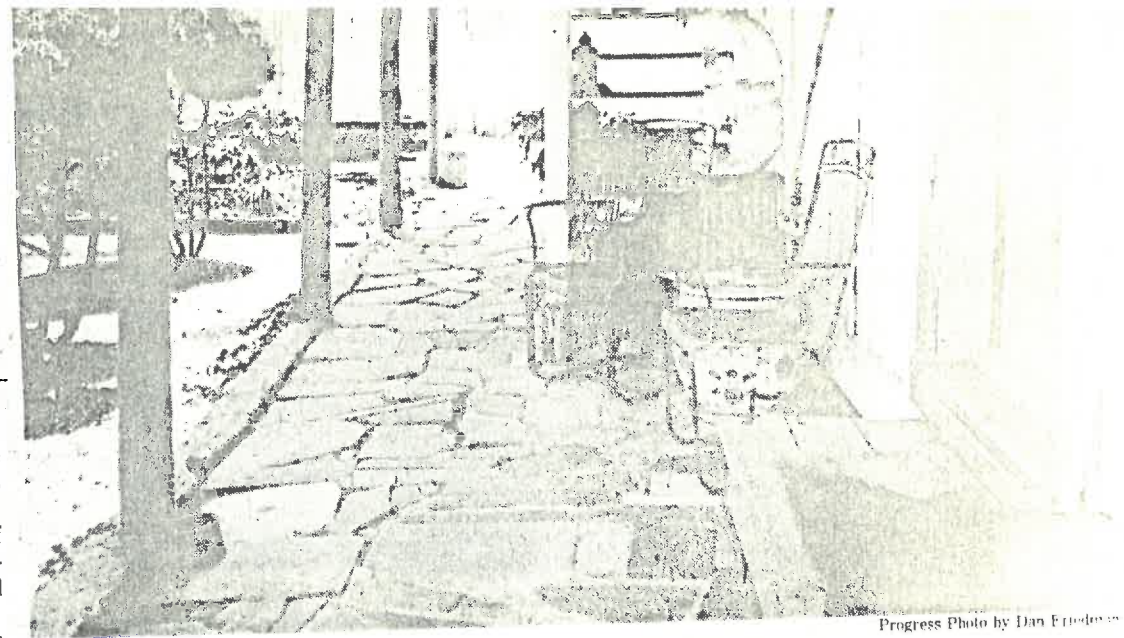
The inside hasn't suffered from over-scrupulous care either. There is a nice balance between the home as an historic structure and the home that is used everyday by a growing family.

Consequently, there is a harmonious mixture of very old antiques with a large number of contemporary furnishings, often made by local artists and craftsmen.

The marvelous interior effect is the result of the wide variety of colors and fabrics in the house — particularly the contrast between the huge fireplaces and ceiling beams which are whitewashed, with the mellow tone of the original old doors and floors.

A massive chimney — which today runs four fireplaces — is at the center of the original portion of the house, and around it are a living room, dining room and two bedrooms upstairs. A wing, added to the back 60 years ago, made room for a study, bedroom and bath on the ground floor, and two more bedrooms with bath upstairs. In 1968, the Capertons added a wing off to the side to accommodate a large country kitchen.

An antique collector and dealer, Caperton has filled the house with interesting furniture and artifacts. There are English, French, Dutch and German antiques with more than a smattering of "Chinoiserie" thrown in.



Progress Photo by Dan Friedman

UNDERNEATH THE CAPERTON'S FRONT PORCH Here and Throughout the House, the Rough and the Cultured Combine

In the dining room is an early American "gate-leg" table surrounded by a rare set of Windsor chairs made in Kentucky around 1820. Next to the fireplace is an unusual English hutch chair, and stacked along one wall are two 18th century Chinese lacquer cabinets from the Shansee province.

The extent of the objects decorating the mantel in the living room is a good indication of the range of Caperton's interests. A Chinese figure in bronze dating from 1500 B.C. is placed alongside glass vases made a few years ago by Mark Peiser, an artist from North Carolina.

