



Antebellum

IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 305 St. Clair Avenue
 Map and Parcel: 51-84
 Census Tract & Block: 3-316
 Present Owner: Downing L. & Margaret E. Smith
 Address: 310 Locust Avenue
 Present Use: Rental Property (2 apartments)
 Original Owner: George Sinclair
 Original Use: Residence

BASE DATA

Historic Name: Old House at Locust Grove
 Date/Period: c. 1839, c. 1890's?, 1946-47
 Style: Colonial Revival
 Height to Cornice:
 Height in Stories: 1½
 Present Zoning: R-2
 Land Area (sq.ft.): 105' x 349 (36,645 sq. ft.)
 Assessed Value (land + imp.):

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Very little of the original house remains in the present building, only parts of three walls and a chimney. It was a 1½-storey, single-pile, rectangular structure on a very low foundation, its brick laid in five-course American-with-Flemish bond like that in the main house. It possibly followed the side hall plan, but that it is difficult to determine now. It had a very steeply pitched gable roof and probably faced west, as the main house does. Later a two-storey gambrell-roofed stable, considerably larger than either the original or the present house, was built around it, using the north and west walls and retaining the east and possibly south walls as interior partitions. A large carriage entrance was opened in the west wall. The new east and south walls were of used brick laid in five-course American bond; part of the south wall remains. The present house is a 1½-storey L-shaped building facing east toward St. Clair Avenue some distance away. It utilizes the east, north and part of the west wall of the original house and the south wall of the stable. The new walls are of used brick laid in stretcher bond, on old foundations in some cases. The gable roof is covered with composition shingles and follows the steep pitch of the original house's roof. There are two gable-roofed, weatherboarded dormers on the facade, another on the south side of the eil, and a shed-roofed bungalow dormer across the west side. Windows are double-sash, six-over-six and eight-over-eight light, with brick sills and plain surrounds; none are original. Besides the original northern interior end chimney with fireplace, there is a small interior chimney on the west

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

side. The veranda has a concrete floor and a shed roof supported by four square posts. The floor plan is irregular.

The 18th century Thomas W. Lewis house at Locust Grove had burned before George Sinclair purchased the 534 acre tract from Dr. Thomas W. Meriwether in 1839 (ACDB 37-438). Tradition says that this small 1½-storey house was built immediately for the family to live in while the main house was under construction. After Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair's deaths, the property was purchased by the Locust Grove Improvement Company for subdivision (ACDB 98-341). Judge John M. White bought the main house and 11 surrounding acres in 1853 (ACDB 98-427, 99-175), and it may have been at that time that a large brick stable was built around the old house. White's executor sold the house and 4.4 acres to Col. J.A. Cole in 1915 (ACDB 159-146). Judge Lemuel F. Smith, the father of the present owner, bought it in 1923 (City DB 45-361). The stable was torn down in the early 1930's but the foundation and part of the south wall remained, as well as the east, north, and a small part of the west wall of the original house.

GRAPHICS

Mr. and Mrs. Downing Smith were deeded this part of the property by his parents in 1946 (DB 129-474) and built the present 1½-storey, L-shaped house, utilizing what remained of the two previous buildings. They now live in the main house and use the old house as a two-unit rental cottage.

CONDITIONS

Very Good

SOURCES

City/County Records
 Mr. and Mrs. Downing L. Smith
 Sanborn Insurance Co. map, 1920
 Mary Rawlings, Antebellum Albemarle, p. 52

Architectural And Historic Survey



Identification

STREET ADDRESS:	818 Locust Avenue	HISTORIC NAME:	Old House at Locust Grove
MAP & PARCEL:	51-84	DATE / PERIOD:	c. 1839, c. 1890's?, 1946-47
CENSUS TRACT AND BLOCK:	3-316	STYLE:	Colonial Revival
PRESENT ZONING:	R-2	HEIGHT (to cornice) OR STORIES:	1½ Storeys
ORIGINAL OWNER:	George Sinclair	DIMENSIONS AND LAND AREA:	105' x 349' (39,645 sq. ft.)
ORIGINAL USE:	Residence	CONDITION:	Good
PRESENT USE:	Residence	SURVEYOR:	Bibb
PRESENT OWNER:	810 Locust Avenue	DATE OF SURVEY:	Spring 1978
ADDRESS:	Charlottesville, VA	SOURCES:	City/County Records - Mr. & Mrs. Downing L. Smith Sanborn Map Co. - 1920 Mary Rawlings, Ante-Bellum Albemarle, p. 52

