John Gordon House
Natchez Trace Parkway

Historic Structure Report

April 2012

for
Cultural Resources Division
Southeast Region, National Park Service

by

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The historic structure report presented here exists in two formats. A traditional, printed version is available for study at the park, at the Southeastern Regional Office of the NPS (SERO), and at a variety of other repositories. For more widespread access, the historic structure report also exists in a web-based format through ParkNet, the website of the National Park Service. Please visit www.nps.gov for more information.

Cover image: Joseph K. Oppermann, 2010

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Natchez Trace Parkway
Historic Structure Report
2012

Approved by: _____ 5/23/12
Superintendent, Natchez Trace Parkway — Date

Recommended by: _____
For Chief, Cultural Resources Division, Southeast Region — Date

Recommended by: _____ 7/3/12
Deputy Regional Director, Southeast Region — Date

Approved by: _____ 7/5/12
Acting Regional Director, Southeast Region — Date

Foreword

We are pleased to make available this Historic Structure Report, part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the historic structures and landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region. A number of individuals contributed to the successful completion of this work, but we would particularly like to thank the Project Team who authored the report and the staff at the Natchez Trace Parkway, including Cultural Resources Program Manager Dr. Christina E. Smith and Historical Architect Ronald Bishop, for their assistance throughout the process. We hope that this study of the John Gordon House will prove valuable to park management in its ongoing efforts to preserve the building and to everyone in understanding and interpreting this unique resource.

Dan Scheidt, Chief
Cultural Resources Division
Southeast Regional Office
2012

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Bibliography

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Executive Summary

John Gordon (1763-1819) was a resident and merchant of early Nashville, Tennessee, arriving there as a young man with his widowed mother in the mid-1780s. He also was a minor politician but gained wide recognition for crafting a business partnership with Chickasaw chief William Colbert to operate a trading post and ferry across the Duck River, an operation of which he later acquired full ownership. But he was most famous for his military skills, first evidenced in the American Revolution, then as a fighter in skirmishes against the local Indian population, and later in major campaigns at the bequest of his good friend and confidante, General Andrew Jackson.

Dorothea, or Dolly, Cross (1779-1859) was a member of a prominent Nashville family and reputedly a descendant of Pocahontas, daughter of Virginia Indian chief Powhatan. Dolly and John Gordon married in Nashville in 1794. At some point they moved to the site of the trading post and ferry they owned on the Duck River. By 1818, according to correspondence between the two, the house that is the subject of this report was under construction. Dolly apparently oversaw this process in the absence of her husband, away at war as he often was. She probably oversaw much in their lives, both the raising of their large family and their many business enterprises, including farm, trading post, and ferry operations.

John returned home in 1818 and was dead within a year. Dolly continued the businesses and lived in the house with her children (ten lived to adulthood) and grandchildren until her death in 1859 at age eighty. little has been documented in specific detail about the property during the Gordon occupancy. However, it is certain that in addition to the two-story, brick main block which survives today, there would have been an assortment of outbuildings and site improvements to sustain family and business operations.

After Dolly's death, the house passed to a grandson who farmed the land but lived elsewhere. By the late-nineteenth century, the property had passed out of the family and Gordon's Ferry had ceased operations. The house had become so deteriorated and the land so overgrown that a 1901 history described the place as "much dilapidated."

In 1904 the house and 107 acres was acquired by the Jewell family who, according to family tradition and period photographs, made extensive repairs and built numerous farm buildings. The enclosure of the interior staircase and replacement of first-floor mantels were probably part of this campaign as well.

The Jewell family farmed the land until 1969 when the Tennessee Department of Transportation acquired it for right-of-way development associated with the Natchez Trace Parkway. By this point, the property was again in a deteriorated state.

The National Park Service (NPS) was well aware of the property's historical importance when it acquired the Gordon site in 1974. A 1944 NPS evaluation of sites associated with the Natchez Trace (Dawson Phelps) had recommended acquisition. Another in 1969 (Edward L. Trout) had urged prompt action due to the rapidly advancing deterioration. Indeed, after the purchase NPS immediately embarked on a campaign to restore the exterior of the house to its appearance at the time of occupancy by John and Dolly Gordon.

The effects of the 1977-78 NPS restoration campaign were dramatic and focused primarily on the exterior. Among the actions taken, the overgrown site was cleared. Eight outbuildings deemed modern were demolished. A two-story wood-framed and weatherboarded ell was

removed, the adjacent masonry back wall of the main house block was substantially rebuilt, and

the other walls and the chimneys were partially rebuilt. All window units and all but one exterior (rear) doorway were replaced. Other wood trim was extensively rebuilt. A wood shingle roof was installed. During preparation for the repairs an early wood sash was discovered and used as the model for much of the work. During removal of the late-nineteenth century wing, an early braced-frame structure was discovered within; the framing was set aside nearby for further study. In subsequent NPS repair campaigns, site drainage was readdressed, front entrance porches were constructed (and later dismantled because of faulty design which damaged the floor framing at the front entrance doorways) and the failing replacement mortars of the 1970s repair campaign were replaced.

Today, the restoration of the house remains unfinished. The main block of the house stands unnaturally alone in a large open field although the house exterior is regularly maintained for the benefit of the passing public. Still, the portrayal is incomplete. There are no steps connecting site to house interior. The long rear service façade is awkwardly barren of connection to work areas. The site is devoid of any of the myriad of support features typical of the operating farmstead. And the interior, inaccessible by the public as when the property was acquired by NPS, remains in a state of disrepair.

Primary-source documents of the Gordon era identified during research for this report were predictably minimal. As is typical of remote homesteads of the period, historical documents with direct reference to the family and the property are rare. In the case of the Gordon House, there is a surviving letter from John to Dolly that briefly discusses the construction of the house, a task Dolly apparently managed.

Most information about a specific house is usually deducted from the broader historical pattern of development and gleaned from investigations of the building itself. In the effort to compare regional examples, only a few somewhat similar but less than pristine house types were identified; their comparison value was limited. Retracing the steps of the previous NPS investigations proved to be challenging. The two narrative reports of 1944 and 1969 were informative, though brief by design and without illustration. Locating and sorting through the research records and salvaged building artifacts

from the 1970s restoration effort and follow-up studies proved to be especially problematic. The records of such pre-restoration investigations typically take the form of notes, narratives, photographs, and drawings, all valuable resources. Unfortunately, the records located to date, some of which have only recently been rediscovered in NPS files, are largely in the form of rough field notations and unlabeled photographs. These are important records to be sure, though because they are largely without identification and summary commentaries by the investigators, the material is difficult to use and the researchers' processes of deduction are often a matter of guesswork.

Especially problematic was the search for salvaged building artifacts. An inventory, if one exists, was not located. The institutional memories of NPS personnel at the park and the regional office post-date the 1970s work; a retired member of the research team was located and confirmed the existence but not the eventual distribution of important artifacts. Missing are the one early window sash believed to be original to the house; fortunately a scaled drawing was subsequently found. Also missing is the door with original hardware for the stair closet. Several sections of window sills, jambs, headers, trim boards, a few window sash and framing members were found in the house and some of these items still retained their masking tape labels; unfortunately, the identification code in water-soluble ink has become illegible in most instances. Distribution of sections of the braced frame structure discovered in the ell could not be confirmed though some may be among the salvaged material in the house. There is a study of the framing by students of Middle Tennessee State University but, unfortunately, enough illustration is not provided to allow subsequent researchers to draw their own conclusions.

Investigations of in situ features as part of this report had its challenges as well. Much of the exterior woodwork has been replaced and the models could not always be confirmed. Nonetheless, the general designs of replaced features are plausible. Much of the exterior

masonry has been so thoroughly cleaned, reworked, and repointed, that there remains little evidence of the pre-restoration characteristics. An historic paint analysis of limited scope was conducted for this report and identified early paint colors, including faux wood graining, in selected areas.

Overall, the exterior of the house is regularly maintained and presents an attractive appearance. However, the interior brickwork of the four perimeter walls at basement level is in need of stabilization. In addition, repairs are required at the front entrance doorways to stem water intrusion, and the wood shingle roofing is beginning to fail. Of growing concern is the condition of the exterior wood elements replaced in the 1970s restoration; though single-board construction was specified, many of the elements are constructed of multiple pieces and the sections are separating and taking in water. The house is at a level of risk without fire and intrusion detection systems.

Interpretation is especially problematic given the general absence of information about the site and the extensive interplay of outbuildings and developed site features associated with the residence in the Gordon era. A secondary concern is a design for unobtrusively providing access to the interior of the house, a challenge exacerbated by the significant height difference between grade and house interior.

Given these circumstances, the Recommended Treatment for the John Gordon House is not an Ultimate Treatment but an Interim Treatment. The Recommended Interim Treatment is preservation coupled with the recommendation to focus research on the site. The historical design of the site is critical to understanding the design of the house. The two must be treated as one design. As site information is gathered, the unknown aspects of the house, particularly the entry points and the rear service façade, will be better understood, an Ultimate Treatment can be better formulated and may also provide insight into designing the least intrusive access into the house.

Administrative Data

Locational Data

Building Name:	John Gordon House
Location:	Natchez Trace Parkway near Duck River
County:	Hickman County at Maury County line
State:	Tennessee

Related Studies

Primary

Bond, Octavia Zollicoffer. "The Family Chronicle and Kinship book of Maclin, Clack, Cocke, Carter, Taylor, Cross, Gordon, and other related American lineages." Nashville, ca.1928.

Leach, Douglas Edward. "John Gordon of Gordon's Ferry," National Park Service typed manuscript, August 1959.

Phelps, Dawson A. "Gordons Ferry; a Study of the Historic Sites in the Vicinity of the Natchez Trace Crossing of the Duck River, Tennessee." National Park Service typed manuscript, April 12, 1945.

Sharp, Bryan A. Gordon House website http://gordonhouse.50megs.org.

National Park Service, Natchez Trace Parkway files, collections, photographs, slides, and digitized records on three CDs.

Secondary

Davis, William C. *A Way through the Wilderness*. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.

nps.gov/natr/historyculture.htm

Phelps, Dawson A. *Administrative History of the Natchez Trace Parkway*. National Park Service: 1965, annual updating to 1982

Trout, Edward L. "The John Gordon House." National Park Service typed manuscript, August 19, 1969.

University of Southern Mississippi, Natchez Trace Manuscript Collection.

Real Property Information

Acquisition Date: 1973

Numbering Information

LCS ID: NATR 00020

Size Information

Total Floor Area: 1,575 square feet ±

Roof Area: 775 square feet ±

Number of Stories: 2 + basement

Number of Rooms: 6

Number of Bathrooms: 0

Cultural Resource Data

National Register Status: House and 68 acres listed April 18, 1974
Boundary reduced to 10 acres November 21, 1977
Reference # PH 0082082
Name: John Gordon House

Proposed Treatment Preservation

I.A Historical Background and Context

John Gordon was born in 1763, his life coinciding with the settlement of Tennessee, the founding of the city of Nashville, and the development of the Natchez Trace as a road for European settlers. The Trace was one of the nation's major thoroughfares during the first two decades of the nineteenth century and integral to the economic development of the Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee river valleys. John Gordon was a soldier and an entrepreneur, one of the first white men to operate a ferry crossing on the Natchez Trace and to build, with his wife, an ambitious two-story brick house.

Native Americans in Tennessee

The area known as Tennessee was first inhabited nearly 12,000 years ago by Paleo-Indians, and later by the Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian cultures (8000 BC-1600 AD). Several tribes were living in Tennessee at the time of the first white contact in the sixteenth century.

Figure 1. Cherokee in the 1730s. (historyforkids.org)

Figure 2. Chickasaw brave. (utm.edu)

The white explorers, beginning with the Spanish and followed closely by British colonists, brought diseases that decimated the Indian populations and forced the survivors to unite into new tribes. These newly organized groups were dominated by the Creek, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Choctaw, and Seminole. By the eighteenth century, the Cherokee occupied the mountain country of western North Carolina and what would be eastern Tennessee, eventually becoming the largest tribe in the southeast. During the same period, the Chickasaw hunted and controlled western Tennessee.[1]

Indian territories often overlapped. In the area that would become Middle Tennessee, Chickasaw claims duplicated Cherokee claims, and the Shawnee and Creek each occupied small areas of the state, leading to constant hostilities between the several tribes. The push of white settlers into Indian lands forced new alliances, and the

1. National Park Service,*Lower Mississippi Delta Region* (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1998), p. 15-16.

fighting escalated, not only between tribes, but also between the Indians and the settlers.[2]

Hostilities between the settlers and the various tribes continued for decades with the tribes' losing land regularly through numerous treaties. In 1818 after two earlier cession treaties, the Chickasaw ceded almost all of their land in western Tennessee to the United States. In return, the United States agreed to pay the Chickasaw $20,000 annually for fifteen consecutive years. But in 1823, the Chickasaw left their native lands and a treaty of 1832 forcefully removed both the Chickasaw and Cherokee to lands west of the Mississippi River in what is now Oklahoma. Most traveled on this "Trail of Tears," which actually comprised several routes.[3]

White Settlement of Tennessee

The State of Tennessee has its origins as the western continuation of the North Carolina colony, whose north and south boundaries were set by the British in 1735. The western portion of the colony was recognized only to the Catawba River.[4] After early explorations, white settlers moved westward, beginning with the establishment of the Watauga Settlement in western North Carolina around 1770. A 1772 Watauga frontier pact is generally regarded as the first constitutional government west of the Appalachians, even though it encroached on lands still under Indian claim.[5]

The founding of the new nation brought more rapid western settlement. In the 1770s and 1780s thousands moved across the Blue Ridge Mountains to establish homesteads in the rugged wilderness beyond. Settlers pushed farther into the area now known as Middle Tennessee. Most came from North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New England, many taking advantage of land grants earned in service during the Revolutionary War or purchased from its veterans. This mix of settlers populated the frontier all the way to the Mississippi River with new towns forming throughout. [6]

In 1784 with the new country heavily in debt, the State of North Carolina voted to give Congress twenty-nine million acres lying between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. This, of course, was of great concern to the wilderness settlers who feared Congress would sell the territory to France or Spain. However, North Carolina withdrew its gift when Congress gave no assurance that it would be put toward the national debt.[7]

The alarmed wilderness settlers became determined to govern themselves by establishing a state of their own. They believed that statehood would provide more protection from Indian attacks than either North Carolina or the federal government could provide. In August 1784, seven new northwestern counties of North Carolina broke away, declaring independence and petitioning Congress for statehood. The votes fell short. Nevertheless, a constitution was adopted, a government assembled, a governor named, and the State of Franklin was declared in what is now east Tennessee (Figure 3).

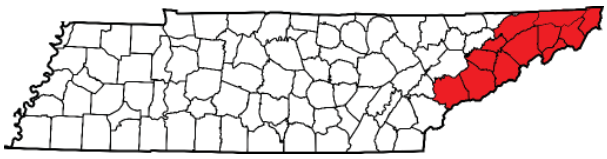


Figure 3. State of Franklin. (wikipedia.com)

The State of Franklin made its own treaties with several tribes. Nevertheless, when the Cherokee, Chickamauga, and Chickasaw nations began to attack its white settlements, the State asked help from an unwilling North Carolina. By 1790 the Franklin government had collapsed, and the counties rejoined North Carolina.

That same year North Carolina again ceded its western lands to Congress; this time it was organized into "The Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio," which was generally

2. Frederick Smoot, compiler. "Chickasaw People and Their Historic Homeland" A TNGenWeb History Presentation.
3. Federal Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration for the State of Tennessee, *Tennessee: A Guide to the State* (New York: The Viking Press, 1939), p. 40; the Cherokee translation is "the Trail Where We Cried."
4. Dawson A. Phelps, "Boundaries crossed by the Natchez Trace, a Study in the History of the Old Southwest" (National Park Service typed manuscript, 1949), cites Poore, *Federal and State Constitutions*, Vol. II, p. 1410. Also John T. Moore and Austin P. Foster, *Tennessee, The Volunteer State, 1769-1923,* Vol. 2 (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co, 1923), p. 409.
5. John Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 46-47.
6. Federal Writers' Project; *Tennessee,* p. 48-49.
7. Phelps, "Boundaries," p. 43.

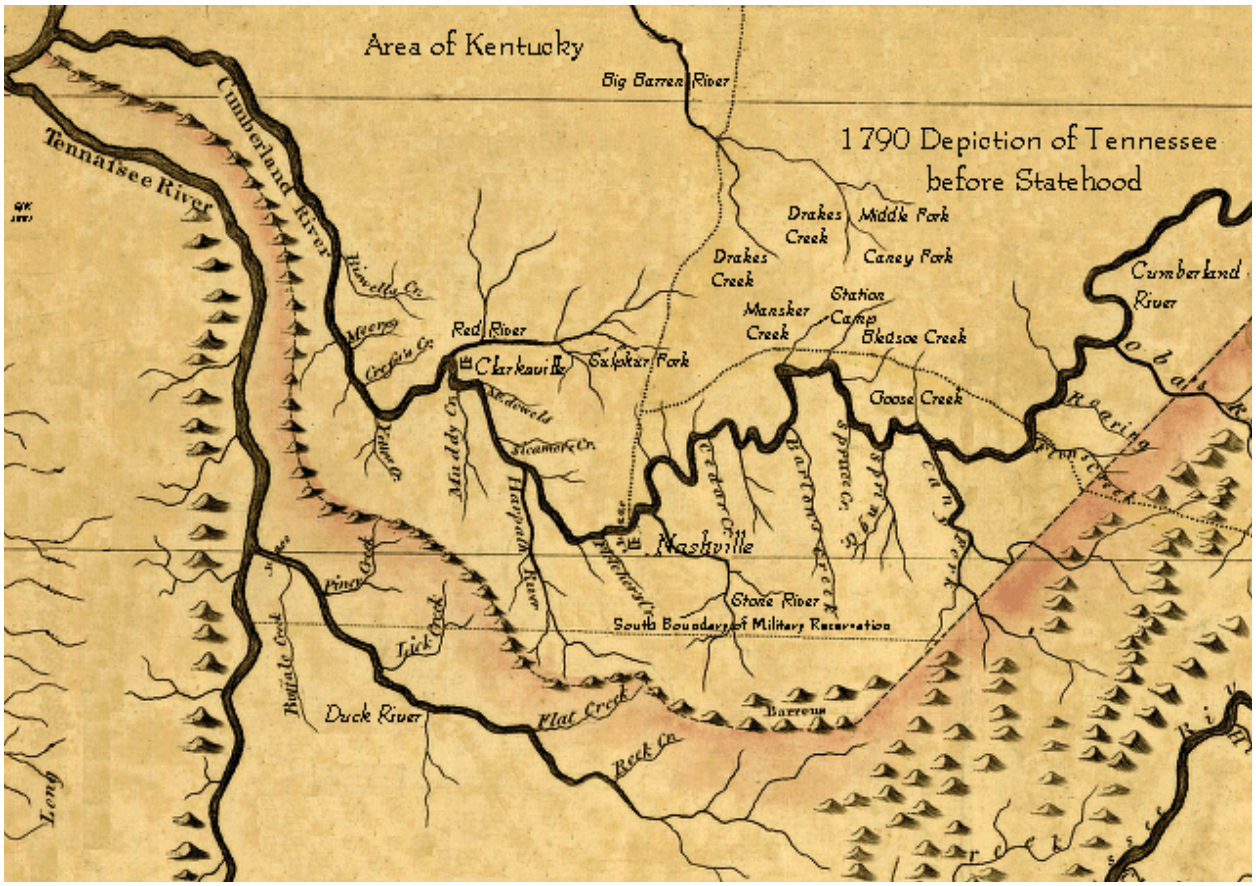


Figure 4. Depiction of portion of Middle Tennessee in 1790 before Statehood. The Duck River runs NW to SE just below the boundary of the "military reservation" around Nashville and the Cumberland Settlements. (US Gen Web archives, USGWarchive.org/maps.tennessee/)

known as the Southwest Territory. The territorial government under Governor William Blount lasted nearly six years; its land and population grew as a result of treaties with the Cherokee and other tribal nations and the completion of a wagon road between Knoxville and Nashville. The Territory was admitted to the Union in 1796 as Tennessee, the sixteenth state.[8]

Settlement of Nashville

The frontier attracted those from all walks of life—from aristocratic planters and slaveowners to poor yeoman farmers—all using the same trails through the Blue Ridge Mountains, down the muddy French Broad River to White's Fork (later Knoxville), and on to the Cumberland Settlements on the river of that name. Settlement of the Cumberland Valley began in 1779 under the auspices of the Transylvania Company, with Richard Henderson as its chief promoter. He had purchased a large tract of land in Tennessee and Kentucky at the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals that extinguished Cherokee claims to that region, making it attractive to white settlers.

The first permanent settlement in the valley was today's Nashville. Its origins can be traced to James Robertson and John Donelson, who in 1779 led a group of approximately two hundred pioneers from the Watauga settlement in northwestern

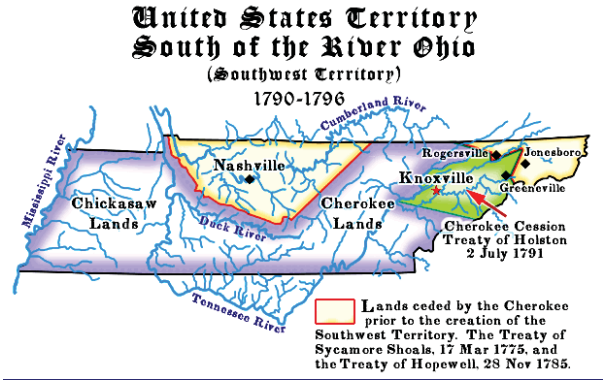


Figure 5. U.S. Territory South of the River Ohio (Southwest Territory) 1790-1796. (TN GenWeb project, tngenweb.org)

8. Federal Writers' Project; *Tennessee*, p. 47.

North Carolina across the mountains. After two months of traveling, the group arrived in late December and constructed a fort on a bluff above the Cumberland River. The fort and the small town that grew around it were called Nashborough in honor of General Francis Nash, former governor of North Carolina and brigadier general in the Revolutionary Army.[9] The community was renamed Nashville in 1784 and incorporated as a town by the North Carolina legislature. It was still a small village in 1785 when a German traveler wrote,

> Nashville is a recently founded place, and contains only two houses which, in true, merit that name; the rest are only huts that formerly served as a sort of fortification against Indian attacks.[10]

Nashville and surrounding Davidson County grew rapidly. A 1795 census of the county reported a white population of 2,615 and about 1,000 slaves, and by 1797 a visitor reported that Nashville itself was a town of some sixty or eighty families. Another report, however, stated the 1798 population of Nashville at "just a few hundred," finding that the houses, mostly of logs and frame, "stand scattered over the whole site of the town so that it appears larger than it actually is."[11]

A later report was more complimentary. Moravian missionaries visited Nashville in the fall of 1799, reporting that

> the city is regularly laid out, has a number of fine buildings and consists of about fifty houses. There is, also, a large stone Presbyterian Church where services are conducted once every four weeks; other religious denominations conduct no services here. A printing press is being established, which is to publish a weekly paper.[12]

Nashville's steady growth was due in part to the Natchez Trace, a notable commercial and postal route leading from Natchez to the Nashville area.

The Natchez Trace

When the Mississippi Territory below Tennessee was opened in 1798, the route from Natchez to Nashville became an important means of communication. The general course of the Natchez Trace developed from an evolving network of trails that had been used for thousands of years by bison, Native Americans, and European explorers and settlers. It was not one route, but a series of footpaths used for commerce between major villages in what became central Mississippi, Alabama, and Middle Tennessee. By the late eighteenth century when the white settlers arrived, the Trace was well established, connecting the two frontier communities of Natchez and Nashville.[13] Even then, the Trace had no set course but followed the numerous trails, each particular trip selected by season and weather as much as by destination. In a 1797 journal, a traveler reported:

> On the opposite shore we found it difficult to rejoin the path . . ., as there were so many crossing and recrossing each other. At last we fixed upon one which appeared to lead the right course, and accordingly pursued it.[14]

Middle Tennessee developed quickly as the northern terminus of the Trace, which was most commonly used as a return route from the Natchez and New Orleans markets. The first official suggestion to open the route as a government road appears to have been made by Winthrop Sargent, the first governor of the Mississippi Territory, in

Figure 6. Location of the Natchez Trace.

9. Edward Albright, *Early History of Middle Tennessee* (Nashville,TN: Brandon Printing Company, 1908).
10. Douglas Edward Leach, "John Gordon of Gordon's Ferry" (National Park Service typed manuscript, August 1959), p. 4, cites Samuel Cole Williams, ed., *Early Travels in the Tennessee Country*, 1540-1800 (Johnson City, 1928), p. 285.
11. Lewis Brantz was a teenager who kept a journal of his trip. J. Frazer Smith, *Plantation Houses and Mansions of the Old South (*Courier Dover Publications, 1993), p. 27. Albright, p. 199-200. Williams, *Early Travels*, p. 410-413.
12. Williams, *Early Travels*, p. 508.
13. Two travelers in the 1790s wrote accounts of their journeys on the Trace: a young Spanish Lieutenant, Estevan Minor, on a diplomatic mission in 1792, and the British astronomer Sir Francis Bailey, who followed the Trace up from Natchez to Nashville in 1796 and 1797. The word "trace" was derived from the French term for a footpath.
14. Williams, *Early Travels*, from NATR CD#3.

1798 after the United States acquired Natchez. The governor further suggested that blockhouses be built as way stations along the route. However, the Secretary of State proposed instead that inns be built to provide food and rest for travelers as well as fresh horses for postal riders.[15]

In 1800, Congress designated the Natchez Trace as a government post road. However, because no improvements were made, the route was not adequate for mail service. In early 1801, the U.S. Postmaster General complained that mail service between Nashville and Natchez was unsatisfactory "on account of the badness of the road…which is very devious and narrow." Subsequent events that same year were to have dramatic impact on use of the Trace roads and thereby the region. First, the Secretary of War responded by instructing General James Wilkinson to improve the road. Second, the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes in separate treaties in October gave permission for a post road to cross their lands, but, in a provision that would be important to John Gordon, the Indians retained sole rights to operate the inns and ferries needed by the road's travelers.[16]

With the treaties in effect, Wilkinson commanded Colonel Thomas S. Butler to build a true road by clearing out the existing footpaths at the northern

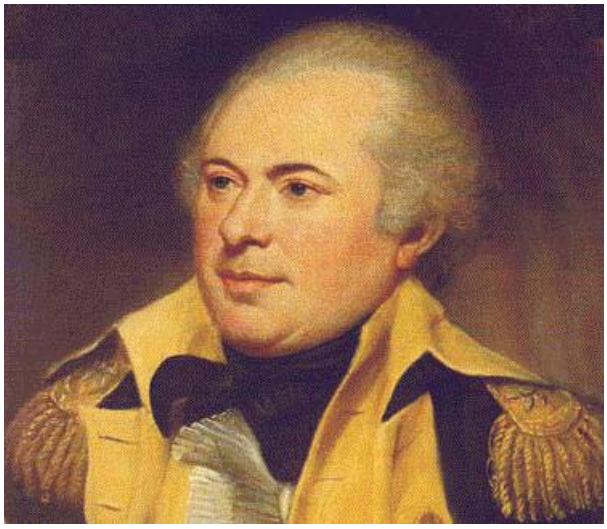


Figure 7. General James Wilkinson. (wikipedia.org)

15. Thomason, p. 9.
16. University of Southern Mississippi, Natchez Trace Manuscript Collection. Wilkinson was commander of all U.S. military forces in the Southwest. Secretary of War to Wilkinson, 6/11/1801, cited in Dawson A. Phelps, "Gordons Ferry; a Study of the Historic Sites in the Vicinity of the Natchez Trace Crossing of the Duck River, Tennessee" (National Park Service manuscript, April 12, 1945), p. 6.

Figure 8. Postrider logo of the Parkway. (nps.gov/natr)

end of the route.[17] Between 1801 and 1803, Butler and his Federal troops cleared and widened the trails to a width "not to exceed" sixteen feet.[18] To conduct the work, Wilkinson established four "cantonments," or supply depots, along the route, each a collection of buildings to receive supplies and presumably to house the troops during construction. One such cantonment was built on the Tennessee River at the Indian boundary, another on the Duck River in Middle Tennessee south of Nashville where John Gordon would later have his ferry.

The mail route became known officially as the "Road from Nashville in the State of Tennessee to the Grindstone Ford of the Bayou Pierre in the Mississippi Territory." For years local residents referred to it simply as "the Road Opened by the Federal Troops." Once the trails were improved, postriders were allowed only two weeks to make the trip between Nashville and Natchez. [19]

But the most frequent travelers on the Trace in the late 1700s and early 1800s were boatmen, and walking was their predominant means of travel. Coming from the Ohio River regions of Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, farmers and merchants, collectively known as "Kaintucks" because most were from Kentucky, floated merchandise down the Mississippi River to southern ports. Their flatboats were laden with livestock, coal, grain, flour, pork, and whiskey, generally sold at markets in Natchez and New Orleans.

17. Phelps, "Gordons Ferry."
18. Ibid.
19. Dawson A. Phelps and Edward Hunter Ross, "Names Please: Place Names along the Natchez Trace" (Journal of Mississippi History 1952). William C. Davis, *A Way through the Wilderness* (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 28.

Figure 9. Flatboat with sweeps and covered, ventilated cargo area. (freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com)

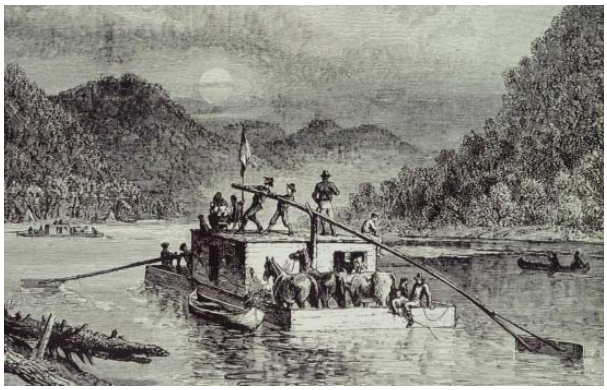


Figure 10. Flatboat with sweeps and cargo area. (lincoln.lib.niu.edu/gal/flatboat.html)

The most basic and most affordable boat available to the Kaintucks was the flatboat with covered cargo area, so named because of its flat underside and shallow draft. Because the boats were unable to make the return trip upstream, they had little use once they reached their southern destinations and generally were dismantled and sold for their lumber.[20] The boatmen would then begin the long walk home, travelling overland on the Natchez Trace to Middle Tennessee; from there they used more established roads to take them north and east.[21]

The 1803 purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France greatly increased commercial trade on the Mississippi River, which in turn increased travel on the Natchez Trace.[22] It is estimated that more than 10,000 Kaintucks were traveling the Natchez Trace by the year 1810.[23]

20. Ibid.
21. The trail was not referred to as the Natchez Trace until the 1820s. Its earlier names were the Chickasaw Trace, Path to the Choctaw Nation, and the Boatman's Trail. Natchez Trace Research Collection (University of Southern Mississippi, www.lib.usm.edu); nps.gov/natr/Kaintuck.html.
22. Robert C. Gildart, *Natchez Trace: Two Centuries of Travel (*Helena, MT: American and World Geographic Publishing, 1996), p. 44.
23. nps.gov/natr/historyculture/people.htm

The road also became an important military road soon after the government improvements of 1801-03, when Tennessee troops marched over it to insure that the Louisiana Purchase agreement would not be challenged by Spain.

In 1806 the road was again improved when President Jefferson ordered that it be twelve feet wide and "passable for a wagon" although that simply required tree trunks to be cut to a height no higher than sixteen inches.[24] Despite its designation as a post road and Jefferson's improvements, the Trace remained no more than a primitive road through the wilderness, better suited to a horse or a man on foot than a wagon or carriage.

Primitive though it was, the Trace was especially busy during the War of 1812. General John Coffee led a cavalry corps to New Orleans where he joined General Andrew Jackson in defense of that city.

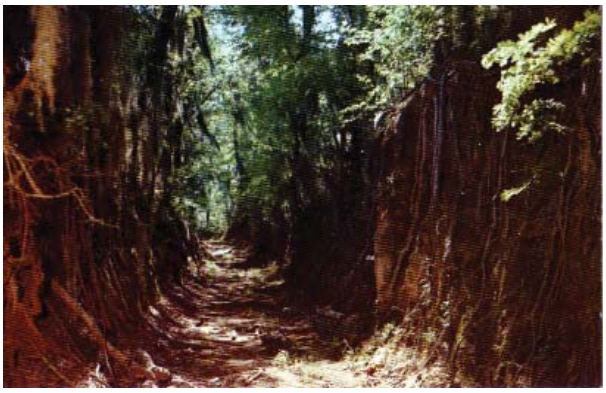


Figure 11. 1950s postcard showing depressed remnant of the old Trace.

Figure 12. Battle of New Orleans, 1815. (americaslibrary.gov)

24. University of Southern Mississippi, Natchez Trace Manuscript Collection.

Early in 1813, Jackson and his entire force marched back to Nashville on the Trace. In 1814 his troops returned to New Orleans to defend against the British attack that would come the following year in the Battle of New Orleans.[25]

Improvements to the road had been proposed in 1814 when the British invaded Louisiana. However, Jackson's 1815 victory at New Orleans ended the war and thereby the call for improvements. Two years later, in 1817, a section of road was built on a new location east of the Trace. Even then the Natchez Trace remained the official postal route; however, as new towns and settlements were established in the region, new roads opened that provided a more efficient route for the post road, diverting sections of the mail route from the Trace.[26]

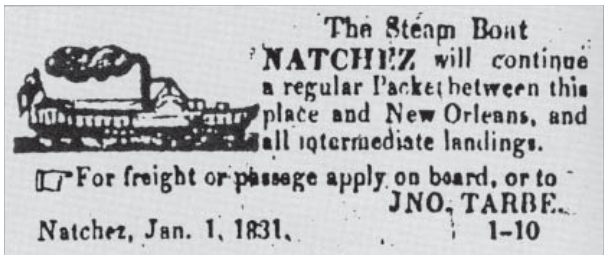

The Steam Boat
NATCHEZ will continue
a regular Packet between this
place and New Orleans, and
all intermediate landings.
For freight or passage apply on board, or to
JNO. TARBE.
Natchez, Jan. 1, 1831. 1-10

Figure 13. 1831 Steam Boat newspaper advertisement, 1831. (*Mississippi Free Trader*)

Though the Natchez Trace had been a vital part of the commerce and trade that opened the area to settlement, its importance quickly faded. The proliferation of steamboats on the Mississippi River in the 1820s allowed the Kaintucks to return upriver, thereby avoiding the hazards of the overland journey on the Trace. The rerouting of portions of the national post road further doomed the Trace to secondary importance, and by 1830 it was essentially abandoned with much of it reclaimed by wilderness or farm roads.[27]

Stands and Ferries

In the early years of the Trace, the issue of accommodations for the postriders and Kaintucks lay in the hands of the Chickasaw and Choctaw who held sole rights. Under their two 1801 treaties with the United States allowing the creation of the post road through their lands, only Indians could operate ferries and "stands" along the road. Stands provided a place for travelers and their horses to stay and obtain a meal of sorts. Along the Trace, a stand came to signify an inn or tavern, though some were only rudimentary. They were notably crude in their amenities with few travelers even provided a bed; most slept on the floor. One traveler reported sleeping with "not less than 50 Indians, many of them drunk."[28]

Existing Indian trading posts were probably the first stands, but the increasing number of white travelers on the Trace became as important as the Indian trade. Many more stands were needed on the trip along the Trace of roughly 450 miles. Passage took about thirty-five days by foot or twenty to twenty-five days by horse.[29] The Chickasaw initially were reluctant to allow whites to operate stands or ferries. However, a partnership was formed in 1802 between a Chickasaw chief and John Gordon, a white settler.

In 1803 the Governor of the Mississippi Territory asked the Chickasaw to create "proper hostelries" on their lands, offering funds to encourage more partnerships with white settlers for such purposes. Then in 1805, three years after the agreement with Gordon, the Chickasaw eased their restrictions and allowed whites independently to open several new stands, even agreeing that the government could advertise for potential lessees.[30]

Scores of stands resulted, most set up solely "for the comfort and accommodation of travelers," as advertised in Natchez and Nashville papers. An illustrated map in William C. Davis's book, *A Way Through the Wilderness*, identifies forty-one stands established along the length of the Natchez Trace during the years 1797 to 1815.[31] The earliest were located between Nashville and the Tennessee River, with four stands established in that section by 1805. Davis's map shows four additional stands in that section of the Trace by 1810 and six others closer to Natchez. The largest number of stands opened between 1811 and 1813 and at least five more were

25. Ibid.
26. Elisabeth P. Myers, *Andrew Jackson (*Chicago: Reilly & Lee Books, 1970), p. 147; Hitchcock, "Site History," p. 9.
27. James A. Crutchfield, *It Happened on the Mississippi River (*Guilford, CT: Morris Book Publishing, 2009).
28. Dawson A. Phelps, "A Preliminary Report on Stands and Travel Accommodations on the Natchez Trace" (National Park Service manuscript, June 11, 1948). Gildart, p. 47.
29. Natchez Trace Research Collection, University of Southern Mississippi, www.lib.usm.edu; nps.gov/natr/Kaintuck.html.
30. Davis, p. 28.
31. Ibid. Some stands are not dated; one was created in 1825.

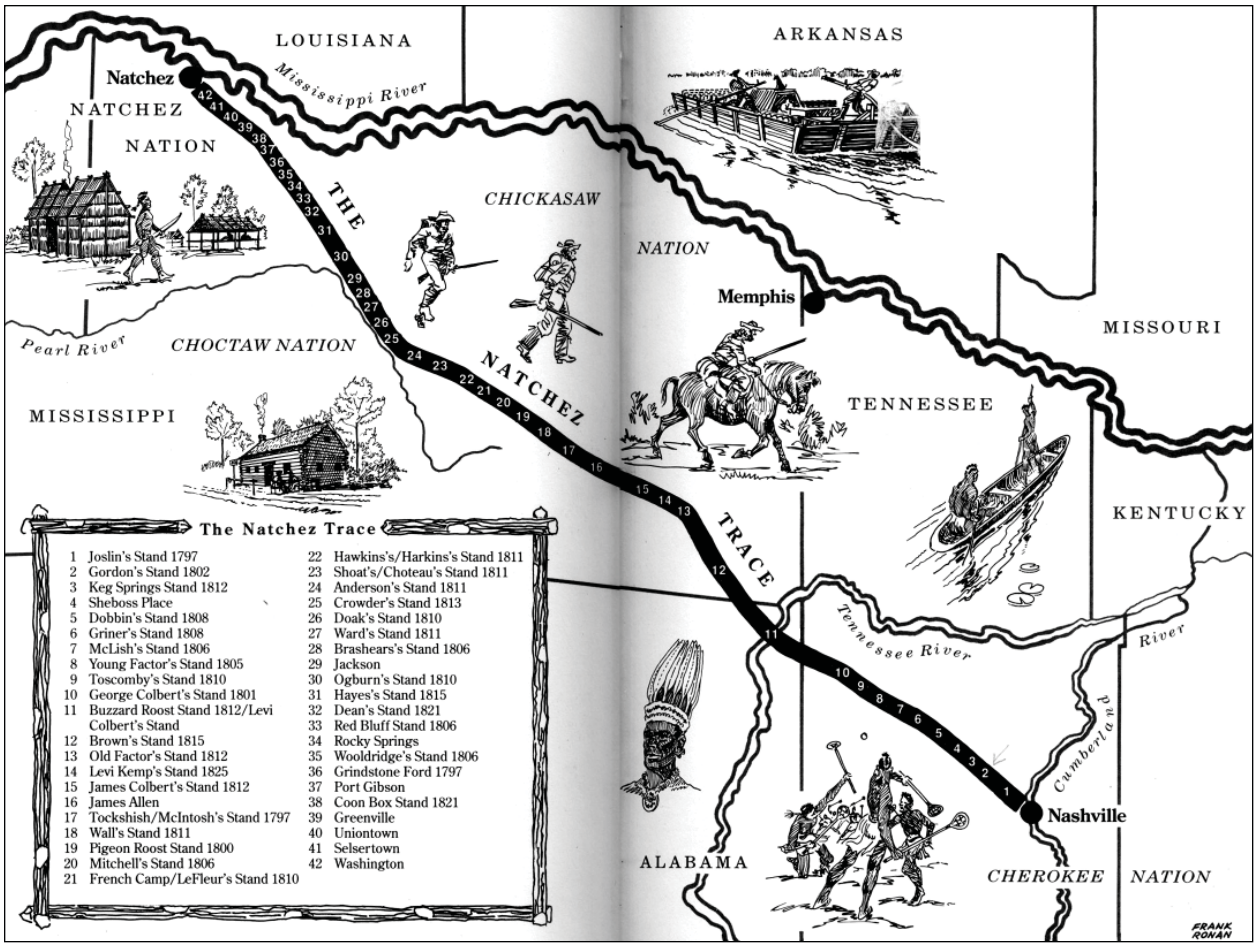


Figure 14. Stands on the Natchez Trace. (Davis, *A Way Through the Wilderness*)

Figure 15. Flatboat ferry crossing the Missouri River, ca. 1870. (The Flatboat Project, www.ausbcomp.com/~bbott/winrr/wrfom.htm)

opened in 1815 and later. About ten other known stands are undated.[32] Generally, the stands on the Trace took the names of the owners, examples being Gordon's Stand and Colbert's Stand.[33]

Ferries also were essential to travel, in order to shuttle people across narrow bodies of water. These were generally flat-bottomed boats of shallow draft. Unlike the flatboats designed for cargo, ferries had no covered area, but open decks that allowed passengers to board on one end of the ferry and leave from the other. Most of the Trace's ferries were probably simple, wooden flat-bottomed boats with low aprons on each end and side rails on the deck. A ferry could be controlled by means of sweeps either on the sides or on the ends but were carried by the current. Sweeps were used for steering the flatboat into the current or for pulling into slack water when landing, rather than for propulsion. Most ferries, especially those in shallow or rapid waters, used instead the more tiring method of poling, or plunging a long pole into the mud to guide and propel the boat.[34] In general, ferries charged on a sliding scale, from a man or horse to a loaded wagon.

Figure 16. Flatboat ferry, Graham County, NC, mid-20th century photograph. (grahamcounty.net/GCHistory/04-townofrobbinsville)

The Colberts

Ferries were often associated with a stand. Perhaps the most well-known was Colbert's Stand and ferry. It was operated by George Colbert, the son of James Colbert, a Scotsman "who has lived among the Chickasaw from his childhood and speaks their language even with more propriety than the English [language]."[35] James fathered five Colbert brothers: William, George, Levi, Joseph,

32. Ibid, stands map.
33. Phelps & Ross, "Names," and Phelps, "Stands."
34. Berty, The Flatboat Project (www.ausbcomp.com/~bbott/winrr/wrfom.htm). Ferries were generally flatboats, but were not the same as the river flatboats used by merchants. Those were built with a cabin for protection of their cargo.
35. James Adiar, *History of the American Indians*. Ed. S.C Williams (Johnson City,TN: Watauga, 1930), p. 398.

Figure 17. George Colbert as depicted by Dorothy Carter McDonald. (*Times Daily*, Florence, Alabama, 3/2/2001)

and Pittman (James), who became principal Chickasaw spokesmen for well over a century.[36] The father was described in 1780 as,

> A man of about sixty years, but still of good health, and a strong constitution. He had lived among the Indians for forty years and had a rich holding among the Chickasaws, one hundred and fifty Negro slaves and several sons by Chickasaw women. During the siege of Pensacola he had rendered assiduous assistance to the English along with some of his sons and a band of Chickasaw braves. [37]

His son George, half-Scot and half-Chickasaw, was born in 1764, grew up among the Chickasaw, and became one of the most influential individuals in Chickasaw affairs in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although of mixed descent, he was one of the first to own an inn on the improved Trace and operated an important ferry across the Tennessee River. Described by a travelling preacher as "shrewd, talented, and wicked," by others as "artful and designing," he charged exorbitant rates for his ferry, which he operated from 1801 to 1819. In a frequently recounted story, Colbert in 1815 charged Andrew Jackson $75,000 to ferry his army of Tennessee Volunteers across the river on their return from the Battle of New Orleans.

36. Phelps, "Stands," p. 55. Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The Chickasaws* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 65.
37. Ibid, p. 56, cites Caughey, John Walton, *Bernardo de Galvez in Louisiana* (Berkeley: UCA Press, 1939), p. 227.