Over the mantel is an Italian majolica dish,

which is "either a 14th century original or a 19th century fake," Caperton said, "and I'll never know which."

Caperton's interest in oriental art extends beyond the house and into the garden, because for many years he has worked on his collection of "bonzai," the Japanese art of miniature trees.

By trimming the roots and branches of small trees once a year, Caperton has accumulated over 25 mature specimens, none of which is over three feet tall.

"The Japanese would look at my collection with scorn," Caperton said, "but this is just another of my hobbies."



Progress Photo by John Atkin

CAPERTON HOME, ORIGINALLY JOHN KELLY'S SLAVE QUARTERS The Weathered Structure Stands in Marked Contrast to Its Neighbors

Singles Change Home Market

By **ROBERT LINDSEY**
(New York Times News Service)

There is a new kind of customer knocking on the doors of home sellers these days — Americans who aren't married. In this year's booming housing market, many real estate agents say they are encountering

- year - old house in New Orleans for \$31,000 and restoring it herself.

"Every penny I make goes into this house," she said. "I've given up my French wardrobe. I can't afford to buy clothes the way I used to. But I love the



omes

Section
F

Built It

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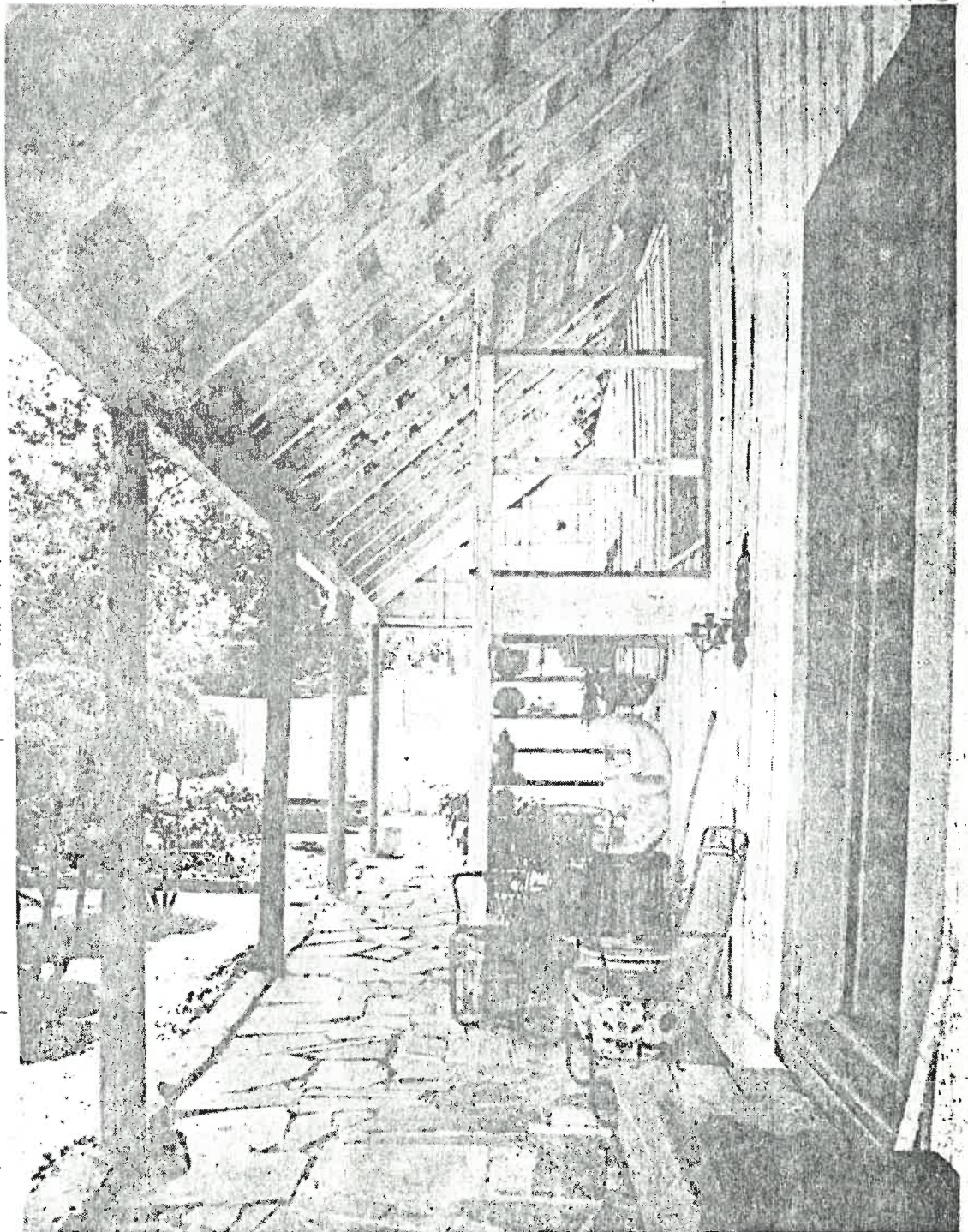
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ve chimney — which today runs four — is at the center of the original portion e, and around it are a living room, din- and two bedrooms upstairs. A wing, ad- back 60 years ago, made room for a room and bath on the ground floor, and bedrooms with bath upstairs. In 1968, ons added a wing off to the side to ac- a large country kitchen. ue collector and dealer, Caperton has ouse with interesting furniture and ar- ere are English, French, Dutch and ntiques with more than a smattering of ie" thrown in.