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Very little of the original house remains in the present building, only parts of three walls and a chimney. It was a 1½-storey, single-pile, rectangular structure on a very low foundation, its brick laid in five-course American with Flemish bond like that in the main house. It possibly followed the side hall plan, but that it is difficult to determine now. It had a very steeply pitched gable roof and probably faced west, as the main house does. Later a two-storey gambrell-roofed stable, considerably larger than either the original or the present house, was built around it, using the north and west walls and retaining the east and possibly south walls as interior partitions. A large carriage entrance was opened in the west wall. The new east and south walls were of used brick laid in five-course American bond; part of the south wall remains. The present house is a 1½-storey L-shaped building facing east toward St. Clair Avenue some distance away. It utilizes the east, north and part of the west wall of the original house and the south wall of the stable. The new walls are of used brick laid in stretcher bond, on old foundations in some cases. The gable roof is covered with composition shingles and follows the steep pitch of the original house's roof. There are two gable-roofed, weatherboarded dormers on the facade, another on the south side of the ell, and a shed-roofed bungalow dormer across the west side. Windows are double-sash, six-over-six and eight-over-eight light, with brick sills and plain surrounds; none are original. Besides the original northern interior end chimney with fireplace, there is a small interior chimney on the west side. The veranda has a concrete floor and a shed roof supported by four square posts. The floor plan is irregular.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The 18th century Thomas W. Lewis house at Locust Grove had burned before George Sinclair purchased the 534-acre tract from Dr. Thomas W. Meriwether in 1839 (ACDB 37-438). Tradition says that this small 1½-storey house was built immediately for the family to live in while the main house was under construction. After Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair's deaths, the property was purchased by the Locust Grove Investment Company for subdivision (ACDB 98-341). Judge John M. White bought the main house and 11 surround acres in 1893 (ACDB 98-427, 99-175), and it may have been at that time that a large brick stable was built around the old house. White's executor sold the house and 4.4 acres to Col J.A. Cole in 1915 (ACDB 159-146). Judge Lemuel F. Smith, the father of the present owner, bought it in 1923 (City DB 45-361). The stable was torn down in the early 1930's but the foundation and part of the south wall remained, as well as the east, north and a small part of the west wall of the original house. Mr. and Mrs. Downing Smith were deeded this part of the property by his parents in 1946 (DB 129-474) and built the present 1½-storey, L-shaped house, utilizing what remained of the two previous buildings. They now live in the main house and use the old house as a two-unit rental cottage.

SIGNIFICANCE

This house incorporates a small portion of a house built for the Sinclair family to live in while Locust Grove was under construction.

City Tax Assessor

Locust Grove

plate: ACDB 51-74

City DB 60-135, 126-47, 129-475, 178-117

209-379 Downing, L. Smith 1958
list of heirs
195-139 Grace " 1956

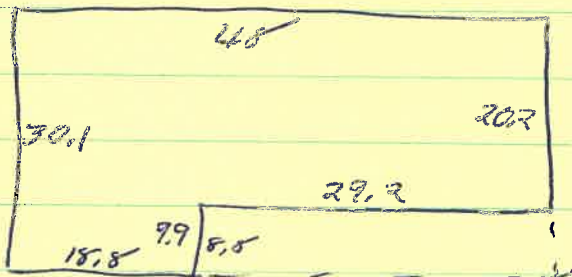
main house 1844

2-farm

9 rooms, 2 baths, 0 basement

"very old, about 1844, rebuilt 1947

brick found, wood & masonry walls, wood & brick floor
comp shingle roof; hardwood & plaster



126-47

178-116, 45-261 (10' x 80')

\$100

plot 178-117

77-54

129-474 Downing, L & Mang. E. Smith

Ac 013
159-146

4

John M White, dec 3-6-1913 (WB 32-178), ordered land sold

3/30/1915 White's exec -> J A Cole

\$10000

lot w/ bldg
part of 98-427 + 99-175

99-175
2-22-1893
98-427
1/14/893

3

L G I Co -> John M White

10,870
strip

98-341

2

Geo Sinclair (WB 31-92) left estate to wife in lifetime.