John Gordon

George Colbert's ferry was among the first to open on the new Trace, but John Gordon was the first white man to operate a ferry under the treaty giving the Chickasaws their monopoly. John Gordon was born into a family of Scottish descent near Fredericksburg, Virginia, on July 15, 1763. He later became a man of some importance to the history of Tennessee. A family chronicle holds that he was an "eccentric, brave and patriotic character," an only son who migrated first to Kentucky, than brought his newly-widowed mother to Tennessee's Cumberland settlement in the mid-1780s.[38] This was only a few years after the founding of Nashville, still then a raw and primitive town. Gordon was described as "rather below than above medium height, dark of complexion… with piercing eyes and hair of raven hue. His movements were quick with energy and prompt decision." The family account continues, "Despite his relative lack of formal schooling, Gordon spelled, wrote, and computed unusually well with few errors in spelling."[39]

After traveling to Georgia for a short time in 1785 or 1786, Gordon returned to Nashville and, probably with help, bought property in the town. At some point he set himself up as a merchant; this is evidenced in part by a 1793 letter from a customer ordering coffee and chocolate and asking Gordon for the latest news about an impending war between the Creek and Chickasaw Indians. [40]

On August 5, 1793, Gordon bought another Nashville property, lot #30, at a sheriff's sale, and a little over a year later sold it to his new father-in-law, Richard Cross, for three times his initial outlay. Cross may have been helping Gordon, who on July 15, 1794, had married Cross's daughter Dorothea, known as Dolly. Their wedding day, July 15, was the birthday of both bride and groom. As a descendant wrote, "Dolly Cross celebrated her fifteenth birthday by marrying Capt. John Gordon…." Gordon was thirty-one. [41]

Gordon's business appears to have prospered. In 1794 he signed a contract with a B. Allison to form a trading concern known as "John Gordon & Company" and, in November, contracted with the Department of War to furnish supplies and rations to troops on duty in Tennessee. He later provided supplies for Butler's troops during their work on the Natchez Trace.[42] A 1958 newspaper article reports that he "was engaged in mercantile transactions extending from Nashville to Philadelphia and from Chickasaw Bluff (Memphis) to New Orleans."[43]

Deeds show that Gordon apparently amassed a substantial amount of property in Nashville as well as a large acreage just to the south. He, Richard Cross, and three others were said to have owned about one-third of Nashville. Family chronicles report that, "at one time Gordon lived on Cedar Street, near the grounds now occupied by the Capitol, and owned Capitol Hill, which he was said to have sold for a horse and saddle."[44]

By the 1790s John Gordon had gained some distinction as an Indian fighter. Even as a young man he had fought in the battles of Bullitt's Lick and Blue Licks in Kentucky during the Revolutionary War. In the spring of 1787 when Gordon was twenty-three, Nashville and the Cumberland settlements were plagued by increasingly severe Indian raids, confining settlers in the southern part of Nashville to a small safe area protected by blockhouses. Gordon helped form a party of the county militia to follow and defeat the Indians in what was named the Coldwater Expedition.[45]

The fighting persisted. From 1790 to 1795 constant hostilities with the Cherokee and the Creek threatened the Nashville area. A spinoff group of Cherokees, known as the Chickamauga, gathered southeast of the town intent on driving white settlers out of Indian hunting grounds. Gordon participated in most of the retaliatory expeditions, leading his company and returning with some renown to Nashville.[46]

38. Octavia Zollicoffer Bond, "The Family Chronicle and Kinship book of Maclin, Clack, Cocke, Carter, Taylor, Cross, Gordon, and other related American lineages" (Nashville, ca.1928), p. 194-195.
39. Moore and Foster, *Tennessee, The Volunteer State,* Vol. 2., p. 132. His father was probably Lieut. John Gordon of the Revolutionary Army, who died on June 5, 1783. Bond, *Chronicles*, pp. 174, 182, 204.
40. Unknown letter referenced by family in Leach, p. 41.
41. Davidson County Register Book D, pp. 67, 77. Dolly was born 7/15/1779. Handwritten family history by Mrs. Hinton (Lucille Gordon) Frierson, n/d, NATR collection.
42. Tennessee Historical Society collection, Box G2, No. 61-G; Leach, p. 42; and Meeker article in 1/23/1958 Hickman County newspaper.
43. Meeker article in 1/23/1958 Hickman County newspaper.
44. Bond, *Chronicles*, pp. 58, 180.
45. Phelps, "Stands," p. 65 cites Federal Writers Project, *Tennessee*, p 482; Leach, "John Gordon," p. 13.
46. Leach, passim.

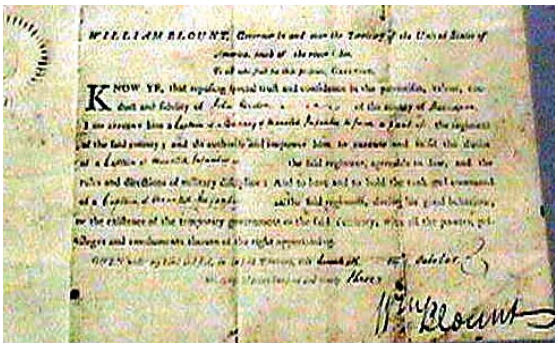


Figure 18. Governor Blount's 1793 proclamation commissioning John Gordon Captain of Mounted Infantry. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

Figure 19. Governor William Blount. (www.senate.gov)

In 1791, he led the "Parched Corn Tour" against the Indians. During this time he was the captain of the independent troop of cavalry that formed the first border patrol, and in September 1792, was appointed a lieutenant of the Davidson County militia. A year later in October 1793, he was commissioned by William Blount, territorial governor, as Captain of Mounted Infantry of the Davidson County Regiment.[47]

After making the proclamation of the appointment, Blount wrote to General Robertson describing Gordon's equipment and the makeup of his volunteer troops:

47. Moore & Foster, II, p. 132.

Knoxville, October 20th, 1793.

Sir,
The company of the Davidson Regiment heretofore called the Independent Troop to be discontinued under that name, and in future to be a company of mounted Infantry commanded as heretofore by captain John Gordon equipped with a fire lock, powder horn, shot bag, etc., to remain a part of the Regiment of Davidson County to consist of sixty four privates, six corporals, six sergeants and two musicians. It is expected that none will be received into the company but such as will hold themselves generally in readiness with good horses and arms to pursue or repel hostile Indians at the shortest notice to be in all respects subject to the Military Law.

Wm. Blount[48]

The following year Gordon played an important part in the Nickajack Expedition that ended Chickamauga attacks on the Cumberland settlements and brought him additional acclaim. The botanist André Michaux writing of his 1795 travels mentions Captain Gordon as one of the people he visited.[49]

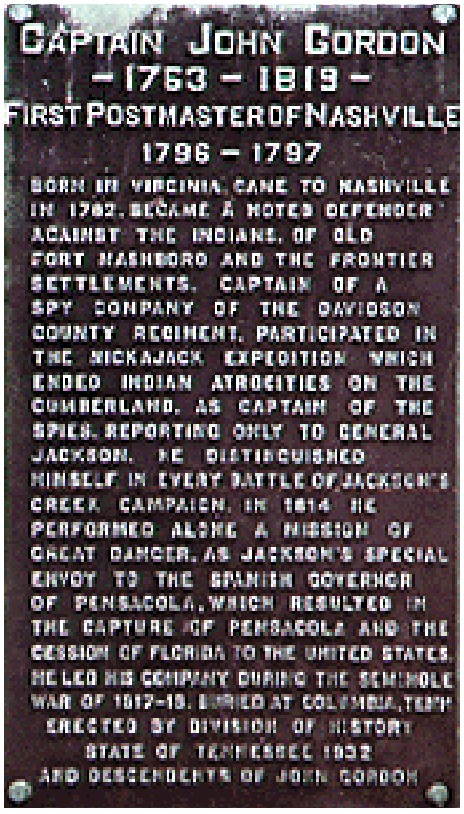


Figure 20. Plaque commemorating John Gordon in Nashville on the grounds of the old Post Office. Erected by the DAR. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

48. Robertson correspondence, p. 79, in NATR CD#3, Indian Fighter, page 1.
49. Leach, p. 6. Susan Hitchcock, "Site History [of Gordon House]." (Draft NPS manuscript, 2010), p.15.

On July 11, 1795, Governor Blount appointed Gordon a Justice of the Peace in Davidson County, a position of importance.[50] Other positions came his way. The national government was expanding its postal service west of the Appalachian Mountains to encourage westward expansion and to cultivate western loyalty to the government.[51] Gordon, already a prominent citizen, was appointed as the first Postmaster of Nashville in early 1796. He kept the position only a short time, however, relinquishing it within a year because he was "about to leave Nashville."[52] That year he began to acquire land two miles southwest of Nashville that became his family farm.

Attacks and battles with the Cherokee and Creeks continued well into the nineteenth century. Gordon, who had become one of Andrew Jackson's closest aides, distinguished himself in every battle of Jackson's campaign against the Creeks. His reputation as an Indian fighter continued to grow and he rose to higher positions of leadership. One of Gordon's cavalry riders reported his daring exploits and was proud to say he had been with Gordon in excursions against the Indians.[53]

Not all military leaders favored forcible removal of Indians from their lands. Colonel Thomas Butler, who would improve the Natchez Trace in 1801, expressed his concerns in a 1797 letter to Indian agent Benjamin Hawkins:

> ". . .The Indians are unquestionably the rightful possessors of their lands; they have ever been so, and there is but two ways of ousting them, conquest or compact. . . . I remember your and my being together at Colonel Craig's when he urged the right of intrusion; he said he had lived their [sic] ten years, knowing himself to be an intruder, and five years of that time lived in an intrusion castle. I remember that the bare mention of intrusion as a right was new to you and me. . . ."[54]

50. Bond, p. 190-191; Leach, p. 6.
51. Leach cites Julian F. Bretz, "Some Aspects of Postal Extension into the West," in 1909 Annual Report of the AMA, p. 143.
52. Leach cites National Archives, Post Office Department, Record Group 28, IV, 397n. Bond suggests he resigned his post because he found it "troublesome and far from lucrative."
53. Leach cites Draper MSS, 6xx15, 6xx78, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
54. Hawkins was General Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Letter of 11/9/1797, Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. IX, *Letters of Benjamin Hawkins*, 1796-1806 (Savannah: Georgia Historical Society, 1916), p. 221. http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/tdgh-nov/nov09.htm

Creek War, the War of 1812, and the Seminole War

For several decades before 1812, the Creeks in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama had been subjected to a United States government plan to "civilize" them. Not surprisingly, many Creeks objected to further dismantling of their traditional society and clan rule; however, other Creeks felt that opposition to the United States government would lead to disaster. This caused a controversy within the tribe: one group labeled the other pro-white, and a civil war broke out between the two sides.

As the fighting began, fear and panic spread throughout Tennessee. A 1927 history exclaimed,

> Yet at the moment. . .a menace was looming over Tennessee so frightful that every [white] man capable of bearing arms should have had his attention fixed upon it. . . .Just below the Tennessee border. . .lay the strong and warlike nation of the Creek Indians."[55]

The Tennessee legislature responded by sending troops to suppress the hostile Creeks, known as Red Sticks. Many in Tennessee favored a war, believing that defeat of the Creeks would lead to acquisition of a large amount of Creek land.[56] A long series of treaties with various tribes had already taken away title to much of the best land in the area.

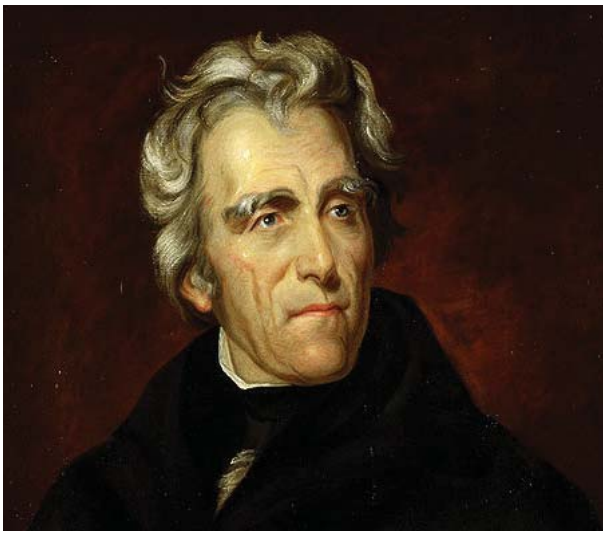


Figure 21. Andrew Jackson in later life. (commons.wikimedia.org)

55. Gerald W. Johnson, *Andrew Jackson, An Epic in Homespun,* New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1927, p. 152.
56. Tom Kanon, "Brief History of Tennessee in the War of 1812" (Tennessee State Library and Archives, www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/tn1812.htm).

John Gordon was fully engaged in the so named Creek War. Andrew Jackson, who knew Gordon's success as an Indian fighter at first hand, sent for him to command a separate company of men to function as scouts, or spies. Gordon agreed to serve provided he report directly to Jackson. Jackson agreed and gave Gordon the title "Captain of the Spies." In this command, Gordon fought in several decisive battles.[57]

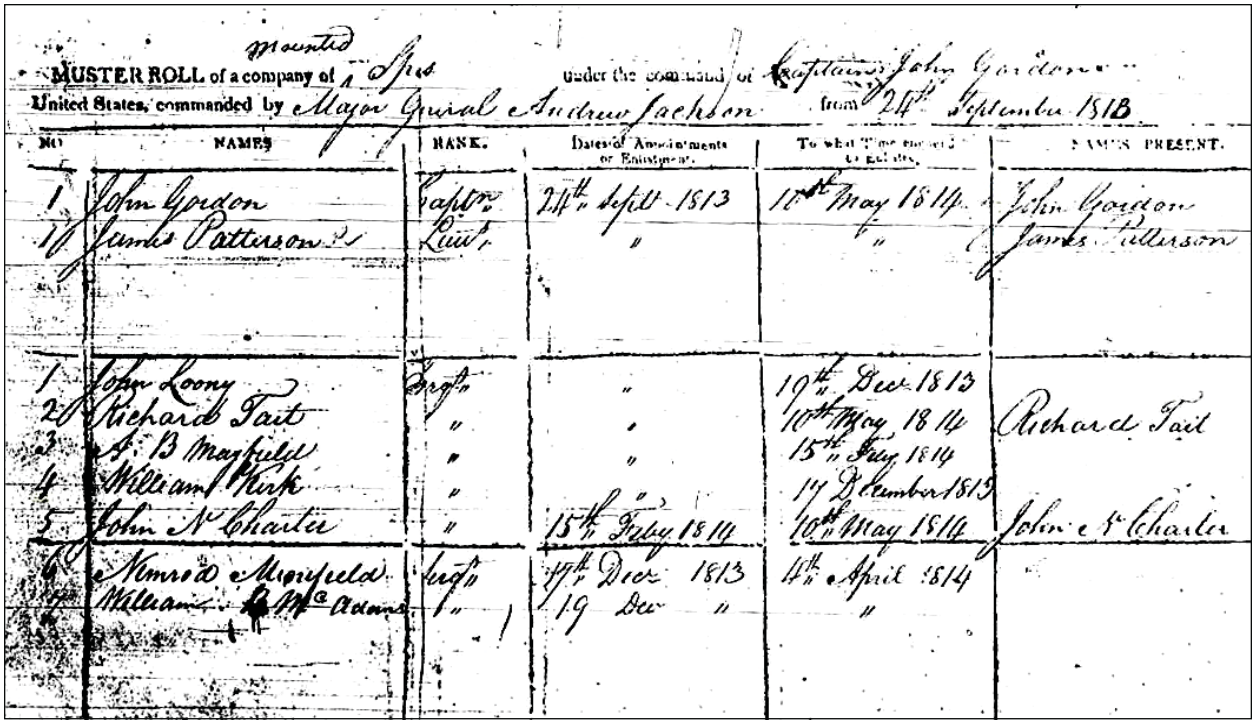
The battles began in 1813 with the defeat of at least two hundred Red Sticks. Additional spies were mustered into service under Gordon in 1813 and 1814. Captain Gordon states at the bottom of his company's muster roll, "I certify that each non-commissioned officer, musician, and private in the company under my command traveled 150 miles in going to Fayetteville where they were musterd [sic] into service...."[58]

Gordon drew attention when, in early 1814, Jackson was suddenly attacked and Gordon's company caused the Creeks to retreat. According to Jackson, "Capt Gordon who was in front at the head of the spies rushed to the fight, and entered into the pursuit, which was continued for two and a half miles with considerable slaughter."[59] Jackson, during this operation, was frequently plagued by volunteer soldiers reluctant to continue fighting when not legally bound. At one point when many soldiers were preparing to depart, Jackson said, "If only two men will remain with me, I will never abandon this post." Captain Gordon stepped forward and said, "You have one, General, let us look if we can not find another." He then went around the camp and convinced 109 to remain with him and Jackson.[60]

With Gordon's help, Jackson was able to defeat the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in March 1814 and by treaty of 1818 forced the Creeks to cede additional acreage to the United States in retribution for the Creek War.[61]

After completing negotiations with the Creeks, Jackson turned his attention to Pensacola, the Spanish province of West Florida that had become a safe haven for the Red Sticks, who now sought help from both the Spanish and British.

57. http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jsggenealogy/Jsgordon/d1329.htm
58. gordonhouse.50megs.com.
59. http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jsggenealogy/Jsgordon/d1329.htm
60. John Buchanan, *Jackson's Way; Andrew Jackson and the people of the Western Waters,* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001, p. 245-6.
61. Kanon. The acreage was in several states.


MUSTER ROLL of a company of Mounted Spies under the command of Captain John Gordon
United States, commanded by Major General Andrew Jackson from 24th September 1813

No.	NAMES	RANK.	Dates of Appointments or Enlistment.	To what Time entered or Enlisted.	NAMES PRESENT.
1	John Gordon	Captn.	24th Sept. 1813	10th May 1814	John Gordon
1	James Patterson	Lieut.	"	"	James Patterson
1	John Loony	Sergt.	"	19th Dec. 1813	
2	Richard Tait	"	"	10th May 1814	Richard Tait
3	A. B. Mayfield	"	"	15th July 1814	
4	William Kirk	"	"	14 December 1813	
5	John M. Charles	"	15th July 1814	10th May 1814	John M. Charles
6	Nimrod Mansfield	Sergt.	19th Dec. 1813	14th April 1814	
7	William McAdams	"	19 Dec "	"	

Figure 22. Muster roll for Captain Gordon's Mounted Spy Company, 9/24/1813, includes list of men under his command. Gordon's name is at the top. (gordonhouse.50megs.org)

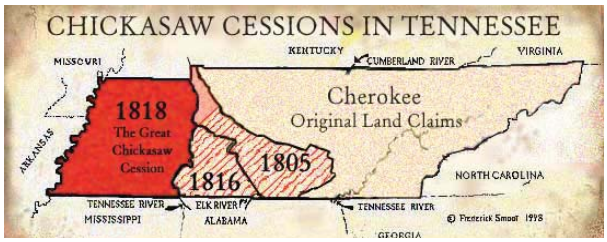


Figure 23. Chickasaw Cessions in Tennessee, 1805, 1816, 1818. (Freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestors.com)

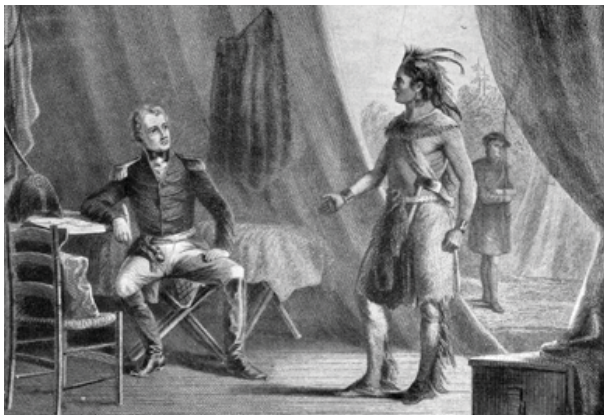


Figure 24. Surrender of the Creeks, 1818. (thehermitage.com)

Jackson dispatched "observant and reliable" Captain Gordon to Pensacola with a letter warning the Spanish governor to remain neutral and to surrender two Red Stick chiefs. Gordon, in one of the more hazardous duties of his career, made his way alone through hundreds of miles of wilderness, interviewed the governor, and reported back to Jackson that the governor had refused, and further, was indeed allowing the British to use Pensacola as a base. Jackson as a result seized Pensacola in November of 1814 with Gordon as captain, an action that would lead to the Battle of New Orleans.[62]

Gordon's mission was given a dramatic description by one historian:

> It was necessary . . . to traverse a long stretch of tropical wilderness, unmarked by road or path, and rendered doubly difficult of penetration by an area of numerous swamps, lagoons, and rivers. Capt. John Gordon, who, with a single companion, undertook the dangerous and seemingly desperate mission. At the end of the first day's journey the companion of Captain Gordon became so much appalled by the prospects ahead that the Captain drove him back and continued his mission alone. After many difficulties and dangers from hostile Creeks, he reached Pensacola. . . .[63]

62. Marquis James, p. 190-191. freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jsggenealogy/Jsgordon/d1329.htm
63. W. Jerome D. Spence and David L. Spence, *The History of Hickman County, Tennessee (*Nashville: The Gospel Advocate Company, 1900).
64. Ibid.
65. http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jsggenealogy/Jsgordon/d1329.htm
66. *Augusta Chronicle* 8/11/1819; *Essex Register* 7/21/1819; *Vermont Gazette* 8/3/1819.
67. John Haywood, *The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee from its Earliest Settlement up to the Year 1796, including the Boundaries of the State,* 1823, reprinted 1969.

After the Creek War, Gordon returned home where, by 1815, he was operating a cotton gin on Dunlap Creek between Duck River and Shady Grove.[64] He joined Jackson again in 1817 to lead his company of spies during the Seminole War. Early in 1818, Jackson again asked Captain Gordon to undertake a diplomatic mission in Florida as part of the war, which he did. But his long and arduous military service undermined his health; he returned home to Gordon's Ferry and died in 1819 at the age of 56.[65]

At his death, obituaries appeared in newspapers from as far away as Georgia, Massachusetts, and Vermont.[66] Gordon was described in 1823 as

> a brave and active officer, distinguished through life for a never-failing presence of mind, as well as for the purest integrity and independence of principle. He had much energy, both of mind and body, and was in all or nearly all the expeditions from Tennessee that were carried on against the Indians or other enemies of the country, and in all of them was conspicuous for these qualities. He now sleeps with the men of other times, but his repose is guarded by the affectionate recollections of all who knew him.[67]

John Gordon's Bargain

In the midst of his Indian exploits, John Gordon established a business on the Duck River. He was foresighted enough to capitalize on the growing volume of traffic that would be using the Natchez Trace, designated a post road in 1800. The improvements to the Trace brought additional potential to this new venture.

In 1802 when the Federal road project ended in Tennessee, Gordon arranged to operate a ferry and trading post in partnership with William Colbert, one of the five Colbert brothers who himself was a Chickasaw chief. Gordon's ferry was at the location of the Duck River cantonment, one of the four built by Federal troops during construction on the Trace. When Wilkinson's soldiers completed their work on the road, they apparently left behind buildings and flatboats at the cantonment. Historic documents do not describe the buildings,

Figure 25. Duck River. (forum.skyscraperpage.com)

but they were "erected on the banks of the Duck River where it is crossed by the Natchez Road, and intended as a place of deposit to the troops engaged in opening the aforesaid road…"[68] Thus there would have been one or more storehouses, boats, and possibly a dock.[69]

In a letter from General Wilkinson to Colonel Butler, the property was ordered to be delivered to William Colbert, or any person nominated by him to receive them. Control of the property passed through to Gordon. The business included a trading post, ferry, and a stand for travelers on the Trace, and was on a 640-acre parcel.[70]

Under the Chickasaw treaty, Colbert was the original grantee, and while the land in 1802 remained in Indian territory, there was no provision in the treaty prohibiting partnerships with white settlers.

Gordon and Colbert worked out a detailed agreement, or "Bargain." Under the terms, Gordon was to have possession of the land "and Houses & Craft as the Federal Troops delivered them," and would run the ferry & trading post, clearing and cultivating the land as needed. Gordon was to "lay in all utensils supplies necessary," to employ a cook and other hired hands as appeared necessary, and to keep account of all transactions.[71]

William Colbert's responsibilities under the Bargain were to provide a "Negroe man," to cover a share of Gordon's expenses, and to provide protection "to all property taken to Duck River by said Gordon." Colbert would bear a proportionate part in case of "spoilation" from plunder or accident. Profits were to be equally divided. This agreement was to be for Gordon's lifetime and afterwards for his son John and Colbert's son Jamison. The ferry began operation in 1803 or 1804.[72]

In about 1804, Gordon hired Thomas Hart Benton as his factor or clerk to help operate the stand. Benton at the time was a young man in his early twenties who had come to Duck River to teach school. He would go on to become the notable senator from Missouri.[73]

It seems Gordon's agreement with Colbert was verbal but was put into writing by Gordon in 1804. Though the two had agreed to share all profits equally, there were few to share. Gordon's Ferry, as it was known, lost money from the start as did the general trading store, and Gordon soon submitted a complaint that Colbert was not fulfilling his obligations.[74]

Gordon presented his concerns to U.S. treaty commissioners in 1804, stating that he "has made many valuable improvements on the place; [and] that he has retained possession of it under peculiar difficulties and supported it at great expense… that he has sustained losses at this place to a large amount…." He complained that Colbert had not complied with "any part of the stipulation of this agreement," had not paid for any of the improvements nor helped with any of Gordon's losses. Gordon requested that, "on the extinction of the Indian claim," the property and adjacent land be deeded to Gordon.[75]

Gordon's arguments succeeded. In 1805, the Chickasaw surrendered all lands north of the Duck River to the United States, and on Sept. 3, 1806, the state legislature passed a special act granting directly to Captain Gordon preemption rights on the 640 acres of land on Duck River. This was the first grant of land made by the State of Tennessee and was done within one week after the State took on authority to make grants.[76] The legislature

68. "Memorial addressed by John Gordon to the Honorable James Robertson and Silas Dinsmore esquire, commissioners on the part of the U. States for treating with the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes of Indians," in the collection of the Tennessee State Archives.
69. NATR CD1 site description.
70. Leach, p. 6; Hitchcock, p.27.
71. 1804 written version of 1802 agreement (Bargain between Wm. Colbert and John Gordon for Duck River, Tennessee State Archive).
72. Leach, p.47.
73. Elbert Smith, *Magnificant Missourian: The Life of Thomas Hart Benton* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1957), p. 45.
74. Davis, *Wilderness*, p. 29; Hitchcock, p. 27.
75. Memorial from John Gordon to James Robertson and Silas Dinsmore, Tennessee State Archives.
76. Park Marshall, "The True Route of the Natchez Trace; The Rectification of a Topographical Error," Tennessee

recognized his ferry and stand and stated that Gordon "under the sanction of the United States did make an Establishment at the crossing of Duck River for the purpose of affording necessary convenience to travelers on the route from Nashville to Natchez."[77]

In succeeding years Gordon received additional land grants until by 1809 he had acquired almost 1,500 acres north of the Duck River. Family sources report 1812 as the date that John Gordon moved his family from his Nashville farm to Gordon's Ferry.[78] Descendant Lucille Gordon Frierson in an undated letter, writes:

> It was in 1812 when Mrs. Gordon was only 33 years old that Capt. John Gordon moved with his family to his plantation at/and a trading post at the crossing of Duck River by the famous Natchez Trace. . .[79]

The 1890 obituary of Gordon's son Bolling Gordon states that Bolling "removed with his father to Duck River" in 1812, and the family website states that the family moved there between 1808 and 1812, though no source is given.[80] In 1818 the Gordons would build their brick house at Gordon's Ferry. Records give no information on the family's housing between 1812 and 1818. They may have lived in a house later demolished, or in a structure converted in 1818 to a rear ell of the new brick house.

Figure 26. Duck River Overlook. (flikr.com.photos)

1930s: Creation of the Natchez Trace Parkway

The success of the steamboat on the Mississippi River and the loss of postal traffic led to the quick decline of the Natchez Trace in the 1810s and 1820s. Much of the road was abandoned while other sections remained in local use, their origins forgotten over time. But interest in the Trace was rekindled in the early twentieth century when the Mississippi Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) began a campaign to mark the historical route.

The suggestion to commemorate the Trace was made by Elizabeth Jones who had become Mississippi's first DAR member in 1892. In 1906 she proposed that Alabama and Tennessee join Mississippi in a marker project. Her goal was to inspire patriotism and to identify the old route through the three states, placing permanent monuments and markers in every county along its path. Her aim was to "trace with accuracy the very route."[81] The Kansas DAR had the same year begun to mark the Santa Fe Trail in several states.

The Natchez Trace project sparked public interest, and in the 1910s and 1920s several articles appeared in historical journals and local newspapers. The DAR expanded its scope and called on Mississippi Congressman Thomas Jefferson Busby for help in constructing a road to follow the Trace. Busby became interested in the early Trace. He asked the Library of Congress for information–-which it produced in abundance–-and realized that the trace possessed greater significance than he had suspected. In 1934 Busby introduced two bills into the House of Representatives, one calling for "a survey of the Old Indian Trail known as the Natchez Trace with a view to constructing a national road on the route to be known as the Natchez Trace Parkway," the other authorizing construction funds for the parkway. Busby was interested not only in the historical importance of the Trace, but also in the economic benefit that a new road would bring to his poor state.[82]

Historical Magazine 1, no. 3 (1915), p. 174.
77. Meeker article, 1/23/1958 Hickman County newspaper.
78. gordonhouse.50megs.com
79. Undated letter & family history from Mrs. Hinton (Lucille Gordon) Frierson, NATR collection.
80. Bond, *Chronicles*, p. 275.

81. Jack D. Elliott, Jr. "Paving the Trace," *The Journal of Mississippi History* 69, no. 3 (2007).
82. Dawson A. Phelps, *Administrative History of the Natchez Trace Parkway* (National Park Service: 1965, annual updating to 1982), 111-1, 2.

Figure 27. Congressman Thomas Jefferson Busby. (homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com)

A few days later, Mississippi Senator Hubert D. Stephens introduced identical bills in the Senate, and on May 21, 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed enabling legislation for the survey of the early Trace.[83] The construction bill was not funded.

The National Park Service began extensive research to locate and survey the original route and any associated historic sites. The route, always a series of trails, was not easily identified. Early records of numerous federal agencies were examined as well as plats of towns along the Trace, post rider schedules, and an early 1800s map drawn by General Wilkinson.[84]

83. Natchez Trace Research Collection, University of Southern Mississippi (www.lib.usm.edu).
84. NPS historians sifted through records at the Library of Congress, the US Geological Survey, the Post Office Department, the Engineering Division of the War Department, and the General Lands Office.

As the route was surveyed and mapped, it was discovered that much of the early Trace was already in use as local roads and highways that could not be taken over as part of a parkway. At the same time, the research and survey confirmed that the historic route was not one distinct path, but several routes varying through time. The new parkway, then, would instead be designed to "memorialize" the Trace rather than follow it in its entirety, and to protect any undamaged sections of the original trail.[85]

Figure 28. Senator Hubert D. Stephens. (wikipedia.com)

Construction of the parkway was not funded until 1935 when a $1.5 million budget was appropriated for the Public Works Administration to conduct a construction survey in Mississippi. Additional funds were appropriated in 1937 and the work of building the road began under the Bureau of Public Roads.[86] On May 18, 1938, the Natchez Trace Parkway was designated by Congress as an official unit in the National Park Service system.

Progress was slow, especially in Tennessee; by 1941 only nine miles had been built in that state. The project dragged on for decades in part because

85. Gildart, *Natchez Trace.*
86. Duck River Highlands; p. 63; Hitchcock, p.13.

the parkway was built in unconnected segments as land and rights-of-way were acquired. In Tennessee, landowners resisted the parkway.[87] Construction was further postponed by long delays during World War II and the Korean War, and by 1956 only twenty-eight miles of Tennessee segments had been completed.

Figure 29. The Natchez Trace Parkway.

87. *Administrative History*, VII-5, IX-3; Hitchcock, p. 15.

The National Park Service opened the Natchez Trace Visitor Center in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1962. By 1966, although significant progress had been made on the road, it nevertheless was less than two-thirds complete. At that time a total of 269 miles of parkway had been paved and were open to public use, including fifty miles in Tennessee.

The segment near the Gordon House was built in the 1990s, and the last section of the parkway was finally completed in 2005.[88]

The parkway today is a two-lane road that extends 444 miles from Natchez to just south of Nashville. Portions of the original trace remain in use both inside and outside the park boundary as county roads.

Figure 30. 1950s postcard showing automobile on the Natchez Trace Parkway.

88. Duck River Highlands, p. 63; *Administrative History*, IX-7.

I.B Chronology of Development and Use

The Gordon House faces southeast, but for the purposes of this report is described as facing south.

The John Gordon House is located about fifty miles southwest of Nashville, midway between Centerville and Columbia, Tennessee. The house sits in an open field facing south towards the Duck River. From the house, a trail leads west to a picnic shelter/comfort station near the Natchez Trace Parkway.

The house is a two-story, side-gabled brick structure on a stone foundation with semi-exposed brick end chimneys. The front is asymmetrical with five bays on the first floor, including two entrances, and three bays of windows above. Inside, the main block of the house is a hall-and-parlor plan, two rooms wide and one room deep with stair along the back wall of the larger room. The second floor repeats the floor plan. A two-room basement is accessed through an exterior door on the west side of the house.

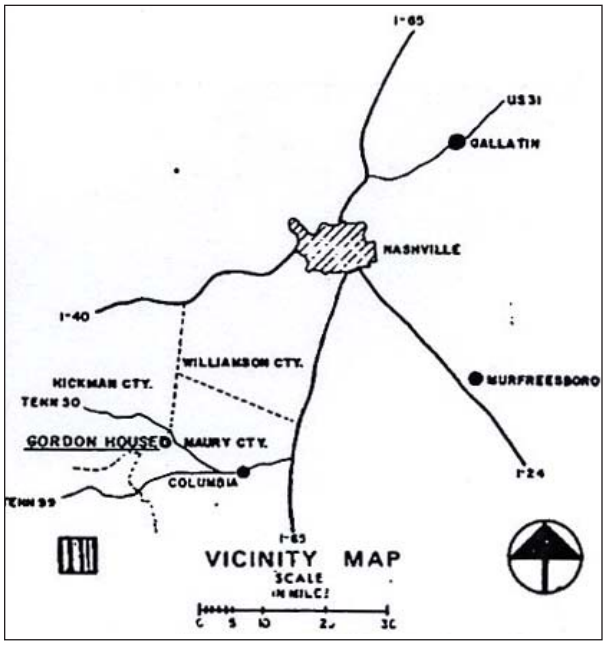


Figure 31. Location map of the John Gordon House.

A series of previous investigations and reports have attempted to determine the appearance of the Gordon House at the time it was constructed. Findings, however, have been partially inconclusive, especially concerning its front and rear elevations. Nevertheless, the rear ell, additions, outbuildings, and landscape features were removed in a major restoration project of the 1970s and in subsequent rehabilitation efforts over the past thirty years.

Figure 32. The Gordon House in 2010.

1818-1819: Initial Construction

John Gordon played a significant role in the early development of Middle Tennessee. Born in Virginia in 1763, he came to the Nashville area as a young man, a pioneering settler, and quickly became a leader in the developing frontier society. He was admired as a fierce Indian fighter alongside his close friend Andrew Jackson. He succeeded also as a merchant, ferry owner, innkeeper,

Figure 33. Duck River at Gordon's Ferry. (Duck River Highlands report)

and farmer. Through land grants he amassed a large acreage along the Duck River southwest of Nashville where in 1812 he moved his family from his Nashville farm to establish a new home at Gordon's Ferry.

Gordon was often absent from Gordon's Ferry on military activities, but by 1818 he apparently had decided to return home and build a new house. However, while in Pensacola, reportedly on private mercantile business but perhaps also as a confidential agent of General Jackson, he was asked by Jackson to participate in the Creek War.[1] Gordon wrote to Dolly about his change of plans, and discussed details of the house they intended to build at Duck River.

> Dear Dolly: I hardly know what to write under present circumstances, as my mind is divided between duty, inclination and interest. I have received in Pensacola a letter from General Jackson requesting me to accompany him on an expedition against the Seminoles in East Florida. The knowledge I have received while in Pensacola seems to make it necessary that I should go on, therefore have concluded to do so, relying on your care and presence at home. I would recommend you to go on with the building if possible, and will try to keep you in funds. As to farming, you are to be governed by circumstances. I did think of putting the Briley field in cotton, but of that you will be the best judge. My orchard and vines will be worthy of your attention, and should you be at loss about the construction of your house, I would recommend that the front should be as follows, viz.: The door into the small room to turn against the partition, the other as near the center of the large room as possible. The windows to be placed on each side of the front door of the large room, and on the right of the door of the small room, to be placed to correspond with three windows in the upper story at regular distances from each other. The back door of the small room to open against the partitions, also. The rest I leave with yourself.…
> I have had an agreeable visit to Pensacola and Paddy [his Negro servant] and myself are both in good health and hope you and the family are the same. I am, dear Dolly, your affectionate husband,
> John Gordon[2]

The brick house was built by Dolly Gordon in 1818-19: two stories tall with doors and windows placed as John Gordon had specified. The major elements of the brick house today remain similar to their original construction. The house is a variant of a house form known as the "hall-and-parlor plan." In this house type, the first-floor level is divided into two rooms of unequal size. The larger, square "hall" typically was entered directly from outdoors and had a fireplace in the end wall. In this room most domestic activities occurred. In the smaller but generally more decorative "parlor," sleeping, formal entertaining, or both took place. Usually, as at the Gordon House, a narrow stairway ascended in a tight turn from the hall to the second story. Hall-and-parlor houses were regularly built with a room or rooms appended to the rear.[3]

The Gordon House differs from the traditional hall-and-parlor plan by having two exterior front entrances, one to each room. It seems that Gordon wanted the door to the large room evenly flanked by windows rather than spaced to create a symmetrical façade.

1. Phelps, "Gordon's Ferry," p. 23.

2. John Gordon to Mrs. Dolly Gordon, sent by hand of Captain Donelson, Fort Jackson, March 2, 1818, reported in Bond, *Family Chronicle,* p. 170-71.

3. Doug Swaim, ed., *Carolina Dwelling: Towards Preservation of Place: in Celebration of the North Carolina Vernacular Landscape (*Raleigh: North Carolina State University School of Design, Vol. 26, 1978).

Based on remaining evidence, the front doors had paneled jambs as currently remain on the back doorway of the Parlor (Room 102), and all three would be expected to have had six-panel doors matching the proportions of the jamb panels. The stair closet had a six-panel door with wood and iron lock. The basement doorway likely was uncovered as it is now. However, it probably had a board-and-horizontal-batten door but without a Z frame.[4]

Inside, the two rooms on each floor were divided by a cross wall. Near the center of the cross wall a doorway provided connection between the two rooms. The floor plan of the second floor mimicked that of the first. At the exterior end wall of each room was a fireplace with mantelpiece. At first floor, the ceiling joists were exposed and displayed decorative edge beading now concealed. At second floor, the ceiling joists held a plaster ceiling.

A recent finishes analysis found a generally simple color palette in the house. Originally, the wood trim in each room was painted in a single color unique to that room. The trim in the Hall (Room 101) was a light brown; the Parlor (Room 102) in a warm yellow; the West Bedroom (Room 201) in off-white; and the East Bedroom (Room 202) in blue. The exceptions were the two interior connecting doors, each grained on its west exposure. Most components of the staircase were painted a red-brown; balusters were a warm yellow. Brown baseboards were found throughout the house.[5]

In his letter to Dolly, Gordon made no mention of front steps or ancillary rooms and spaces beyond the brick house, though they must have existed. One essential facility now missing is a kitchen. There is no evidence anywhere in the brick house of a place for meals to be cooked. Cooking was typically conducted in a building outside the main house because of the threat of fire spreading from an interior kitchen. Often the kitchen was in a separate but nearby building, usually behind the main house. Sometimes the kitchen was contained in an ell extending from the rear of the house; often the ell was a wood-framed structure. In the ell arrangement, the kitchen may have abutted the rear of the house or may have been separated by an open breezeway. If the kitchen abutted the house by a breezeway, a side porch with roof typically provided shelter for carrying the prepared food. If the kitchen was separated from the house by a breezeway, the breezeway typically would be covered too.

The configuration of the fenestration on the rear of the brick house seems to suggest a couple of possible locations for an original ell. The lack of windows on the eastern end of the back elevation at both floor levels would have allowed a one-and-one-half or two-story ell to connect to the house there, either directly or by a breezeway. The absence of fenestration at first-floor level near the center of the rear elevation suggests connection there. Functionally, it seems likely that a rear ell or combination of ells could have been part of the original house design. Certainly, kitchen ells were a popular house feature in this period.

Certainly there would have been a full complement of outbuildings and site features including barns, animal coops, pens, privy, smokehouse, orchards, fences, and vegetable gardens, and perhaps an ice house and even servant quarters or other housing for help.

Architectural Context

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Middle Tennessee was a rural area without concentrated wealth or large cities. Nashville was the only large community. The region's architectural landscape was unprepossessing, generally composed of utilitarian farmsteads and crossroad communities of small log or frame dwellings and simple wooden agricultural buildings. With timber plentiful and no specialized craftsmen required, small wood dwellings became the predominant building type.

Middle Tennessee grew rapidly. By 1810 its population had reached 160,000 and twelve counties were delineated. In the county where the Gordon House would be built, Maury County, established just three years earlier in 1807, the population exceeded 10,000. Notably, over one-

4. The closet door is no longer present but was still in place after the 1977-78 restoration project. The Z-frame design of current basement door, as reconstructed, generally did not appear until the late-nineteenth century nor become popular until the twentieth-century.
5. Dorothy Krotzer, "John Gordon House Interior Finishes Analysis" (April 2011), pp. 7-8, 21.

fourth were slaves, indicating a level of affluence among the county's residents. Neighboring Hickman County with its poorer farmland had a population of only 2,500.[6] By 1820 the population of Maury County had doubled, and even Hickman had grown to 6,000.

John Gordon's brick house must have stood out from the more prevalent and less substantial wood structures of the region. It was not the only brick house built during that period, however, and all were a direct result of the economic vitality and rapid growth of the area, especially in Maury County.

It is frequently said that the Gordon House was the first brick house in the region. Spence's 1900 history reports that it was the first built within its thirty-mile radius, a "curiosity which many people traveled miles to see."[7] However, a memoir of Nathan Vaught, a master builder in Maury County, indicates that there were other brick houses in the area both before and shortly after John and Dolly Gordon's house was built. Vaught lived in Columbia, the county seat, and worked as a journeyman carpenter and builder until 1821. Thereafter, he built both frame and brick houses on his own.[8] Vaught claims that "he built and assisted in building more houses in around *[sic]* Columbia than any other man in the county," though he does not include the Gordon House. Vaught mentions other brick dwellings as early as 1806-07.[9]

Figure 34. Jonathan Webster House, ca. 1810, Maury County. (historicmaury.org)

6. Hitchcock, p. 4; Myers, 120-26, plate III.
7. Bond, *Family Chronicle*, p. 149-50.
8. Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture.
9. Fleming, *Maury County*, p. 51, cited in Trout, p. 8.

Figure 35. Bowen-Campbell House, ca. 1787. (wikipedia)

A notable Maury County brick house of the period, the Jonathan Webster House, was built ca. 1810 and is still intact. Like the Gordon House, it is two stories in height, side-gabled with semi-exposed end chimneys. It is, however, more sophisticated with five symmetrical bays on both levels and a central entrance with fanlight.

Four other Middle Tennessee brick houses have been identified that are more similar to the Gordon House. They too are two-story, side-gabled houses with semi-exposed or interior end chimneys and stone foundations. However, they vary in their bays, symmetry, and stylistic development.

The earliest of the four is the Bowen-Campbell House, built in Goodlettsville about ten miles north of Nashville. Reportedly built thirty years earlier than the Gordon House in about 1787, it has four bays on the first floor including two entrances at center. The entrances may have had transoms. At second-floor level there are two windows, one above each outer bay. Unlike the Gordon House, the fenestration of the main facade is arranged symmetrically and the doors are grouped together at the two center bays.

The original house at Two Rivers Mansion in Donelson is east of Nashville. Built ca. 1802, it is somewhat less sophisticated than the Gordon House with four bays on the first floor and windows at only the two outer bays on the second floor. The two inner bays of the first floor are entrances asymmetrically placed.

Two other houses more developed than the Gordon House are symmetrically designed with matching bays on both levels. The John Hoggatt

Figure 36. House at Two Rivers Mansion, ca. 1802, Donelson, Tennessee. (nashville.gov/parks/historic)

Figure 37. John Hoggatt House, Nashville. (HABS TENN,19-DONEL.V,1, Lester Jones, 1940)

House at Clover Bottom Mansion in Nashville, also known as Old Blue Brick, has five bays on both levels, a central entrance with transom, and simple dentil cornice.

Windsor, built ca. 1820 about the same time as the Gordon House, in Lebanon Pike, east of Nashville, is far more developed with a symmetrical façade of five bays with central entrance, Federal door surround, and stone lintels.