Progress Photo by Dan Friedman

UNDERNEATH THE CAPERTON'S FRONT PORCH Here and Throughout the House, the Rough and the Cultured Combine

In the dining room is an early American "gate-leg" table surrounded by a rare set of Windsor chairs made in Kentucky around 1820. Next to the fireplace is an unusual English hutch chair, and stacked along one wall are two 18th century Chinese lacquer cabinets from the Shansee province.

The extent of the objects decorating the mantel in the living room is a good indication of the range of Caperton's interests. A Chinese figure in bronze dating from 1500 B.C. is placed alongside glass vases made a few years ago by Mark Peiser, an artist from North Carolina.

Over the mantel is an Italian majolica dish,

which is "either a 14th century original or a 19th century fake," Caperton said, "and I'll never know which."

Caperton's interest in oriental art extends beyond the house and into the garden, because for many years he has worked on his collection of "bonzai," the Japanese art of miniature trees.

By trimming the roots and branches of small trees once a year, Caperton has accumulated over 25 mature specimens, none of which is over three feet tall.

"The Japanese would look at my collection with scorn," Caperton said, "but this is just another of my hobbies."

Mail

Homes

THE DAILY PROGRESS, Charlottesville, Virginia, Sunday, August 14, 1977

A Cranky Pioneer Built It

By DAN FRIEDMAN
of The Progress Staff

Located in the Rugby Road vicinity, the home of Bernard and Mary Hill Caperton is so striking because at first it seems out of place.

At the heart of a "tony" neighborhood made up of grand brick structures imitating Jefferson's architectural style - a style which long since has been beaten to death - the rough and almost primitive feeling about the Caperton house makes it the neighborhood architectural anomaly.

It also makes it the most refreshing house in the area, like an old familiar piece of Americana set in a room decorated entirely with gothic-revival.

neighborhood, this home has the longest pedigree on the block.

It all started in 1817, when John Kelly, a local merchant living above his store on Main Street, bought 500 acres which today would extend from Rugby Road to the railroad station. The Caperton house was built around that time to house Kelly's slaves, and that accounts for the apparent disregard for "refinement" in the building.

At one time the newly-wed home of Jefferson scholar Dumas Malone when he was a graduate student at the University of Virginia, the property under Kelly's ownership had an interesting history.

Kelly, according to Caperton, was not on the

best of terms with Jefferson, so when an ass to Jefferson was helping him buy land for future construction of UVA, Kelly said he would see Jefferson "at the devil before he have my property at any price."

Jefferson is reputed to have replied that "is a fool, but if we can't get the best site for University, we must be content with the best we can get."