Sheddie 12/16/1891

500 acres

\$37,000

37-438

1

Thos W & Anne M Merimether -> Geo Sinclair

9/19/1839

tract w/ appurtenances on SW side Rivanna & near town of
Chic, 534 acres

City DB

129-474

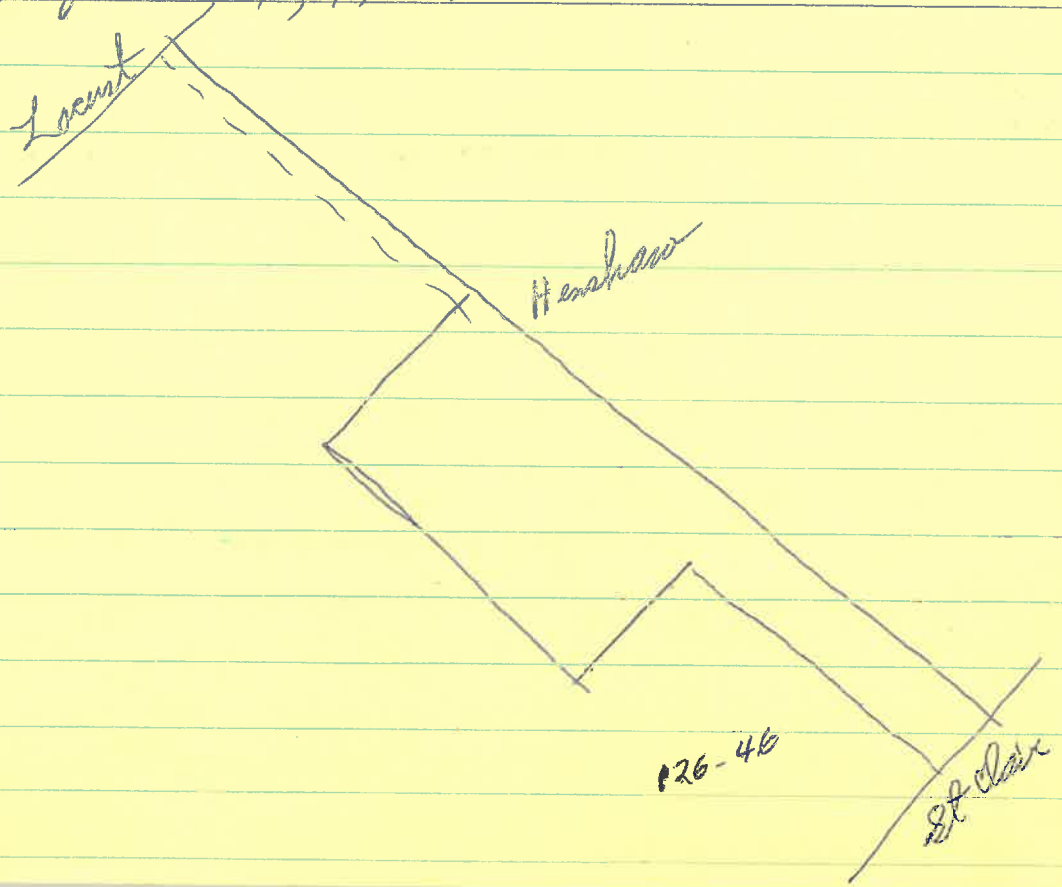
11

L F & Grace S Smith -> Downing L & Mary E. Smith

\$5,000

12/17/1946

balance of Lot 3 in 126-47 after small piece sold (129-47)
part of 45-361, 47-188



\$20,000

45-361 ⁵ J A + Marnie M. Cole → John W Fishburne + L F Smith
11/14/1933 4.44 ac - ~~59' on Locust~~
302' on Locust, 562 1/2' on Hazel, 398 1/2' on St Elmer, 559' on north
same as ACDB 159-146, 1915, spec of John M. White → J A Cole