These four houses all are north or east of Nashville some distance from Gordon's Ferry. However, Gordon was widely known in Nashville and a close friend of Andrew Jackson who lived nearby. He apparently continued his mercantile business there even after moving to Gordon's Ferry in 1812. It is likely that he visited Nashville and the surrounding areas and may have been familiar with houses and builders there.

Figure 38. Windsor, ca. 1820. (HABS TENN,19-NASH.V,8, Lester Jones, 1940)

Although the builders of the Gordon House are not known, the house would have required skilled craftsmen including carpenters, bricklayers, sawyers, and joiners. John and Dolly Gordon, and later Dolly alone, probably worked directly with the builders to plan the house, and hired each tradesman separately. There has also been speculation by the family that the Gordons' sons and their slaves built the house.[10]

1819: Dolly Cross Gordon

When John Gordon returned home from the Seminole War to his family and the new brick house Dolly had built, his health had been seriously impaired by exposure during the Creek campaign. He lived in the house only a short time, dying of pneumonia on June 16, 1819. He was buried in the family graveyard on the hill between the house and the Duck River.

Dolly Gordon had supervised construction of the house during her husband's absence. Gordon's letter suggests that she and the builder were primarily responsible for its design. She had for years managed the trading post, ferry, and farm alone, and after Gordon's death she continued to run these businesses.

Dorothea Cross was born on July 15, 1779, the daughter of Anna Maclin Cross and Richard Cross and the niece of William Maclin who had been Secretary of the Tennessee Constitutional

10. Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), passim, and family histories.

Convention. Born in middle Virginia in what would become Nottoway County, Dolly at the age of fourteen moved with her family to Nashville. The following year she married John Gordon. She was reported to be "highly cultured" and descended from Pocahontas.[11]

A family chronicle reports she was

> kind and benevolent in disposition, but of a firm, positive nature, and a woman who was universally respected for her upright principles, rare business judgment, and unselfish charity. She is remembered as being in her latter days very aged in appearance and of sedate, dignified bearing. Her attire was faultlessly neat. She was astonishingly active to the day of her death, riding horseback over the rough roads and by-paths wherever she cared to go. She often rode her good roan pacer to Columbia to visit her grandchildren at the Columbia Institute, of which she had become a patron as soon as it was opened in 1836.[12]

The Gordons had ten children at the time of John Gordon's death, one born only a few months earlier. Several were grown when the house was completed, but Dolly raised her younger children in the house as well as taking in six grandchildren and other relatives.[13]

Changes to the house likely were prompted by an expansion and perhaps redesign of the kitchen to accommodate her growing household. A one- or one-and-one-half-story braced frame ell assembled with mortise-and-tenon joinery may have been moved and reoriented to abut the house or a larger rear structure. Unfortunately, the braced frame structure was disassembled in the 1980s, and the massive repairs to the north wall's exterior brickwork removed evidence of changes.[14]

Dolly successfully managed the business of the farm "without an overseer save her negro factotum, Lewis, producing fine cotton crops and raising much stock and cattle."[15] She also ran the stand. The nearby tributary of Duck River is said to have taken its name, Fattybread Branch, from her activities there. According to family lore,

Figure 39. Oil portrait of Dolly Cross Gordon. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

Figure 40. Graves of John and Dolly Gordon in Rose Hill Cemetery, Columbia TN. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

Indians gathered at Gordon's Stand where Dolly would offer them her "Fattybread" (probably cornbread). Soon the name stuck to the branch. "They [Indians] felt safe at the home and would frequently curl up in their blankets to sleep, and be gone like ghosts by early morning."[16]

Dolly Gordon lived at the house at Gordon's Ferry for forty years until her death on December 5, 1859, at age eighty. Before her death, the remains of her husband and her half-brother, Richard C. Cross, had been moved from the graveyard at the Gordon House to a new lot in Rose Hill Cemetery, where Dolly would be buried as well.[17]

11. Bond, *Family Chronicle*, pp. 40, 144-47, 183. Her father owned a sizeable amount of land in Nashville. The wedding took place in his stone house which had served as a fort, on what is now the northwest corner of Broad Street and Second Avenue.
12. Ibid., p. 149-50.
13. Letter of 5/11/1992 from Shirley Gelineau to Daniel W. Brown, NATR Superintendent (NATR collection).
14. This ell was discovered during the 1977-78 restoration but later demolished. It is discussed later in this section.
15. Bond, *Family Chronicle*, p. 148-49.
16. Duck River Highlands, p. 73; and letter of 5/11/1992 from Shirley Gelineau to Daniel W. Brown, NATR Superintendent (NATR collection).
17. Bond, *Family Chronicle*, p. 151-52.

At her death, her close son-in-law Felix K. Zollicoffer wrote an obituary, describing her life and praising

> the dear wife and mother who, in the midst of the canerakes upon the border of the warpaths, remained alone, nourishing her little children while the stouthearted husband and father was in the frontier driving back the ruthless enemies of his country. She bore the burdens of their home, and was as brave and heroic as he.[18]

1860: Later Owners

At Dolly Gordon's death in 1859, Bolling Gordon was named executor of her estate. Bolling was the fourth son of John and Dolly and became, perhaps, the most prominent. He was born in Nashville in 1800. When he was twelve his parents moved to Duck River, but it is probable that he and several of his brothers continued their education in Nashville. At age nineteen, upon the death of his father, he inherited a part of his father's land in neighboring Hickman County and later built a house there. He was left additional land at age twenty-three by his half-uncle, Richard Cross, who was exactly the same age.[19]

Bolling Gordon was active in politics and became a member of the Tennessee General Assembly and of the state constitutional conventions. He lived at his large house, Cottage Hill, less than a mile from the Gordon House.[20]

Richard Cross Gordon (1837-1903), the only son of Bolling Gordon, bought his grandmother's house in 1860, just a year after her death. He was born at Cottage Hill and attended school in Nashville while living there with his aunt. He later attended the University of North Carolina, graduated in 1861, and had a distinguished career in the Confederate Army. After the war he became a prosperous farmer and politician, and, like his father, served in the state legislature.[21]

Richard Gordon owned and farmed his family property for about thirty years but did not live in the Gordon House. He and his wife and children

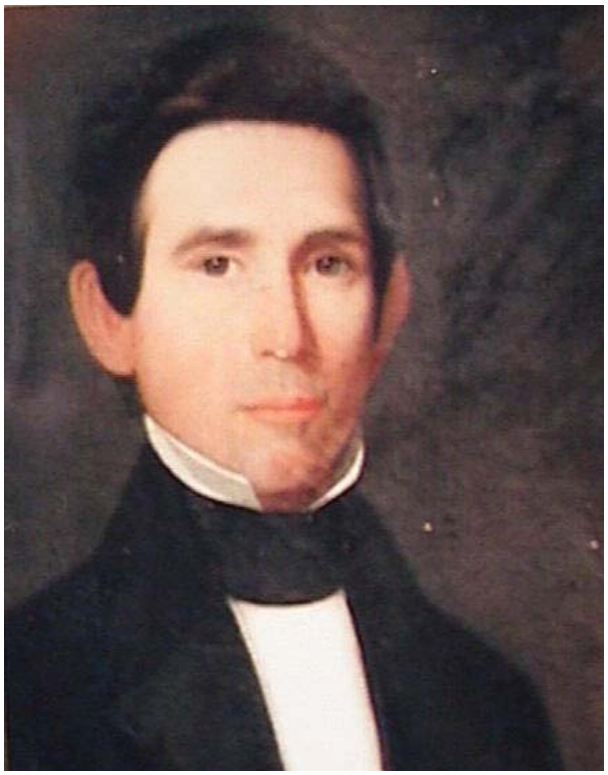


Figure 41. Bolling Gordon (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

lived instead at a large farm he owned at Cross Bridges, five miles away. During this time the operation of the ferry continued, though no details are known. It is also not known who, if anyone, occupied the Gordon House immediately after Dolly's death or during Richard's ownership.

On January 27, 1879, Richard Gordon conveyed the Gordon House in trust to George W. Stockard. Stockard had been Bolling Gordon's overseer for many years and was a merchant in nearby Williamsport.[22] The transaction included "lands lying partly in Hickman and partly in Maury County" offered as security against Gordon's various debts. Nonetheless, Gordon continued to be listed as owner of the house in 1883.[23]

1896: Closing of the Ferry

As the region grew and new towns developed near Gordon's Ferry, the character of travel over the Natchez Trace changed, becoming almost entirely local. There was no bridge over the Duck River, so the ferry continued to be the principal means of crossing.

18. ibid., p. 152-54.
19. Ibid., pp. 148, 155-57, 263-64, 449. She sent her daughters to school at the Nashville Female Academy. She was said to take "much interest in the mental development of her children."
20. Bolling Gordon Family Papers, TN State Archives.
21. Turner, *History of Maury County*, p. 272 (Card 94, Gordon Family, NATR CD#3.
22. "Captain John Gordon," sketch and letter by Mrs. Hinton (Lucille Gordon) Frierson.
23. Maury County Deed Book B, Vol. 3, p. 504; Leach, p. 74.

Figure 42. Road Building. (schultzonline.org)

A bridge was proposed in the 1880s. With this in mind, the boundary line between Hickman and Maury counties was relocated in 1883, transfering a small tract of Hickman County land to Maury County, thus strategically positioning the crossing and enabling the two counties to share the cost of a new steel bridge. The change shifted a portion of the Gordon lands, still under the name of Richard Gordon, from Hickman to Maury County.[24]

Three months later, the Hickman-Maury Turnpike Company was incorporated with authority to build a toll road from Sawdust, Tennessee, to Gordon's Ferry. The bridge, known as County Line Bridge, was built in 1896. R. S. Jewell, the inspector for Hickman County, was charged with building the portion of the road between the old Trace and the new bridge. A few years later, Jewell would own the Gordon House.[25]

By 1896 George Stockard had died. The house, with possibly 155 or 160 acres, may have been acquired by G. P. Mayberry and his wife Ethel at this time or earlier. At any rate, it was Mayberry and his wife who on August 31, 1896, sold it to A. Hooten.[26]

The house was apparently in poor condition by 1900 when Jerome Spence wrote his *History of Hickman County*. He describes the Gordon House:

> The brown brick building with the severely straight walls, which stands in the valley south of Bolling Gordon's Old residence [Cottage Hill], was the home of Captain John Gordon.

24. Phelps, "Study," p. 3. Acts of the State of Tennessee, approved 3/14/1883.

25. Ibid.

26. Cards 60 & 62, Gordon Lands, NATR CD#3.

Figure 43. Jewell family shown in front of the house ca. 1910. (loose photograph in NATR collection)

Figure 44. Undated photograph showing picket fence, trees, and a covered entrance to the basement. (NATR collection #7095 labeled "from a photograph")

> This much dilapidated and out-of-date building was for years the most elegant home in Hickman County. Here lived the most aristocratic family of the county. The name of Gordon, once so prominent in the county, is now no longer found here…. The old home is almost in ruins, and where once was grandeur, now is gloom.[27]

Spence's description suggests that the house had been neglected and probably vacant for some time. Richard Gordon, who had never lived in the house and had endured financial difficulties, apparently had relinquished all claims to the house by 1896. It seems unlikely that Richard Gordon would have made improvements while living elsewhere.

The legal status of the property during the period from 1883 to 1896 remains unclear. The report on the transfer of property from Hickman to Maury County states that Richard Gordon was the owner of the house. It is not clear from deeds when Mayberry acquired the property, nor indeed whether Stockard ever took ownership,` although he held it in trust for years. It seems he had died by 1896 when the Hootens made their purchase. We also do not know whether the Hootens lived in the house; however, it seems unlikely given Spence's 1900 description of the house "almost in ruins." While Spence's 1900 history may have been out of date., it adds to the uncertainty of use and changes to the property for a significant period of time.

1904: The Jewell Family

It is known that after eight years of ownership, Hooten and his wife sold the house and 107 acres on October 27, 1904, to W. C. Jewell and his son, Richard S. Jewell.[28] The Jewells apparently also bought 130 acres on the Duck River from T. H. Ervin and his wife on February 23, 1909.[29]

According to family histories and historic photographs, the Jewells apparently made major repairs and some changes to the property shortly after their purchase. They are believed to have built several outbuildings, to have built, modified, or enlarged an existing rear ell, and to have built or rebuilt the front porch.

27. Spence, p. 125.

28. Book T-1, p. 161: Conveyance was not encumbered "except three notes which are the last three payments on this land and are held by Otey Walker administrator of G. W. Stockard estate," as recorded in Card 62, Jewell Document, NATR CD#3. Also see Hickman County Deed Book L-1, p. 391 and Book T-1, p. 207.
29. Hickman County Deed Book R-1, p. 104.

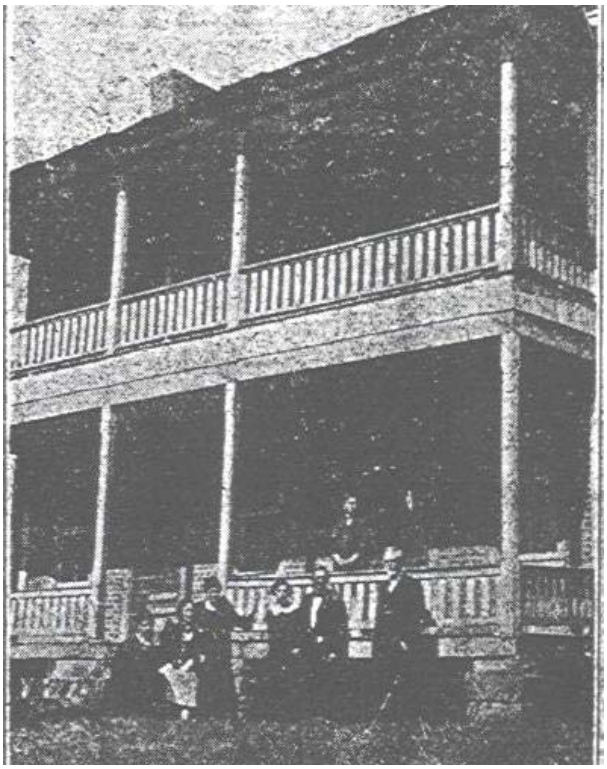


Figure 45. October 1924 family photograph shows the two-story porch on a stone pier foundation. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

According to family history, the porch was built ca. 1907.[30] A ca. 1910 photograph, the earliest known image of the house, shows the Jewell family standing in front of the Gordon House, and confirms the new porch is in place. Further, the house exterior is freshly painted and apparently in good repair (Figure 43).

The photograph shows a two-story, double-gallery porch supported by four chamfered posts with pilasters at both levels and a picket or sawn balustrade. The two center posts create a center bay narrower than the outer bays. The two levels of the porch appear to be identical. The door lintels are lower than those of the windows; later photographs show that transoms had been boxed in. The windows contain period two-over-two-light sash. The center bay of the second floor, stipulated as a window by John Gordon, has been converted to a doorway to provide access to the upper porch. An enclosure has been built over the basement doorway. In front of the house is a picket fence with gate; the fence has a base of stacked,

30. Bond, *Family Chronicle.*

Figure 46. 1944 photograph shows the double-gallery porch built ca. 1907 and replacement two-over-two-light sash.. (Phelps, 1944, NATR collection #5485)

Figure 47. Double-gallery two-story porch and wire fence. (Jennings, 1945, NATR collection #5508)

irregularly shaped stone topped with a formed stone coping. A mailbox on a wood post is in front of the fence and deciduous trees are in the yard.

The Jewells may have added a rear ell, but it is more likely that they improved or added to an existing ell, with perhaps a portion dating to the original construction of the house. An early ell would have been consistent with traditional rural architecture of the time, and especially useful for a family as large as John and Dolly Gordon's.

A kitchen building and changes to the ell are referenced in two oral histories with Gordon family members conducted in 1976 and 1977. An interview with Elizabeth Jewell Baker and her husband Ellis Baker was conducted on September 21, 1976 by an unidentified NPS staff member. Mrs. Baker was the granddaughter of R.S. Jewell who bought the house. The interview notes are not clear, but apparently the Bakers gave a list of outbuildings extant in 1976, as well as a reference to a kitchen on the west side, "now gone." Neither the age of the kitchen nor its date of demolition was recorded.[31]

A later interview with Ellis Baker was held on October 18, 1977 by Todd Rainwater of NPS. Mr. Baker reported that a one-story ell extended north from the center of the rear elevation when in 1904 the Jewell family bought the house. In 1910-15 a second floor was added to this ell and a one-and-one-half-story ell built extending to the west, perpendicular to the earlier ell.[32]

Later photographs show the two-story ell with perpendicular one-and-one-half story gable ell. The 1910 photograph shows a frame one-and-one-half-story ell at the northwestern rear corner of the house. A shed roof extending west is not seen in later photographs.

31. Handwritten interview notes in NPS files associated with 1970s restoration project.
32. Ibid.

Figure 48. 1945 photograph showing one- and two-story rear ells (Jennings, 1945, NATR collection #5509

Figure 49. View of the Gordon House in 1945 looking northwest from the ridge between the Duck River and Fattybread Branch and showing Highway 50 in front of the house. (Phelps, 1945, NATR collection #6084)

The Jewells apparently also made alterations to the interior of the brick house soon after taking possession. The more significant were replacement of the two mantelpieces on the first floor and the enclosure of the upper portion of the stairs. The mantelpieces are stylistically of the period and were assembled with wire nails. The mantelpiece in the parlor (Room 102) was installed after the adjoining baseboard and floor were burned. At probably the same time, a new floor was laid over the original parlor floor. Both the floor and the replacement mantelpiece covered, and therefore postdated, the areas that had burned.[33]

The Jewells also enclosed the upper portion of the staircase, adding a wall and a four-panel door, stylistically popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Appendix B Sheet 7). The 3¼-inch tongue-and-groove boards on the interior of the new stair wall match the boards used to patch the burned area of the parlor floor.

Apparently also early, two fireplaces in the house were infilled with brick and stuccoed to hold small cast metal coal grates of early-twentieth century design. And plank boards were installed with wire nails on the second-floor ceilings to hold wallpaper. Handwritten notes in NPS files report that the wallpaper was put on "circa 1920s." These notes also report that the house had a wood shingle roof when acquired in 1904, and that a metal roof was installed after the wood roof nearly caught fire.[34]

Ownership of the property remained in half-interests and was further conditioned in a deed of January 5, 1915. That document required Richard S. Jewell to support W.C. Jewell until his death. Thereupon, Richard S. Jewell would acquire full title to the property. Accordingly, at W. C.'s death on December 8, 1918, the property passed to his son Richard.[35]

Later early-twentieth-century images show other exterior characteristics of the house. An undated photograph (Figure 44) shows half-glazed front

33. The overlay floor was removed in the 1970s.

34. Handwritten interview notes in NPS files associated with 1970s restoration project.

35. Card 63, "Jewell document," NATR CD#3; and Hickman County Deed Book T-1, p. 207.

doors and Victorian spool screen doors. The photograph also shows the shed lean-to at the basement door on the west side of the house. A one-story gable wing projects from the northwest rear of the house. Its placement is not traditional. A photograph taken in October 1924 provides the additional detail that the porch rests on a stone pier foundation (Figure 45).

1940s

A series of photographs taken in the 1940s during the Jewells' ownership shows the significant changes made by the family. In 1944 and 1945, Dawson Phelps prepared a report for the National Park Service on Gordon's Ferry including the cantonment site and the house and their relationship to the Trace as part of the study for the new Natchez Trace Parkway. During his study he took several photographs of the site.

One of his images of the house shows the same two-story double gallery porch shown in the 1910 and 1924 photographs (Figures 43 and 45). The pier foundation shown in the 1924 photograph has been replaced by a solid foundation. Windows at the front and east side of the house are two-over-two-light sash with no shutters. Screen doors are at both front entrances. The door lintels are lower than those of the windows and no transoms are visible. A one-story shed-roofed porch is visible at the northeast rear of the house.

In front and at the sides of the house is a post-and-wire fence replacing the picket fence shown in earlier photographs. The date of the post-and-wire fence is not known. At the back is a woodshed. Several trees surround the house.

In 1945, NPS archaeologists Jesse Jennings and John L. Cotter took additional exterior photographs. Cotter was in charge of the archaeological investigation program for construction of the Natchez Trace Parkway. One of their photographs shows the same double-gallery porch, a metal roof, and two-over-two-light windows (Figure 47). At the front is the post-and-wire fence with gate, walkway, and center steps leading to the porch. This photograph shows the one-story gable structure at the northwest rear of the house and a gable-front vertical-board outbuilding beyond.

Another important 1945 photograph shows the back of the house with a large two-story frame gable ell (Figure 48). At its east side elevation are two bays with an entrance and window on the first floor and two bays of two-over-two-light windows on the second. Perpendicular one-story shed porches meet at the junction with the house, supported by what appear to be 4x4 posts.

West of the two-story ell is an attached, perpendicular one-story gable ell with flue chimney near the west wall. No chimney is visible on the two-story section. Weatherboard siding was applied continuously to the rear of these ells.

The rear of the two-story ell is a single bay with window at the first level and shuttered window above. These appear to be the only shutters on the house. A doorway at the rear of the one-story section is covered with a simple pent roof. All roofs are covered with metal panels.

Preservation of the house was a part of the parkway study. In his April 1945 report, Dawson Phelps recommended acquisition of the Gordon House and property by the National Park Service "for purposes of protection, preservation, and development of the historic sites associated with Gordon's Ferry." He recommended that the Gordon House be restored and interpreted with physical changes made to aid in the interpretation. These included removal of the frame rear addition, the metal roof of the main house, and the ca. 1907 porch. He recommended that further study be conducted to determine additional changes that might be needed.

Phelps noted that the house was only 400 feet from the centerline of State Highway 50, which ran in front of the house and was to be acquired as part of the parkway right-of-way. He recommended that the road be relocated "to run as far back of the house as is possible." He also suggested that an archaeological survey be conducted, that portions of the Old Trace be preserved, and that markers be erected.[36]

An important, succinct paragraph in Phelps' report reads,

> No historical site in Tennessee, with the possible exception of Nashville, had a longer

36. Phelps, "Gordon's Ferry," pp. 29, 34. Highway 50 had been built in front of the house in the 1920s.

> or more intimate association with the Natchez Trace than did Gordon's Ferry. At no place on the entire length of the Trace through the state can as large a concentration of material remains be seen. At no place is it possible more easily to visualize the problems attendant on the history of the Trace; its construction, development, and use.[37]

He noted that John Gordon's association with the Natchez Trace was

> long and intimate extending over a period of almost three decades….His activities carried him over every section of the Trace from Nashville to Natchez. The use he made of this Indian trail and highway is an important part of the history of the Natchez Trace and illustrates its use in both peace and war."[38]

At Gordon's Ferry, he pointed out, the parkway visitor would be able to see the Trace as it left the river bottom and climbed to Duck River Ridge which it followed for nearly twenty-five miles.

1945: The Gordon House Controversy

Phelps's report created a stir regarding the significance of the Gordon House. A series of letters between Regional Director Thomas J. Allen and NPS Director Newton B. Drury ensued, with Drury arguing for preservation of the property.[39]

Regional Director Allen sent his comments on the Phelps report to Drury:

> The report has been reviewed in this office, and while interesting, it is primarily a saga of John Gordon's activities rather than a study of the historical significance of Gordons Ferry as related to the old Natchez Trace.
>
> Landscape Architect Zimmer implies that the Gordon House, though postdating the period of principal interest, is needed to provide a definite historical atmosphere and bolster the historical significance of the Natchez Trace in that vicinity. The impression gained leads us to believe that it may be advisable, following archeological investigation and further study, to remove the existing structure (Gordon House of 1818) and direct attention in the interpretative program to the more authentic remains that may be found in the archeological research. In any event, it seems there is a great deal to be learned before the interpretive requirements can be determined and the needs of future development can be presented in plan.
>
> We firmly believe that any program of interpretation for this area, as well as all other areas along the Trace, should be limited to facts and events having a direct relationship to the use of the old Trace and should not endeavor to present the complete history of the general locality.[40]

Figure 50. Newton B. Drury, NPS Director 1940-51. (www.rpts.tamu.edu/pugsley/Drury.jpg)

NPS Director Drury replied:

> The Gordon House of 1818 dates from the period of principal interest of the Natchez Trace (1790-1830). Both John Gordon and the Gordon House are directly associated with the old Natchez Trace and its history. Therefore, the house should not be removed or destroyed.
>
> You have raised the point that only facts and events directly related to the old Trace should be considered in the interpretive program. Do you not agree that what is directly related to any area depends upon a broad knowledge of its background?[41]

Regional Director Allen responded, only half convinced by Drury's arguments:

> We can agree almost entirely with your memorandum of August 20 as regards the general thought of the interpretive program for Natchez Trace Parkway, and according to your decision we will, therefore, not remove or destroy the Gordon House near Gordon's Ferry on Section 1-C of the parkway location.
>
> We see three things involved in the study of this location; namely, Gordon's Ferry, the John Gordon story, and the Gordon House. The

37. Ibid., p. 34.
38. Ibid., p. 25.
39. Hitchcock, p. 21-22, records the excerpts.
40. Thomas J. Allen, Regional Director, to Newton B. Drury, NPS Director, 8/7/1945, cited in Hitchcock.
41. Drury to Allen, 8/20/1945.

Figure 51. Full-height porch built in 1947-48. (Cotter, 1948, NATR collection #6670)

> first two we are convinced have important significance in our planning and to the Trace story. We will take the same attitude toward the Gordon House in view of your decision but suggest you seal the name of the Gordon House in an envelope and perhaps two or three years from now you may agree that it falls in your own description as being "sheer incident of no fundamental importance.[42]

Director Drury restated his argument:

> The historians are wondering why you regard the house as unimportant historically. John Gordon was in the ferry business. Therefore, he settled at this site. The house was built during the heyday of travel on the Trace and was used by him in connection with his ferry operations. It is a material object which reflects the culture of the Tennessee frontier during the second decade of the nineteenth century. By culture is meant the way of life and physical resources of the people living there at the time.
>
> The Gordon House, moreover, is one of the three houses now standing which are known to date from the period of the most significant use of the Trace, and is probably the best preserved and most substantial. Like the Colbert Chimney at the Tennessee River and the Mound Place near Natchez, it was actually a part of the old Trace and is illustrative of the principal use of the Trace—transportation.[43]

Whether Drury and Allen ultimately agreed, the house was saved and, despite Allen's prediction, became recognized for its significance to the Trace and to the development of the region. In the meantime, the Jewell family continued to live in the house and to make significant changes.

1947-48: A New Porch

In 1947 and 1948 the Jewells removed the porch they had built forty years before and replaced it with a strikingly different porch.

A 1948 photograph (Figure 51) taken by archaeologist John Cotter shows the full-height porch supported by four square paneled wood columns. A concrete porch deck rests on a base of large masonry blocks. At mid-level, a balustraded balcony extends from the center bay between the

42. Allen to Drury, 8/30/1945.

43. Drury to Allen, 9/18/1945.

two center columns. The center bay of the second floor remains as a doorway to provide access to the balcony. The two-over-two-light windows remain at both levels and screen doors are at both half-glazed front doors.

Ghost marks of the former double-gallery porch and its pilasters are clearly visible at both levels. The horizontal marks of the first-floor ceiling and upper floor of that porch are evident.

Also visible in the photograph is an intriguing alteration made earlier to the façade, possibly by the Jewells during their ca. 1907 work. Above the lintel of the front entrance doors can be seen the boxed fill of the transom openings. Horizontal boards have been installed to mask the transom opening. The boards are painted brick red and penciled to simulate a brick jack arch, while the actual jack arch above has been scribed to look like horizontal bond, matching the surrounding brick. The earliest known photograph of the house, taken in 1910 after construction of the double-gallery porch, also shows these transom openings covered.

Figure 52. Wood-boxed opening masking the transom and painted to simulate brick jack arch, with disguised jack arch above. ("Frost," [Trout?] 1969, NATR collection #10907)

Figure 53. Front and east side of the house shown in 1959. (Donald M. Black, 11/29/1959, NATR collection #10085)

The 1948 photograph (Figure 51) shows the new concrete porch deck resting on a high block foundation with center cement steps and no balustrade or railing on either porch or steps. This appears to be a new foundation with larger masonry blocks than those seen in the 1944 photographs of the double-gallery porch, which replaced an earlier pier foundation. A stepped cement walk leads from the post-and-wire fence to the house, where two people enjoy rocking chairs on the western end of the porch.

A portion of the one-story gable ell is visible at the western rear with a simple shed porch on the south elevation. Its siding is weatherboard. Roofs appear to be asphalt shingle.

1959

Another set of photographs was taken in 1959 by park naturalist Donald M. Black. One image shows the 1947-48 porch and the east side of the house (Figure 53). Taken in winter, the photograph shows no additional changes. At the northeast rear of the house is the one-story shed porch with the woodshed beyond. Trees surround the house.

1969: State of Tennessee

Dawson Phelps in 1945 had recommended that the Park Service acquire the Gordon House and the associated sites that would be included in the right-of-way for Section 1-D of the parkway. Section 1-D was being acquired by the State of Tennessee in increments. By 1959 Highway 50 had been relocated behind the Gordon House to its north. In 1969 the state acquired the house and lands south of the relocated highway from the Jewell family for the John Gordon House development.[44]

In August of that year, NPS historian Edward L. Trout prepared a report on the Gordon House in anticipation of work to be conducted by the Park Service. His photographs and report help to describe the property at that time.

Trout noted that the exterior bricks were laid with a ⅜-inch "flush cut" and penciled joint. He noted a severe vertical crack in the brick of the rear wall which allowed daylight to enter.

44. Hitchcock, pp. 22, 42; National Register nomination.

Figure 54. Mantelpiece in first-floor west room (Room 101). (Trout, 1969, NATR collection # 10915)

Figure 55. Mantelpiece in first-floor east room (Room 102). (Trout, 1969, NATR collection # 10912)

He also described two first-floor rear (north) doors, noting that the sill of the western rear door, located in Room 101 near the foot of the interior stairs, showed more wear than the eastern rear door. He believed this indicated the presence of an early kitchen or wing at the western location.

Trout's are the first photographs of the interior found to date and they are extensive (Figures 54 - 61). They show the four-room house with plaster walls, baseboard, and chair rail throughout. There appear to have been few changes made to the interior or its floor plan. The two mantelpieces in the first-floor rooms are the Jewells' early twentieth-century replacements, while the Federal-style mantelpieces on the second floor appear to be original. The fireboxes in Rooms 101 and 201 above have been infilled and fitted with metal coal grates (Figures 54 and 56). The firebox in Room 102 had been infilled completely (Figure 55). Trout did not photograph the mantelpiece in Room 202.

Gas heaters had been placed on the hearths of the first-floor rooms. Trout noted that the hearth in Room 102 had been raised with "a thick layer of grout," and that a later floor had been laid over the original floorboards in that, the more formal room. The floor is not described.[45]

In Room 101, the stair climbs along the north wall. The upper portion had been enclosed and a four-panel door added, probably by the Jewells. At the stair closet was a six-panel door, apparently dating from the original construction. Trout describes the door, "its obverse fitted with wrought hook and staple and reverse with a wood-and-iron lock."[46]

Trout did not discuss the ells because he judged them to be later additions and therefore unimportant. Nevertheless, his interior

Figure 56. Federal-style mantelpiece in second-floor west room (Room 201). (Trout, 1969, NATR collection # 10916)

Figure 57. Interior stair showing six-panel closet door, later stair enclosure and stair door. (Trout, 1969, NATR collection #10911)

45. Edward L. Trout, "The John Gordon House" (National Park Service typed manuscript, August 19, 1969), p. 16.
46. Ibid., p. 15.

Figure 58. Closet showing opened door. (Trout, 1969, NATR collection #10918)

Figure 60. Two-panel Greek Revival door between northwest porch and "annex hallway." (Trout, stapled in 1969 report, NATR collection)

Figure 59. Rear door of Room 102 leading to northeast rear shed porch. The screen door into the annex can be seen. (Trout, stapled in 1969 report, NATR collection)

Figure 61. Door leading from Room 201 to Room 202. (Trout, stapled in 1969 report, NATR collection)

Figure 62. 1976 photograph showing front porch, complex of rear additions, woodshed, and pasture. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

photographs of the house show doors associated with what he called the annex, giving some idea of the configuration of the ells at that time.

Among the photographs are the three-over-three vertical-panel door, still in place, leading from Room 102 to the northeast rear porch (Figure 59).

Another photograph is of a two-panel door between the northwest porch and the "annex hallway" (Figure 60).

On the upper level, Trout reported that the center window at the rear had been enlarged to accommodate a door to the two-story ell.

1973: National Park Service

NPS acquired the John Gordon House in 1973 from the State of Tennessee, together with other properties within Section 1-D of the parkway. The following year, NPS historical architect John C. Garner, Jr., conducted an initial assessment, finding that the house was in relatively good condition but suffering from high moisture levels.[47]

Garner found that the boarded windows allowed no cross ventilation, and that poor drainage had left the basement saturated after heavy rains. He noted some deterioration of brick joints, stating that the mortar for the masonry was "a stiff mud with little indication of any lime content."

There was also damage to the joints of the stone foundation, so that water penetrating the stone walls had almost eliminated the interior plaster of the basement. Further, rainwater had entered freely through the unprotected basement entrance located well below grade.

The roof of the house was covered with a deteriorated composition shingle and the house had no gutters. As a result, water was regularly entering the building and pooling along the exterior and in the basement.

All of the outbuildings were in fair to poor condition and according to Garner appeared to date from the turn of the twentieth century. This determination was based on his finding of wire nails and original metal roof coverings. The outbuildings remaining in 1974 included a frame privy, a post and frame equipment shed, a post and frame chicken house, a post and frame animal barn, and two post and frame storage buildings.[48]

Garner recommended the installation of wood louvers over the lower window sash openings while

47. Garner to Associate Regional Director, 4/10/1974.

48. Garner to Associated Regional Director, SERO, 4/10/1974. Some of the outbuildings were later identified as smokehouse, woodshed, and granary.

boarding the upper sash to protect the glass. He also recommended corrections for the basement drainage problems, consisting of land drains of perforated pipe and gravel drain beds to reduce foundation deterioration, as well as a weather proof cover over the basement entrance.[49]

He proposed that all decayed exterior wood be saturated with penta in solution with Hydrozo clear water-repellent coating.[50]

He also recommended that the 1947-48 front porch be demolished after measured drawings were made.[51] Several documents from this period and later indicate that Garner and others were not familiar with the double-gallery porch erected ca. 1907. Garner noted the outline of an earlier one-story porch on the brick wall surface, but did not mention the marks of the second-floor pilasters.

During this time, the house and sixty-eight acres were listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination was prepared by the Natchez Trace Association of Tennessee and listed in the Register on April 18, 1974.

Also in 1974, initial stabilization of the house was completed following Garner's recommendations. Window louvers were installed and the basement entrance was covered. Wood surfaces were treated with penta to prevent further deterioration. All trees and shrubs were cleared from the outbuildings, while a number of trees were left around the house.[52]

Even after the stabilization, Garner was unconvinced that the house should be retained and restored. Of concern were the changes that had been made to the house during the twentieth century. Specifically referenced were the front porch and rear ell, both considered to be additions. He questioned the historical integrity of the house and voiced his doubt whether it warranted preservation. Garner wrote the Southeast Regional Director in 1976:

> As these subsequent changes were made, the original architectural character of the house was progressively impaired. Because of this impairment, there is some question at this time as to whether the structure or the complex merits preservation in its present form due to the subsequent loss of integrity. Additionally, the question arises as to whether the structure as originally built would merit preservation by the National Park Service. The structure was typical of its period of its style of architecture which was fairly common in this country. Gordon, himself, does not appear to have been historically significant except locally. Finally, the house appears to have had little connection with the ferry operation on the Trace since it was erected after the ferry was bypassed through Columbia.[53]

Natchez Trace Superintendent C.W. (Jack) Ogle responded on October 7 that "it is important and in the national interest to preserve and maintain what few vestiges of structures associated with the Old Trace still remain." He also reminded the Regional Director that commitments had been made to the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office and to the former owners and descendants.

Of great significance, the park superintendent acquiesced to Garner regarding the frame structures of the site including the ell and outbuildings. Ogle agreed that it was not necessary to preserve or maintain the outbuildings or frame addition "since they date circa 1900 and are not a part of the historical scene likely to be interpreted and would be a continual maintenance expense difficult to justify."[54]

Ogle recommended the "compromise" that the outbuildings, rear ell, and front porch be removed and the exterior of the building be restored and

Figure 63. 1977 NPS photograph showing deteriorated condition of the porch. (NATR collection)

49. Hitchcock, p. 38, and Garner memo, 4/10/1974.
50. Garner memo, 4/10/1974.
51. Hitchcock, p. 38.
52. Superintendent's Annual Report 1974. Penta is a toxic oil-based wood preservative now replaced by alternative wood treatments.
53. Garner to Regional Director, SERO, Trip Report 9/30/1976
54. Captions of photographs accompanying the original (undated) Section 106 compliance statement imply an initial proposal to rehabilitate the two-story rear ell.

maintained to its original 1818-19 appearance. There would be no need to restore or refurnish the interior. This proved to be the course taken.[55]

During the 1976 assessment, the NPS team met with Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Baker and Mrs. Baker's mother, Mrs. Jewell, who were the most recent residents of the house and who made several old photographs and deeds available to the team for study.[56] These included the ca. 1910 photograph of the house (Figure 43).

By this time, the condition of the house had worsened considerably. There was concern that the deteriorated 1947-48 front porch could collapse (Figure 63). Measured drawings were made and the porch was removed in February 1977. A temporary sheet metal roof was placed on the main structure for protection. Further investigation suggested that there had been at least two earlier one-story porches; however, again no mention was made of the ca. 1907 double porch.[57]

1977-78: Restoration

Major work was conducted by NPS in a comprehensive project from 1977 to 1978. The purpose was to restore the house to approximate its 1818-1819 appearance. The work was based on a master plan prepared in April of 1977 by John Garner, the NPS architect who had conducted the initial assessment of the house.

Also in April, archaeological investigations were conducted for five days, with additional excavations in June conducted by the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC). The investigations found the remains of the stone retaining wall along the south edge of the front yard, as shown in the 1910 photograph. Also found was evidence of a stone walk leading from the front porch south to the road. Archaeologists hoped to find evidence of window hardware but did not. There was also no evidence of early fill around the southwest corner of the front porch, though that had been expected.[58]

Figure 64. West elevation in 1977 before front porch and rear sections were removed. (NATR collection)

Figure 65. North elevation of rear ell before removal in 1977. (NATR collection)

In the basement, excavations removed eight inches of fill, the result of years of drainage of water and soil into the space. The results of the archaeological investigations were published in July 1977 as a preliminary report by Shawn K. Bonath of SEAC.

In September 1977, the construction contract for the project was issued to "stabilize the structure and place it in maintenance condition."[59] The first phase specified stabilization of the deteriorating exterior of the brick structure and removal of features thought to date after its original construction. The $57,626 contract was awarded to Norman R. Sawyer, general contractor of Williamsburg, Virginia.[60] Some of the millwork

55. Superintendent Ogle to Associate Regional Director for Planning & Assistance, SERO, 10/7/1976.
56. Garner to Regional Director, SERO, Trip Report 9/30/1976.
57. Superintendent's Annual Report, 1977; Section 106 Compliance Statement, 5/18/1976; Deputy Associate Regional Director to Superintendent, NATR.
58. Ronald Bishop, "Completion Report Narrative, Preservation of John Gordon House," 1/9/1979, based on preliminary archaeological report by Shawn K. Bonath of SEAC dated July 1977
59. Bishop. Specifications and eleven sheets of contract drawings were prepared by John Garner and Todd Rainwater of NPS.
60. *The Courier* (Tennessee Historical Commission, June 1978, Vol. XVI, No. 3).

was provided by Waterfront Lumber Company of Newport News, Virginia.[61] Work began in October 1977 on the first task: removing the pump from a well in front of the house and boarding up the well.

The same week, the frame rear ell was demolished. During demolition, when exterior siding was removed, the wall framing of a one-story braced frame structure was revealed (Figure 66). The hand-hewn sills of the structure rested on limestone piers. Wall studs were mortised into a top plate. This was an earlier framing system than the frame of the second story and of the perpendicular one-and-one-half-story ell. The braced frame structure was reported to consist of 3" x 4" studs mortised into a top plate and a 9" x 9" hewn sill. Corner studs were 4" x 8" with 4" x 6" corner braces. The framing of the second story and the one-and-one-half-story ell was reported to be of balloon-frame construction consisting of 2" x 4" studs and rafters.[62]

The braced frame structure was initially determined by John Garner and the NPS team to date from the 1818-19 construction of the house. The decision was made to keep it in place pending further research. A temporary roof and sidewalls were constructed to protect it (Figure 67).[63]

Additional archaeological investigations were carried out in December 1977 by SEAC to locate remains of a chimney for the braced frame structure, possibly a kitchen. The report stated that the "findings were clear and unambiguous: no chimney remains exist at the rear of the kitchen as it is presently situated."[64] The braced frame structure might have been original. The framing is consistent with framing of the period of construction of the main block of the house. However, it may not have been in its original location. Gordon family recounts that occasionally, groups of Indians would stay at the Gordon House and in the morning, would "call for something to eat. The 'hot and hot' buttercakes sent them from the kitchen in the yard were their delight."[65] The reference to the kitchen in the yard implies that there was a separate kitchen building, detached from the main block of the house. It is possible that that was the braced frame structure, later moved to the back of the house.

On the south side of the braced-frame structure, closest to the brick house, was a gap in the sill, apparently where a chimney had been in place. It seems unlikely that a chimney would have been in that location so close to the house and the archaeological evidence confirms that. So the question is whether the braced ell originated there, was later turned, or, more likely, was moved from a location farther from the house. Perhaps the structure was located away from the house, the chimney dismantled, and the structure then moved and turned to orient a window or doorway to a desired location. An additional doorway was then cut into the south elevation to access a breezeway or connector.

Figure 66. Braced frame structure found within two-story ell, 11/1977. Possible ghostmark of a front-gabled roof is visible on the rear wall of the brick house. (color transparency, NATR collection)

Figure 67. Temporary roof during installation on braced frame structure, 8/1978. (color transparency, NATR collection)

61. Correspondence of 12/15/1977
62. Handwritten NPS notes in files associated with 1970s restoration project.
63. Trip Report, 10/18-21/1977, and Bishop, Completion Report of 1/9//1979, p. 8.
64. Christopher E. Hamilton, "Excavation in Search of Chimney Remains from the John Gordon House," 1978.
65. Bond, *Family Chronicle,* p. 154-155.