"If true," Caperton said, "this would account for the construction of the Rotunda on the low side of the hill instead of at the top of Rugby Road - because stubborn Kelly refused to sell his land!"

Today, the old slave quarters never look so good, and if the house looks rickety, that's because appearances are deceiving.

The exterior is particularly deceiving because at first glance it looks like the house hasn't been painted in years. "We regularly paint the trim," Mrs. Caperton said, "but we kind of neglect the effect of the whitewash which has worn so beautifully." "I prefer to think of it as neglect," Caperton added.

Kelly said he would see Jefferson "at the devil before he should have my property at any price."

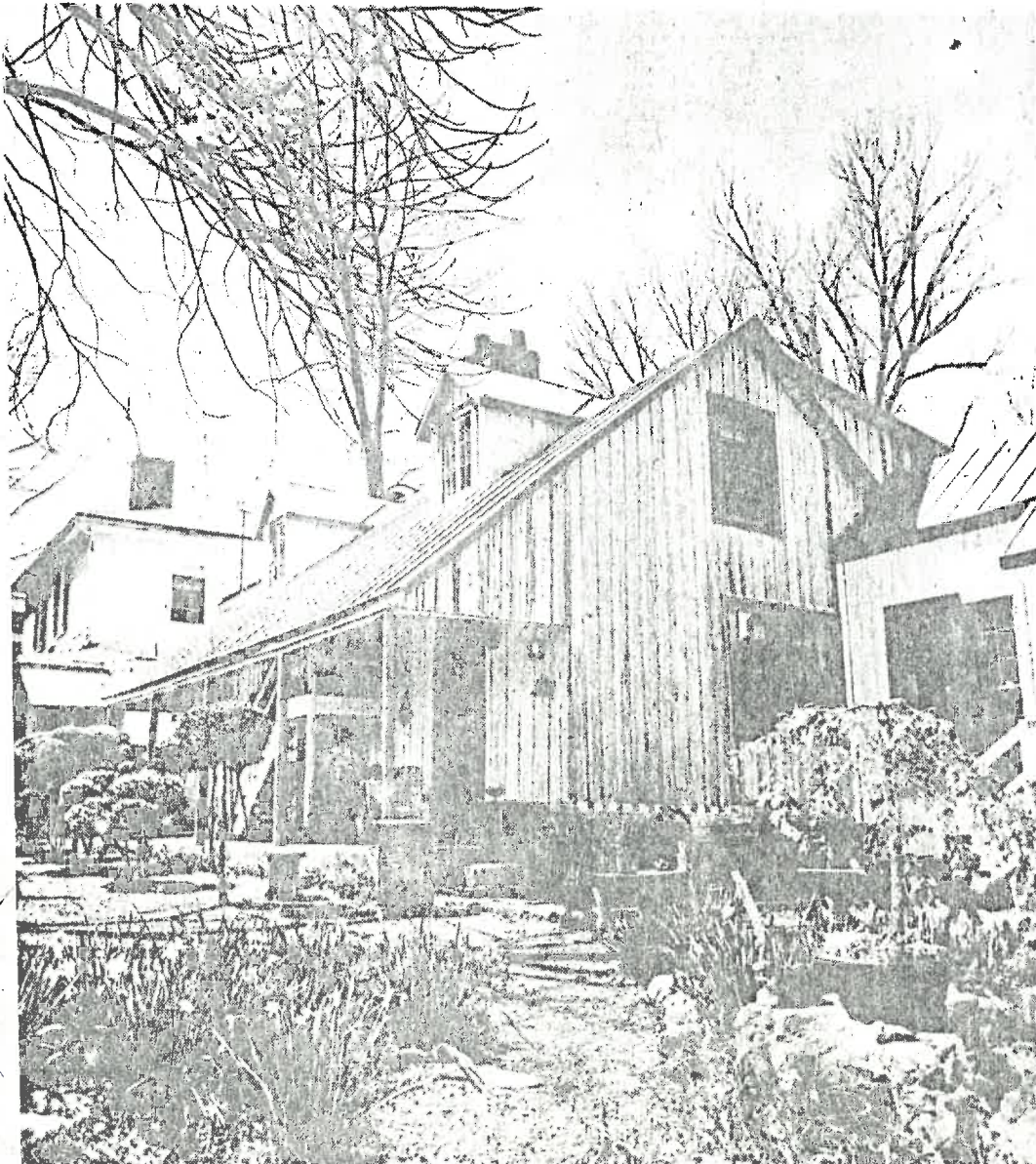
The inside hasn't suffered from over-care either. There is a nice balance between the home as an historic structure and the home used everyday by a growing family.