1946 lot L F Smith \$6800 + 8000 = 14,800
1947 " " " + 11,000 = 17,000
Donning " ad
1948, 49 " " 300 + 2000 = 2300
for L F Smith 129-474

lot off 126-46, 129-47
imp added

c. 1892-93 ² Sinclair → L B Co
1893 ³ Locust Grove Imp Co → White
1915 ⁴ White → Cole
1923 ⁵ Cole → Fishburne + Smith

Locust Grove

1872	Geo Sinclair est	506/80p	1/3 m NE	+ 4000 =	17725.50
1893	Locust Br Dwyer	453a 80p	Sinclair 1/2 m NE	+ 0 =	13,108.50 fr Geo Sinclair est
1893, 94, 95, 96	Judge John M White	10 or 13p	Locust Br 3/4 m NE	+ 4000 =	5950
1899	" " "	14 or 53 1/3 p	"	2006 + "	= 6006
1915	" " " est	" " "	" " "	2860 + 3500 =	6360
1917, 18, 20	W J A Cole	E side L B	av	1800 + 3600 =	4600
1921, 22, 23	"	"	"	4500 + 4500 =	9000
1924	Fishburne & Smith	"	"	" " "	fr J H Cole
1925	L F Smith	4, 44	"	" " "	"
1926 - '30	"	"	"	" + 5500 =	"
1931, 32, 33	"	"	"	7000 + 6500 =	13,500
1934	"	"	"	6900 + 6500 =	24,490 est sold
1935	"	"	"	7000 + 8000 =	15,000 re-assessed
1936, 38	1st	"	"	6925 + 8000 =	14,925 est sold
1937	"	"	"	7000 + "	"
1851 - 1871	Geo Sinclair est	492 or 40p	near Sh. W 1 m NE	+ 4000 =	24,612.50
51, 52, 60, 63					
1820	Thos W. Lewis est	835a		+ 3375 =	18,787
1826-28	" " "	"		+ 4210 =	19,622
1831	Ely Lewis (donor)	290a		+ 2710 =	4926
1836-39	Thos. W. Meriwether	534a		" = 10,680	fr N H & Ely Lewis & reassessed
1840	" " "	"		+ 1500 =	11,748
1841	Geo St. Clair	535a		" = 11,775	fr Thos W. Meriwether
1845	Geo Sinclair	572 "		" = 13,427	
1846-49	" " "	567 "		" = 12,317	
1848-50	" " "	497 "		" = 10,097	
51					
1851 - 1871	" " est	492 or 40p		+ 4000 =	24,612.50
1892	" " "	506 or 80p		" =	17,725.50

summary:

1863-1871	Simlaix	492a 40p	+ 4000 = 24,612.50	
1892	"	506a 80p	+ 4000 = 19,725.50	
1893-96	White	10a 13p	" = 5750	
1899	"	14a 53½p	2006 + " = 6006	
1915	"	"	2860 + 3500 = 6360	
1917-1920	Cole		1000 + 3600 = 4600	
1924-25	Smith / Smith		4500 + 4500 = 9000	
1926-30	"		" + 5500 = 10000	
1931-34			7000 + 6500	
1935-39			" + 8000	re-appraised

1826-28

1836 —

1845 Geo Sinclair 572a adjltho, NE +1500 = 12,420
 1846, 47 " " 567a 2p in Pecosm, 1/4 mile " = 12,317
 1848, 49, 50 " " 493 " " = 10,097

1836, 37, 38, 39, 40 Thos W Meninether - 534a adjltho, NE +2710 = 10,680
 for NH & Ely Lewis ^{reassessed}
 1840 " " " +1500 = 11,748

1841 Geo St Clair 535a 33p " +1500 = 11,774.50 ^{for Thos W Meninether 41}

1831 Ely Lewis (deced) 290a Pecosm 3m SE + ~~1500~~²⁷¹⁰ = 4,926

1828, 26 Nicholas H. Lewis 282a " " + —
 " , 26, 24 Thos W Lewis et 235a adjltho +4210 = 12,622
 1820 " " " " + 3378 = 15,427

Locust Grove

3-c Am F
int end chum
2 bays, wind shortened
shed porch

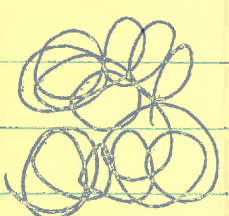
stable

they built this cottage around ruins to live in when it married after war
some walls had fallen

no interior fabric left?

plan ~?