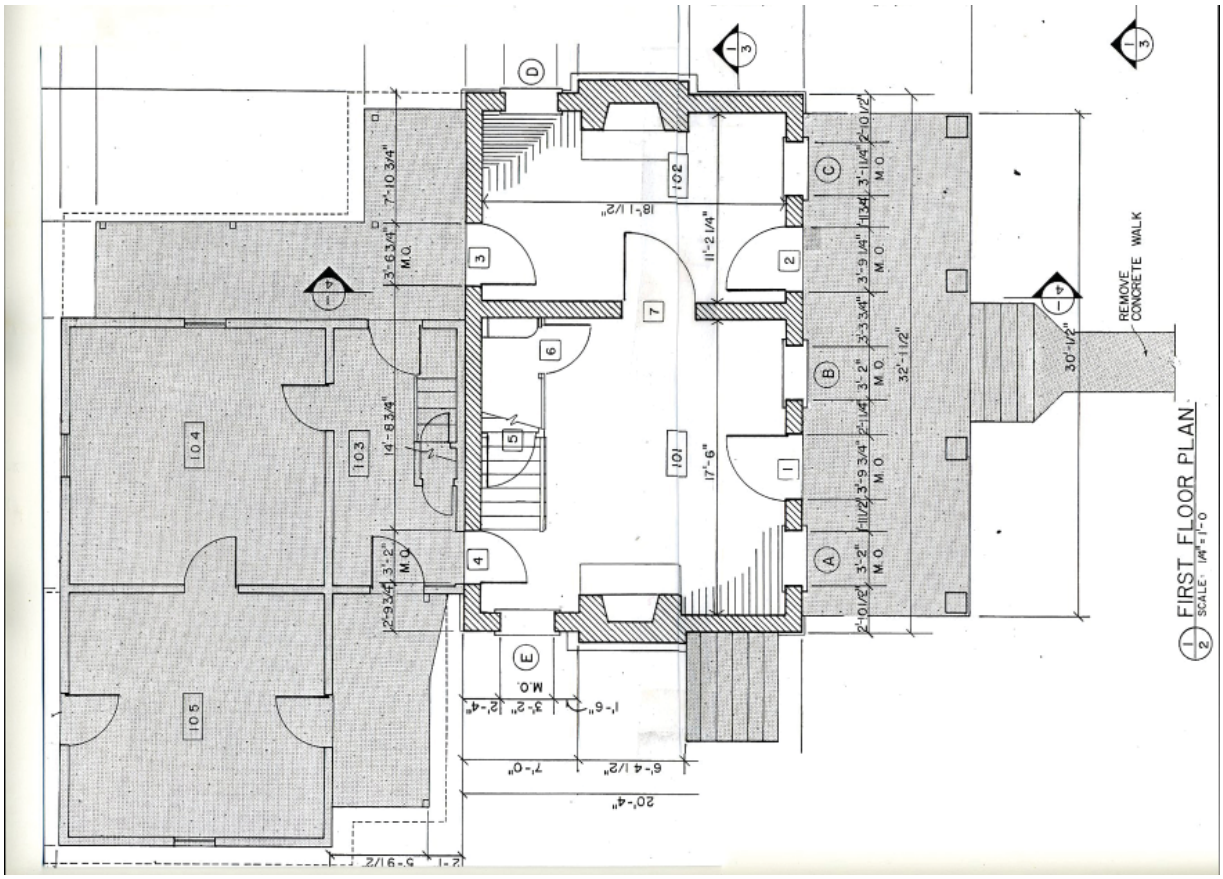


Figure 68. Construction drawings, first-floor plan, 1977. Shaded areas show elements to be removed. (NATR collection)

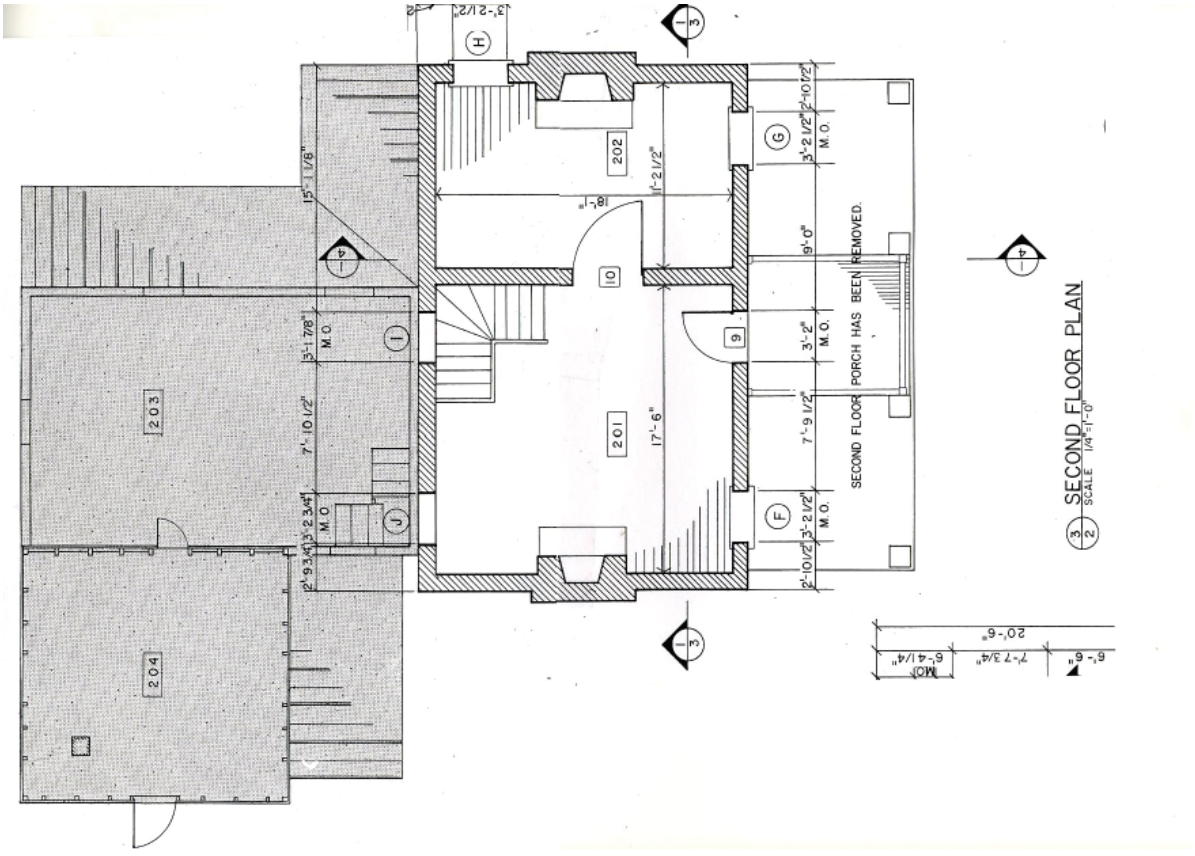


Figure 69. Construction drawings, second-floor plan, 1977. Shaded areas show elements to be removed. (NATR collection)

An additional discovery was made in 1977 when the block foundation of the front porch was removed. An earlier set of cement steps was uncovered behind the 1947-48 steps. Archaeological testing was done to determine if evidence of an earlier porch could be found. The presence of stone slabs, though scattered, suggested that a previous stone porch foundation had existed, and the uncovered steps suggested a structure built sometime between 1890 and 1947.[66] The stones may have been the remnants of the stone pier foundation seen in the 1924 photograph, and the earlier porch was most likely the Jewells' early-twentieth-century porch, but again, no mention is made of it.

Another important element of the restoration project was the improvement of the drainage pattern near the basement entrance. The grade was lowered at the southwest corner of the house to create a slope away from the house, and a catch basin was installed at the basement entrance.[67]

In the midst of the 1977 work, the property's National Register nomination was amended in July to reduce its boundary from the originally-listed sixty-eight acres to ten. The reduction was requested because the "land which is to be omitted from the nomination is vacant land and is not necessary to interpret the John Gordon House."

The scope of the 1977-78 work was extensive, though few changes were made to the interior. Completion Reports prepared by NPS historical architect Ronald Bishop in January and August 1979 outlined the work:

- The 1947-48 porch had been removed in February 1977 for safety concerns before the official start of the project;
- The rear ell was demolished; the earlier one-story braced framing system within was retained because it was believed to date from the 1818-19 construction of the house;
- A temporary roof and sidewalls were built over the braced frame structure;
- The second-floor center door to the ell was removed and converted to a window;
- The rear doorway from Room 101 was converted to a window despite Trout's concern that this may have been an early doorway;
- The "modern" wood floor in Room 102 was removed from atop the original flooring;
- All window sash (early-twentieth-century two-over-two light sash) and frames were replaced with reproduction pieces in a nine-over-six configuration based upon a salvaged sash;
- The roof sheathing was determined to be original by historical architect Bishop and was reused for installation of a new wood shingle roof;
- The screen doors were removed; two early-twentieth-century half-glazed front doors were replaced with reproduction six-panel Federal style doors;
- Wood trim was repaired or replaced "as needed;"
- Sections of reproduction wood cornice were installed at the north and south rooflines. (It appears from notes and photographs taken during the 1970s project that sections of the original cornice were retained and portions were reproduced. NPS staff determined that the fascia boards had been replaced previously; therefore, a new fascia board was designed to be more appropriate. Original sections of other portions of the cornice had survived and those were reproduced and installed in sections.)
- Stonework of foundations was repaired by replacing missing stone, resetting displaced stone, repointing mortar joints, and waterproofing foundations below grade;
- The brickwork of the northwest corner of the house was rebuilt;
- Other portions of the exterior masonry were rebuilt;
- Exterior masonry was repointed in certain areas of all facades; a majority of the joints were later found to be overfilled, creating a thin featheredge, and were corrected, but neither the joint profile nor color matched the original;
- Chimney caps were installed;
- A catch basin with grate was installed at the basement entrance;
- A French drain was installed around the perimeter of the house;
- A modern butane tank was removed from the west side of the house;
- Several trees near the house were removed and four large trees retained;
- The cement front walkway was removed,

66. Bishop, Completion report of 1/9/1979, p. 4, and Hitchcock, p. 39.
67. Emrick HSR, p. 13.

uncovering a stone walk;
- 51 linear feet of two-inch rigid PVC conduit were installed underground by NPS employees from the basement to a power pole on the west side of the house; a portion of brick rubble was uncovered during this work;
- All seven outbuildings were demolished after measured drawings were made;
- All landscape features dating to the twentieth century were removed;
- Fumigation and soil poisoning was undertaken by Cook Pest Control, Inc., of Knoxville.

Figure 70. Brick repair of east chimney, 11/1977. (color transparency, NATR collection)

Figure 71. Wood shingle roof and reproduction dentil cornice. (2010 photograph)

Figure 72. 1976 photograph shows power pole. Underground connection was made to the basement in 1977. (NATR collection)

The completion report gives no mention of the addition of shutters; however, they were discussed during initial investigations and it appears they were added during the project. (A letter of March 14, 1978 indicates that shutter hooks and staples were to be manufactured by Donald Streeter, a blacksmith who specialized in restoration hardware.)

Although not mentioned in the report, a letter of April 1978 to contractor Norman Sawyer indicated they would be "using material salvaged from the demolition of the additions and other structures located on the premises" for repairs to the two doorways in the basement.

Plans had called for the basement walls to be plastered, but that provision was deleted from the contract, along with installation of metal grills and repair to the ends of three floor joists. The project was completed on August 17, 1978.[68]

1980s

Little work was conducted on the Gordon House in the 1980s, though several studies were made. Planting was provided along Highway 50 in 1981 to help screen the road from the house, and the house and "quarters" exteriors were painted in 1982. (The quarters was the braced frame structure.) In 1983 the NPS leased adjacent pasture land to local farmers for cattle grazing.[69]

In 1983, archaeological investigations were conducted by SEAC to determine the location

68. Bishop, Completion Report, 1979; Emrick HSR, p. 13.
69. Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1981-83.

of early outbuildings. A specific question was whether the braced frame ell behind the Gordon House had stood elsewhere in the yard. The study sought to determine the locations of the outbuildings in order "to guide construction and interpretation in the future." The study consisted of a soil resistivity survey with limited test excavations. No conclusive evidence was found, in part because the later outbuildings (removed in 1977) may have been built on the same sites as earlier structures. Additional excavations were recommended.[70]

An unrelated archaeological study was conducted in the summer of 1984 by the University of Tennessee in an unsuccessful search for the Duck River cantonment site and Gordon's stand. However, in the spring of 1985, SEAC identified a possible site west of the Trace along a levee near the mouth of Fattybread Branch.[71]

In 1986 the Park Service constructed a visitor parking lot and interpretive shelter/comfort station just off the Natchez Trace Parkway, providing pedestrian access to the house. The exterior of the house was again painted in 1987, and 0.7 miles of asphalt trails were constructed at the site in 1988.[72]

Despite earlier plans to retain the braced-frame ell behind the house, a proposal was made in 1988 to remove the ell and to add a front porch to provide access to the house. Neither was to occur for several years. The restoration of the 1970s was reported as being complete; however, the house had been unoccupied since that time, and the entrance doors remained still some three to four feet above ground level with no stair access.

Figure 73. Visitor shelter. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

70. Rochelle A. Marrinan, "Soil Resistivity Survey and Test Excavation, Gordon House," June 1983.
71. Hitchcock, p. 35, cites James Atkinson's 1985 SEAC report, j:9.
72. Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1981-88.

In a memo of 1988, the interior use of the house was addressed for the first time. The Natchez Trace Parkway had been completed near the Gordon house and the parking lot and comfort station were in place. The proposed use involved the local historical society's administering the structure through a special use permit to provide visitors with an introduction to the area. Superintendant James L. Bainbridge proposed "to adaptively restore the house for use as a staffed information facility. This will require providing exterior access, removal of an outbuilding adjacent to the structure, and interior renovation of the first floor." Bainbridge reported that the Development Concept Plan for the work had been approved in 1983 and the Section 106 finding of no significant impact had been approved on June 12, 1984. He requested technical assistance from the Regional Office in order to proceed.[73]

Bainbridge's proposal was later amplified, listing the specific work requested as Park Priority 1:

> Remove the detached frame outbuilding near the rear of the house. Record all historic components [of the braced frame ell] in the form of drawings and photographs, tag and number each component, and carefully dismantle and store structural elements in a safe location within the parkway's curatorial collection.
>
> Research and construct historically compatible front and rear porches on the John Gordon House.
>
> Design and construct accessibility ramp to the rear porch.
>
> Perform interior preservation work sufficient to permit use of first floor as visitor information station.[74]

In association with these proposals, a preliminary Historic Structure Report was prepared in the fall of 1988 by Michael Emrick. He reported on the performance of the work completed ten years earlier in 1978, noting in particular that the drainage was not working well, leaving the basement muddy after rains and causing continued damage.

Emrick made major recommendations. His was a more comprehensive approach than earlier proposals. He suggested that a simple, unroofed

73. Memo to Associate Regional Director for Operations from Bainbridge, 8/15/1988.
74. Southeast Region Planning/Design Assistance Form, undated, 1989 or later. The records, drawings, and tagged structural elements have not been located.

flight of wood steps be constructed at each front door. His recommendation was based on his review of structures of similar style and age within the region. In contrast with the observations of others before him, Emrick found no indication of framing for an earlier porch. His silence on this feature probably is due to the extensive masonry repointing and rebuilding of the 1970s that obliterated evidence of previous designs. Emrick recommended that the interior of the house be completely finished for visitor use. This would include removal of old wallpaper, repair of plaster, refinishing of the floors, and installation of new plaster ceilings. He further recommended full electrical, telephone, HVAC work and appropriate lighting, but he did not call for plumbing in the house.

Emrick went beyond earlier proposals to suggest as well a conjectural reconstruction of a kitchen wing for interpretation space, staff toilet, sales space and the like. He was aware of the earlier archaeological survey that had been unsuccessful in finding evidence of an early kitchen, but recognized the previous disturbance that the ground had undergone over the years.

He also recommended site work to include additional walkways, a rear handicap ramp, and utility access.

Emrick discussed the possible use and purpose of the house in some detail. A Hickman County group was interested in leasing the house in order to staff and open its first floor for exhibits about the Natchez Trace, John Gordon, and the county. The Park Service had consulted with the group but had not made a determination about a possible lease or decided whether the lessee would make the renovations. In fact, the use of the property had not been determined.

In preparing his report, Emrick had reviewed earlier documents, especially those relating to the 1977-78 work. Many were not available. In December 1988, Regional Historian Len Brown expressed concern that documents from the Gordon House were missing or misfiled and could not be readily accessed. He mentioned in particular the measured drawings of the seven outbuildings demolished in 1977-78, the drawings of the 1947-48 porch, and a report by John Garner regarding an original window sash that had fallen between the rear wall of the house and the frame addition.[75] (In 2010, a full-size drawing of the sash was located at the NPS Southeast Regional Office. The other documents have not been found.)

Again in 1989, the lack of access to the structure was of concern. Porches had not been built during any of the previous projects because it was felt there was not enough archaeological or documentary evidence to verify the earliest porch configuration.

1990s

In 1990 a marker proposed by the DAR was approved and erected the following year.

Discussions with the local historical society had begun by the summer of 1988 to consider whether they might occupy the structure through a special use permit and provide visitors to the northern end of the parkway an introduction to the history of the area and the site.[76] In 1990 NPS architect Rene Cote prepared recommendations to allow adaptive use of the house by the local group. Given this use, Cote identified sixteen work items to be considered, estimating about $78,000 to be needed for completion.[77]

In a letter of December 29, 1990, Acting Superintendent Don R. Thompson wrote to the local Chamber of Commerce explaining the current plan. He stated that "We do not propose any re-creation of the original landscape." He agreed only that landscaping "was desirable to soften the intrusion of the modern parkway, parking area, and restroom facilities."[78]

Thompson itemized the work proposed for a rehabilitation project to be done in two phases, generally following the recommendations in Emrick's preliminary HSR. The first phase was to include "essential items:"

75. Brown to Kirk Cordell, Regional Chief, Cultural Resources, 12/2/1988.
76. Billy Garrett, Chief, Historic Architecture Division, SERO, to NATR Superintendent, 7/12/1989.
77. Ibid., 11/5/1990. The project outline was generally consistent with the 1990 Draft Resource Management Plan for NATR.
78. Thompson to James Griffin, Hickman County Chamber of Commerce, 12/29/1990.

- Construct entrance stairs and landings;
- Construct handicap ramp with access to the rear of the building;
- Install French drain and regrade around the structure. The earlier French drain had been unsatisfactory;
- Install heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems;
- Upgrade electrical service; and
- Install fire detection (but not suppression) and security systems.

Figure 74. 1991 view showing inappropriate repointing and steep grade near basement entrance. (HSAR 1992)

The secondary phase was to include work to make the structure suitable for occupancy as a visitor information station. These would be necessary for a local group to open the building to the public:

- Repair exterior millwork and install weather stripping on doors and windows;
- Paint exterior millwork;
- Install new roof;
- Repoint masonry;
- Repair fire boxes;
- Repair plaster;
- Prepare and repaint wood ceiling;
- Repair and refinish wood floors;
- Install security blinds on interior.[79]

This proposed work was yet another in a stream of proposals made for the house. All highlighted three major issues that remained problematic. The first was the question of demolition of the braced frame structure uncovered during demolition of the two-story ell, with demolition now recommended because it was argued the remnant had lost its historic integrity.

79. Ibid.

The second was the question of a reconstructed rear kitchen ell, with concerns centering on expense, need, and the lack of documentation.

The third and most pressing was the configuration of a front entrance. Investigations had been inconclusive; it was recommended that Emrick's 1988 design be followed because it was "consistent with the regional style" and "would be low in cost and require minimal impact on remaining historic building fabric."

The emphasis, once again, was on securing the building and opening it to visitors. The proposed rehabilitation did not contain provision for installation of historic furnishings nor reestablishment of the historic setting, both needing study before decisions could be made. A request for documentation and analysis of interior and exterior surfaces was made.

Further study was soon conducted. An Historic Structure Assessment Report (HSAR/ICAP) of the house was completed in 1992 by Ali A. Miri of the Georgia Institute of Technology. This was to serve as a baseline for work proposed for 1993. The superintendent was actively exploring

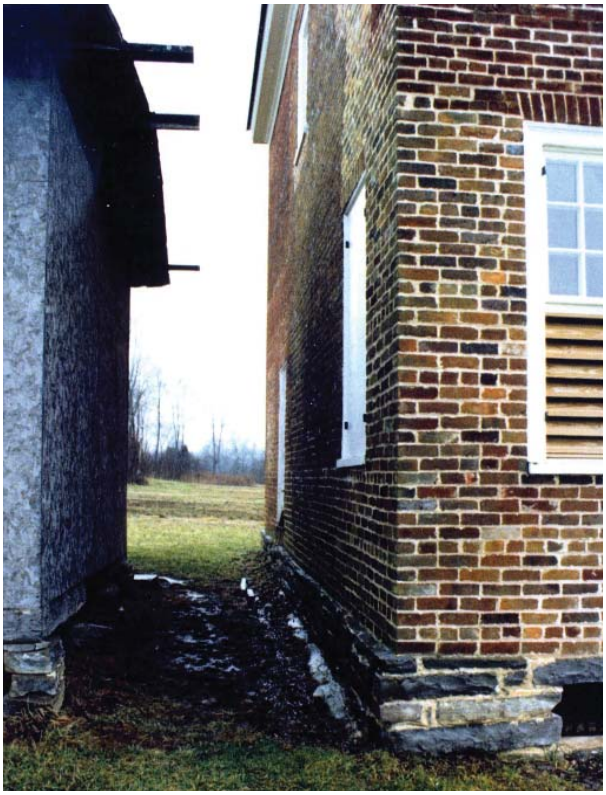


Figure 75. 1991 view showing braced frame structure, with protective roof and sidewalls, at the rear of the house. (HSAR 1992)

opportunities to open the building as a staffed information/interpretive facility in the near future.[80] A Section 106 compliance statement of May, 1993, noted that interior work was scheduled for fiscal year 1994. It also outlined the earlier proposal to record, tag, dismantle, and store the framing components of the retained rear ell (Figures 66 and 75).[81]

In 1993 the Park Service received $35,000 to conduct the work on the house, and during the summer, the Southeast Region's Field Services Crew installed another wood shingle roof, repaired window and door surrounds and sills of the first and second levels, repaired the lower portion of the basement door jambs, and repointed the brick. The intent of the work was to provide a weathertight exterior.[82]

An unpaved interpretative foot trail was built along a part of the Old Trace from the Gordon House down to the ferry site. The crossing over Fattybread Branch was rehabilitated and a footbridge built. Wayside exhibits were erected along the trail.[83]

Superintendent Daniel W. Brown in 1993 consulted again with Hickman and Maury county representatives to discuss a possible agreement to staff the house as an information station. Possible leases had been discussed in Emrick's 1988 HSR. Brown also expressed hope of receiving additional funding for the "interior adaptive restoration to permit public access and use." The NPS did not intend to furnish the house.[84]

In 1994 a materials analysis and recordation of paint and paper coverings in the house was completed by Regina T. Binder of the Building Conservation Branch of the North Atlantic Regional Office.[85] Unfortunately, subsequent testing conducted in 2010 for this Historic Structure Report found the previous analysis to be unreliable.[86]

The house had stood from 1977, when the 1947-48 porch was removed, without access to the front doors. Finally, in 1995 the Park Service installed open, simple wood stairs with small landings, handrails and railings at both front entrances. The configuration was similar to that recommended by Emrick in his 1988 HSR (Figures 76 and 77).[87]

Installation of the steps appears to have been funded by the Granny White Chapter of the Questers, an organization founded in part to encourage the preservation of historic landmarks.[88]

Additional funding was sought for a handicapped-accessible ramp at the rear of the house.[89]

A significant decision was made in 1995. At the request of NPS, students in the historic preservation program of Middle Tennessee State University prepared a report on the retained portion of the braced frame rear ell of the Gordon House to determine its date of construction. It had stood alone since 1977 with the question of its provenance still unanswered, though it had been proposed for dismantling in 1988. Through a brief study of the framing system, saw marks, and nails, the students concluded that the braced frame portion of the ell was built not at the time of original construction of the house, but between 1835 and 1850.

The braced frame structure was tagged and dismantled in December, 1995, after the data had been studied but before the final report was printed. The pieces were placed in storage in the Meriwether Lewis Maintenance Yard in 1996.[90] However, those salvaged pieces are not now at that facility nor have any locations of subsequent storage been identified.

Portions may be in Gordon House itself. There are house parts in the house apparently intended for storage. Unfortunately, those pieces are tagged with masking tape; on a number of the pieces

80. HSAR/ICAP, 1992.
81. Sara Amy Leach, Chief, Interpretation and Visitor Services, to Ed Johnson, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 1/9/1996.
82. Hitchcock, p. 40; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993; Superintendent Daniel W. Brown to Shirley P-B Gelineau, a Gordon family descendant from San Antonio, TX, 4/2/1993; .
83. Section 106 assessment, 1992; Hitchcock, p. 31.
84. Brown to Gelineau, 4/2/1993. In 1990 Acting Superintendent Dan R. Thompson was considering an agreement with the Hickman County Historical Society to allow them to provide information and interpretive services at the house.
85. Leach, draft Management Plan, 1998; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1993.
86. Krotzer, Finishes Analysis, 2011.
87. Superintendent's Annual Report 1995.
88. Superintendent Brown to Shirley Gelineau, 8/20/1996.
89. Hitchcock, p. 40.
90. Sara Amy Leach, 1998 Management Plan – Rehabilitation Proposal.

the masking tape has come unglued. Further, the identifying information was applied with a water-soluble medium; many identifications have blurred beyond recognition. The inventory ledger identifying the salvaged elements and their provenance has not been located either.

Though not prominently stated in any of the many reports and proposals regarding the rear ell, it was acknowledged that the house was built originally with an ell of some sort to house ancillary functions. It is also not unreasonable to assume that additions were constructed to house the children and grandchildren living with Dolly Gordon during her many years of occupancy.

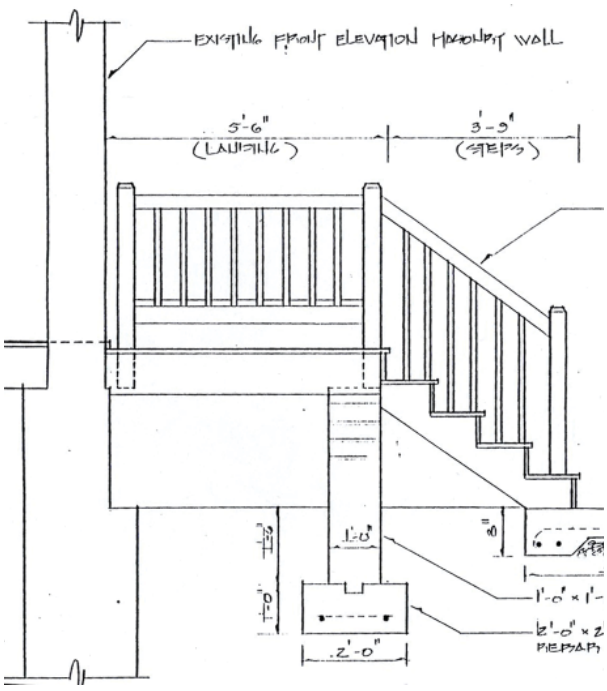


Figure 76. 1993 drawing, proposed front stair. (NATR collection)

Figure 77. House showing new stairs built in 1995. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

A kitchen likely would have been connected to the main house either directly or by a covered breezeway, a traditional configuration.

It is plausible that these additions would have suffered along with the house during the general deterioration in the late nineteenth century. Thus, the Jewells would have been forced to make repairs, both minor and major, and even to build anew upon their purchase in 1904. The same could be said for the outbuildings.

Figure 78. Barn before demolition, 9/1976. (color transparency, NATR collection)

In 1996, a year after construction of the front stairs, an inspection conducted by the Southeast Regional Office found that the installation was creating serious problems. The new landings and the 1970s replacement door sills sloped towards the house. As a result, the replacement door sills, adjacent original flooring, and associated original floor joists were developing extensive rot. In addition, the risers in the stairs were not equal, creating awkward footing.

Flooding of the basement due to inadequate site drainage also remained a problem. Less threatening yet just as annoying was the sloppy repointing of the brick walls and the mismatched mortar color.[91]

The 1996 inspection report also addressed the interior of the house, noting evidence of different periods of alterations. The report observed that first-floor ceiling joists were beaded, causing speculation that the plaster ceilings were added.

91. Report of Interim Team Coordinator, Education and Visitor Services, Gulf Coast System Support Office, NPS, 1/11/1996.

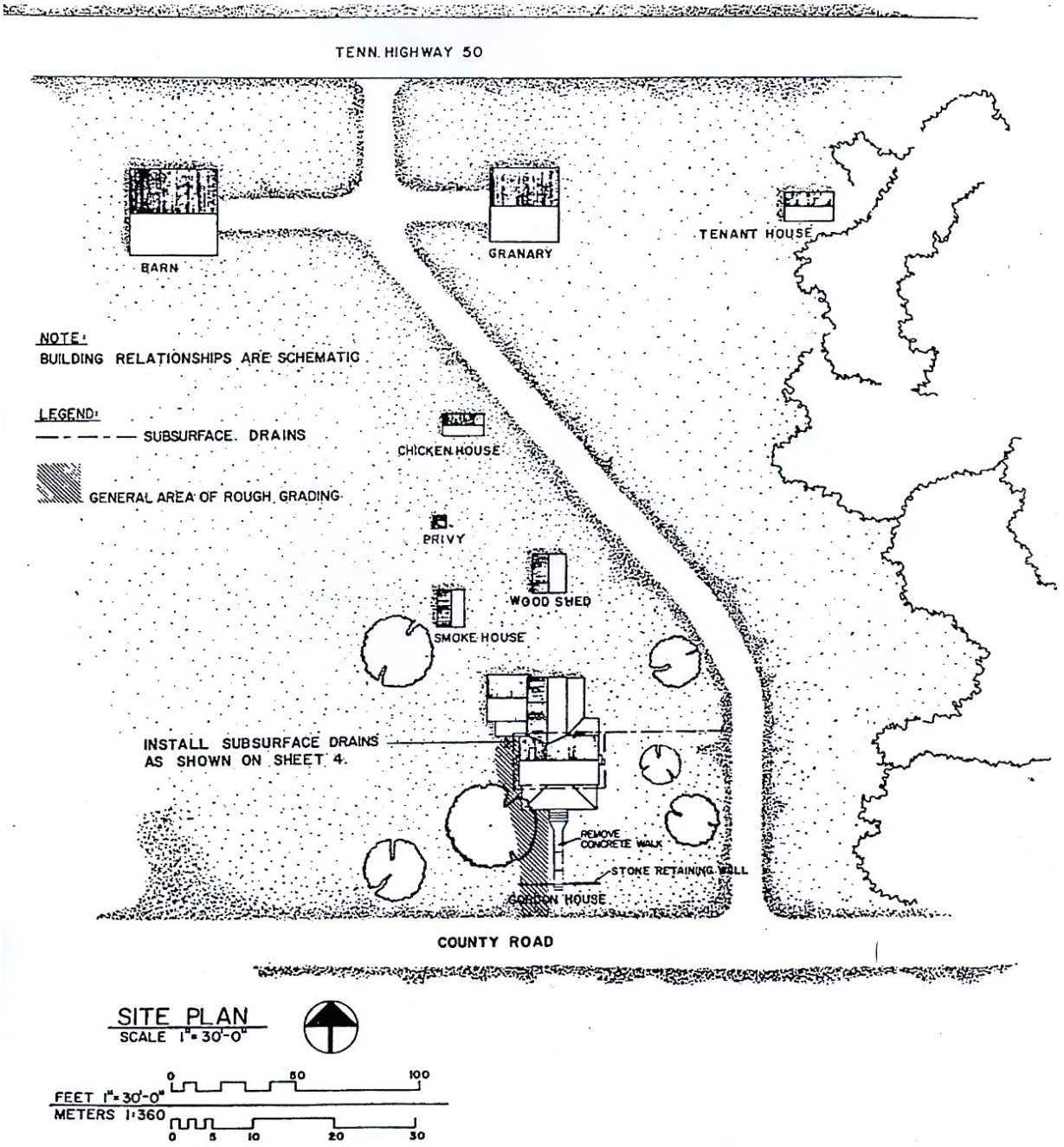


Figure 79. Site plan showing outbuildings before demolition. (Emrick HSR, 1988)

Also noted were the circular-sawn plank boards attached to the bottoms of the second-floor ceiling joists, a modification probably made by the Jewells.

The inspection also found layers of plasters from different periods. The age of the existing wallpapers was found to be almost one hundred years old and therefore determined to be historic fabric. This justification reflects a change in preservation philosophy from the earlier focus on the 1818-1819 appearance of the building.[92]

In September 1997, NPS took steps to remedy the chronic drainage problems at the Gordon House. Despite grading and the installation of drains, surface water continued to flow down the basement steps, often overflowing the drain and covering the basement's dirt floor. The Park Service proposed to build a shallow 18-inch swale to carry water away from the building and basement, as well as a small berm to channel water from the basement steps.

92. 1996 inspection report.

Figure 80. South elevation showing poor repointing, ghostmarks of earlier porches and second-floor center doorway, and stairs constructed in 1995. (color transparency, 1998, HAER Survey #MS-15)

Plans for opening the house to the public continued. In 1998 work was proposed to improve drainage around the foundation; to repair rotted floor joists, door sills, and related framing; to repair/rebuild two brick chimneys (not called for in earlier proposals); to stabilize/repair wall lath and replaster interior walls; to finish surfaces appropriately; to repair/replace rotted floor boards; to completely repoint exterior brickwork; and to install electrical and security systems.

In addition to this rehabilitation work, the Park Service again proposed to construct a handicap ramp and to develop interpretative exhibits and displays to be installed in the building. Upon completion, the Gordon House would be opened to the public and would provide a "major historic setting where the history of the Old Trace would be actively presented to visitors," especially those to the northern half of the parkway. Under the proposal, the local community would partner with the park to provide volunteers to staff the house.[93]

Studies of the house continued. In September 1998, Cultural Resource Specialist Sara Amy Leach completed a Management Plan-Rehabilitation Proposal for the Gordon House. Her recommendations were consistent with the several previous proposals and funding requests, but she first suggested that past archaeological studies be reviewed "and probably complemented by new research/recovery." She recommended a cultural landscape study to determine how the site should be presented to the public. Funding for both of those projects had been requested, $80,000 for FY 2001 and $12,000 for FY 2002.[94]

The main recommendations of her rehabilitation proposal included the work necessary to dry out the basement, correction of inappropriately pointed mortar, removal or corrections to the front stairs, improvements to the basement steps, and installation of a handicap ramp. Inside, she recommended installation of electrical and security systems and the possibility of HVAC and telephones, the repair of fireboxes, joists, floor boards, and baseboards.[95]

Leach suggested that exhibits be developed by the NPS Interpretative Specialist, and noted that a Furnishings Plan would be required if consideration was given to furnishing the house. Apparently, funding of $30,000 also had been requested for FY 2002 to undertake that project.[96]

2000s

The swale and berm recommended in 1997 were not built until 2001. The swale is located west of the house and carries the water south away from the basement door. The berm that had been created at the top of the basement stairs was enlarged to guide water towards the swale.[97] This remedy reportedly has been a success.

Additional repointing of the exterior of the house, excluding areas blocked by steps, was undertaken

Figure 81. Gordon family reunion at the house, 2003. (gordonhouse.50megs.com)

93. Project justification, Craig Stubblefield, Chief, Resource Management Division, NATR, 2/19/1998.

94. Leach, draft Management Plan, 1998.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.
97. Section 106 assessment, 3/1/2000.

in 2003 by Mid-Continental Restoration Co., Inc, of Fort Scott, Kansas, in an attempt to correct earlier repointing. The work was completed in December with images stored on CD at NATR.

Also in 2003, the Gordon family held a reunion at the house and planted a memorial tree in the front yard.[98]

In August 2005, the interior of the basement was repointed, this time by Harmony Industries of Altamont, Tennessee, an independent contractor, using a mortar containing Manufactured Data hydrated lime and nearby creek sand.[99]

As a part of the same project, repairs were made to floor joists. During the inspection, powder post beetles were discovered and treated with a spray application of Bora-Care, a water-soluble product produced by U.S. Borox. Harmony found the joists to be in generally good condition, though two slumping floor joist ends were raised and sistered. In addition, Harmony installed supplemental support to the rotting lower door jambs of the interior basement door, leaving the existing pieces in place (Figure 82).[100]

Figure 82. Interior basement door showing sistered pieces, 2010.

The front stairs, which in 1996 had been found to cause problems, were removed in 2009. No additional stairs have been constructed.

Today the Gordon House sits in a large open lawn near the edge of a ridge overlooking Fattybread Branch to the south. Although it is one of only two extant historic houses along the Old Natchez Trace, the house has never been interpreted or opened to the public despite years of planning and continued high level of interest by local communities.

Rehabilitation of the structure has been proposed for years as documented by Phelps' 1945 report, by Trout's 1969 report, in the work of the 1970s, the NATR General Management Plan (1987), the Preliminary Historic Structure Report (1988), the Gordon House Development Plan (1989), the Historic Structure Assessment Report/ICAP (1991), and others.

In part an example of changing preservation philosophies, the house has been stripped of many of its architectural features, both original and those added after 1819. Nevertheless, it retains significant elements, including its form, floor plan, and most of its interior features from the time of original construction and from the Jewells' renovations of the first decade of the twentieth century.

Figure 83. ,View of Gordon House from picnic shelter/ comfort station, 2010.

98. Notice of Award, Dale Wilkerson, NPS Contracting Officer, to Mid-Continental Restoration Co. 8/27/2003. Gordonhouse.50megs.com
99. Dale Wilkerson, Contracting Officer, NPS, to Jerral Parris of Harmony Industries, 9/9/2005.
100. Parris to Wilkerson, 8/11/2005; Wilkerson to Parris, 9/9/2005.

Timeline

1763 July 15	John Gordon born near Fredericksburg, VA.
1775-1783	American Revolution. Gordon fights in at least 2 battles.
1779 July 15	Dorothea (Dolly) Cross born in Virginia.
mid-1780s	Gordon moves to Nashville with his widowed mother, buys property, becomes merchant.
1785	Boatmen begin commercial floating trips down the Mississippi River to southern markets, then walk back up to Nashville and beyond. Trails later known as the Natchez Trace.
1787	Gordon leads a company in Coldwater Expedition against the Cherokees. Later defends Nashville area from Creeks and Cherokees; participates in many battles. In 1793 is appointed captain of Davidson County militia.
1793	Dolly Cross moves to Nashville with her family; her father Richard Cross is prominent. On July 15, 1794, Gordon and Dolly are married in Nashville on their shared birthday.
1794	Gordon opens John Gordon & Company, contracts to furnish supplies to troops.
1794 Aug.	Gordon leads men in Nickajack Expedition against the Chickamauga, in 1795 is appointed Justice of the Peace, and in 1796 is appointed postmaster of Nashville.
.	
Fall 1801	Chickasaw & Choctaw allow US to open the Natchez Trace through their lands; they retain sole rights to operate inns & ferries on the route.
1801-03	US Troops improve the Natchez Trace; build cantonment supply depot at Duck River crossing.
1801	Chickasaw chief George Colbert establishes ferry across Tennessee River.
1802	Gordon enters partnership with Chickasaw chief William Colbert to operate trading post and ferry on the Duck River, reusing cantonment buildings and watercraft. Gordon still living in Nashville.
1802	Gordon's Ferry begins operation with a slave and hired help. Thomas Hart Benton hired as factor in 1804 for short time while teaching school nearby.
1804	Gordon & Colbert's 1802 agreement put in writing. Gordon submits complaint that Colbert not fulfilling his obligations.
1806-1809	Through land grants, Gordon amasses about 1,500 acres on the Duck River including the future house site.

1811	Gordon advertises for rent 60 acres and Duck River stand & ferry; also advertises to rent his buildings in Nashville.
1812	Gordon moves family to Duck River. Having financial troubles, loses portion of his Davidson County farm at public auction, almost loses portion of Duck River property.
1812-1815	War of 1812 & associated Creek War. Gordon called by Andrew Jackson in 1813-14 to command company of spies.
5/19/1814	Gordon leaves military service.
1814	Jackson recalls Gordon for special mission to Spanish governor of Pensacola; Jackson seizes Pensacola. Gordon returns to Duck River, continues previous trading ventures. In 1815 is operating cotton gin nearby.
1818	Jackson recalls Gordon to fight Seminoles in East Florida. Gordon makes second diplomatic mission to Florida.
1818	House under construction. Gordon writes Dolly advising her to continue building the house, suggesting elements of the house, and assuring her he "will try to keep you in funds."
1818	Gordon returns from Seminole campaigns.
10/19/1818	Government agrees in Chickasaw Treaty to pay William Colbert's debt of $1,115 to Gordon.
2/21/1819	Daughter is born; tenth living child.
6/16/1819	Gordon dies; buried in graveyard near the house. Dolly continues to live in the house; operates ferry, stand, and farm & raises children and grandchildren.
1819	Portion of Gordon's lands bequeathed to son Bolling. Bolling acquires an additional 23¾ acres from his uncle's will.
1820-30	Use of the Trace greatly reduced as steamboats became preferred method of travel from Natchez up the Mississippi River.
ca. 1840	Dolly may have modified rear window to create doorway and added Greek Revival doors,; may have expanded and/or moved rear ell.
ca. 1855	Gordon's grave moved to Rose Hill Cemetery in Columbia, TN.
1859	Dolly Cross Gordon dies at age of 80; buried at Rose Hill Cemetery. Son Bolling named executor of estate; property divided among heirs.
1860	Richard Cross Gordon, grandson of John & Dolly and son of Bolling, purchases house & land. He farms the land but does not live there.
1/27/1879	Richard Gordon conveys property in trust to George Stockard as security against debts.
1883	Richard Gordon stated as owner when line between Hickman & Maury counties is shifted.

1896	Gordon's Ferry ends operation when bridge built across Duck River.
18__ ?	G. P. Mayberry & wife Ethel acquire the property.
8/31/1896	Mayberry & wife sell to A. Hooten.
1900	Spence's 1900 *History of Hickman County* describes the house as dilapidated.
10/27/1904	A. Hooten sells house & 107 acres to W. C. Jewell and son Richard S. Jewell. Jewell family makes substantial repairs and alterations; owns house for 65 years.
ca. 1907	Jewells add 2-story double-gallery front porch. Probably at this time, mantelpieces are replaced in both first-floor rooms; interior stair is enclosed with four-panel door; new floor installed over existing in Room 102; 2nd-floor ceilings covered with circular-sawn plank boards; fireboxes in Rooms 101 & 201 infilled with brick & stuccoed to hold small cast metal coal grates; repair or additions to rear ell; several frame outbuildings built.
1910	Winter photograph of facade shows new double-gallery porch, 2nd-story center door, Flemish bond brick at the front, stone foundation, 2/2 windows, no transoms, stone slab retaining wall beneath picket fence, mailbox, trees.
12/8/1918	W. C. Jewell dies; Richard S. Jewell becomes sole owner of Gordon House.
19__	Undated photograph shows no change. Visible are half-glazed doors, boarded & painted transoms, spool screen doors, shed lean-to at basement entrance, one-story gable rear ell with porch at west.
1924	Photograph shows stone pier foundation beneath porch.
1920s	Highway TN 50 constructed in front of house.
1934	Bills introduced concerning Natchez Trace. In May, President FDR signs legislation for survey of Trace. Construction funds assigned in 1935. Construction begins in 1937.
5/18/1938	Congress creates Natchez Trace Parkway as a unit of the National Park System.
1944-45	Dawson Phelps conducts study of the ferry, cantonment site, and house as related to Old Trace. His photographs show porch on solid foundation, metal roof, 1-story back porch, new post-and-wire fence, woodshed, vertical-board outbuilding. Other 1945 photos show large 2-story rear ell & adjoining 1-story ell.
1945	Phelps' report recommends NPS acquisition as part of Section I-D of the Parkway and restoration of house for interpretation. Recommends further research, and removal of ca. 1907 porch, rear frame addition, metal roof. Recommends relocation of Highway 50. Stressed significance of Gordon House.
1945	Series of letters between NPS Director and Regional Director debating significance of house.
1947-8	Jewells replace double-gallery porch with full-height porch on high block foundation with cement steps and walk. 1948 photo shows porch and ghostmarks of earlier double-gallery porch.

1950s	Highway 50 relocated north of the house.
1959 Aug.	Douglas Edward Leach prepares historical report, "John Gordon of Gordon's Ferry."
1959	Photo shows no apparent changes.
1969	Gordon House purchased by State of Tennessee. Edward Trout prepares report for NPS; photographs show details, included earliest images of interior, especially doors & mantelpieces. Mentions additional floor in Room 102.
1973	NPS acquires property. Initial condition assessment finds high moisture levels, deteriorated joints, basement damage. Porch severely deteriorated. Report notes evidence of earlier 1-story porch; no mention of earlier double-gallery porch.
1974	Initial stabilization. Temporary louvers placed in windows; basement entrance covered; building treated with penta; many trees removed.
4/18/1974	House and 68 acres listed in National Register of Historic Places.
1976	Photographs shows side & rear elevations, pasture land around the house.
1976	Temporary sheet metal roof placed on main structure.
Feb. 1977	Measured drawings made of front porch; porch removed.
1977 April	Master Plan and drawings for renovations. Investigations show evidence of at least two earlier 1-story porches; no mention of double-gallery porch.
1977 July	Boundaries of National Register listing changed from 68 acres to 10 acres.
1977-1978	Restoration underway: rear ell demolished except earlier one-story braced framing system within; temporary roof and sidewalls constructed over braced frame structure; wood shingle roof installed; reproduction wood cornice installed at north and south rooflines; exterior masonry repointed in certain areas of all facades; second-floor rear center doorway converted to window; first-floor rear doorway converted to window; all sash replaced with reproduction sash; two front doors replaced with reproduction doors; wood trim repaired or replaced as needed; French drain installed; several trees removed; electricity extended to house; cement walkway removed uncovering earlier stone walk; all outbuildings demolished; all 20th-century landscape features removed; drainage improvements.
1977	Archaeological investigations of stone wall, basement floor, possible kitchen chimney.
1979	Completion Report.
1981	NPS plants trees to screen house from Highway TN 50.
1982	House exterior painted.
1983	NPS leases pasture land, about half the site, to local farmers for cattle grazing.
1983	Development Concept Plan approved to remove braced frame ell, build porches, build handicap ramp, renovate interior for visitor information center.