Consequently, there is a harmonious mix of very old antiques with a large number of contemporary furnishings, often made by local craftsmen.

The marvelous interior effect is the result of a wide variety of colors and fabrics in the decor, particularly the contrast between the dark wood fireplaces and ceiling beams which are whitewashed, with the mellow tone of the old doors and floors.

A massive chimney - which today houses a fireplace - is at the center of the original structure, and around it are a living room and two bedrooms upstairs. Added to the back 60 years ago, made a study, bedroom and bath on the ground floor, two more bedrooms with bath upstairs. The Capertons added a wing off to the side to accommodate a large country kitchen.

An antique collector and dealer, Caperton filled the house with interesting furniture and artifacts. There are English, French, German antiques with more than a smattering of "Chinoiserie" thrown in.



Progress Photo by John Atkin

THE CAPERTON HOME, ORIGINALLY JOHN KELLY'S SLAVE QUARTERS
The Weathered Structure Stands in Marked Contrast to Its Neighbors



EW CONEVAL

SHIRT

Preston

1920

725757

LONG

Yesteryears
David A.
Maurer



Charity Pitts ran a grand boarding house

The ageless Kenmore stove, cluttered hutch, and uneven floors sloping into the corners help create an alchemy of warmth and cheer — this is Mary Crockett Martin's kitchen.

Just like the clock in the white enamel stove, with hands frozen at 10:41, time seems to stand still in the room. The past, like the smell of spices and old wood, has settled in every nook and cranny, because this was once the kitchen in Charity Pitts' boarding house.

From about 1930 until the early '60s, Mrs. Pitts was noted for running the best boarding house and serving the finest meals in Charlottesville. For those who knew the matriarch of the "Old Preston House," she epitomized all the grace, charisma and elegance of the grandes dames of a bygone era.

The high point in the day for many of the judges, professors and other guests at the boarding house came when they put their legs under the table for the home-cooked meals. In fact, so many people wanted to eat there, there were extra tables in the long entrance hall, and guests were fed in shifts.

"Everything was cooked to perfection," said Mrs. Martin, who ate at the boarding house while she was a student at the University of Virginia. She later moved into a part of the lower house when it was converted into apartments.

"I loved Mrs. Pitts from the first time I saw her," Mrs. Martin said. "She was rather short, rotund and would pile her hair high on her head and wear a touch of rouge on her cheeks.

"She was not only a beautiful lady but so sweet," she said. "The first time we met, she put her arm around my shoulder and said, 'You belong at my table.' From then on, my place at meals was on her right."

People couldn't just waltz into Mrs. Pitts' place and get a room or eat a meal. In her words, they had to be "eligible," which meant she wouldn't let anyone in unless someone she knew could vouch for him.

One eligible guest was Margaret Faulconer Minich, who arrived in Charlottesville on a spring evening in 1949. She had traveled from her home in West Chester, Pa., to find suitable accommodations for a son, who would be attending the University of Virginia in the fall.

"While vacationing at Cape May in New Jersey, I met a woman and mentioned that I had to go to Charlottesville for a few days," Mrs. Minich said. "She told me the only place to stay in town was at Charity Pitts' boarding house, but she was very fussy about who she took in."

A friend of Mrs. Minich, who knew Mrs. Pitts, sent a letter of reference on her behalf, and soon a letter arrived from Mrs. Pitts stating she was "eli-

Charity

Continued From Page C1

gible."