Sinclair's built to live in while building big house
chimney of ~~the~~ ^{the} house remain, has been moved
bricks, foundations, ruins everywhere



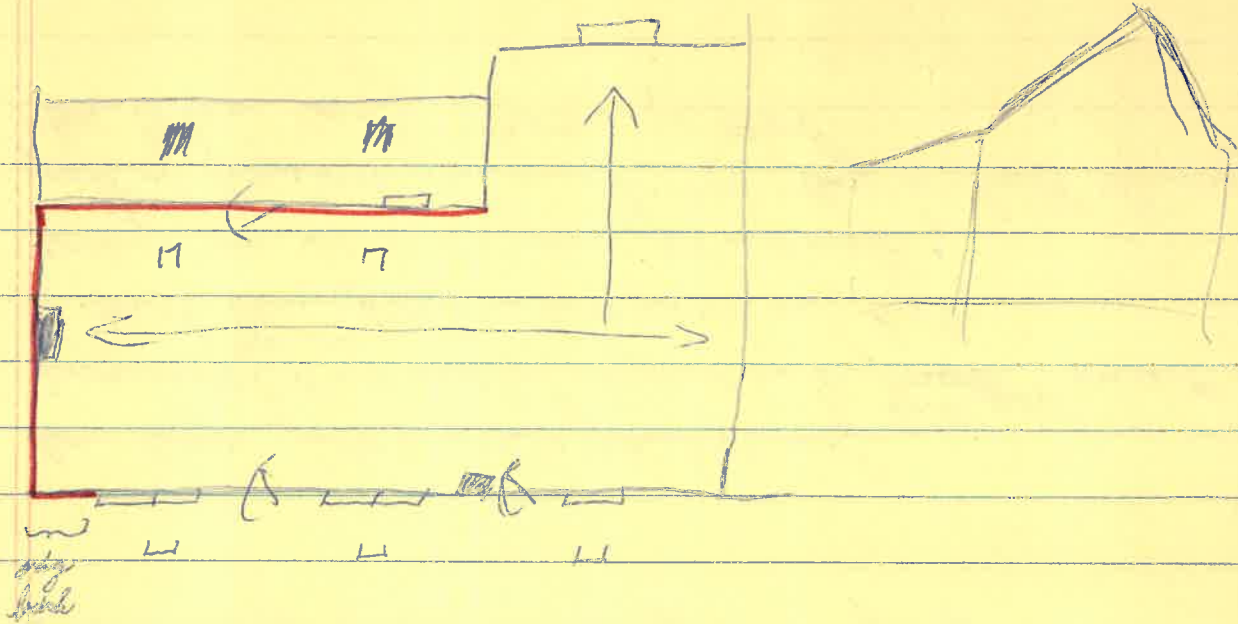
Questions:

Was stable in or attached to it? ^{where?} ~~down again before Sinclair~~
When was stable added? ^{before Sinclair} ~~(Was it standing 1946?)~~
~~pictures~~ any old pictures, anytime before, ^{including} 1940s rebuilding?

Barn large; picture shows gambrel roof
incorporated N+W walls, beyond on E, ^{lower part} ~~present~~ S wall
built then ^{top near} stable where porch in; left
carriage room where S+W wall, cut in W wall;
part of fireplace remained 1946; they re-built chimney
to be down early 1930s, c. 1934

Main house is 3-c Am of Elm, not stretcher!!

remaining
part of house



rear (west)

8/8 windows, brick sills, plain windows, down rear
6/6 " " " up & facade

long ~~to~~ ^{shed-roofed} bungeloid dormer on back (west)
white weatherboarded

rear - med brick, ~~or~~ stretch bond; orig at N end

N end - steep gable roof (asphalt shing, bled cornice) ^{floor}
follows orig line; close work.
int end chimney (rebuild)
5-0 am-up 1-1/2 inch; upper left replaced

facade (E) - brick orig, some re-working at top wind & door
windows were taller full-size, smaller ones, brick sill
~~and with~~ 2 dormer gable-roofed, weatherboarded sides, flush wooden
siding on face, 6/6, ~~to~~
shed-roofed concrete porch, 4 sq posts, 1
brick found orig for house