1984	University of Tennessee conducts archaeological investigations associated with cantonment site.
1985	Heavily-vegetated slope east of the house cleared by bulldozer.
1986	Visitor parking area and picnic shelter/comfort station constructed west of house.
1987	House exterior painted.
1988	Asphalt walk built from parking area to house.
1988	Preliminary HSR proposes drainage improvements; comprehensive rehabilitation; construction of wood front steps; rehabilitation of interior for visitor use; installation of electric, telephone, HVAC systems; construction of conjectural kitchen ell; site work. Discusses possible lease by local historical group.
1990	Images show newly planted trees between house & picnic shelter; 2 large trees remain near house.
1991	DAR marker for Gordon House erected.
1992	Historic Structure Assessment Report (HSAR) prepared.
1993 summer	NPS crew installs wood shingle roof, repairs window & door surrounds & sills of 1st-and 2nd-levels, repairs basement door jambs, repoints brick.
1993	Materials analysis of paint and paper coverings completed. 1994 report.
1993	Natchez Trace segment near Gordon House is completed.
1993	Unpaved foot trail with wayside exhibits built from house to ferry site; footbridge built across Fattybread Branch.
1995	Unroofed wood stairs with landing constructed at each front entrance. Installation funded by Granny White Chapter of the Questers, a private organization.
1995	Student study of framing, saw marks, & nails of retained framing system determines construction date between 1835 & 1850. Report printed 1996.
1995 Dec	Rear ell braced framing system tagged, dismantled and pieces stored before student study is printed.
1996	Inspection finds new front steps creating water damage to joists; sills sloped incorrectly; risers cause safety concerns; brick repointing unsatisfactory; drainage around house a continuing problem.
1998	Draft “Management Plan-Rehabilitation Proposal” prepared.
2001	Swale and berm built to improve drainage at basement entrance.
2003	Gordon family reunion; memorial tree planted.
2003	Extterior brick repointed.

2005	Basement interior repointed with hydrated lime & creek sand. Two floor joist ends sistered; interior basement door jamb repaired; powder post beetles treated with Bora-Care.
2009	Front steps removed.
2011	Historic Structure Report.

I.C Physical Description

General Description

The Site

The Gordon House is located in the central portion of the state, a region commonly referred to as Middle Tennessee. By the crow's flight, the site is about forty miles southwest of Nashville and some ten miles west/northwest of Columbia, Tennessee.

The house site is nestled in a bend of the Duck River, a slow-moving, shallow waterway that passes just 150 yards south of the front elevation of the house before turning north some 400 yards to the west. The terrain in this part of the state consists of rolling hills with cleared fields edged by thick groves of trees. The north bank of the river, where the house sits, slopes gently from the northwest to the southeast. The house, now without its complement of historic outbuildings, fences, walkways, plantings, and other manmade features, stands somewhat awkwardly alone, except for a single Gordon Family memorial tree in a large, open, grassy field near the crest of the hill. Woods frame the field on three sides, the west end opening some 250 yards away onto a 1986 park picnic shelter and one-story, brick comfort station of straightforward utilitarian design with an asphalt-paved parking lot and the adjacent Natchez Trace Parkway beyond.

Figure 85. Gordon House and comfort station/picnic shelter.

Figure 86. Walkway along old State Highway 50 road bed.

Figure 84. The Duck River south of the John Gordon House.

Figure 87. Unpaved foot trail to the Duck River.

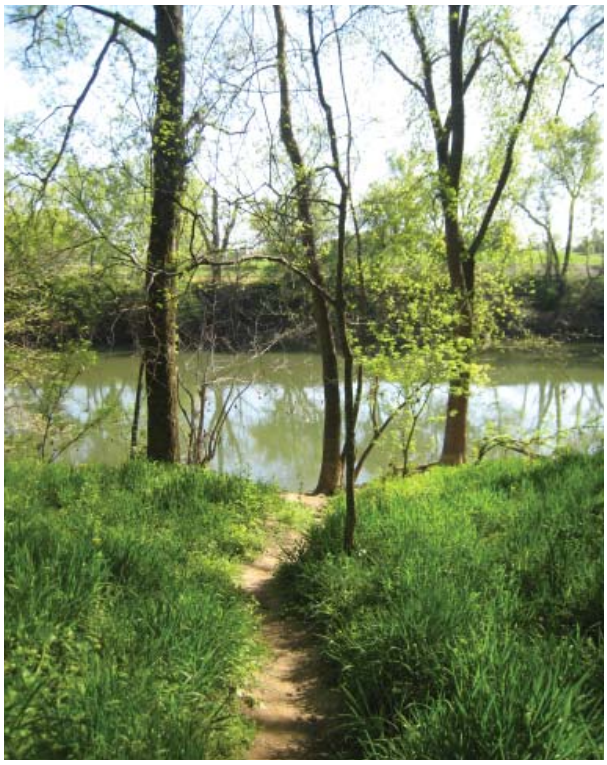


Figure 88. The North bank of the Duck River below the Gordon House site.

An asphalt walkway added in 1988 leaves the rest stop and passes in front of the house, following the previous roadbed of the 1920s-era Tennessee Highway 50. In front of the house, remnants of an early stone walkway connect the house to the asphalt walkway. Just beyond the house an unpaved foot trail installed in 1993 drops down to the south through woods and across Fattybread Branch to the banks of the Duck River where once was a ferry, a major reason for placement of the house.

The Building's Exterior Organization & Characteristics

The footprint of the house is a rectangle in plan, measuring about twenty feet by thirty-two. The long front elevation faces southeast towards the river and said ferry landing. For purposes of this report, the front or main elevation is referred to as the south elevation.

The house is a two-story brick building resting on a stone foundation extending well below ground level to enclose a full-height basement. The brickwork of the front elevation is laid in the more formal and expensive Flemish bond; the brickwork of the other three elevations is laid in the utilitarian and less expensive 1-to-5 common bond. The stone foundation at all elevations is made of blocks of stone formed by hand chisel. The exterior walls were spot pointed in 1977-78. Reportedly because of the contrasting appearance with the earlier mortar, additional pointing with different mortar was conducted in 1993 and again in 2003 and 2005.

The front or south elevation of the house is organized in a five-bay configuration. Though the fenestration at first seems to be arranged symmetrically, it is in fact slightly asymmetrical as required to achieve even placement when viewed from the interior of the two rooms. Three windows at the first floor alternate with the two doorways; at second floor, the windows are directly above those of the first floor.

The two narrow gable end elevations, the east and west, and the long rear, or north elevation, do not reflect this formal arrangement of fenestration. On the east, there are two windows, the one at second floor directly over the other at first; both are on the north side of the chimney. On the north elevation, there is a doorway off center to the east at first-floor level; one window is centrally placed. At second-floor level, two windows are at the far west end, one of them immediately above the one at first floor. A single first-floor window is located on the north side of the chimney on the west elevation.

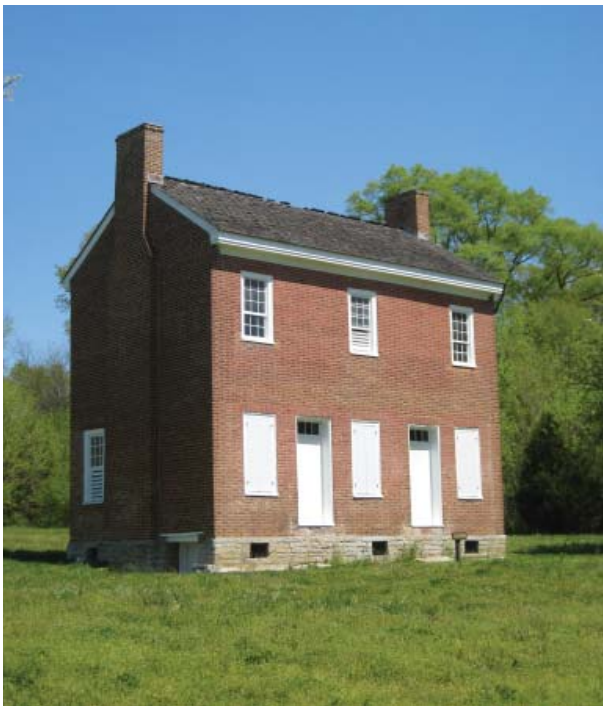


Figure 89. Flemish bond and five-bay design of south facade.

There are two primary entrances, both on the south elevation, each connecting with one of the two first-floor rooms. Both doorways have a paneled jamb, a three-light transom and a six-panel Federal-style door. Both doorways are replicas installed in 1977-78. A secondary doorway is on the north elevation and connects with the east room. There currently are no steps or porches in place to serve any of these three first-floor doorways.

The first-floor windows are nine-over-nine light, single-hung sashes with top sash fixed. The shorter windows of the second floor are nine-over-six light sashes of the same operation. All window sash as well as the sills, jambs, and exterior casing are replicas installed in 1977-78. The first-floor windows have pairs of replica three-panel shutters installed during the same restoration effort. Each door and window has a flat-arch lintel formed in voussoir pattern in the brickwork.

The house has a single exposed end chimney centered on both the east and west walls. A simple gable roof of medium pitch spans east-west and is covered with split wood shingles. On the north and south elevations the roof eaves are finished with a complexly detailed cornice with dentils.

Three of the foundation walls are pierced with small openings for ventilation. Three openings are asymmetrically arranged on the south elevation as is the fenestration above at first and second floor levels. But while the windows are directly aligned vertically, the vents are not, perhaps the result of a design modification during construction. On the smaller east and west elevations, a single opening is north of the chimney directly below the window

Figure 90. Northeast oblique view of Gordon House.

Figure 91. Stone steps leading from Basement. Modern catch basin is at the base of the steps.

at first floor. Each opening has square iron bars set vertically, fixed in two flat iron straps, one at the top and the other at the bottom. There are no ventilation openings on the long north elevation which is uphill in the site drainage pattern.

The basement level is accessed via stone steps set in the earthwork on the west side of the house. A doorway with board-and-batten door is located on the south side of the chimney.

The Building's Interior Organization & Characteristics

At basement level and at each of the two principal occupancy levels of the house, there are two rooms, the west wider than the east, as defined by the masonry wall that divides each floor level and provides structural rigidity to the perimeter walls.

The floor plan of the house is a variant of a common American design known as the hall-and-parlor plan. In this configuration, two rooms span the width of the house. The larger square room served as the hall, used for everyday living, and the smaller, more formal room as the parlor for entertaining and often for sleeping (Figure 93).[1] In the Gordon House, the Hall and Parlor each has its

1. Swaim, *Carolina Dwelling.*

own front entrance and the Parlor also contains the rear entrance to the house. As would be expected, there is an interconnecting doorway between these two rooms. Partway up the stairs, enclosing walls and a door have been added, perhaps for both privacy and security. Beneath the stairs, a doorway opens to a closet. Over time, the use of rooms adapted to changing needs.

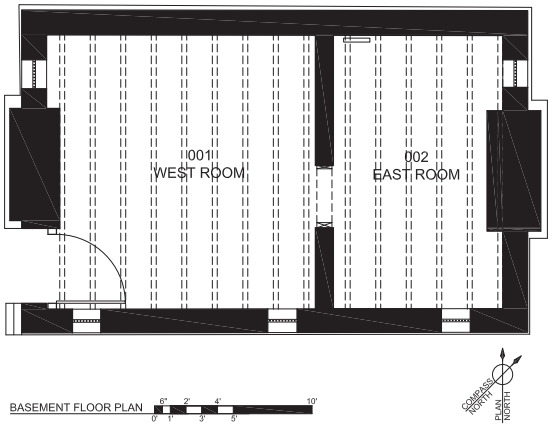


Figure 92. Basement plan.

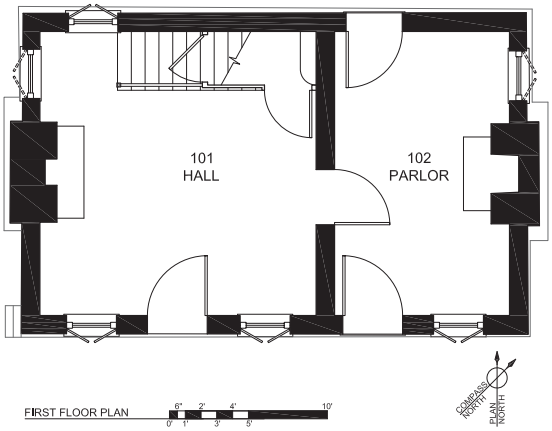


Figure 93. First-floor plan.

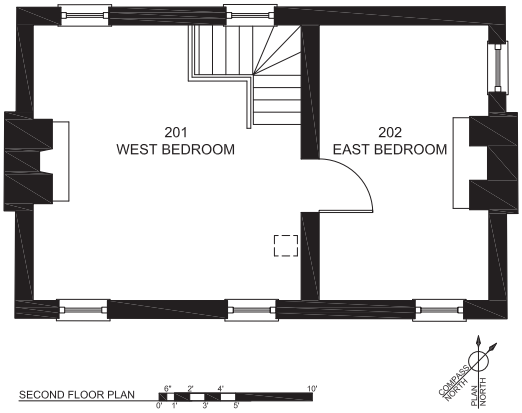


Figure 94. Second-floor plan.

At second-floor level there are two rooms, their widths again defined by the location of the load-bearing cross wall that extends from basement level. The staircase connects with the larger west room. The two rooms are connected by a doorway centrally located in the cross wall.

Construction Characteristics

Structural Systems

Foundation

Aligned with the perimeter of the house is an exposed masonry foundation wall approximately 1'–6" deep. The wall is constructed of horizontal blocks of local gray limestone. The blocks are of various sizes and each has been roughly squared with broad chisel strokes and laid up in mortar beds with flush mortar joints. With the site sloping to the southeast, this foundation wall extends above grade just 1'-8" at the northwest corner to 2'-4" at the northeast and 2'-11 at the southeast. Below grade, this wall at its interior face retains its roughly flush surface and extends some seven more feet creating enclosed ancillary space below the first level of the house.

There are five small openings near the top of the perimeter foundation wall to ventilate and to provide natural light to this basement level. One is on the west wall and another on the east, both located midway between the chimney foundations and the north foundation wall. Along the south foundation wall there are three unequally spaced openings. All the openings measure 1'-10" wide by 1'-1" tall and have nine square bars, equally spaced, rotated on the diagonal and set vertically. The bars and the retaining top and bottom plates are made of wrought iron. The bars measure ⅝" by ⅝" and the plates measure 2" deep by about ¼" thick.

A cross wall of the same construction but just 1'-0" in depth runs north-south. This wall is aligned with the masonry wall directly above that extends through first- and second-floor levels. It is set off center, closer to the east wall, thus dividing each of the three floor levels into two rooms, the east rooms about two-thirds the width of the west rooms.

At the center of the west and east sections of the perimeter foundation wall are the bases of the two end-wall chimneys. At these locations, the stone base projects approximately 1'-0" both inwards and outwards to provide additional support.

Figure 95. Typical foundation vent.

Figure 96. Brick walls atop foundation of chiseled blocks of grey limestone.

Exterior Walls

Set atop the four sections of perimeter stone foundation walls are the four brick load-bearing exterior walls. The brickwork of the more public front or south façade is laid in Flemish bond; the other three walls are laid in a 1-to-5 common bond. The original bricks vary in size from 2¼" to 2⅜" by 8" to 8¼" by 3½" to 3⅞." The color of the original bricks, starting with the most dominant, are dark red, red, light red and brown red. The mortar joints vary in width from ½" to ¾." The repointing mortar of 1993 is highly granular and tan in color, set in a flush joint.

Interior Wall

Set atop the basement level stone foundation cross wall is a load-bearing brick wall. The wall surfaces of the brick cross wall are finished with plaster at first- and second-floor levels.

Flooring System

At first-floor level, fifteen joists span north to south the full distance without intermediary support and rest in pockets in the stone foundation. The joists are poplar, hewn on all four sides. The two end joists rest partially atop a ledge in the stone chimney base; these joists are the largest, measuring about 5" by 8 ½." In between these two end members, the joists measure about 3¾" by 8¼" set 24" to 27" on center.

Figure 97. Hewn joists and gauged flooring.

Figure 98. Sistered joists on south wall of Room 001.

Four of the original joists have been repaired for damage along the south section of the perimeter foundation wall. Counting west to east, joists number 4, 5, 10, and 11 have been sistered onto with modern framing to strengthen the ends as part of the 2003 repairs.

At second-floor level the floor joists are sash sawn and edge beaded. (Appendix B Sheet 14). These joists measure 3½" by 8" and are set at about 29" on center running north-south.
The flooring, at both first and second levels, identified as ash by NPS historian Edward L. Trout in 1969 and as chestnut by NPS architect John Garner in 1976, is gauged to fit the floor joists and is laid east-west. At first floor, the tongue-and-groove boards measure 1" thick by widths ranging from 4½" to 5½" in ¼" increments. At second-floor, the tongue-and-groove boards measure 1" thick by width increments of 6", 6½" and 7."

Roofing System

Hewn ceiling joists measuring 3½" by 8⅜" span the full distance from north to south exterior masonry walls. Joists are set at various spacing ranging from 20" on center to 27" on center.

Figure 99. Hewn joists and sash-sawn rafters.

Figure 100. Supplemental support of rafters.

A pair of sash-sawn rafters measuring 3½" by 4¼" sits atop each joist. The two rafters have a mortise and tenon connection at the ridge. There is no collar tie.

The early roof deck material is sash sawn and measures ¾" thick by 10" wide. Some replacement boards are along the south roof plane near the south masonry wall.

Supplemental bracing formed by conventional 2" framing material has been installed along the north side of the roof ridge. Presumably, the support was added by NPS in 1977-78.

Trim

Throughout the house, the framing for doors and windows are set in pockets in the masonry. The framing members are mortised and tenoned together.

Trim is attached with early machine-formed cut nails. Trim nails are about 1¾" long. They are side-pinched and cross-grained. Burrs are on the same side of the shaft. The head is rectilinear, small, thick and set to one side of the shaft.

Figure 101. Typical first-floor reproduction window shutters.

Utility Systems

Mechanical System

There is no evidence of a mechanical system having been installed in this house. Rather, passive cooling was achieved by locating the house on a rising slope of land above the Duck River to catch thermal uplifts, siting the house with its long elevation running east-west to catch prevailing breezes, utilizing vegetation for shading (undocumented at this time), using operable sash windows to let in breezes and shutters to block the heat of the sun.

Figure 102. Typical porcelain light bulb socket of 1977-78.

Figure 103. Electrical panel box of 1977-78 on north wall of Room 002.

Heating in the cool months was encouraged by locating the house on a south slope to maximize winter sun and block, at least partially, the winter winds. Quite possibly, too, plantings were used to create a windbreak (undocumented). Paneled window shutters when opened let in winter sun and when closed blocked winter winds. Added radiant heat was accomplished primarily by the four wood-burning fireplaces, one per occupied room.

Electrical System

Though there is no electrical power at the site at this time, there are remnants of an electrical system installed during the NPS restoration effort of 1977-78. These remnants include an unlabeled and otherwise unidentified panel box on the north wall of the East Basement room (Room 002). Associated equipment includes switches and outlets and their cover plates, junction boxes, sections of cloth-wrapped wiring, porcelain light bulb sockets at basement and stair closet, and a light fixture in Room 102 The Parlor.

Figure 104. Typical switch plate (left) and outlet cover (right).

Plumbing System

No evidence was found to indicate an interior plumbing system was ever installed.

Exterior Features

Roofs & Rainwater Collection/ Dispersal

The existing random-width, split-wood shingle roof was installed by NPS crews in 1993. The roof ridge features a roof comb detail. Roofing shingles along roof ridge are failing.

Figure 105. Split shingle roofing.

Figure 106. Catch basin at entrance to Basement.

There are no roof gutters or downspouts. The natural slope of the site, from northwest to southeast, directs rain runoff around the house and downhill. French drains were installed in 1977-78 but were reportedly inadequate for handling the runoff; the basement flooded regularly. A swale and berm were added at the steps leading to the basement in 2001 and has had more satisfactory results.

Chimneys

Both chimneys are capped with copper sheet metal. Both have copper step flashing where the chimney intersects with the gable roof.

Roof Cornice

There are matching roof cornices running the length of the north and south elevations of the house. The cornices were extensively repaired during the 1977-78 work contracted by NPS. According to NPS notes, it was determined during repairs that the fascia boards were modifications; therefore NPS designed a more historically

Figure 107. Roof cornice of north and south elevations.

accurate replacement. Also according to NPS notes and photographs, other elements of the cornice survived allowing for duplication of non-salvageable elements. NPS construction administration documents also indicate that the cornice replacement samples as submitted were rejected by NPS with warning that replacement elements must be constructed of one piece of wood and not laminated. (See Physical Condition, the last division of this section.)

Windows

The first floor has nine-over-nine light wood sash windows. The top sash is fixed; the bottom sash is operable and without weights. The sash openings measure 2'-5" by 5'-7." There are no screens or window hardware. Each window has a pair of three-panel shutters.

The second floor has nine-over-six light wood sash windows. The top sash is fixed; the bottom sash is operable and without weights. The sash openings measure 2'-5" by 4'-10." There are no screens, window hardware, or shutters.

All window units were replaced by the National Park Service in 1977-78 using the existing mortised-and-tenoned window frames and one discovered sash as the model for reproduction (Appendix B Sheet 14). That sash was found in a wall cavity between the house's north wall and the two-story ell.

Doors

On the main facade there are two matching principal entrance doorways. Both doorways are reconstructions in the Federal style with a six-panel door, panelled jambs and four-light transom

dating to 1977-78. According to Ron Bishop, an architect of the National Park Service team during the 1977-78 repair effort, the original doorways had been replaced and were not on site. Therefore, the design of the doorways was based on the intact original doorway connecting the Hall (Room 101) and the Parlor (Room 102).

The 1977-78 replica doors overall measure 3'-6½" by 6'-9½" by 1⅜" and are in poor condition. New replacement doors have been fabricated and are awaiting installation. Unfortunately, the new doors are dissimilar in dimensions (Figure 111).

The hardware on these two front entrance doors dates to the 1977-78 installation. The rim locks are period reproductions. Each measures 4¼" tall by 8" wide and has a pair of 1¾" diameter brass doorknobs. The hinges are modern steel butt hinges that measure 3½" by 3½." The sources of the hardware designs are unknown.

Each doorway has a three-light transom and paneled jambs. The transoms are fixed. According to Bishop, the design of the paneled jambs also is based on the interior doorway; the design of the transom is based on a window sash found on site.

Figure 108. Interior view of the original secondary entrance doorway, at the rear or north elevation, Parlor (Room 102). The door dates to c. 1840-50 and the interior casing to the early twentieth century.

The third exterior doorway of the house's living quarters is a secondary entrance on the rear of the house. It opens from the north elevation of the Parlor. The paneled jambs and header are original features. The jamb and header of the doorway has flush panels, each edged with an ⅛" bead, suggesting the original door was a six-panel door similar in configuration to the door between this room and the hall. The door is not original, however stylistically, this door likely dates to c. 1840-50. The door measures 3'-4" by 6'-9½" by 1⅜." Each door face has a group of three raised panels arranged vertically directly above, but separated by a broad lock rail, a matching group of three raised panels arranged vertically. The interior door casing, though stylistically dating from a broader range, probably was installed during the early-twentieth century repairs. The casing has the chatter marks of a modern mill, is installed with wire nails but has the later wood faux-finish found throughout the room. Beneath this casing are the holes for the cut nails of the original casing, its precise design unknown.

Figure 109. Interior door casing - secondary entrance doorway, Parlor (Room 102).

Figure 110. Replacement rim lock - secondary entrance door.

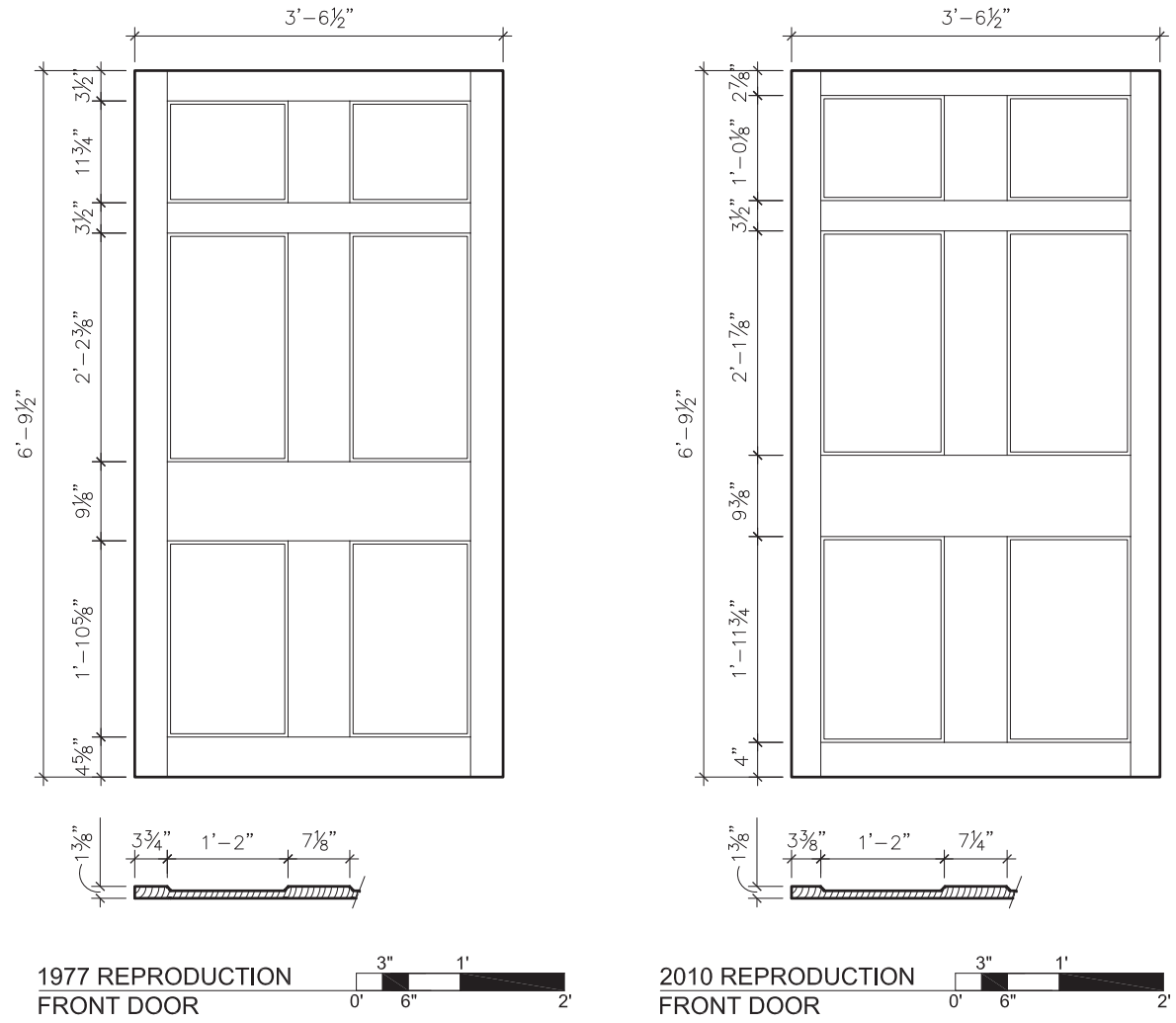


Figure 111. Comparison of elevations and sections of reproduction doors of two different time periods of the front entrance doorways.

A fourth exterior doorway provides entrance to the basement. The board-and-batten door measures 4'-4½" by 5'-6" by 1"; the interior face is braced with battens arranged in the shape of a "Z." The door and frame were installed in 1977-78 by NPS. The origin of the design is not known. The Z-brace configuration is common in the twentieth century but unusual for the early-nineteenth century.

Fortunately, NPS SERO has the 1976-77 field notes, drawings and photo documentation prior to restoration. NPS SERO also has the construction documents for the 1977-78 restoration, as well as photo documentation, correspondence and field reports during that work. Unfortunately, neither the park nor the Regional office has located the records for the disposition of the doors, door hardware, windows, trim or other elements removed from the house during the 1977-78 restoration.

Porches, Stairs, & Steps

There are no porches or stairs currently in place at either principal entrance on the south elevation or at the secondary entrance on the north side of the building.

There are stone steps, actually treads, set in the earthwork that leads down to the basement entrance on the west side of the house.

Figure 112. Interior view of basement doorway.

Figure 113. Exterior view of basement doorway.

Interior Features: Typical Original Elements

There are several original interior architectural elements that are common throughout the Gordon House. These elements include:

Baseboards: Floor Levels One and Two

The typical baseboard common to all four rooms of the first- and second-floor levels of the house is a flush board 1" thick and 5" in height with ¾" edge bead along the top plane.

Chair Rails: Floor Levels One and Two

All four rooms of the first-and second-floor levels have the same composite chair rail circling the room. The chair rails butt the door casings and form the window aprons. The design has two

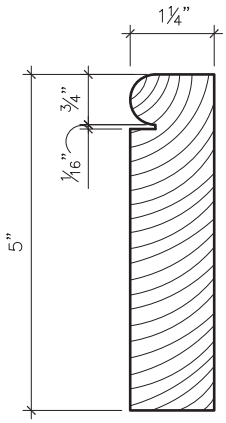


Figure 114. Baseboard section.

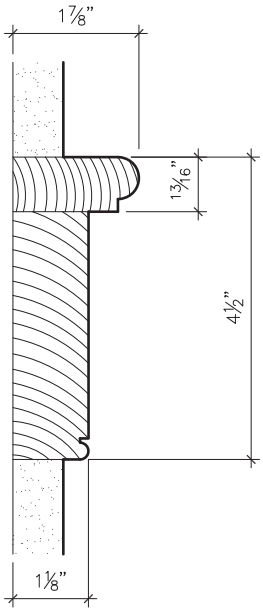


Figure 115. Chair rail section.

parts: a 1⅛" thick base of flush board with a ¼" edge bead at the bottom; and a 13/16" thick by 1⅞" wide cap with a ⅝" edge bead.

Door & Window Casings: Floor Level One
Both Hall and Parlor on the first floor have the same two-part casing of complex base and applied backband for doorways and window openings. The overall width is 4⅞" with a maximum thickness of 1¼" at the backband.

Door & Window Casings: Floor Level Two
Both bedrooms of the second floor have the same casing for all window openings. The casing for both sides of the one doorway which connects the two rooms is very similar. The designs for second-floor door and window casings are much less complex and refined than the door and window casings of the first floor.

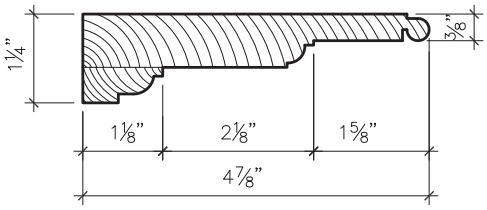


Figure 116. First floor casing section.

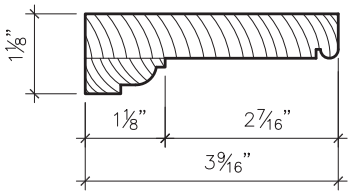


Figure 117. Second floor window casing.

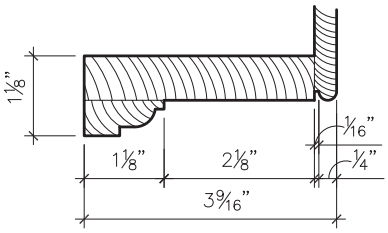


Figure 118. Second floor door casing.

Description by Room

Room 001: West Basement Room (Large Room)

The larger of the two basement rooms, it measures 16'-10" wide by 17'-4" deep with a room height of 6'-3" from top of dirt floor to bottom of the joists. It is the basement room with direct access to the exterior. Its purpose(s) over time are not clear though the hanging strips and pegs attached to the overhead joists suggest their use for drying items. The dirt floor, low interior height, open wall vents and absence of heat source would have limited the types of use.

Flooring
There is no added flooring material. Rather, the "floor" is the dirt of the site made level.

Baseboards
There are no baseboards.

Figure 119. Southwest oblique of Room 001.

Figure 120. Southeast oblique of Room 001.

Walls
The only walls are the mortared stone perimeter foundation walls and mortared stone cross wall.

Ceiling
There is no applied ceiling material. Instead, the exposed original first-level floor joists and underside of the original gauged flooring constitute the room's "ceiling."

Doorways
A reconstructed doorway connecting this room and thereby all the basement with the exterior is located on the west wall. The doorway is discussed in the section above, "Exterior Features."

Figure 121. Connecting doorway as viewed from Room 002.

A second doorway is on the east wall and connects with Room 002, East Basement Room. The original jambs and lintel remain, joined with mortises and tenons at the two intersections of framing. The door, measuring 3'-6" in width by 6'-2" in height, is missing. For this location and use for ancillary activities, the door probably was made of boards and battens. Scars for two 3½" tall butt hinges on the Room 002 side of the south doorjamb indicate that the door opened into Room 002. A U-shaped wrought-iron strap on the Room 002 side of the north doorjamb indicates the door could also be secured.

Figure 122. Doweled and tenon framing of interior doorway.

Figure 123. Wrought-iron staple on north jamb of doorway between Room 001 and Room 002.

Windows
There are three openings in this room that provide ventilation and some natural daylight. One is

on the west wall and two are on the south wall. These openings are discussed in the section above, "Structural Systems: Foundation."

Finishes
The exterior doorway and door installed by NPS in 1977-78 are painted, as are the early wrought iron bars that cover the foundation wall vents.

The wood doorway between the two basement rooms is very weathered but may have remnants of whitewash.

There are remnants of whitewash on the stone walls.

Electrical System
Though now disconnected, remnants of the first (1977-78) electrical system remain. These items include light switch, porcelain base for overhead light, outlet, and fabric-wrapped electrical wiring.

Chimneys
At the west wall is the base for the west-side chimney which is discussed in the section above, "Structural Systems: Foundations."

Split Wood Hanger
Near the north wall and parallel to it there is nailed to the bottom of joists number 5 through 8 a wooden strip several feet long, presumably to serve as a hanger for suspending objects (Figure 124).

Wood Dowel Hanger
On the west side of joist number 6 at midsection is a driven dowel, presumably another hanger (Figure 125).

Figure 124. Split wood hanger in Room 001.

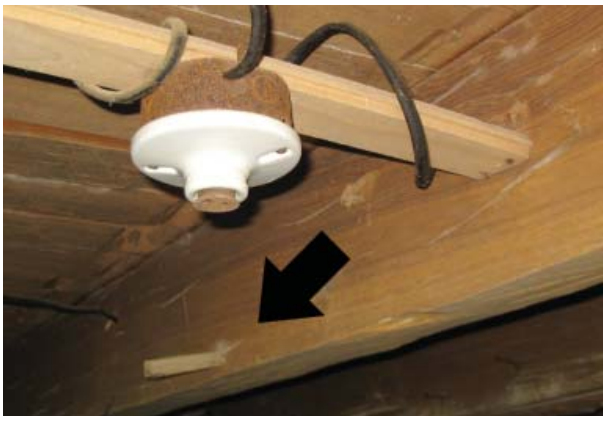


Figure 125. Driven dowel hanger.

Wall Vents
Two vents are located on the south wall and one on the west wall.

Room 002: East Basement Room (Small Room)
The smaller of the two basement rooms, it measures 10'-9" wide by 17'-4" deep with a room height of 6'-3" from top of dirt floor to bottom of floor joists. It is the basement room without direct access to the exterior. Its purpose(s) over time are not clear though the hanging strips and pegs attached to the overhead joists suggest a use for drying material, perhaps herbs, fruits and vegetables. The dirt floor, low interior height, open wall vents and absence of heat source would have limited the types of use.

Flooring
There is no added flooring material. Rather, the "floor" is the dirt of the site made level and without vegetation.

Figure 126. Northeast oblique of Room 002.

Figure 127. Southwest oblique of Room 002.

Baseboards
There are no baseboards.

Walls
The only walls are the stone perimeter foundation walls and the cross wall.

Ceiling
There is no applied ceiling material. Instead, the exposed first floor joists and underside of the gauged flooring constitute the room's "ceiling."

Doorways
A doorway on the west wall connects with Room 001, West Basement Room. This doorway is discussed in the section above, "Room 001: West Basement Room – Doorways."

Windows
There are two openings in this room that provide ventilation and some natural daylight. One is on the east wall and one is on the south wall. These openings are discussed in the section above, "Structural Systems: Foundation."

Finishes
The wrought iron bars that divide the foundation wall vents are painted.

There are remnants of white wash on the stone walls.

Electrical System
Though now disconnected, remnants of the first (1977-78) electrical system remain. These items include an unlabeled panel box on the north wall, light switch, porcelain base for overhead light, outlet, and fabric-wrapped electrical wiring as well as metal conduit for electrical wiring.

Chimneys
At the east wall is the base for the east side chimneys which is discussed in the section above, "Structural Systems: Foundations."

Split Wood Hangers
Near the south wall and parallel to it there are nailed to the bottom of joists number 12 through 14 two wooden strips. Each strip is several feet long. Presumably the strips served as hangers. Two more wooden hangers are nailed to joists number 11 through 14 (Figure 128).

Opposite these hangers, scratched into the applied limewash of the west wall, is a series of small vertical lines about three inches in height, possibly an accounting record (Figure 129).

Figure 128. Split wood hangers nailed to bottom of joists.

Figure 129. Graffiti scratched into limewash of west wall of Room 002.

Figure 130. Vent in foundation wall.

Wall Vents

One is located on the south wall and one on the east wall.

Room 101: Hall

The larger of the two first-floor rooms, it measures 17'-6" wide by 18'-0" deep with a floor to ceiling height of 10'-11." This room has direct connection to the exterior via a front door on the south elevation. This is the only room with connection to the second-floor rooms.

Flooring

As is typical of both first-floor rooms, the flooring is original, gauged to fit the floor joists and is laid east-west. The tongue-and-groove boards measure 1" thick by widths ranging from 4½" to 5½" in ¼" increments.

Baseboards

Much of the original baseboard of this room remains, which is same baseboard used throughout all the rooms of the first-and second-floor levels. Replicated sections were installed on the north side of the chimney breast, the west wall north of the chimney, and on the north wall at the stair landing when this area was restored by NPS in 1977-78.

Walls

The four walls of the room are constructed of brick with multiple layers of plaster, the earliest being original, according to Garner, applied into the joints of the brick substrate. The north, west, and south walls are exterior walls. The east wall is a cross wall.

Figure 131. Northeast oblique of Hall (Room 101).

Figure 132. Southeast oblique of Hall (Room 101).

Figure 133. Southwest oblique of Hall (Room 101).

Chair Rail

Much of the original chair rail remains. However, replicated sections were installed on the north side of the chimney breast, the west wall north of the chimney, and on the north wall at the stair landing where restored by NPS in 1977-78.

Ceiling

The ceiling is plaster on wood lath. During investigations for this report, a small hole made in the ceiling near the staircase wall revealed a sawn lath matching that of the added staircase wall.

The lath is nailed to the bottom of the original ceiling joists. These joists have edge beads cut along the two bottom edges, an indication that the joists were initially intended to be exposed (Appendix B Sheet 14).

Doorways

There are four doorways in this room; all but one are original. An original doorway opening connecting this room with the exterior is located on the south wall. The door and exterior elements of this doorway are discussed in the section above, "Exterior Features: Doorways." New replica casing was installed in 1977-78.

A second doorway, also original, is on the east cross wall and connects with Room 102: Parlor. The composite door casing matches the casings of all first-floor windows and internal room doorways. (Figure 116). The door is a six-panel, Federal-style door measuring 1¼" thick by 3'-6" wide by 6'-5" tall. On the west face of the door, the hall and private family side, the door is less articulated; the panels are flush with the stiles and rails, delineated by a ⅛" edge bead. On the east face, the parlor or public side, the door is treated in a more sophisticated manner; the panels are recessed and are edged with delicate trim (Appendix B Sheets 11 and 12). The steel hinges are replacements; scars on the door indicate the original hinges were 3½" tall butt hinges. The current rim lock is a mid-to late-nineteenth century replacement. It measures 3" tall by 4" wide with two porcelain door knobs and mismatched cast iron keeper. Paint ridges on the door indicate an earlier rim lock.

A third original doorway leads to a closet beneath the staircase. The casing contains the same elements as other first-floor original casings but downscaled for a smaller door opening. The

Figure 134. Hall side of doorway to Parlor.

Figure 135. Early-twentieth century stairway enclosure in Room 101.

original six-panel Federal-style door with wooden box lock was in place in 1977 according to NPS field notes and photographs but it is now missing. The door size measured 1" thick by 3'-0" wide by 6'-0" tall. The opening now contains a modern plywood door. Scars on the east doorjamb indicate that the two original hinges were 3½" tall butt hinges. The 3" long wrought-iron hook remains on the outer face of the west door casing.

The fourth doorway appears to be part an early-twentieth century remodeling that enclosed part of the staircase. This door, a four-panel measures

1⅜" thick by 3'-0" wide by 6'-8" tall. Stylistically, the door stile and rail molding dates to the late-nineteenth through the early-twentieth century. (Figure 135). The doorway retains one of its original 3½" tall, five-knuckle, iron-embossed hinges (Figure 136) also stylistically from that era; the bottom hinge is a modern 3" tall, butt hinge replacement. The original iron rim lock also remains. It measures 3" tall by 4" wide and retains both of its porcelain door knobs but is missing the keep.

Figure 136. Embossed hinge of door on stairway to second floor.

Figure 137. Rim lock of door on stairway to second floor.

Windows

Throughout the house, the window sash and framing were replaced in 1977-78. Much of the window casing remains, however. In this room replica window casing was installed in 1977-78 at the north window when the existing doorway was converted to a window.

Finishes

Room trim is currently painted dark brown except where there are replacement elements from the 1977-78 work; these replacement elements have only a white primer coating.

According to the recent Interior Finishes Analysis (Appendix C), the pigments of the earliest paint layers are coarsely ground as is typical of Pre-Civil War paints. The staircase initially had a polychromatic paint scheme of dark reddish brown and warm yellow. The baseboards were painted dark brown. The chair rail, door surrounds, window casing and paneling were painted light brown. The door to the Parlor, Room 102, was faux painted to represent wood graining.

The door to the closet beneath the stairs is missing and the painted front door is a replacement; the original finishes of these features are unknown.

The mantle is a replacement; the original mantle, now missing, probably was painted the color of room trim as was done on the second-floor original mantels.

The plastered walls and ceiling have remnants of wallpaper. A 1993 wallpaper analysis by NPS determined that the wallpaper has a wood pulp base, typical for wallpapers from the late-nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century.

The flooring is very worn. The evidence of original finish is not apparent.

The exposed section of original beaded ceiling joists is very small. The evidence of finish is not clear.

Behind the mantle, the stucco atop the stone firebox has remnants of red faux painting representing dressed stonework.

Electrical System

Though now disconnected, remnants of the 1977-78 electrical system remain. These items include light switch, porcelain base for overhead light, outlet, and fabric-wrapped electrical wiring.

While there is no indication of an electrical lighting fixture in the room itself, there is a porcelain light socket in the closet.

Fireplace

At the west wall, extending into the room 1'-1", is the fireplace and chimney breast. The original stone hearth remains, as well as its wood lock strip notched into the flooring to hold the hearth stone in place. Comprised of a single stone, the hearth measures 1'-8½" deep by 4'-8" wide. The original wood-burning, stone firebox has been infilled with brick and plastered to enclose a small early-twentieth century, cast-metal coal grate measuring 1'-8" tall by 1'-8" wide by 9" deep. It is noteworthy that Garner compared the top coat of room plaster with the plaster enclosing the coal grate and concluded they are from the same period. The replacement mantel stylistically dates to late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century. This mantle is slightly less ornate than its comparable counterpart in the adjoining Parlor. Both mantels are made of wood, and assembled with wire nails, presumably by the same maker. This mantle measure 4'-6½" tall by 6'-4" wide at the shelf. Hidden behind the mantle architrave is decorative faux painting of dressed stonework, apparently exposed when a previous, perhaps original, mantle was in place.

Figure 138. Faux-dressed stonework behind replacement mantle of Room 101.

Staircase

The original staircase is located adjacent to the north wall. The landing is in the northwest corner of the room. An ell in shape, the staircase was originally open. Twelve treads in the lower run turn ninety degrees with three winders and end with an upper run of four treads. Each step measures a 6¾" high riser with tread 10¼" deep by 3'-6½" wide; an exception is the bottom step that has an 8" riser. The 3" by 3" by 3'-11" tall newel post with round disk cap remains, as does the handrail and a number of the 1" by 1" balusters of the lower section of the staircase. These balusters left in their original locations are set at 5" on center, two per stair tread. Beneath the stairs is

Figure 139. Fireplace of Room 101.

Figure 140. Staircase of Hall (Room 101).

the original paneled wall enclosing the closet. (Balusters removed for the installation of the upper stair enclosure are stored in this closet.)

Upper Staircase Enclosure

Beginning at the seventh stair tread up from the floor of Room 101, the staircase is enclosed by a stud-frame wall. On the side facing Room 101, the wall has plaster on circular-sawn wood lath attached with wire nails. On the staircase side, the wall is covered with tongue-and-groove boards measuring ¾" by 3¼" (the same size and type of board used to patch the fire-damaged flooring in Room 102). The doorway and stair enclosure date to the early-twentieth century.