Mrs. Pitts was an unlikely candidate to end up running a boarding house. Born on Sept. 8, 1873, to Brent and Eleanor Ishmsen Von Sweringen, a prominent Pennsylvania family, she spent her youth at "Sunnyside," a family home behind Monticello mountain.

When not horseback riding and hunting on the family estate, she attended school in Switzerland, and, later, married William Pitts, a graduate of Princeton University. After the couple settled in Charlottesville, Pitts went into the lumber business.

"As I understand it, her husband went broke and Charity got a job at a tea room," Mrs. Minich said. "She would invite me into her private quarters at the house for sherry and told me she thought it was stupid of her to be working for someone, so she opened the house to boarders.

"She was very aristocratic and certainly knew everything about gracious living," she said. "The first time I was invited to her quarters, I noticed a photograph on a table and said, 'Oh my word, that's a picture of someone being presented at the Court of Saint James.'"

Charity said it was her sister. "Of course, you really had to be someone to be presented to the king and queen of England. I knew what it was, because when a woman was presented there, she had to wear three ostrich plume feathers on her head."

Mrs. Pitts either went out or had the food for the meals delivered to the house every day to ensure freshness. She always paid top dollar for the food and second or even third helpings were always available. Mrs. Pitts once admitted she had never "so much as made a cup of tea." But her "cookbookless" cook, Marie Givens, was the culinary expert behind the wonderful food.

The meals were served on Mrs. Pitts' own china and silver by maids in starched uniforms. The chicken fricasse, duck stuffing, homemade bread and ice cream became legend.

"I'll never forget the Sunday dinners," said Mrs. Martin. "Mrs. Pitts was an artist when it came to serving food. The homemade ice cream would be formed into round balls and served in a large, glass punch bowl. The balls would be piled high, and you'd almost be afraid if you took one, the rest would fall off.

"The boiled potatoes would be served the same way, with butter and parsley running all over them," she said. "Mrs. Pitts would generally steer the conversation at her table, but never to herself. She always got people to enjoy each other."

Arthur F. Stocker, professor



Charity Pitts turned 100 in 1973.

emeritus in the classics department at UVa, had meals at Mrs. Pitts from 1949 until 1962. Stocker ate at the UVa faculty table in the main hall.

"There were about eight places at the faculty table, so with the limited capacity, one had to wait for an opening," he said. "I would pay \$60 a month to have lunch and dinner there.

"I remember you could pretty well count on roast beef on Saturday, a fowl of some sort on Sunday, and I believe Wednesday was steak," Stocker said. "The desserts were very elaborate and highly regarded, in fact you could feel they were a course unto themselves."

Mrs. Pitts was not without her vanities, Stocker said. A small fault, but one that led to a faux pas that caused her no small amount of consternation.

"Charity had such people as Lady Astor eat at her place, and she was very proud of her connections," Stocker said. "So when a woman showed up passing herself off as Lady Montague of England, Charity was totally taken in.

"She boarded at Charity's and took her meals there while going around to several local schools saying she was studying the educational system in America," he said. "When she tried to raise money she said was for the improvement of education in England, it was discovered that she was a complete fraud."

What probably hurt Mrs. Pitts the most was that the con artist had used her as a reference to get her foot in many local doors. But true to her nature, she found some humor in the incident after the shock and embarrassment wore off.

"Oh yes, she was suave," Mrs. Pitts said of the thief. "I heard later she'd been in jail, but you know, she didn't steal anything here."

Mrs. Pitts, the regal old woman who was fond of wearing a black lace dress for dinner, died in Oct. 1973, just a few weeks after her 100th birthday. Her boarding house at 605 Preston Place, built in 1857, had once looked out over rolling farmland, but now stares at the

brick wall of the Preston Court Apartments.

The long hallway has been closed off as has the opening in the kitchen wall where platters of food were passed into the dining area.

But the claw foot bathtub remains as does the old stove and the atmosphere.

"Often when I'm meal in the kitchen aren't going right all the fluttering on this kitchen Martin said. "It's because I know C been sympathetic ing."

Please see Charity, Page C10

David A. Maurer is a staff writer for the features desk of The Daily Progress.