3-bay facade 5-bay rear (orig), single pil
1/2-story, L-shaped
2nd am int chimney
low foundation

look for old windows on E facade - no one
was front (E) " orig a central door? no, prob just orig ^{orig} of window (2 b lower
" " door opening orig? - prob, wall had fallen above
S stable wall to top windows only no re-working at edges, something?
compare measurements + my drawing Windows, E Jeff, 5284409 Ridge
all - modern frame

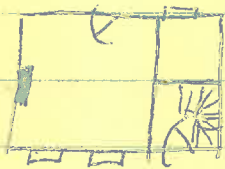
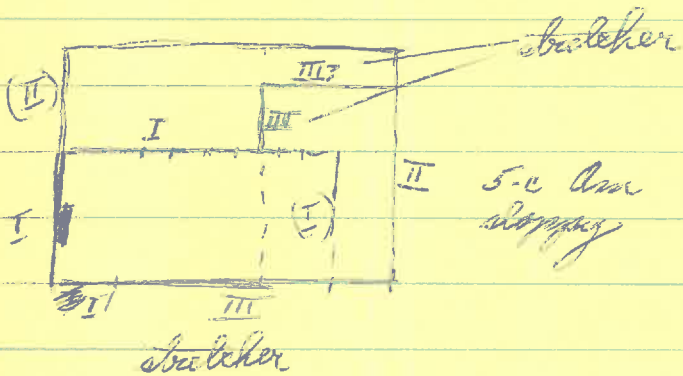
N wall on porch - stretch bond w/ ^{mid} brick, ^{up} windows matches
E wall - 2/3 wind, brick sill
all mod stretch, no old
S wall - 1 dormer matching facade
door in gable end, stairs, close verges
sloppy 5-c am bond, mid brick
(can't see below windows) - nothing looks old
reg sized 6/6 windows, no sills, floorboards
roof not quite as steep

kitchen-garage = 5-course American ^{of Flemish also} bond

glazing size sill surrounds

W 1st	8/8	reg	brick	plain
" 2nd	6/6		(wooden)	"
E 1st	"	short	brick	"
E dormer	"		(wooden)	"
N ell	"		brick	"
E "	8/8		"	"
S "	6/6	reg	—	"
S " dormer	"		(wooden)	"