Figure 141. Newel post and balustrade.

Figure 142. Wall paneling, stair stringer, handrail, and balustrade.

Figure 143. Closet shelving.

Figure 144. Bolt and nut on the upper south wall of the Hall, probably for securing the upper section of the double gallery.

Closet Shelving

Along the east wall of the closet is early if not original shelving measuring 1" thick by 12" deep. The forward end of each board is rounded where the board extends into the door opening.

Bolt and Nut

On the south wall above the west window is a bolt and round nut. A matching set is above the east window of the Parlor (Room 101). These bolts probably secured the upper section of the c. 1907 double-gallery porch against the south elevation of the house (Figure 144).

Figure 145. Southwest oblique of Parlor (Room 102).

Figure 146. Northeast oblique of Parlor (Room 102).

Room 102: Parlor

The smaller of the two first-floor rooms, it measures 11'-1" wide by 18'-0" deep with a floor to ceiling height of 10'-11." This room has direct connection to the exterior via a front door on the south elevation, the same as the other first-floor room, and via a back door on the north elevation. Though smaller than the adjoining Hall, Room 101, the architectural embellishments (mantelpiece and door to Room 101) are more refined as would be appropriate for impressing the visiting public.

Flooring

As is typical of both first-floor rooms, the flooring is original, gauged to fit the floor joists, and is laid east-west. The tongue-and-groove boards measure 1" thick by widths ranging from 4½" to 5½" in ¼" increments.

It is noteworthy that there is a section of replacement floor boards in front of the hearth, repair for apparent fire damage. The forward edge of the baseboard on the north side of the firebox is also charred. (Absence of charring on the adjacent mantel is an indication that installation of the mantel followed the fire damage.) The boards of the repair measure ¾" x 3¼" and are tongue-and-groove. (This is the same type of board used to enclose the upper stairs in Room 101.) The added second flooring, removed by NPS, apparently was installed to hide the mismatched flooring as repaired (Figure 151).

Baseboards

Much of the original baseboard of this room remains, which is same baseboard used throughout all the rooms of the first and second floors. A replica section was installed along the entire south wall by NPS in 1977-78.

Walls

The four walls of the room are masonry with multiple layers of plaster as in Room 101. The north, east, and south walls are exterior walls and constructed of brick. The west wall is a cross wall constructed of brick.

Chair Rail

Most of the original chair rail remains. However, replicated sections were installed on the south wall on either side of the doorway by NPS in 1977-78.

Ceiling

Plank boards cut with a circular saw and applied with modern wire nails are attached to the bottom of the second floor joists. These boards were not finished. Rather, the loose fitting boards were only intended to provide a base for a cloth liner and wallpapers, remnants of which remain. An oral history obtained from a family member by NPS in 1976 dates the installation of these boards and the wallpaper to the 1920s.

Beneath the planks on the underside of the ceiling joists are the lime stains and small nail holes of an earlier plaster-on-lath ceiling. However, the ceiling joists themselves were meant to be exposed as evidenced by the edge bead found at the bottom corners of the joists as also found in Room 101.

Doorways

There are three original doorways in this room. A front doorway is located on the south wall while the house's back doorway is located on the north

wall. Both doorways are discussed in the section above, "Exterior Features: Doorways."

A third doorway is on the west wall, the cross wall, and connects with the Hall, Room 101. This doorway is discussed in the section above, "Room 101: Hall."

Windows

Throughout the house, the window sash and framing were replaced in 1977-78. Most of the window casing remains, however. In this room a replica section of window casing was installed on the west jamb of the south window.

Finishes

The exposed paint finish of baseboards, chair rails, door and window casings, and doors (interior door and exterior rear door) is faux-wood graining. Replacement elements from the 1977-78 restoration have a coating of only a white primer.

According to the recent Interior Finishes Analysis (Appendix C), the baseboards were initially painted dark brown. The chair rail, door face, door surround and window casing were painted warm yellow.

The front door is a replacement; the original finish is unknown.

Figure 147. Faux wood graining of door to Hall (Room 101).

The back door is a c. 1840-50 replacement. Its paint serialization was not tested due to the limited scope of this project.

The mantle is apparently an early-twentieth-century replacement; the original mantle probably was painted the color of room trim as was done on the second floor original mantels.

The plastered walls and board ceiling have remnants of wallpaper. A 1993 wallpaper analysis by NPS determined that the wallpaper has a wood pulp base, typical for wallpapers from the late-nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century.

The flooring is very worn. The evidence of original finish is not apparent.

The exposed section of original beaded ceiling joists is very small. The evidence of finishes are not clear.

Plank boards attached to the bottoms of the ceiling joists with modern wire nails have remnants of wallpaper. Oral history dates the installation of this board ceiling and its wallpaper to the 1920s.

All the finished wood features of this room have a faux-wood grain paint finish, apparently dating to the twentieth century after the mantle and door casing of the rear doorway were installed.

There are small remnants of red paint on the stone work of the hearth, the date and pattern unknown.

Electrical System

Though now disconnected, remnants of the 1977-78 electrical system remain. These items include

Figure 148. Ceiling light in Parlor (Room 102).

Figure 149. Mantel of Room 102.

light switch, a ceiling light, outlet, and fabric-wrapped electrical wiring.

Fireplace

At the east wall, extending into the room 1'-2", is the fireplace and chimney breast. The stone hearth may remain; the wood lock strip to hold it in place remains notched into the flooring. The hearth which measures 1'-9" deep by 4'-8" wide is now covered by a layer of cement parging sitting proud of the floor. This 1" thick parging was apparently added when another layer of flooring, now removed, was installed.

The original wood-burning, stone-lined firebox remains. The mantel is a replacement, as indicated by a burned adjacent section of original baseboard; the scorch on the baseboard does not continue onto the mantel. Stylistically dating to the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century, it is somewhat more ornate than its comparable counterpart in the adjoining Parlor. Both mantels are made of wood, and assembled with wire nails, presumably by the same maker. This mantle and measures 4'-6½" tall by 6'-4" wide at the shelf.

Figure 150. Mid-to late-nineteenth century replacement mantel of Parlor (Room 102).

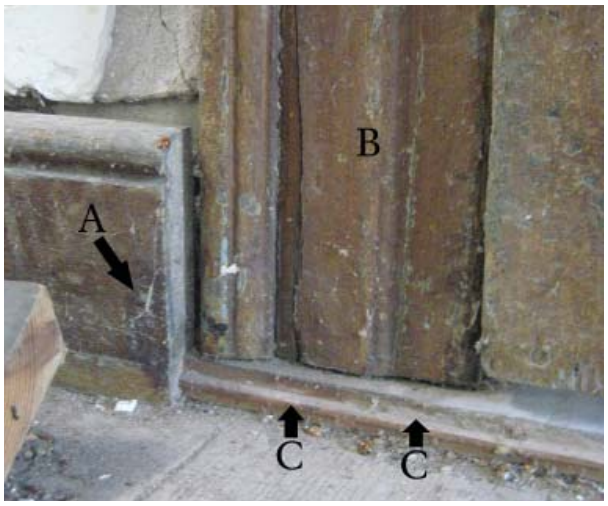


Figure 151. Charred edges of baseboard (A) adjacent to undamaged mantel (B) atop remnants of an added flooring (C) now removed.

Room 201: West Bedroom

The larger of the two second-floor rooms, it measures 17'-6" wide by 18'-0" deep with a floor-to-ceiling height of 9'-5½." This room has direct connection via the staircase to the rooms of the first floor below, and thereby indirect connection to the exterior of the house. As with the adjoining bedroom, the ceiling is lower and the features less sophisticated than comparable elements of the first-floor rooms.

Flooring

As is typical of both second-floor rooms, the flooring is original, gauged to fit the floor joists, and is laid east-west. The tongue-and-groove boards measure 1" thick by widths ranging from 6" to 7" in ½" increments.

Figure 152. Northeast oblique of West Bedroom (Room 201).

Figure 153. Southeast oblique of West Bedroom (Room 201).

Figure 154. Southwest oblique of West Bedroom (Room 201).

Baseboards

Most of the original baseboard of this room remains, which is same baseboard used throughout all the rooms of the first and second floors. A replica section was installed below the east window of the south wall by NPS in 1977-78 when the doorway alteration was returned to a window.

Walls

The four walls of the room are constructed of brick and covered with plaster. The north, west, and south walls. The east wall is a cross wall.

Chair Rail

Most of the original chair rail remains. However, replica sections were installed on the south wall on either side of the east window when the doorway alteration was returned to a window by NPS in 1977-78.

Ceiling

Plank boards cut with circular saw and applied with wire nails are attached to the bottom of the second-level ceiling joists.

Beneath the planks on the underside of the ceiling joists are the lime stains and small nail holes of an earlier probably original plaster on lath ceiling. On the room side of the plank boards are remnants of cloth liner and wallpaper. According to oral history, the plank boards with wallpaper were installed in the 1920s.

Figure 155. Doorway to East Bedroom (Room 202).

Figure 156. Panelled jamb of doorway between Room 201 and Room 202.

Doorways

There is one doorway in this room. It is original and intact. It is on the east wall and connects with Room 202 the East Bedroom. The door casing matches the casings of all second-floor windows and doorways which are less complex and less ornate than the same features in the first-floor rooms (Appendix B Sheets 9, 10 and 14). The door is a six-panel, Federal-style door measuring 1⅛" thick by 3'-6" wide by 6'-5½" tall. On the west face of the door, there are raised panels with clipped corners. On the east face, the panels are recessed and are edged with delicate trim (Appendix B Sheets 9 and 10). The two hinges are modern replacements, butt hinges of 3½" height, as were the originals.

Windows

Throughout the house, the window sash and framing were replaced in 1977-78. At places the interior window casing remains. In this room, however, all interior window casing was replaced with replicas in 1977-78.

Finishes

Room trim is currently painted dark brown except where there are replacement elements from the 1977-78 work; these replacement elements have white primer.

According to the recent Interior Finishes Analysis (Appendix C), the pigments of the earliest paint layers are coarsely ground as is typical of Pre-Civil War paints. The staircase initially had a polychromatic paint scheme of dark reddish brown and warm yellow. The baseboards were painted dark brown. The chair rail, door surrounds, window casing and paneling were painted off white. The door to the East Bedroom, Room 202, was faux painted to represent wood graining.

The plastered walls and board ceiling have remnants of wallpaper. A 1993 wallpaper analysis by NPS determined that the wallpaper has a wood pulp base, typical for wallpapers from the late-nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century.

Beneath the plank boards, on the underside of the ceiling joists are lime stains indicating an earlier probably original plaster ceiling. Whether this plaster ceiling was painted or wallpapered is not known.

The flooring is very worn. The evidence of original finish is not apparent.

Electrical System

Though now disconnected, remnants of the 1977-78 electrical system remain. These items include light switch, ceiling light, outlet, and fabric-wrapped electrical wiring.

Fireplace

At the west wall, extending into the room, is the fireplace and chimney breast. The stone hearth remains, with a wood lock strip notched into the flooring to hold it in place. Comprised of a single stone, the hearth measures 1'-1" deep by 5'-2" wide. The original wood-burning, stone-lined firebox has been infilled with brick and stuccoed to

Figure 157. Fireplace of West Bedroom (Room 201).

enclose a small, early-twentieth century, cast metal coal grate measuring 1'-8" wide by 2'-2" wide by 10" deep. The mantel is probably original and has Federal-style features. It is slightly less ornate than its comparable counterpart in the adjoining bedroom. Both mantels are made of wood, presumably by the same maker. This mantle is the smaller one, measuring 4'-6" tall by 5'-7" wide at the shelf. The shelf itself is 8½" deep.

Staircase

The ell-shaped original staircase is located in the northeast quadrant of the room, adjacent to both the east and north walls. The design is discussed in the above section, Room 101: Hall – Staircase.

Figure 158. Staircase at West Bedroom (Room 201).

Figure 159. Second-floor staircase newel and balustrade.

Figure 160. Staircase winders.

Figure 161. Ceiling access opening of West Bedroom (Room 201).

Ceiling Access Opening

Just 3" off the east wall near the south jamb of the doorway is a ceiling access hole. The opening measures 1'-4" wide by 1'-6" long.

Room 202: East Bedroom

The smaller of the two second-floor rooms, it measures 11'-1¼" wide by 18'-0" deep with a floor to ceiling height of 9'-5½." As with the adjoining bedroom, the ceiling is lower and the features less sophisticated than comparable elements of the first-floor rooms.

Flooring
As is typical of both second-floor rooms, the flooring is original, gauged to fit the floor joists and is laid east-west. The tongue-and-groove boards measure 1" thick by widths ranging from 6" to 7" in ½" increments.

Baseboards
All of the original baseboard of this room remains, which is the same baseboard used throughout the rooms of the first and second floors.

Walls
The four walls of the room are constructed of brick and covered with plaster. The north, east, and south walls. The west wall is a cross wall.

Chair Rail
In this room, it appears that all of the original chair rail remains.

Figure 162. Northwest oblique of East Bedroom (Room 202).

Figure 163. Southeast oblique of East Bedroom (Room 202).

Ceiling
Plank boards cut with circular saw and applied with wire nails are attached to the bottom of the second-level ceiling joists.

Beneath the planks on the underside of the ceiling joists are the lime stains and small nail holes of an earlier probably original plaster on lath ceiling. On the room side of the plank boards are remnants of cloth liner and wallpaper. According to oral history, the plank boards with wallpaper were installed in the 1920s.

Doorways
There is one doorway in this room and it is original and intact. It is discussed in the above section, Room 201: West Bedroom – Doorway.

Windows
Throughout the house, the window sash and framing were replaced in 1977-78. In some rooms portions of the original interior window casing has been replaced as well. However, in this room all the original interior window casing remains.

Finishes
Room trim is currently painted dark brown except where there are replacement elements from the 1977-78 work; these replacement elements have white primer.

According to the recent Interior Finishes Analysis (Appendix C), the pigments of the earliest paint layers are coarsely ground as was typical of Pre-Civil War paints. The baseboards were painted dark brown. The chair rail, door surrounds, window casing and paneling were painted blue.

The plastered walls and board ceiling have remnants of wallpaper. A 1993 wallpaper analysis by NPS determined that the wallpaper has a wood pulp base, typical for wallpapers from the late-nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century.

Beneath the plank boards, on the underside of the ceiling joists are lime stains indicating an earlier probably original plaster ceiling. Whether this plaster ceiling was painted or wallpapered is not known.

The flooring is very worn. The evidence of original finish is not apparent.

Electrical System

Though now disconnected, remnants of the 1977-78 electrical system remain. These items include light switch, ceiling light, outlet, and fabric-wrapped electrical wiring.

Fireplace

At the east wall, extending into the room, is the fireplace and chimney breast. The stone hearth remains, a wood lock strip notched into the flooring to hold it in place. Comprised of a single stone, the hearth measures 1'-1" deep by 6'-1" wide. The original wood-burning, brick-lined firebox is intact and measures 2'-3" wide by 2'-6" tall by 1'-2" deep. The mantel is probably original and has Federal style features. With its recessed panels at the pilasters it is slightly more ornate than its comparable counterpart in the adjoining bedroom. It is also larger, measuring 4'-6" tall by 6'-3" wide at the shelf. The shelf itself is 9" deep.

Figure 164. Fireplace of East Bedroom (Room 202).

Character-Defining Features

The Gordon House possesses historic qualities and physical attributes that together define its unique identity. These characteristics include aspects of the original construction as well as alterations made during the historic period of the house. These historic character-defining features have a high priority for retention and preservation. Modern reproductions of formerly missing elements of an historic feature also have an important role in defining the character of the house and should be retained and preserved but have lesser importance than the historic elements of the historic features. Together, these character-defining features include:

Original Features

- The house foundation of chiseled blocks of stone.
- The front or south wall exterior elevation of brick laid in Flemish bond and contrasting 1-to-5 common bond of the other three elevations.
- The two gable-end chimneys.
- The asymmetrical five-bay configuration of fenestration on the front exterior elevation; the asymmetrical configurations of fenestration on the other three elevations.
- The nine-over-nine light sash window design of the first floor and nine-over-six light sash window design of the second floor.
- The two front entrance door units of Federal style design with six-panel doors, paneled jambs, and four-light transoms.
- The paneled jamb doorway of the rear or north elevation.
- The dirt floor of the basement.
- The exposed stone wall surfaces of the basement perimeter walls and cross wall.
- The vent openings with cast iron bars of basement walls.
- The exposed hewn joists and underside of first-floor level gauged flooring overhead in the basement.
- The door frame between Rooms 001 and 002.
- The staves and pegs attached to the underside of the exposed joists in the basement.
- The graffiti incised in the plaster of west wall of Room 002.
- The gauged flooring of all four rooms of floors one and two.
- The original sections of baseboards.
- The original sections of chair rails.
- The original sections of door and window casings.
- The plastered walls.
- The paneled wall and staircase of Room 101.
- The staircase of Room 201.
- The shelving of the staircase closet.
- The doorway with paneled jambs and six-panel door between Rooms 101 and 102.
- The doorway with paneled jambs and six-panel door between Rooms 201 and 202.
- The stone hearths of Rooms 101 and 201.
- The stone fire box of Room 102.
- The Federal style fireplace mantels of Rooms 201 and 202.

Later Historic Features

- The Greek Revival style six-panel door at north elevation.
- The faux-graining of Room 102.
- The two first-floor fireplace mantels.
- Stair enclosure and door unit of four-panel door and casing.
- The iron bolt and nut imbedded in the south wall of Room 101 and Room 102.
- The plank board ceiling surfaces in three of the four rooms; the plaster-on-lath ceiling in the Hall, Room 101.

Modern Reproduced Elements of Historic Features

- The split shingle roof.
- The two front door units of Federal style six-panel doors, transom and paneled jambs.
- Sections of interior baseboards.
- Sections of interior chair rails.
- Sections of interior door and window casings.
- The window units of sill, frame and sash.
- The basement entrance door unit of board-and-batten door and framing.

Figure 165. The Gordon House as viewed from the west.

Physical Condition

The exterior of the house was restored by workers under contract to the National Park Service in 1977-78. There also have been several subsequent phases of additional remedial repairs in addition to routine maintenance. The interior, in contrast, has been left largely as found when acquired by the National Park Service in 1973.

Figure 166. Added window louvers for passive ventilation.

At first glance, the Gordon House appears to be sound and secure, the restored exterior wall maintained, the condition of the interior building fabric stable, and the immediate building site kept mowed. The protective exterior envelope appears tight, interior structural support seems adequate. The chiseled stone units of the foundation are in good condition, generally, and the mortar joints are secure. The bricks generally appear to be in good condition, and their joints are secure. Damaged ends of first-floor framing joists are reinforced by sistered units. The roof plates and rafters appear to be satisfactory without visual evidence of damage or pronounced deflection.

In addition, the basement by original design has the much needed fresh air ventilation essential for preserving wood framing; five openings in the foundation walls provide a constant air exchange. NPS used the same concept for the two levels above when in 1974 they initiated a similar passive air circulation system by installing louvers at some windows. Currently, at two windows of each of the two occupation levels, the bottom sash is open and wood frames with fixed louvers have been installed in the opening.

Further, the disconnecting of electrical service at the site removes a potential threat of fire.

On closer review, there are several stewardship issues that warrant attention. Some are obviously matters of routine maintenance. Others are more subtle. Cumulatively, they pose a threat to the physical well-being of the resource or otherwise hinder its protection and full utilization as an historic site. These stewardship matters include:

Poor quality of recent construction and repairs.
A number of building features are exhibiting deterioration much more advanced than should be expected. The sources of the problems are the construction methodology. These features include the window sills and the front door transom bars, both groups repaired by contractors for NPS in 1977-78. In both instances, features which traditionally would have been constructed of a single section of wood specifically to be durable and weather-resistant, instead were constructed of laminated wood sections with vertical seams. All these features are separating, allowing water to collect in the joints and rotting.

Also in the 1977-78 construction phase, the extensive and poorly executed masonry repairs on the exterior of the house (misaligned coursing and required repeat repointing efforts) bypassed needed interior masonry repairs. At basement level between floor joists, the brick coursing of the exterior walls are missing massive amounts of bricks. One and even two courses of bricks are missing in almost every location between joists on the north and south walls; the number of missing bricks is so extensive that it appears the interior brick courses were robbed at some point for use elsewhere. The result is a serious threat to the structural integrity of the affected walls. Of similar concern, the reconstructed northwest corner of the foundation wall does not match the intact original design of the other building corners and does not provide full masonry support to the wood framing above.

The two reconstructed front porches of 1995 also apparently had serious construction flaws as reported by NPS staff the following year. The flaws necessitated the demolition of the porches in 2009 and no entrance porches now exist. At these two front entrances extensive rot is present, reportedly the result of the water intrusion associated with the two porches. The intruding water apparently also damaged the first floor joist below these entrance locations. Those damaged joists were reinforced in 2005. The doorway thresholds and flooring have not been repaired, however.

The roofing.
The split shingle roofing is beginning to fail along the roof ridge. Numerous shingles are out of position or broken. Replacement should be scheduled for the very near future to avoid additional damages to associated building features and even the building interior.

The lack of on-site detection systems.
The discontinuance of electrical power at the site diminishes the potential for damage by fire from electrical malfunction, but it also removes the capacity for an early detection system for fire as well as intrusion. As isolated as the house is and without staffing, detection systems could be valuable.

The loss of important building artifacts associated with the site.
The disappearance of architectural elements from the site, both main block and ell, are a serious loss. The known early items now missing include:

- The six-panel Federal style door of the stair closet. The door is visible in NPS photographs during construction. Ron Bishop has confirmed the door was in place at the close of construction
- The six-light window sash believed to be an original. Found by NPS architects between the main block and the ell during pre-restoration investigations, the sash served as the guide for reconstruction of window sash and door transoms. The sash was stored at the NPS Chatahoochee Conservation Facility, according to Bishop. Efforts to locate it have turned up a full-scale drawing but not the sash.
- The c. 1840-50 two-panel Greek Revival style exterior door that was on the west elevation of the ell adjacent to the doorway to Room 101. Also missing are the door hardware and doorway casing, both sides of the doorway.
- The four-panel door of the doorway between Room 101 and the ell. Also missing are the door hardware and door casing, both sides of the doorway.
- The board-and-batton door, its hardware and door casing of the west doorway of the ell. Though originally an exterior doorway, it later served as a passageway between the ell and the

c. 1910-15 west wing of the ell.
- The four-panel door, its hardware and door casing of the east doorway of the ell.
- The windows, siding, trim, shingle or other architectural element of the ell.

In the stair closet, there are a couple of late-nineteenth century window sash (perhaps from the ell), part of what appears to be a window frame from the main block, a few mortise-and-tenon framing members and several balustrades from the staircase. Some pieces have applied sections of failing masking tape; there are failed pieces of tape loose in the closet. Information was written on the tape with water-soluble ink and many markings are illegible.

The pre-restoration NPS field notes do provide sketches of some elements associated with the ell and late-nineteenth and twentieth century elements from the main house block and the ell. But these are sketches for identification of element type in the broadest sense. They are not typically useful for more specific recordation. Nor does it appear that such elements were systematically recorded with photographs. These field notes are extensive with much valuable information. But they remain as jottings and sketches for personal referral. They do not appear to have been put in a form that would serve as useful reference material for another person.

During the course of this project, no catalogue of inventory of removed architectural elements was found. However, some partially-legible identification markings on taped elements on site may correspond to handwritten notations on NPS blueprints of floor plans dated "1-18-77."

The setting.
The house now sits alone. Historically, it would have been just one, admittedly the most commanding, of many man-made site features including outbuildings, gardens, orchards, fences, walkways and the like. Fortunately, preparation of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) by NPS is currently underway. Information gained from the preparation of the CLR will soon be available to inform decisions involving treatment of the site as well as to affect other associated interpretation efforts.

Inaccuracy of replication.
The 1977-78 vintage front doors are currently being used as models for preparing in-house replacement doors. While the replacement doors are approximations of the previous designs, the dimensions of individual door components do not match. Individually and cumulatively, the inaccuracies are significant. Unfortunately, inaccurate dimensions can easily be passed to successive generations of replications, especially if the models are not retained. In addition, post-assembly sanding of the surfaces has removed the crispness of the delicate bead that is integral to the Federal style door design.

II.A Treatment & Use

Significance & Condition

Early settlers John and Dolly Gordon, the formidable Federal-style house they built as their residence, and their enterprises on the associated landholdings, including trading post and ferry landing on the adjacent Duck River, have significance in numerous aspects of American history. Some of the more prominent categories and themes are contact with native civilizations, including cooperative commerce via trading post and ferry service as well as John's participation in declared and undeclared conflicts between Indians and white settlers; transportation, commerce and westward expansion, as facilitated by the Natchez Trace of which their property was a part; warfare, including the War of 1812 as well as several regional conflicts in which John played prominent roles; and, architecture, as represented by their house.

Today, only the masonry main block of the Gordon House remains. Gone are the many ancillary outbuildings and site features that were essential for its operation as a rural homestead. Perhaps also missing is a rear service wing typical of houses of the period. Fortunately, what remains of this main block appears largely intact, both inside and out, from the period of initial construction by the Gordons.

On the exterior, the original designs of three elevations appear to be clearly discernible. The broad south elevation, facing downhill towards the river and containing the two matching central doorways for public access, is the principal façade; unfortunately, the entrance steps have long since disappeared. The small east and west elevation end walls are secondary facades, functioning in part to contain the chimney stacks. Uphill to the north, the long rear elevation was for access to utilitarian activities. In contrast to the other three elevations, its original design is a bit of a mystery, having been reworked extensively in the 1970s. At that time a large late-nineteenth-century wood-framed ell was removed, and another earlier frame structure was discovered inside; the question as to the purpose of the earlier structure was never resolved satisfactorily, nor were the questions of the actual interplay of the back of the house with the inevitable myriad of associated outbuildings and site features. The odd arrangement of windows and a utilitarian doorway off to one side, as well as missing steps, suggest an incomplete representation of what was originally the second principal façade.

Inside this main block of the house, the original two-room floor plan remains intact at basement level and at the two floor levels of occupancy above. The house also retains a large amount of original building fabric. The basement, with original stone walls, dirt floor, and exposed underside of the original first-floor framing, retains its character as unoccupied ancillary spaces. Both upper floors retain original wood flooring, wall plaster, and wood trim. While early-nineteenth-century fireplace mantels remain in both rooms of the second floor, late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century mantels are located on the first floor. Probably as a part of the same remodeling as the installation of first-floor mantels, a portion of the first floor of the staircase was enclosed. And the original plastered ceilings of both second-floor rooms and the east first-floor room have been replaced with board and wallpaper. While the exterior of the house has been extensively repaired and is well maintained, the interior has received little attention since the middle of the twentieth century and has been used in recent decades for storage. Paint and varnishes are well worn. Wallpaper remnants hang in disarray. There is much clutter.

Although the house retains much original building fabric, there are also significant amounts of reworked and replaced material, primarily on the exterior. Visually, the replacement material blends seamlessly with the old. In addition, the exterior of

the building is well maintained, further enforcing the impression that the building as a whole is in very good condition. However, the clean and cohesive exterior appearance disguises instances of lacking substrate. A notable category of problems is the exterior woodwork. Much of the woodwork is replacement material installed in the 1970s. The construction, craftsmanship, and sometimes the design of these elements are significantly subpar. Poor design has caused significant damage at the two main entrance doorways. The poor construction of fenestration elements, rather than poor design, has caused their rapid deterioration; virtually every door and window unit has serious defects. Apart from these localized problems, the building remains structurally sound, in general. The notable exception is the masonry perimeter wall; missing bricks at the first-floor framing, visible only from the interior at basement level, is a serious concern that needs remedial reconstruction. On the positive side, the passive ventilation system that allows fresh air circulation to the interior of the house has been invaluable in preserving the building fabric.

The General Management Plan – Natchez Trace Parkway

The General Management Plan (GMP) in place for the Natchez Trace Parkway was approved a quarter century ago, on April 24, 1987. The document is outdated for use as a planning tool, yet the strategy outlines is illustrative of the long-term recognition of the historical significance of John and Dolly Gordon, their house, and the site. The plan is organized around the conclusion that "the most appropriate purpose for the parkway is the commemoration and interpretation of the old Natchez Trace." Further, a key objective of the GMP is "to provide orientation/interpretation waysides . . .to help visitors plan their stays and select places to stop."

The Gordon House site at milepost 407.8 in lower Tennessee is the wayside site furthest north. Its assigned role in the GMP is to provide "general orientation for southbound traffic [and] overview of Natchez Trace significance." Initially, the Gordon House site also served as interim visitor contact facility until construction of the northern entrance facility was completed.

The GMP proscribes a general management strategy for the John Gordon House that will "preserve, maintain, interpret, [and] adaptively use as a visitor contact station. . .continue existing cyclic preservation maintenance program." Also, it states that management objectives for the John Gordon House grounds are ". . .the preservation and maintenance. . .of the grounds of the Gordon house (1818) to their appearance at the time the house was built."

The Recommended Interim Treatment

The current exterior appearance of the John Gordon House dates primarily to the 1977-78 NPS efforts to restore to the appearance in the time of John Gordon c. 1819. The west, south, and east elevations of the main block are probably accurate representations of that period with the principal exception of the two missing entrance steps and landings.

The rear or north elevation of the main block is probably an accurate representation of the general organization of brickwork and fenestration with the exception of poorly executed brickwork and misaligned reconstructed window at first-floor level. However, the connection at this elevation with a structure housing a kitchen and perhaps other ancillary functions such as servant quarters, remains unclear though the connection with some structure seems certain. Further, there currently is no available information about the many small buildings and developed site features such as barns, pens, storage facilities, vegetable gardens, walkways, fences, and the like, that would have been present.

In light of this uncertainty of the design of the rear house elevation combined with the general absence of evidence of other associated site developments, preservation is a sound choice for an interim treatment. By choosing this treatment, the four exterior elevations of the main block are maintained at the current level of restoration and the interior retained for further action. It is also recommended that research be directed to the site to gather what evidence remains of associated buildings and site enhancements as well as evidence of house features such as entrance steps.

The Recommended Interim Treatment is preservation, maintaining the appearance of the restored exterior and interior of the main block of the house in a state of good repair.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- Enhances public benefit by retaining/ preserving the restored exterior of one of the parkway's important historic buildings and National Register property.
- Enhances public benefit by investigating the historic house site., an area which is underrepresented in the understanding of how the Gordon House functioned.
- Enhances public benefit by investigating known missing appendages of the house including front and rear entry steps.
- Complies with the general management strategy of the Parkway's GMP to preserve and interpret the house and site at the time of occupancy by John and Dolly Gordon.
- Retains flexibility for future park decisions regarding treatment and interpretation to coincide with the results of additional research and investigation.
- Constitutes cost-effective treatments of the exterior and interior of the house.

This approach would have the following disadvantages:

- Incurs the cost of site archaeology, associated documentary research and curation, and a comparative architectural study of contemporary house sites.
- Delays further access to the interior of the house by the public.

II.B Requirements for Treatment

The John Gordon House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 18, 1974, thereby receiving formal recognition as a significant cultural resource important in the history of the nation.

The National Park Service Cultural Resources Management Guideline (DO – 28) requires planning for the protection of cultural resources on park property.

In addition, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) mandates that federal agencies, including the National Park Service, take into account the effects of their actions on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment.

Treatment of the building and site are to be guided by *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects,* the Americans with Disability Act, and the International Building Code. Threats to public life, safety, and welfare are to be addressed; however, because this is an historic building, alternatives to full legislative and code compliance are recommended where compliance would needlessly compromise the integrity of the historic building.

II.C Alternatives for Treatment

In addition to the Recommended Treatment discussed in Section I.A above, two alternative treatments for the John Gordon House are discussed below.

Alternative #1: Preserve the restored exterior as currently portrayed. Reconstruct the original rear ell and front entrance steps, and restore the interior to original appearance based upon current information. Open the interior for public visitation.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- Enhances public benefit by retaining/ preserving the restored exterior of one of the parkway's important historic buildings and National Register property.
- Expands public benefit by opening for some visitors the restored interior of one of the parkway's important historic buildings and National Register property.
- Expands public benefit by providing another venue for displaying exhibits and distributing interpretive materials regarding the Parkway.
- Complies with the general management strategy of the Parkway's GMP to preserve and interpret the house at the time of occupancy of John and Dolly Gordon.
- Allows the upgrading of modern building systems including electrical and security while retaining character-defining historic features.

This approach would have the following disadvantages:

- Does not promote much needed research of the original site, the house, and the functional relationships between the two.
- Relies on extensive speculation of the design and construction of the reconstructed ell and entry steps.
- Incurs the costs of designing, constructing, and maintaining an additional building wing.
- May be difficult to reconstruct an historically-accurate ell which unobtrusively incorporates a design for access by the handicapped.
- Removes vestiges of historic modifications from post-Gordon era occupancy.

Alternative #2: Preserve the restored exterior as currently portrayed. Construct an entry porch(es) of non-historic design and preserve the interior as currently found but in a state of good repair. Open the interior for public visitation.

This approach would have the following advantages:

- Enhances public benefit by retaining/ preserving the restored exterior of one of the parkway's important historic buildings and National Register property.
- Expands public benefit by opening for public visitation the preserved interior in good repair of one of the parkway's important historic buildings and National Register property.
- Expands public benefit by providing another venue for displaying exhibits and distributing interpretive materials regarding the Parkway.
- Complies with the general management strategy of the Parkway's GMP to preserve and interpret the house.
- Allows the upgrading of modern building systems including electrical and security while retaining character-defining historic features.
- Retains flexibility for future park decisions regarding treatment and interpretation to

coincide with the results of additional research and investigation.
- Constitutes a low-cost treatment of the exterior and even lesser-cost treatment for the interior.

This approach would have the following disadvantages:

- May not provide access to the interior of the house by the handicapped because of the significant distance between grade and first-floor level.
- Does not promote much-needed research of the original site, the house, and the functional relationship between the two.

II.D Recommendations

Actions to Achieve Recommended Interim Treatment:

The Recommended Interim Treatment is a temporary step, a delay in making a decision as to the appropriate Ultimate Treatment until additional essential research is conducted. This Interim Treatment is recommended because information necessary to make a responsible stewardship decision is not currently available.

To achieve the Recommended Interim Treatment, the following actions should be taken:

- Repair base of perimeter brick walls at basement level to bring to full depth of wall thickness. Includes replacing missing courses of brick and repointing of adjacent brickwork.
- Reconstruct masonry and framing of west side of northwest corner at basement level to provide more adequate support of flooring above; the two corners on the east elevation are intact original features that provide an appropriate model.
- Repair damage to the two front entrance doorways including thresholds and flooring; reconstruct and install accurate reproductions of the two entrance doors.
- Reconstruct in its correct position the misaligned first floor window (1977-78 reconstruction) of the north elevation; correct associated misaligned brick masonry.
- Install threshold missing at doorway of north elevation; repair associated flooring; repair door.
- Reconstruct window sills using one solid section of wood to replace the sills of multiple wood sections installed in 1977-78.
- Reconstruct transom bars of two front doorways using one section of wood to replace the transom bars of multiple wood sections installed in 1977-78.
- Install a board-and-batten door of a more period-appropriate design for the entrance to the basement.
- Keep weathertight the exterior envelope of the building. Regularly caulk and repaint all painted surfaces. Maintain sound mortar joints in the masonry.
- Bring to a state of good repair and preserve the interior of the main block of the house, all three levels.

There are other recommendations for actions to be undertaken which focus on the house specifically while the site beyond the house is being researched and investigated: These include:

- Conduct a search for the missing door for the first-floor stair closet still in place during the 1977-78 NPS restoration and the missing window sash discovered during that phase of work.
- Locate, inventory, and catalogue the remaining salvaged building elements. Assign a unique number to each and attach permanent identification. Photograph each element from multiple angles as part of the cataloguing process. Store in a secure location.
- Contact NPS and others involved with the 1977-78 work to the house to inquire about possible dissemination of salvaged building artifacts.
- Complete a more extensive paint and finish analysis.

Appendix A:
Chain of Title

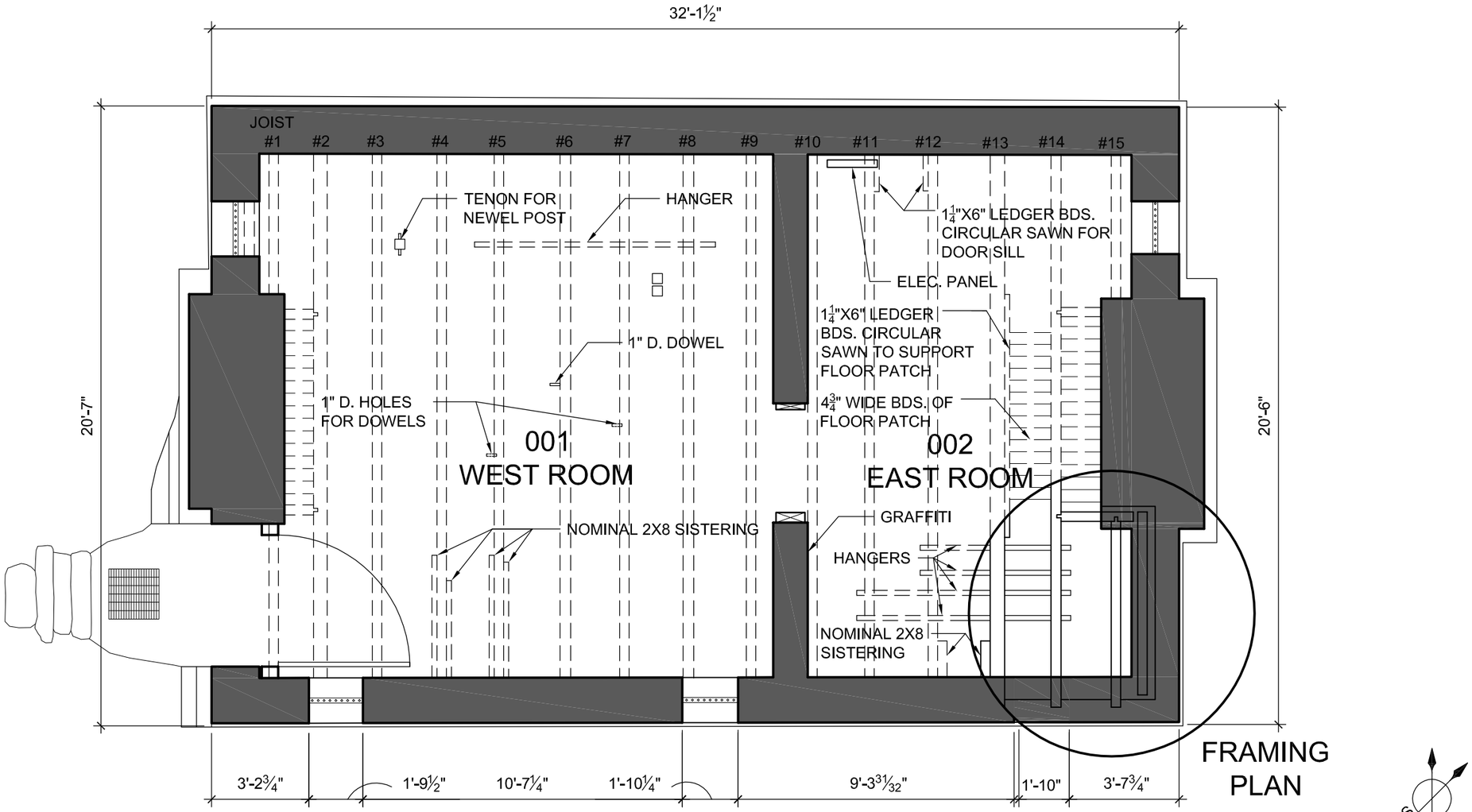
JOHN GORDON HOUSE
CHAIN OF TITLE

Hickman County deeds burned during the Civil War

Date of Instrument	Book/Page	Grantee	Grantor	Instrument	Description	Notes
1973		National Park Service	State of Tennessee		68 acres	
1969		State of Tennessee	Mrs. R.S. Jewell		72 acres	
12/8/1918		Richard S. Jewell	W.C. Jewell	Death of W.C. Jewell		
10/27/1904	Book T-1, p. 161, Book L-1, p. 391, Hickman Co.	W.C. Jewell & son Richard S. Jewell	A. Hooten & wife Ethel		107 acres	Encumbered by three notes due to estate of G.W. Stockard
8/31/1896		A. Hooten & wife Ethel	G.P. Mayberry		?	
unclear		G.P. Mayberry	George W. Stockard?		155-160 acres?	
1883						Richard Cross named as owner at relocation of county line
1/27/1879	Book B, Vol. 3, p. 504, Maury Co.	George W. Stockard	Richard Cross Gordon	Deed of Trust		Stockard was Bolling Gordon's and R.C. Gordon's overseer and a merchant in Williamsport
1860		Richard Cross Gordon	Bolling Gordon, executor			Richard was Bolling Gordon's only son
12/5/1859		Bolling Gordon, executor	Dolly Cross Gordon	Death of Dolly Cross Gordon		Bolling Gordon was Dolly Gordon's son
1819		(Dolly Cross Gordon)	(John Gordon)	Death of John Gordon		
1804-1809		John Gordon	Series of land grants, many for 640 acres		Land at Duck River totals almost 1500 acres	

Appendix B: Documentation Drawings: As-Found

Sheet B-1: Basement Floor Plan
Sheet B-2: First-Floor Plan
Sheet B-3: Second-Floor Plan
Sheet B-4: Attic Floor Plan
Sheet B-5: 1977 Reproduction Front Door
Sheet B-6: 2010 Reproduction Front Door
Sheet B-7: Four-Panel Door at Staircase
Sheet B-8: Exterior Door at Back of House
Sheet B-9: Second-Floor Door, Room 201 Side
Sheet B-10: Second-Floor Door, Room 202 Side
Sheet B-11: First-Floor Door, Room 101 Side
Sheet B-12: First-Floor Door, Room 102 Side
Sheet B-13: Millwork Details
Sheet B-14: Millwork Details



FRAMING PLAN

BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

6" 2' 4' 10'
0' 1' 3' 5'

NOTE: THE GORDON HOUSE FACES SOUTHEAST BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT THE HOUSE IS DESCRIBED AS FACING SOUTH.

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

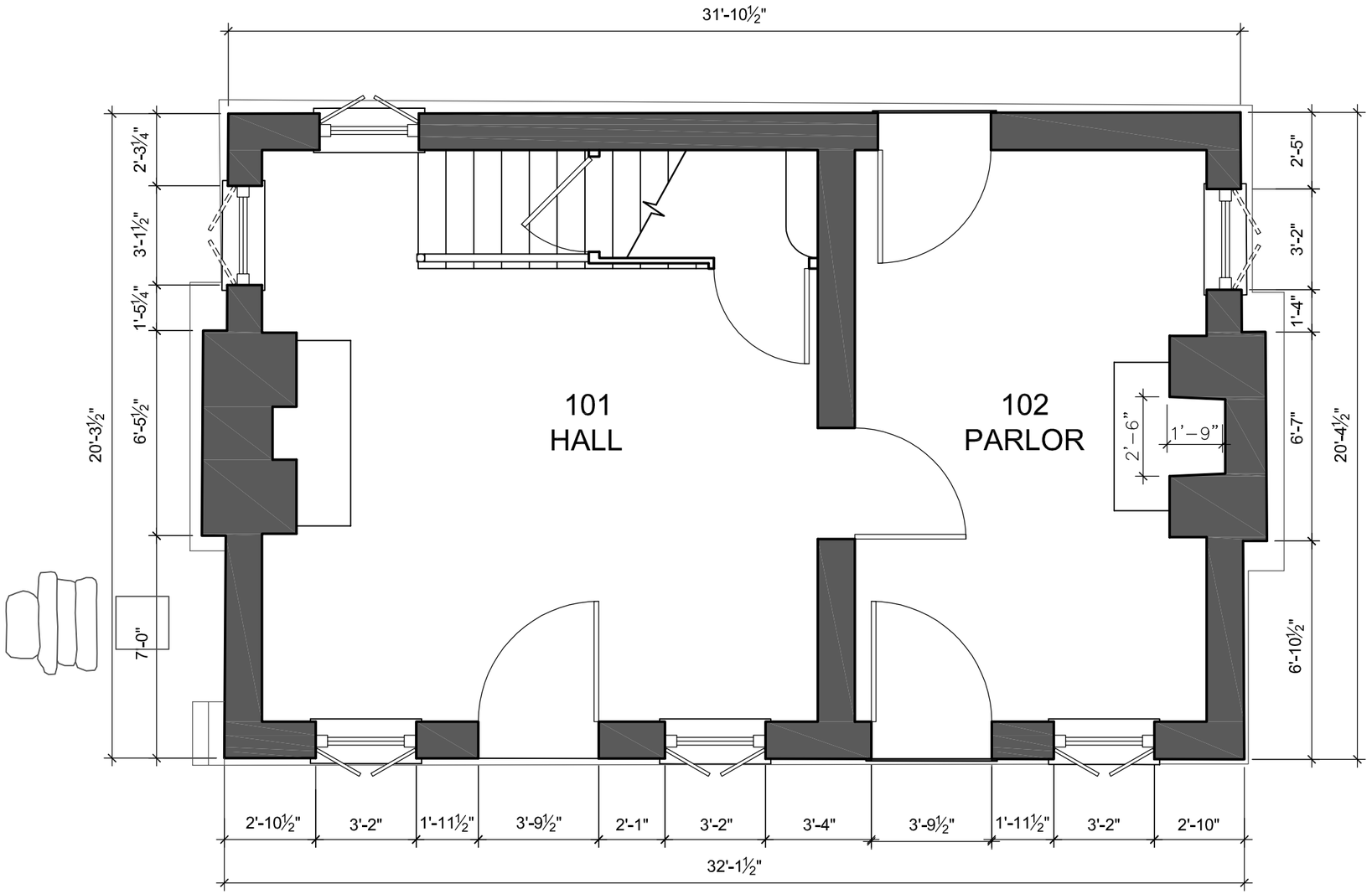
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 1 OF 14 SHEETS



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

6" 2' 4' 10'
0' 1' 3' 5'

COMPASS NORTH
PLAN NORTH

NOTE: THE GORDON HOUSE FACES SOUTHEAST BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT THE HOUSE IS DESCRIBED AS FACING SOUTH.

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

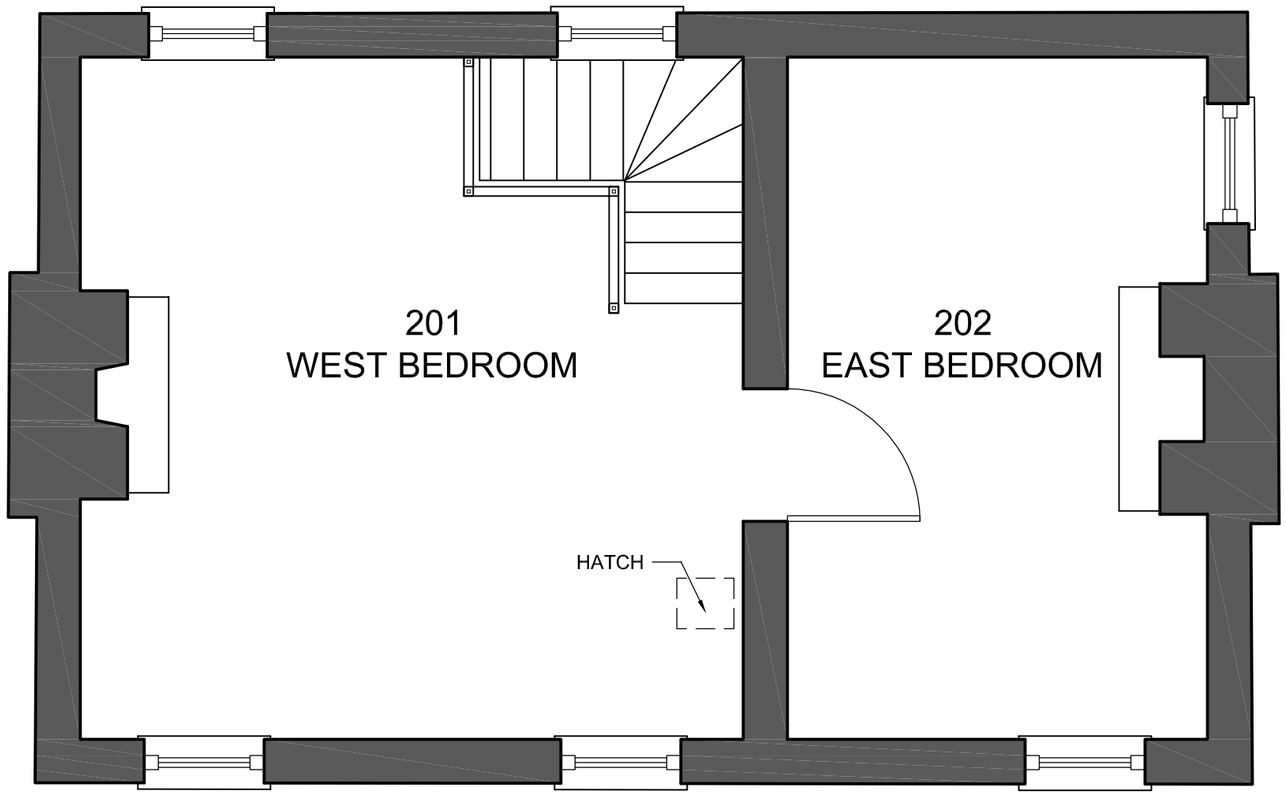
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 2 OF 14 SHEETS



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

6" 2' 4' 10'
0' 1' 3' 5'

NOTE: THE GORDON HOUSE FACES SOUTHEAST BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT THE HOUSE IS DESCRIBED AS FACING SOUTH.

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

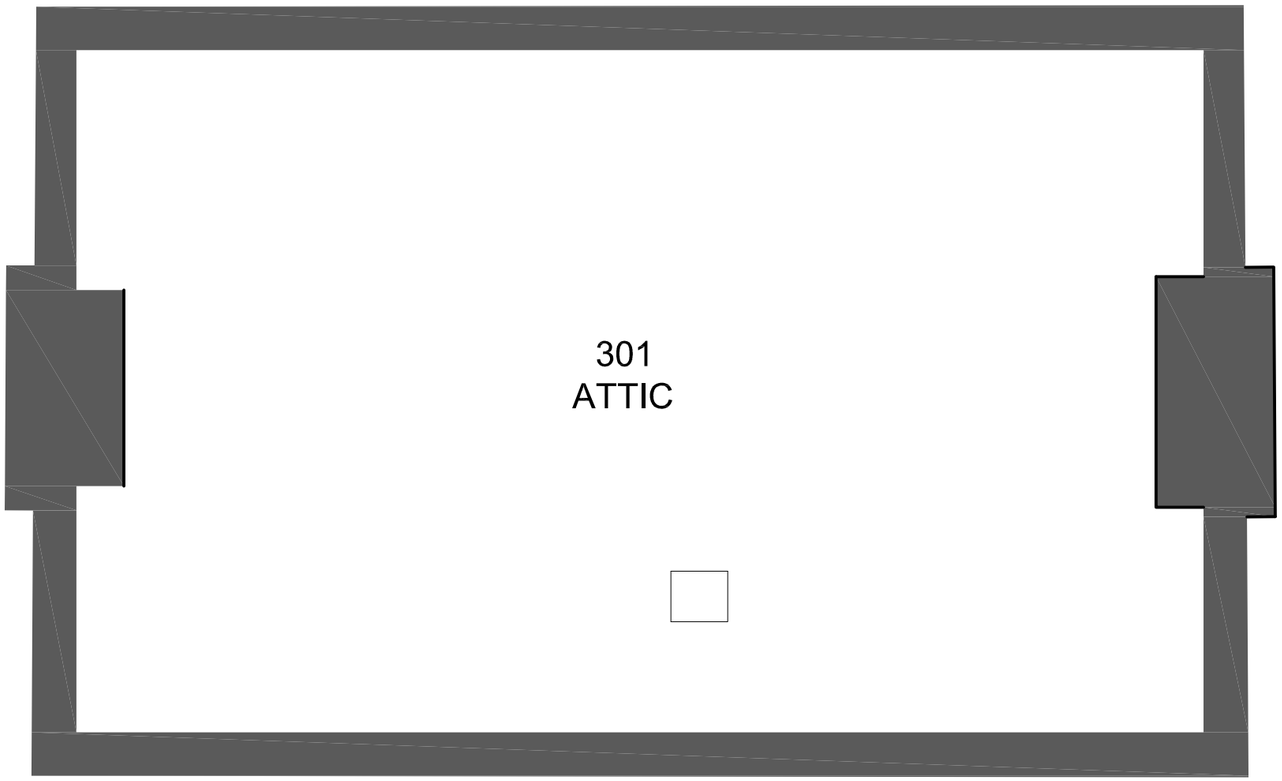
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 3 OF 14 SHEETS



ATTIC FLOOR PLAN

6" 2' 4' 10'
0' 1' 3' 5'

COMPASS NORTH
PLAN NORTH

NOTE: THE GORDON HOUSE FACES SOUTHEAST BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT THE HOUSE IS DESCRIBED AS FACING SOUTH.

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

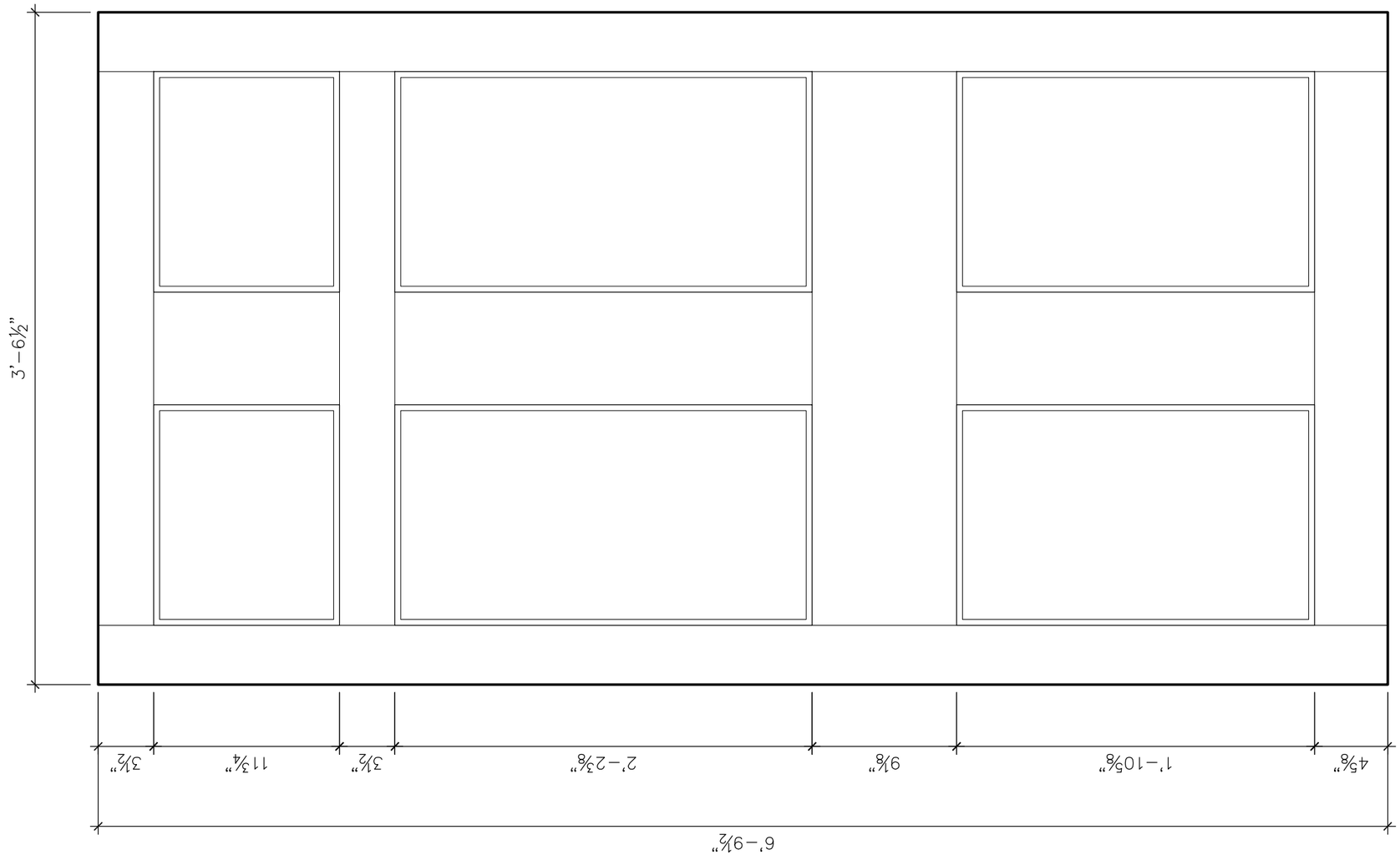
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

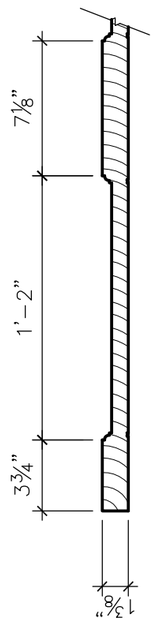
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 4 OF 14 SHEETS





1977 REPRODUCTION
FRONT DOOR

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

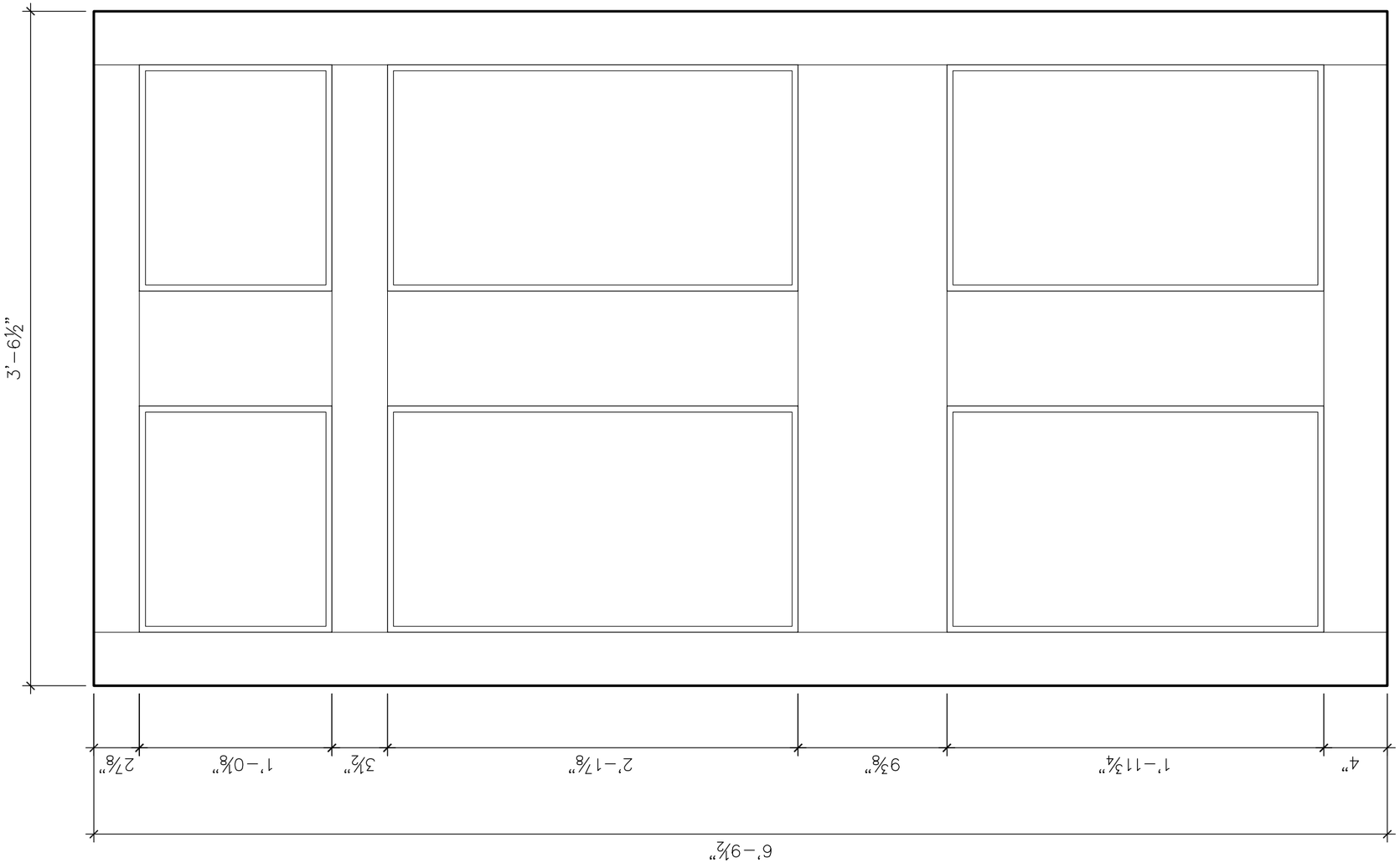
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

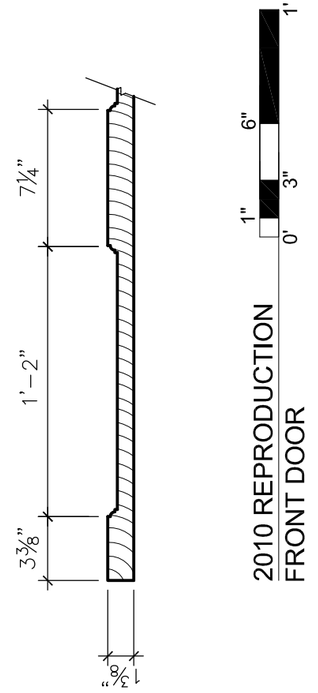
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 5 OF 14 SHEETS





2010 REPRODUCTION
FRONT DOOR

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

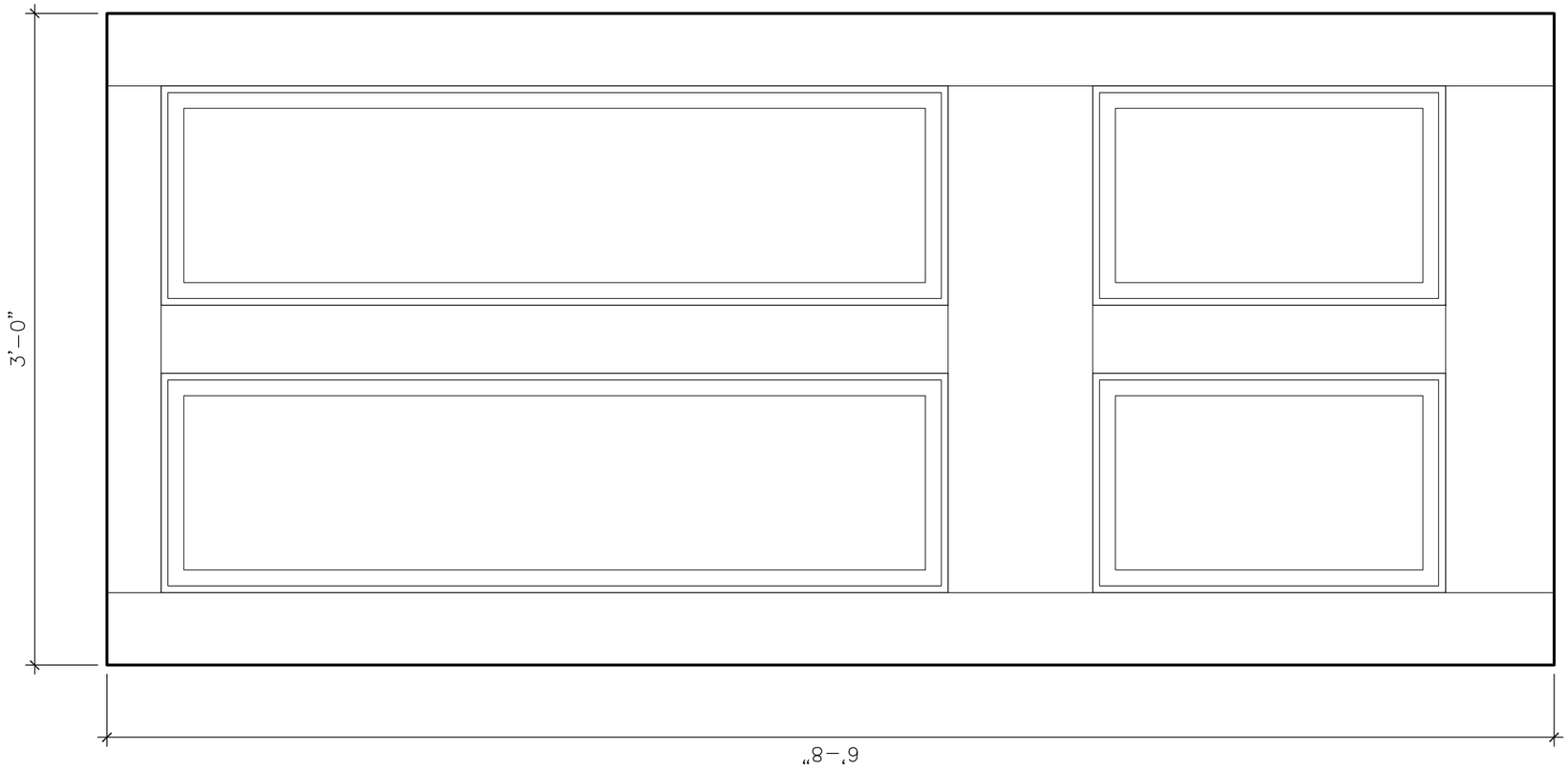
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

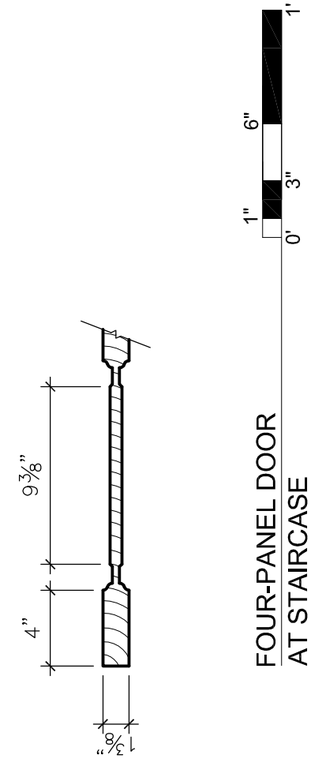
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 6 OF 14 SHEETS





RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

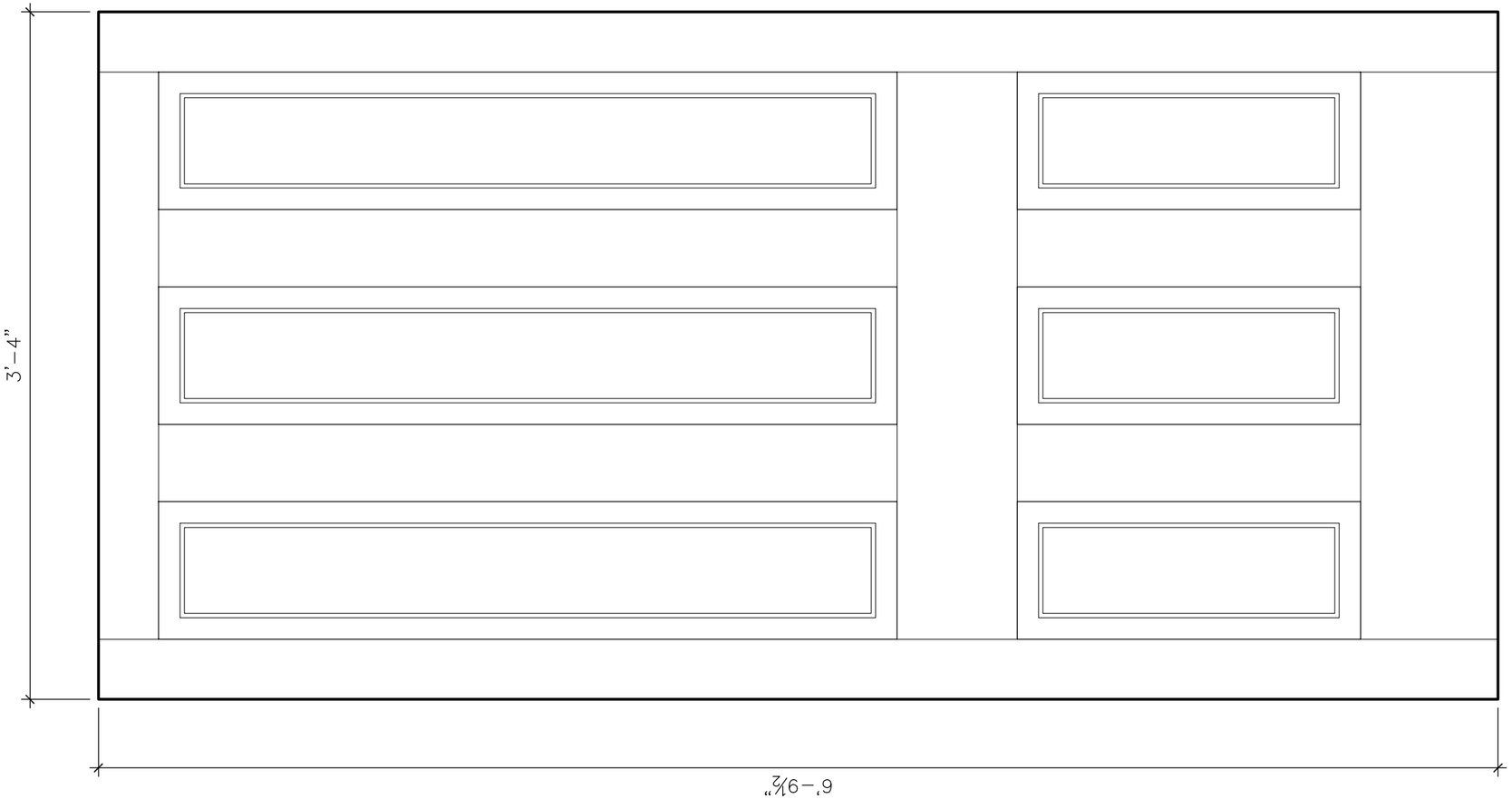
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

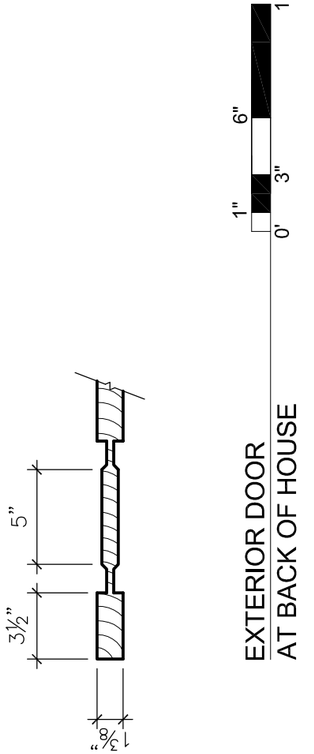
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 7 OF 14 SHEETS





EXTERIOR DOOR
AT BACK OF HOUSE

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

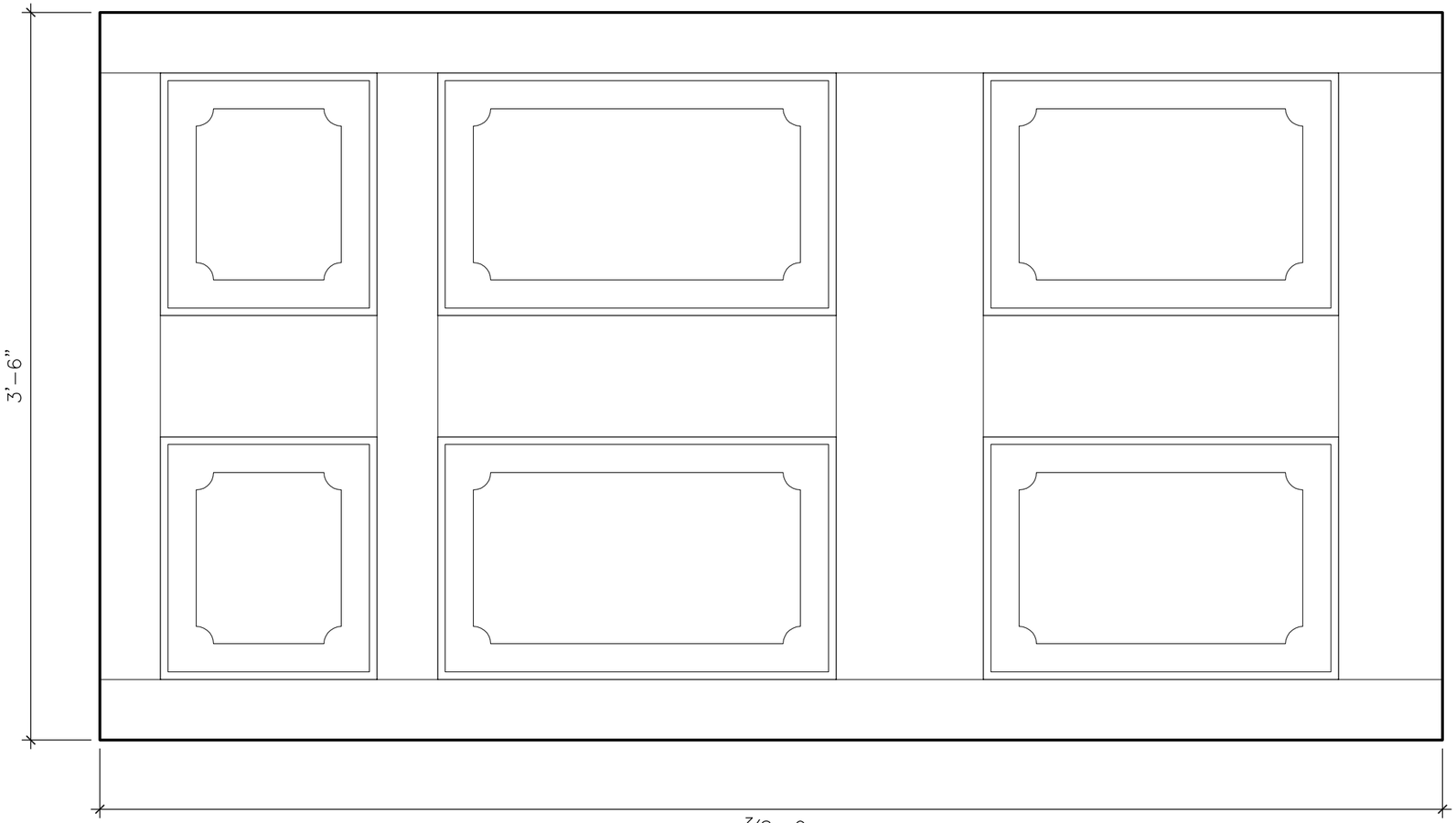
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

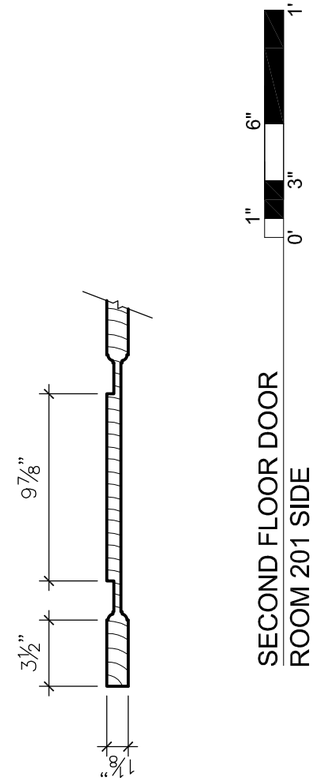
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 8 OF 14 SHEETS





SECOND FLOOR DOOR
ROOM 201 SIDE

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

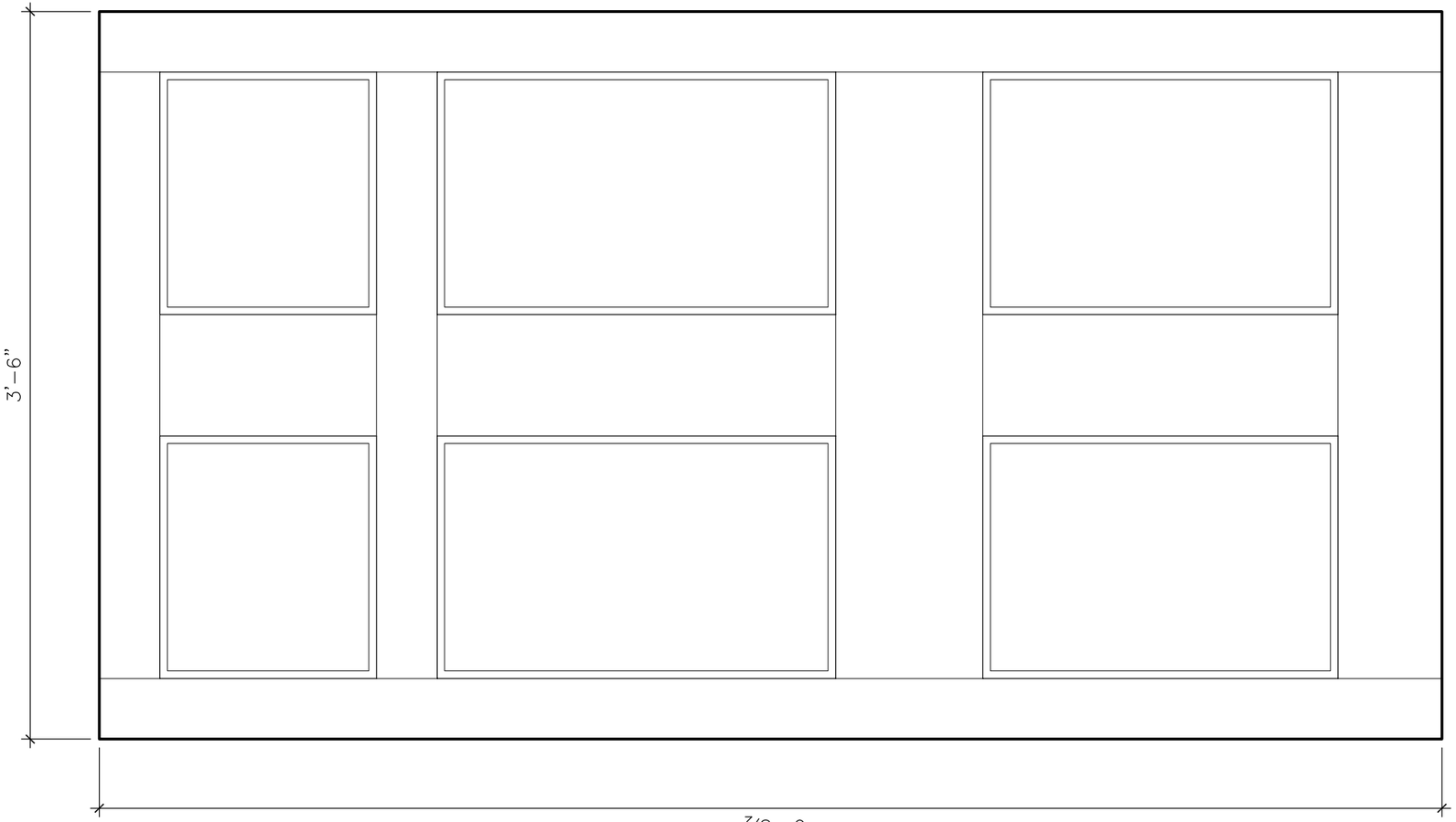
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

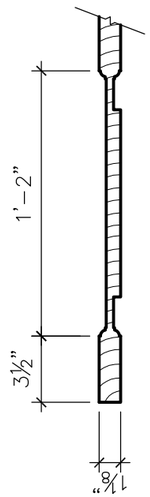
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

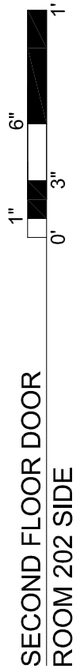
DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 9 OF 14 SHEETS







SECOND FLOOR DOOR
ROOM 202 SIDE

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

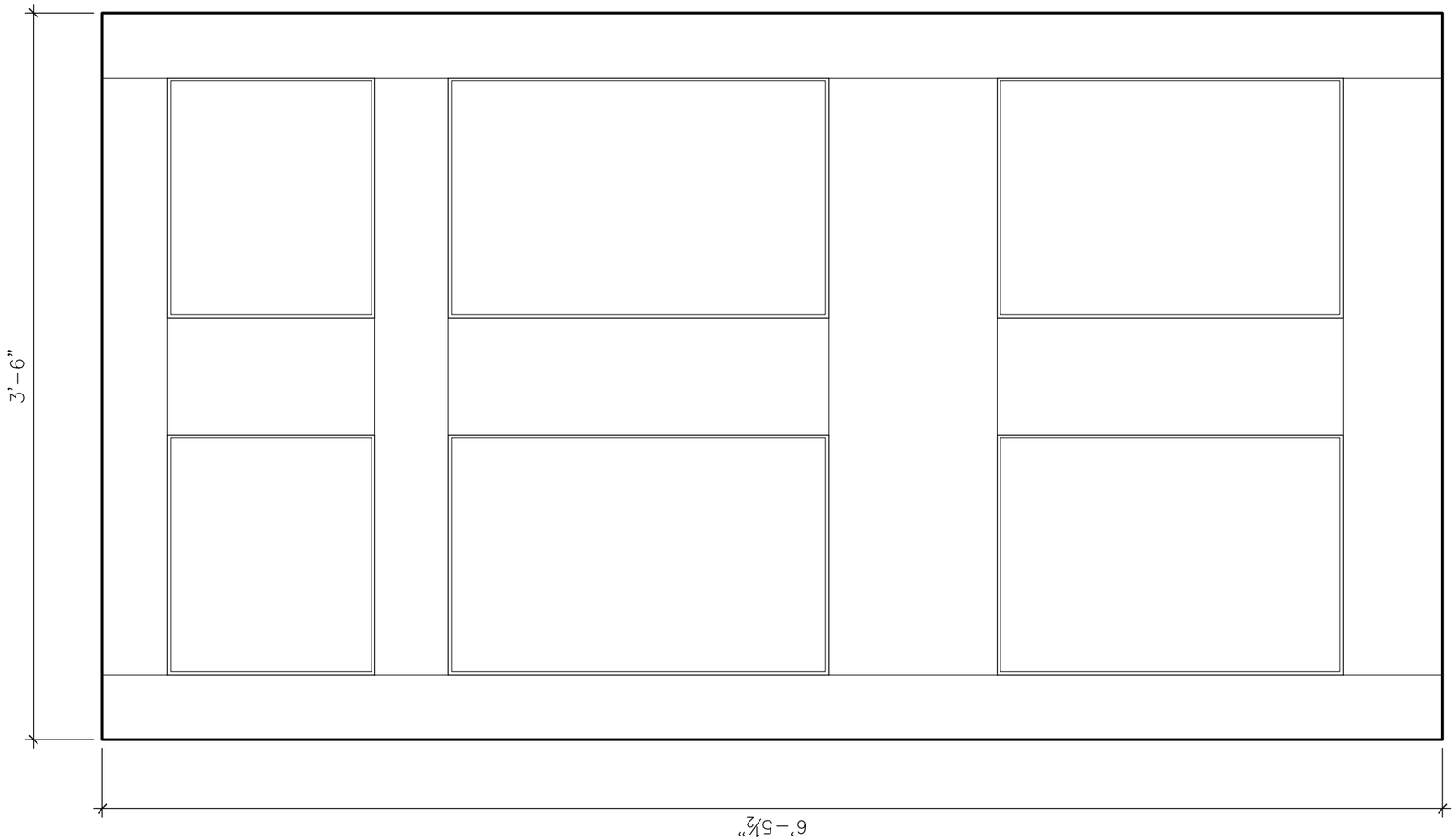
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

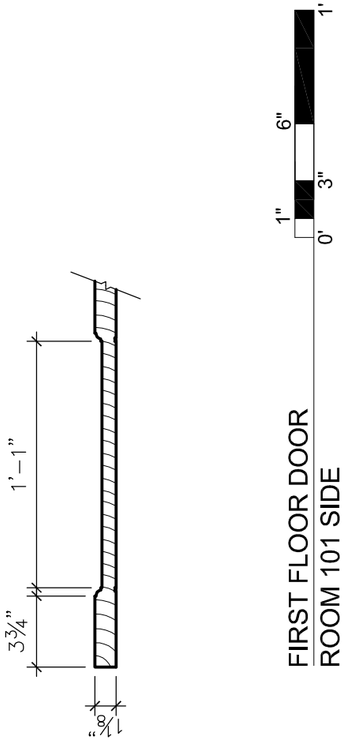
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 10 OF 14 SHEETS





FIRST FLOOR DOOR
ROOM 101 SIDE

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

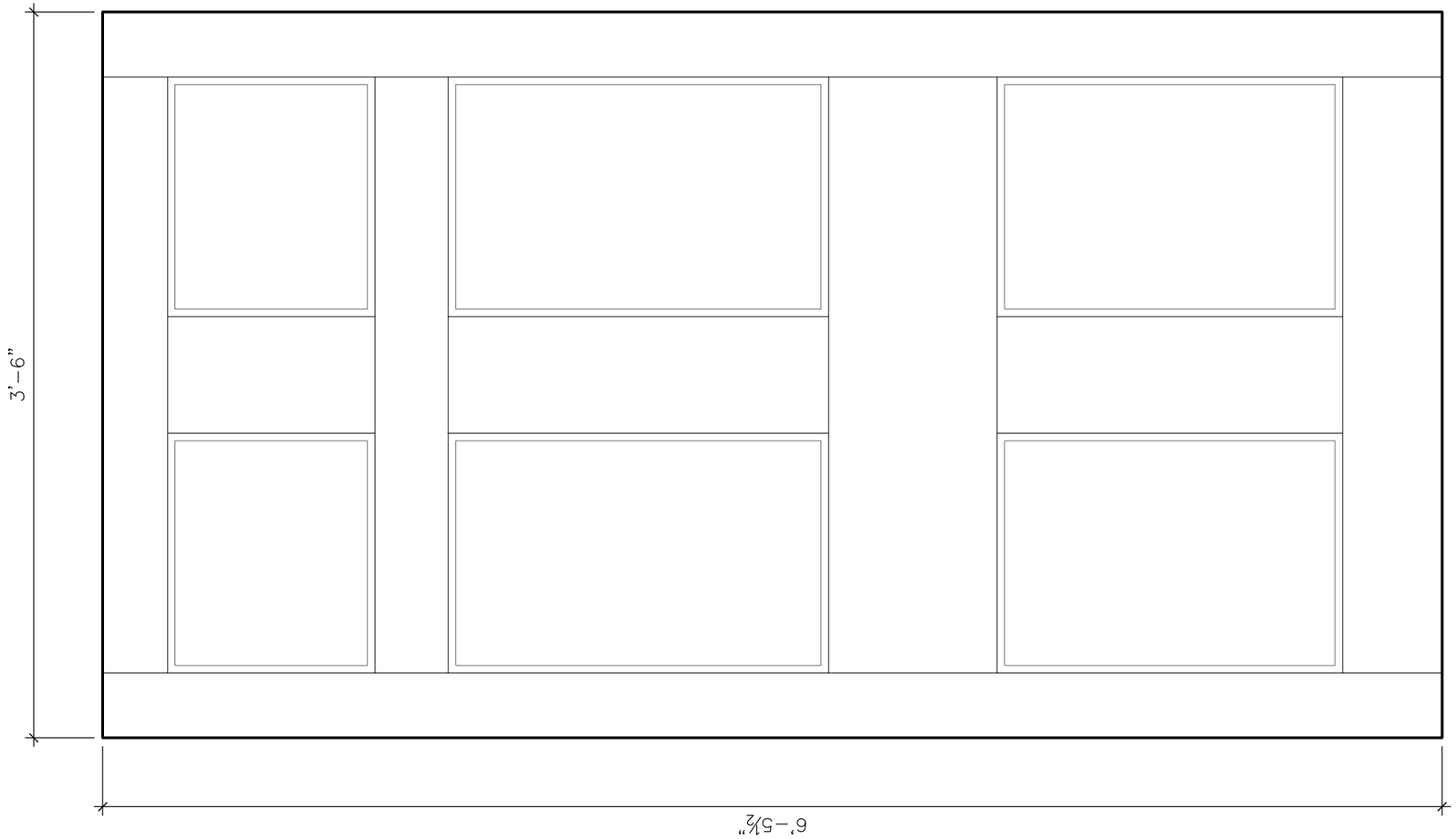
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

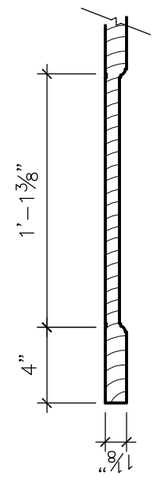
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 11 OF 14 SHEETS





FIRST FLOOR DOOR
ROOM 102 SIDE

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

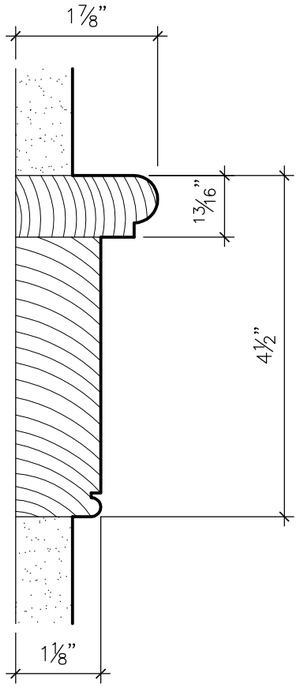
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