I all 50
broad floor



Woods

pp. 252-53, 290-93, 138-39

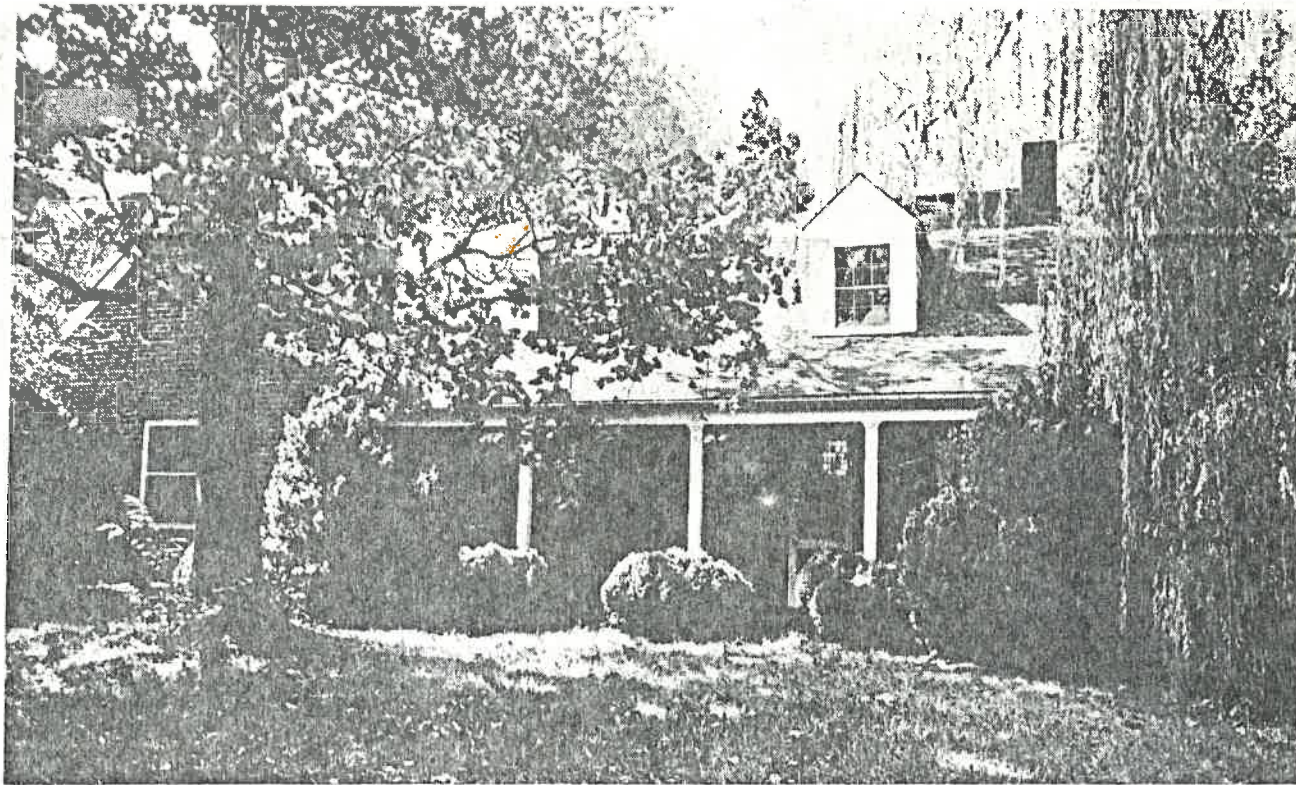
Nicholas Meinwether Jr
- 1744
The Farm

David Meinwether — Jane Meinwether — Robt. Lewis - 1765 — Nicholas Meinwether III - 1759 — ^{Married c1757} Thorensen — ^{Dr Thomas} Walker

Nicholas Meinwether — Ann Meinwether — Nicholas Lewis - 1808 — Richard Anderson — Pantops + Miller — Mary Walker - 1825 —
The Farm

Wm. D. Meinwether - 1845 — Elizabeth Lewis — Elizabeth Meinwether — Thomas W. Lewis - 1809 —
Lived at Cloverfields; also owned The Farm — Lovell Grove

Dr. Thos. W. Meinwether - 1863 — Ann Nelson — Susan David - 1829 — Mary Lewis — James Litch —
Cloverfields — Pantops — Meinwether Anderson - 1851 — Eliza Litch - 1872



Progress Photo by Dan Friedman

BRICK HOUSE BEHIND MANSION IS OLDER THAN THE MAIN HOUSE
Pre-1844 House Was Itself Made of Salvaged Bricks

Locust Grove Gates Now Gone

City Has Overtaken Plantation

By DAN FRIEDMAN
of The Progress Staff

"Locust Grove," Mr. and Mrs. Downing Smith's imposing four-story home of late Georgian design on Locust Avenue in Charlottesville, is a good example of a meticulous and loving preservation of an historic residence.

With some of the best houses both in the city and county threatened by the bulldozer, developments or sheer neglect, it's reassuring to see a place of historic significance so well attended to.

Situated on four acres of extensive gardens and magnificent old trees, Locust Grove has been the Smith family home since 1913 when Judge Lemuel Smith — a former Virginia Supreme Court Justice and father of the present owner — purchased the property.

The 12 room red-brick mansion was originally a part of the Nicholas Meriwether grant of 1735, and associated, therefore, with Meriwether's Charlottesville home, "The Farm," still standing on Farm Lane. And on September 19, 1839 — according to the Historic Landmark Survey — a Meriwether descendant sold 534 acres for \$16,000 to George Sinclair, who built Locust Grove a year later.

During the Civil War Gen. Philip Sheridan raided the area and a Union regiment occupied Locust Grove, carrying off horses, servants and other valuables. Mrs. Sinclair at the time reputedly was nursing a seriously wounded Confederate soldier and successfully concealed his presence.

One of the real splendors at Locust Grove today — and an indication of how large the early plantation once was — is its group of fascinating outbuildings. A guest house on the south lawn — which the Smith's use as a rental property — is older than the main house and was made from the bricks of the old dismantled slave quarters. There's a charming two-story brick kitchen building with a massive chimney behind the house which is used as a garage, and an original smoke house with elaborate brick cornice work which the owners have converted to a second guest house.

"Before the land was subdivided in the late nineteenth century," Mrs. Smith said, "the entrance gates for Locust Grove were located where Martha Jefferson hospital is today — five long city blocks away."

The main residence is a fairly standard four-over-four-over-four — that is, four rooms and a hall on each of the three main floors. The full attic — which is used for storage — has lovely dormer windows. All the rooms are of noble proportions. The ceilings on the first floor are 12 feet high, and there's a fireplace in every room and beautiful hand-painted ceramic tiles at the base of each fireplace.

The house is decorated with a fine collection of family furniture and antiques, including an old clock in the living room and a pair of beds upstairs which were made by Smith's grandfather. In addition, there are some interesting Chinese vases which Smith's mother received from her first cousin, writer Pearl Buck.

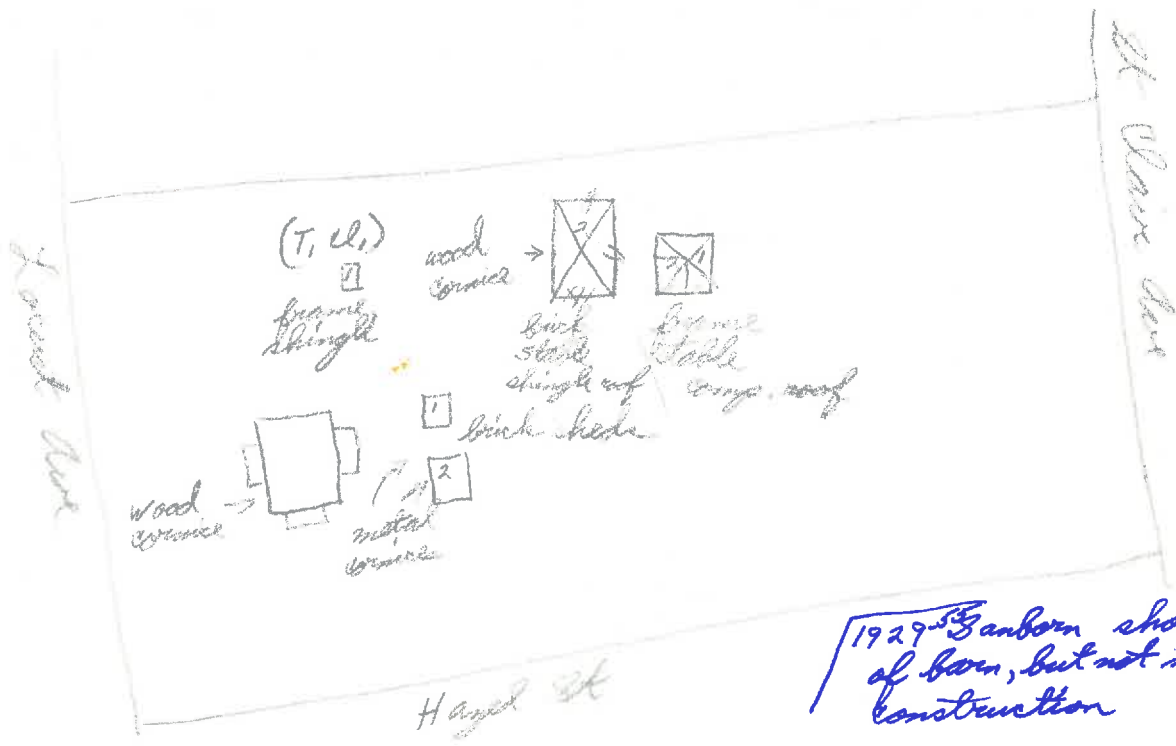
"The place is home to us," Mrs. Smith said. "My husband has lived here since he was six years old, and, quite simply, we couldn't live anywhere else."



MODEST KITCHEN BUILDING NOW SERVES AS GARAGE
Not Fine Old Brickwork in Building's Cornice

LOCUST GRO

1920
Sanborn Maps



1929⁵³ Sanborn shows demolition of barn, but not new 1946-47 construction

1 = 1st + 2nd storage windows
 > 30' x 50'
 frame 30' x 30', 220' away, in line