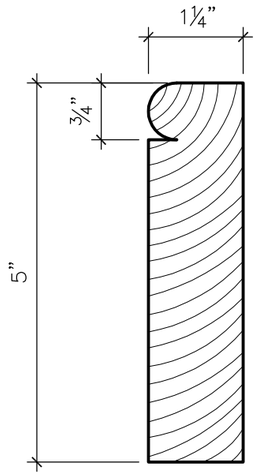
SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 12 OF 14 SHEETS



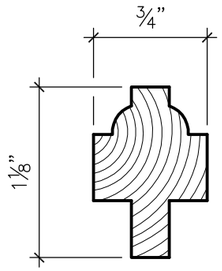
CHAIR RAIL
1ST & 2ND FLOORS

1/2" 2"
0 1" 3"



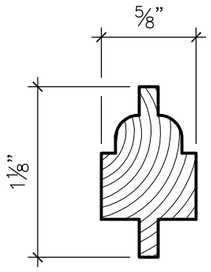
BASEBOARD
1ST & 2ND FLOORS

1/2" 2"
0 1" 3"



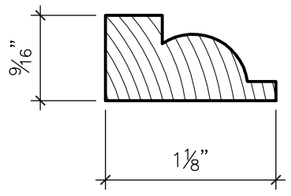
REPRODUCTION
SASH MUNTIN

1/4" 1"
0 1/2" 2"



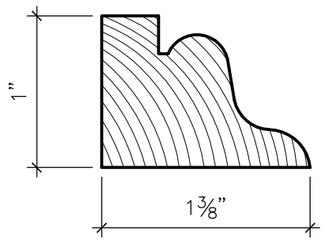
WINDOW SASH
ADDITION

1/4" 1"
0 1/2" 2"



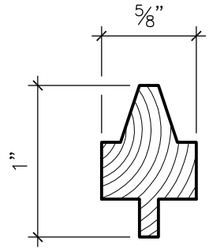
SALVAGED WIN.TRIM
"OPENING #4,
NW CORNER OF HSE"

1/4" 1"
0 1/2" 2"



REPRODUCTION TRIM
1970S WINDOWS
& DOORS

1/4" 1"
0 1/2" 2"



WINDOW SASH
ADDITION

1/4" 1"
0 1/2" 2"

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

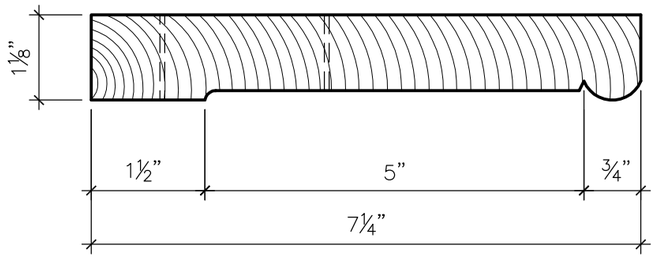
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

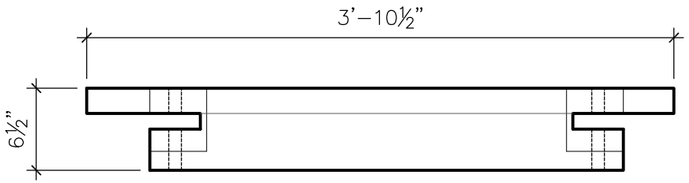
SCALE: VARIES

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 13 OF 14 SHEETS



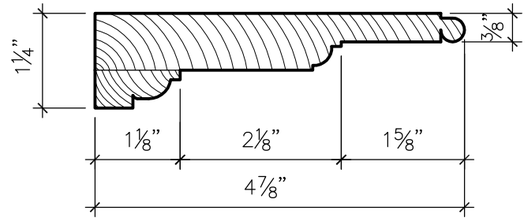
"RAKE BOARD FROM NE CORNER OF HSE"

1/2" 2"
0 1" 3"



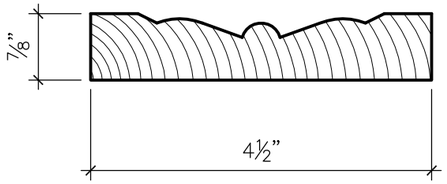
PLAN OF SALVAGED WINDOW SILL

3" 1'
0 6" 2'



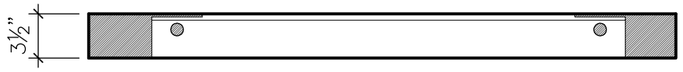
WINDOW & DOOR CASING 1ST FLOOR

1/2" 2"
0 1" 3"



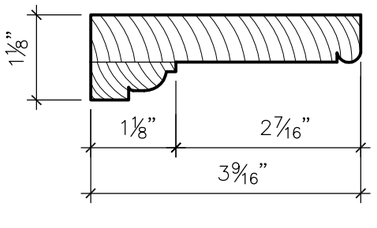
INTERIOR CASING BACK DOOR

1/2" 2"
0 1" 3"



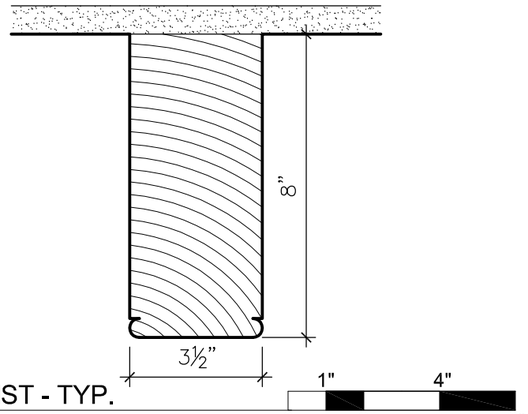
ELEVATION OF SALVAGED WINDOW SILL

3" 1'
0 6" 2'



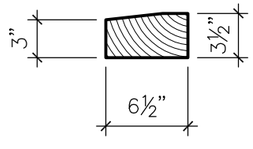
WINDOW CASING 2ND FLOOR

1/2" 2"
0 1" 3"



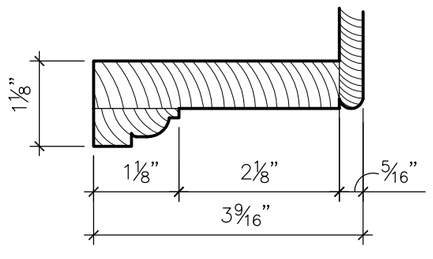
CEILING JOIST - TYP. FIRST FLOOR

1" 4"
0 2" 6"



SECTION OF SALVAGED WINDOW SILL

3" 1'
0 6" 2'



DOOR CASING 2ND FLOOR

1/2" 2"
0 1" 3"

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

JOHN GORDON HOUSE

- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: VARIES

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 14 OF 14 SHEETS

Appendix C:
Interior Finishes Analysis

John Gordon House

Interior Finishes Analysis

Natchez Trace Parkway, Tennessee

Prepared For
Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A.
539 N. Trade Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Prepared By
Building Conservation Associates, Inc.
329 Race Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

BCA Team
Dorothy Krotzer
Marlene Goeke

April 2011

BCA

BUILDING CONSERVATION ASSOCIATES INC

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Appendix A: Sample List
Appendix B: Photomicrographs

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the request of Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A., Building Conservation Associates, Inc. (BCA) has prepared an interior finishes analysis of the John Gordon House located outside of Columbia, Tennessee.

The John Gordon House is located along the Natchez Trace in central Tennessee. John and Dorothea Gordon located the house near their trading post and ferry operation on the Duck River. Gordon and his wife designed the simple two-story, four room brick house (*Figure 1*). It was constructed from 1818 to 1819, completed shortly before Gordon's death in June of 1819.[1]

The house has changed ownership several times, most recently to the National Park Service (NPS) from the State of Tennessee in 1973. The house has been essentially vacant since the state acquired the building in 1969 and by the time the NPS assessed the building, it had suffered from lack of maintenance and high moisture. In 1977 and 1978, the NPS began work on the building to restore it to its 1819 appearance and stabilize the building, which included replacing the wood sashes and frames, replacing some interior wood trim, replacing a doorway with a window, and removing the front porch.[2] Most of the interior was not touched, and replacement elements are clearly identifiable because they were not painted to match the existing elements.[3]

The primary goal of the analysis is to identify the interior paint colors of painted wood for inclusion in an Historic Structures Report being prepared by the client. The following report summarizes the findings of the finishes study. Following the introductory information regarding the site and the study methodology, the report discusses the findings of the research and then makes recommendations for appropriate restoration paint colors. All mounted cross-sections have been labeled and permanently housed and will be archived at BCA's Philadelphia office unless otherwise requested by the client.

All work required for the execution of this study was performed by Marlene Goeke, BCA Conservator with assistance from Dorothy Krotzer, BCA Regional Director. Samples were taken on January 18, 2011, and laboratory analysis was performed in January and February of 2011.

[1] Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A. *John Gordon House Historic Structure Report 75% Draft.* October 2010. Pg. 30
[2] Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A. John *Gordon House Historic Structure Report 75% Draft.* October 2010. Pg. 45
[3] Conversation with client, January 18, 2011

Figure 1: John Gordon House, front (south elevation), January 2011.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Before visiting the site, the draft Historic Structures Report was reviewed to gain an understanding of the chronology of the building and changes to the interior.

A site visit was made on January 18th to remove samples for analysis. Before samples were taken, each element was investigated at several locations to confirm consistency in the paint finishes. Samples were removed from each interior room from a variety of wood surfaces. All rooms contained several basic elements that were sampled (baseboards, chair rails, doors and door surround, and window casing) in addition to any other woodwork unique to the room. The window sash, all replaced during the 1977-78 restoration, were not sampled. The plaster walls and wood ceiling, determined to be later additions by the client, were not sampled. The basement, an unfinished space, also was not sampled.

All samples were taken back to the conservation laboratory for analysis. Approximately 60 samples were removed from the interior of the building. A complete list of sample locations is included in *Appendix A* at the end of this report.

Approximately 35 representative samples were selected for cross-section analysis. The samples were mounted in a commercial polyester/methacrylate resin polymerized with a methyl ethyl ketone peroxide catalyst (Bioplast®). Embedded samples were sectioned on a Leco® VC-50 micro-saw for microscopic examination. The sectioned samples were dry-polished using a series of fine Micromesh® polishing clothes ranging from 6,000 to 12,000 grit. Sectioned samples were observed under a Nikon 50i compound microscope in both visible light filtered through a daylight correction filter and ultraviolet light. The ultraviolet light was generated by a mercury illumination system filtered through a violet filter cube (EF4 V-2A Ex400/40 Dm430 Bar 450). Photomicrographs of representative samples were taken using a 5 mega pixel Nikon DigiSight color digital camera system and are included in this report to illustrate specific observations. Photomicrographs of the individual samples can be found in *Appendix B* at the end of this report.

Once the stratigraphies of every sample were deciphered, significant paint layers were identified and raw samples were manipulated in order to expose these layers for color matching purposes. Each sample was visually matched to the Munsell system and commercial Benjamin Moore paint palette. All color matches are included in the *Conclusions and Recommendations* section of this report.

3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The interior of the John Gordon house consists of four rooms: a parlor, where the family would have entertained guests; a hall, the main living space; and two upstairs bedrooms (*Figures 2 and 3*). A central door connects the two rooms on each floor and a staircase connects the hall to the west bedroom upstairs. All of the historic woodwork is currently painted with brown paint; replacement elements are painted with white paint. In the Parlor, the wood trim is currently grained (*Figure 4*).

The Gordon house has had several significant periods of vacancy. After Dorothea Gordon's death in 1859, the house remained vacant until 1907 when it was purchased by the Jewell family and many exterior and interior changes were made.[4] The State of Tennessee acquired the house in 1969, and it has remained vacant since.[5] The extended periods of vacancy may have resulted in fewer paint layers than one would expect in a building of this age.

Findings from a previous finishes analysis, completed in 1994, shared some similarities to this current analysis.[6] However, there are some differences between the current and the previous studies. These differences can mainly be attributed to a difference in technique. Polished cross-section samples were used for this analysis and viewed at higher magnifications, as well as in visible and UV light, allowing for a more thorough understanding of the paint chronology than had been provided in the 1994 study.

General Observations

All of the samples removed from the building contain wood substrate. Examination of the bulk samples revealed that two different types of wood were used. Both appear to be hardwoods. One wood type, dark yellow-green in color, looks similar to poplar (*Figure 5*). The other wood, a warm reddish-brown, appears similar to oak. Generally, the "poplar" wood was used for the chair rails, window casings, and door surrounds and jambs while the "oak" was used for the baseboards and staircase (balusters, handrail, newel posts); however, there are some anomalies.

Different woods may have been used for several reasons – poplar is easy to work with and durable, but oak is considered a more refined wood. Perhaps Gordon simply used what was available at the time. Both poplar and oak are trees found in Tennessee and their wood is common in building construction. Unfortunately, the samples are not large enough for proper wood identification, nor was that part of the scope of work for this project.

Nearly all of wood substrates are darker at the surface than deeper within the wood (*Figure 6*). In cross-section, this looks like a saturated surface (*Figure 7*). This saturated surface sometimes appears reddish in visible light, suggesting that the woodwork may have been stained. However, no pigment particles are visible within this area of saturation in any of the samples as would be expected of a stain. It is possible that the woodwork was stained with a dye that contained no pigments, but this would be somewhat unusual. Although the surface of the wood appears saturated, there is no evidence of early varnish or clear coatings, nor does it appear that the

[4] Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A. *John Gordon House Historic Structure Report 75% Draft.* October 2010. Pg. 33.
[5] Joseph K. Oppermann–Architect, P.A. *John Gordon House Historic Structure Report 75% Draft.* October 2010. Pg. 41.
[6] Binder, Regina. "The John Gordon House: Finishes Analysis." Building Conservation Branch, National Park Service, 1994.

surfaces were stripped or abraded to remove any earlier coatings before the first paint coating. It is possible that the woodwork was sealed with a liquid to protect it before application of the subsequent paint layer. In UV light, these areas of saturation sometimes auto-fluoresce orange (*Figure 8*). Orange auto-fluorescence can be indicative of shellac, which was sometimes used on wood as a sealer or protector. The fact that two different woods were used throughout the house and the location where these woods were used varied, implies that the woodwork was most likely not intended to be exposed and varnished. Moreover, clear-finished oak would be stylistically unusual for the time period. when the Gordon House was built.

There is also evidence of a wood filler used before the first paint layer. Several samples contain an early whitish layer that is found only in the pores or as an extremely thin layer on the wood surface (*Figure 9*). Paste fillers were often used on open-grain woods, like oak, to fill in the pores and provide a smooth wood surface. Paste filler traditionally was made from finely ground silica or whiting, linseed oil and japan drier. It was spread on the surface, allowed to dry until sticky, and the excess wiped off across the grain to deposit the filler in the pores, leaving a smooth wood surface.

Because paste fillers and paints contain similar materials, they appear similar in both the bulk sample and cross section. As such, it can be difficult to determine the intention of the layer and to distinguish it as either a filler or a paint layer. However, there are several reasons why this white layer is not believed to be an earlier paint campaign. One, it is not thick nor regular enough to be a primer or finish coat; two, there isn't a clear dirt layer between this layer and subsequent paint layers indicating a period of exposure; and three, the wood surface does not look distressed so it does not appear that earlier layers were mechanically removed. Moreover, while it is possible that earlier layers had worn off, the earliest existing layers are of crude manufacture. These paints are very coarsely ground with large pigment particles visible in the paint layer, suggesting that they are hand-ground and date from before the advent of commercially manufactured, ready-mixed paint that became widely available after the Civil War (*Figure 10*).

Room 101 – Hall

The Hall is adjacent to the Parlor, accessible through the central door. The paneled door jamb is located in the Hall, and presumably would be finished like the door in the Hall. It also contains a door to the front of the house on the south wall and a wood mantel. The Hall is larger than the parlor, and contains four windows. Access to the second floor rooms is in the Hall, up a staircase on the north side of the room and through another door. The side of the staircase is decorated with wood paneling and a small closet with a door is tucked underneath the stairway (*Figure 11*).

The wood mantel was indicated by the client to be a late 19th/early 20th century replacement, and was not sampled. Likewise, the doorway along the stairs that divides the first floor Hall from the second floor west bedroom is a later addition and was not sampled. Other elements throughout the room that had been replaced were not sampled, including the closet door and select areas of wood trim.

The earliest existing layer on the baseboards is a dark brown paint. This paint is visible in the pores of the wood but not as a layer on the wood surface (*Figure 12*). In visible light, it appears

similar in color to the dark reddish brown that is visible in the stratigraphy as the third paint layer.

The window casing, chair rail, door jamb, stair string, and paneling all share the same light brown paint layer, characterized by large pigment particles and lack of auto-fluorescence under UV light, as the first finish (*Figure 13*). After the light brown are two dark greens, similar to the greens found in the Parlor and probably contemporary. Overall these elements have between 10-13 layers, and are consistent with each other.

The sample taken from the door in the Hall (JGH.101.17) differs from all other paint samples removed from the house, except for the central door in the West Bedroom. The early layers in these samples suggest a decorative paint finish, possibly graining. Graining is typically applied in three layers: a ground provides the base color, a thin glaze imitates the figure or grain of the wood, and a varnish layer seals and protects the decorative finish. In samples JGH.101.7 and JGH.201.15, the first layer is a peachy pink, followed by a thin, uneven red layer (*Figure 14*). There may be traces of a varnish on top of the red but it is not clear in the cross section. The peachy pink is an appropriate ground color for graining. The red is thinner than a typical paint layer, and appears translucent and binder-rich in the bulk sample, much like an oil glaze. In addition, the irregularity of the layer suggests a decorative finish and not a consistent, opaque paint treatment. *In situ* exposures or removal of larger samples for analysis would be required to confirm the presence and appearance of this early decorative finish.

The newel post and handrail in the Hall were very worn, and samples removed from these elements did not provide a clear paint history. Since originally the stairway was open to the west bedroom, it is possible that the entire balustrade was painted in the same color. Paint build-up was found on a baluster. The first campaign on the baluster is the warm yellow found in the Parlor. This color is also visible on the underside of the handrail at the top of the stairs (*Figure 15*).

Room 102 – Parlor

The Parlor contains two doors to the exterior, one front and one rear, and one interior door that connects it to the Hall. The central door that accesses the Hall is flush with the walls – the deep paneled door jamb in between the two rooms is located in the Hall (*Figure 16*). It also contains two windows, on the south and east elevations, and a fireplace with a wood mantel.

According to the client, the mantel is not original to the house and thus was not sampled. In addition, the front door is known to be a replacement, as are select elements of the wood trim (according to the client). Known replacement elements were not sampled.

The first finish layer found on most the wood trim in the Parlor is a warm yellow. This includes the door, door surround, chair rail, and window casing. This consistent yellow layer is a coarsely ground paint with large pigment particles visible (*Figure 17*). A layer of soiling divides the yellow from the next layer, a dark green. Given this evidence, the yellow is likely the original finish.

Limited evidence was available for the baseboards, but it appears that the first two campaigns on the baseboards is a dark reddish brown (*Figure 18*).

The rear exterior door was also indicated by the client to be a late 19th/early 20th century replacement, but its wood trim was believed to be original. Several samples were taken from the exterior door: the exterior jamb as well as the interior and exterior face of the door itself. The earliest existing paint color on the sample from the exterior jamb (JGH.102.7) is off-white. This off-white is followed by five layers of grays and off-whites, followed by green and browns; most paint layers are damaged indicating long-term exposure. The sample from the exterior face of the door (JGH.102.8) appears to be missing its earlier layers when compared with the jamb. It only contains two paint layers before a green that matches the green on the jamb. In addition, the wood surface looks roughened, as if it had been abraded, either to remove the paint or from weathering. In addition, the sample from the interior face of the door contains only a few modern paints. The fact that the door itself has fewer paint layers than the jamb provides evidence that it is a replacement piece.

Room 201 – West Bedroom

The second floor rooms contain fewer replacement elements than the first floor. The balustrade along the Hall staircase continues up to the second floor. Some of the balusters appear to be replacement pieces judging from the lack of paint evidence, but two balusters that contained more substantial paint evidence were sampled. Various areas of the mantel in this room were also sampled as it is believed that the mantels are original.

The earliest existing paint finish on most of the wood trim in the west bedroom is white, including the window casing, door surround, and chair rail (*Figure 19*). The two samples taken from the mantels examined in cross section also matched the rest of the interior trim in this room (*Figure 20*).

The sample from the door itself is similar to the door in Hall (Room 101), which had evidence of a possible decorative graining finish. The same peachy pink ground coat and red glaze are present on this door. Like the door in the Hall, the evidence found here is not conclusive.

The baseboards contain layers similar to other baseboards throughout the house – an early red-brown in the pores, followed by a gray and second brown.

The staircase in this room contained more paint evidence than the woodwork on the first floor. A sample from one stair post in this room was examined in cross-section and revealed a thin, dark reddish brown on top of the white filler in the wood pores followed by a blue and later browns. The red-brown is uneven and looks slightly soiled, indicating that it was probably exposed. Two samples from the handrails also have red-brown as the first existing paint layer (one followed by a blue and one by dark browns). A sample from the bottom rail was not viewed in cross section, but examination of the bulk sample also revealed a dark brown paint on the wood surface under a blue. The baluster sample contained the warm yellow found on the first floor as its first finish layer. This color is visible in some locations on the underside of the handrail (see *Figure 18*).

In addition, the skirtboard around the staircase opening and edge of the landing tread contain a similar dark reddish brown under a blue. From these samples, the overall original paint scheme of the staircase consisted of red-brown rails, posts, landing treads, and skirtboards with warm yellow balusters and underside of the handrails. The fact that the balusters are the same color

on the first and second floor implies that the colors may have been consistent from the first floor to the second floor.

Room 202 – East Bedroom

The east bedroom was the most intact of all of the rooms examined and contained only a few areas of replacement material. A variety of locations on the mantel were sampled as it is believed to be original (according to the client), as well as select elements of the wood trim.

An early campaign of a white primer with blue finish paint is on the majority of the wood trim in the east bedroom (*Figure 21*). This includes the door surround, chair rail and window casing. After the blue is a green and then a blue-gray, both coarsely ground paints and thus believed to still be fairly early. The last layer is the current brown, and appears more modern. It matches the most recent brown found elsewhere in the building. The scarce number of paint layers suggests that this room was not refinished as frequently as the other rooms of the house, perhaps because it is less public or perhaps because it was used less throughout the house's history.

Two samples from the mantel were also examined in cross section. The layers in both samples are somewhat rough and damaged. One sample (JGH.202.13, *Figure 22*) contains similar early layers as the rest of the room, including traces of the blue paint. Later layers in both samples include dark browns and a varnish, similar to the mantel samples from Room 201.

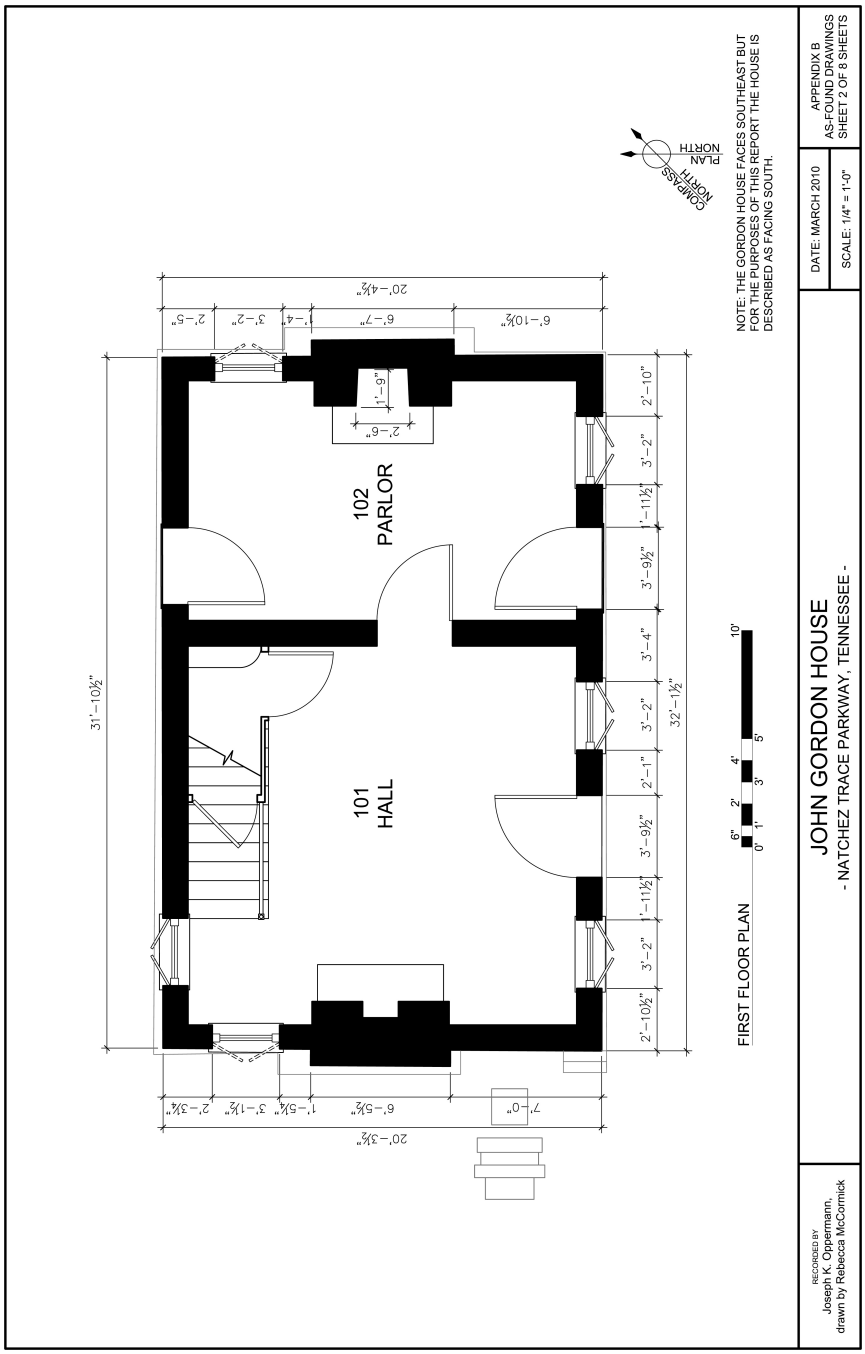


Figure 2: John Gordon House, first floor plan. From the *John Gordon House Historic Structure Report 75% Draft*, October 2010, courtesy of Joseph K. Oppermann.

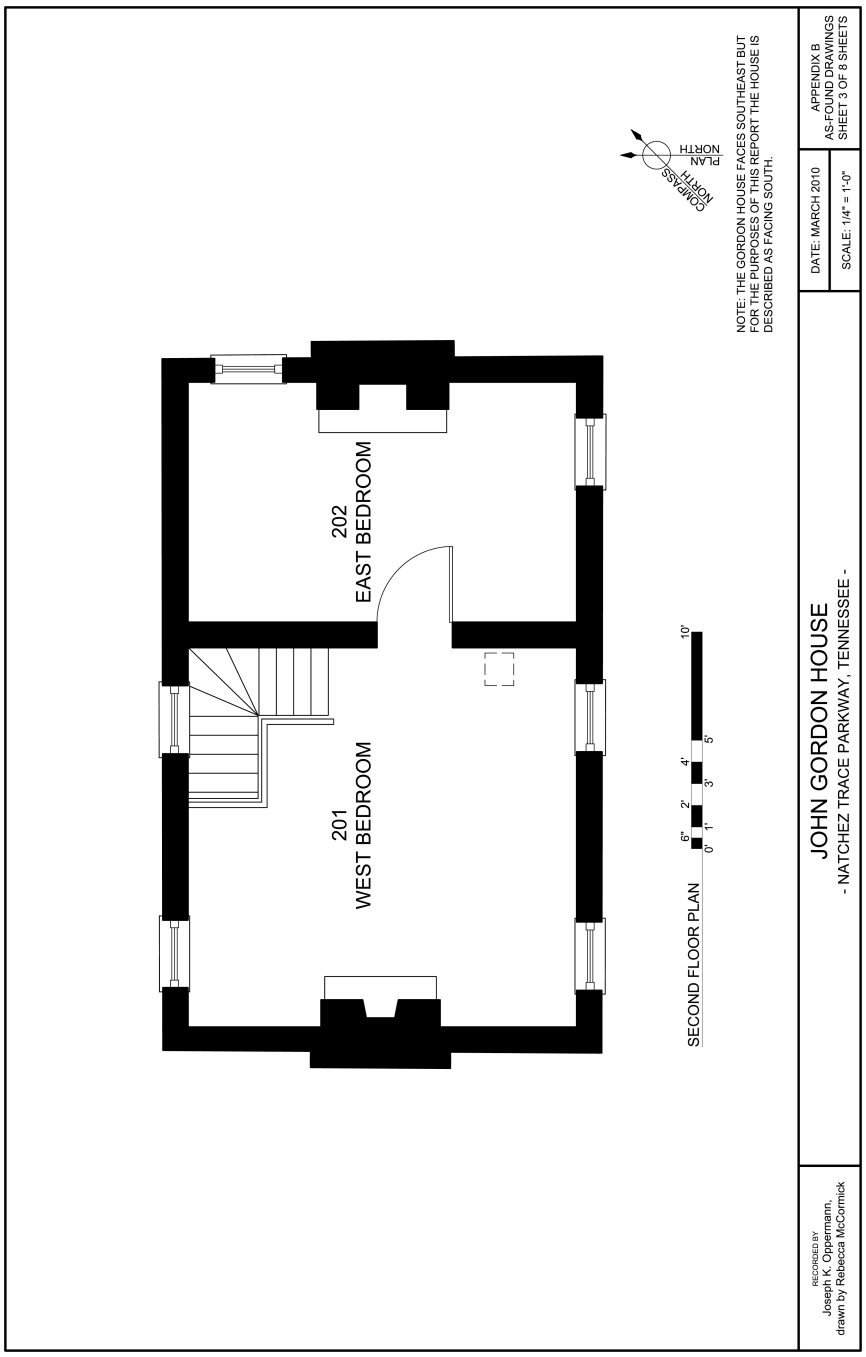


Figure 3: John Gordon House, second floor plan. From the *John Gordon House Historic Structure Report 75% Draft*, October 2010, courtesy of Joseph K. Oppermann.

Figure 4: Current decorative graining in the Parlor.

Figure 5: Sample JGH.102.5 (baseboard, left) is an example of the warm brown wood and thought to be oak. Sample JGH.102.2 (door surround, right) is an example of the yellow-green wood thought to be poplar. The two woods are used throughout the building.

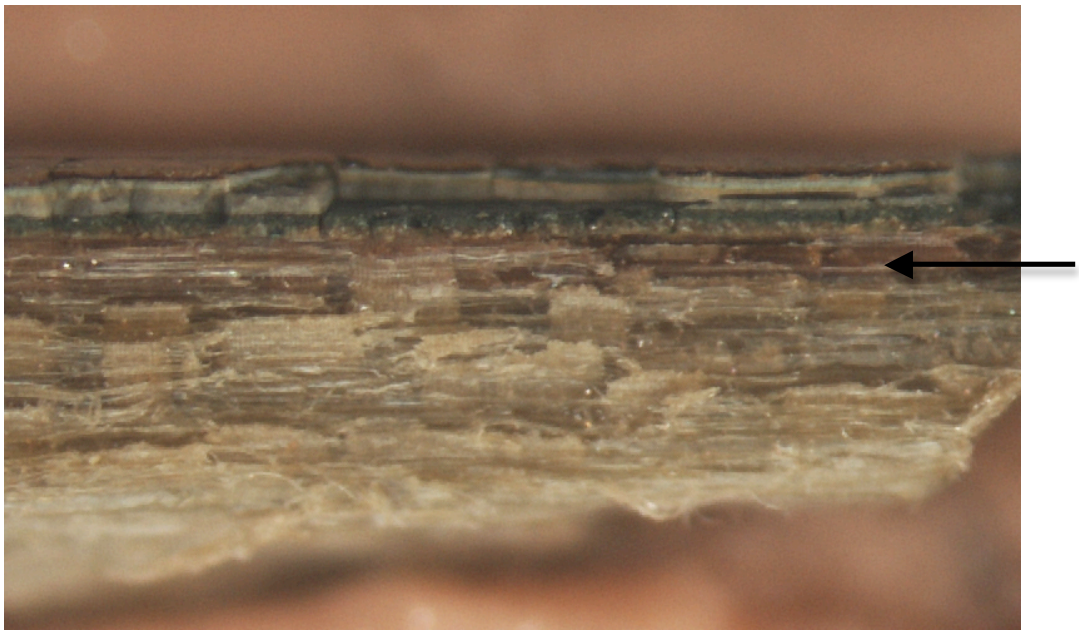


Figure 6: Sample JGH.101.1 (chair rail, 18x magnification) illustrates the saturation visible at the surface of the wood in this bulk sample.

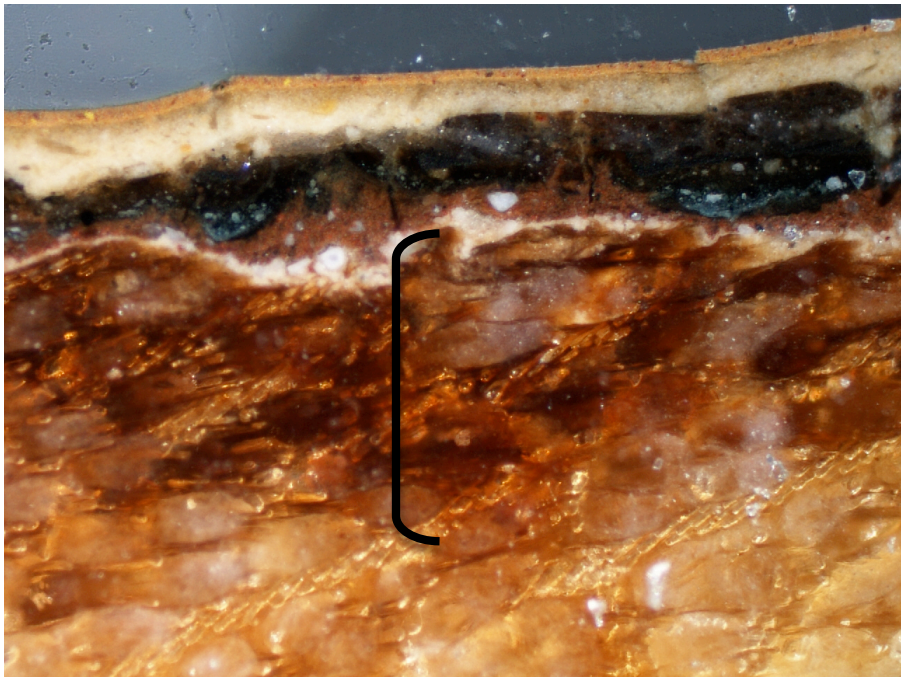


Figure 7: Sample JGH.201.5 (handrail, 100 x magnification – visible light). Note the darker, saturated surface of the wood under the cream layer.

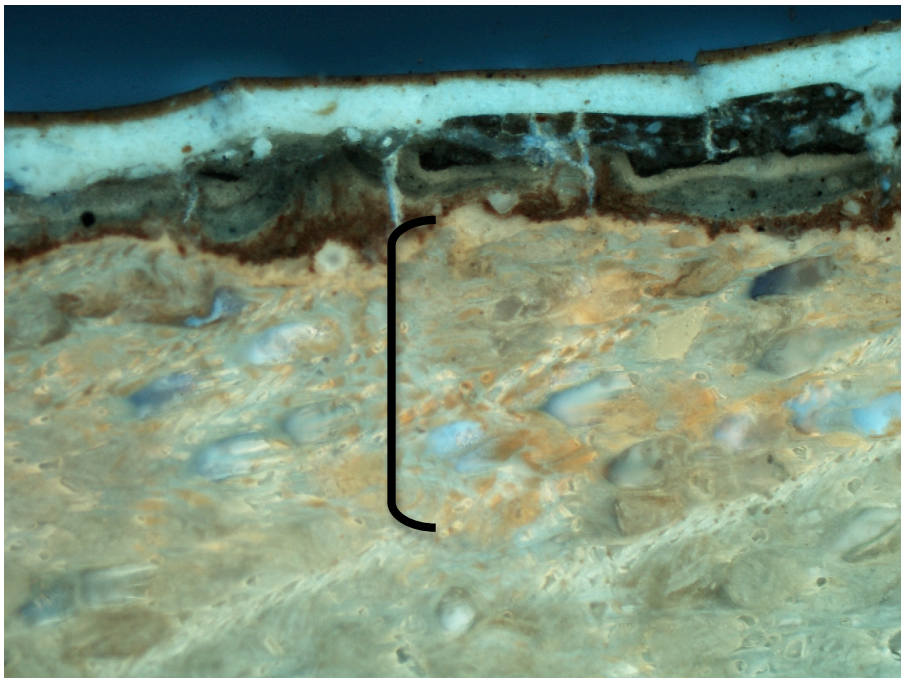


Figure 8: Sample JGH.201.5 (handrail, 100x magnification – UV light). The saturation visible in many samples in visible light auto-fluoresces orange and yellow in UV light.

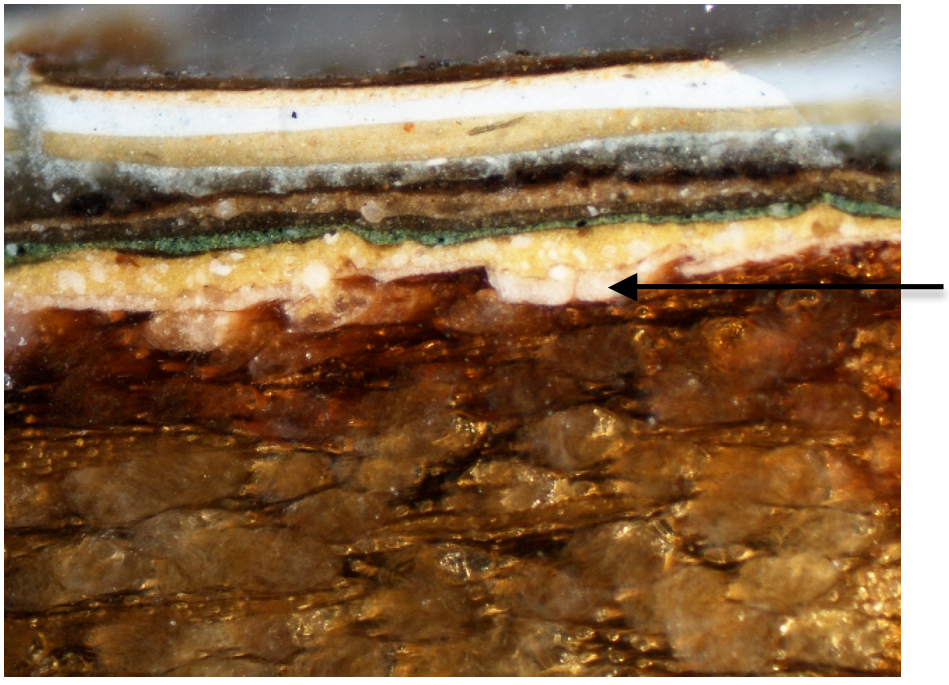


Figure 9: Sample JGH.101.1 (chair rail, 100x magnification – visible light). An early cream layer found in the wood pores or as a thin coating is believed to be a wood filler used to create a smooth wood surface.

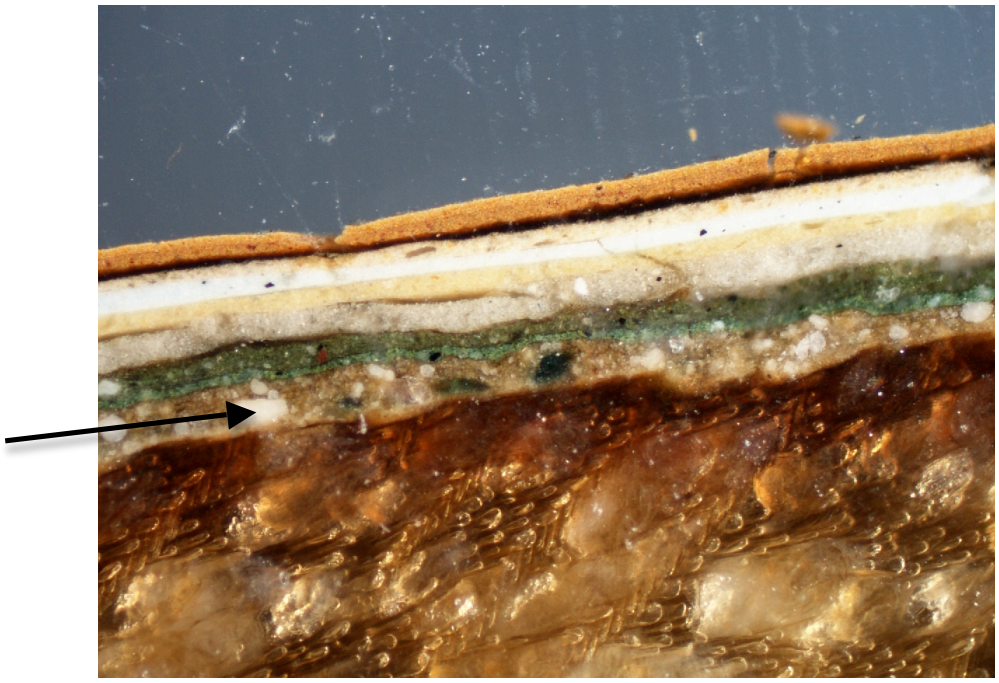


Figure 10: Sample JGH.101.1 (chair rail, 100x magnification – visible light). Note the large, variable size pigment particles in the first tan/light brown layer as compared to the more uniform yellow and brown layers later in the paint history.

Figure 11: Stair and wall paneling in the Hall. The doorway halfway up the stair is a later addition.

Figure 12: JGH.101.3 (baseboard, 100x magnification - visible light). Traces of brown paint are found in the wood pores on the surface of the wood.

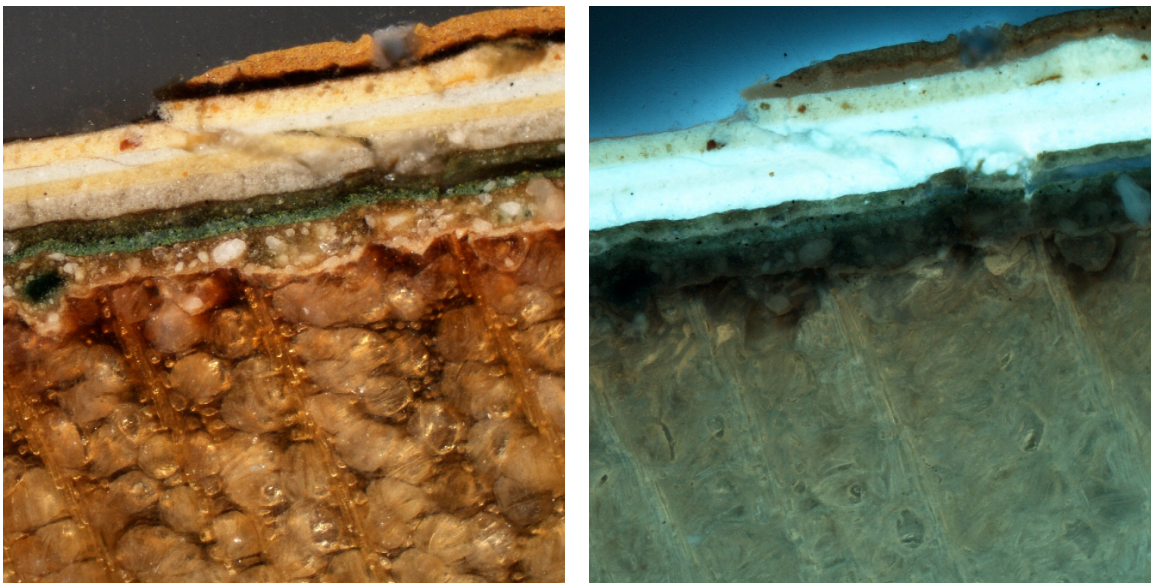


Figure 13: JGH.101.11 (wall paneling, 100x magnification- - visible light, left, and UV light, right). The earliest campaign is a light brown paint with coarsely ground pigment that does not auto-fluoresce.

Figure 14: JGH.101.7 (door, 100x magnification- - visible light, left, and UV light, right). This door shows evidence of graining, with a peachy-pink ground layer; thin, uneven red glaze; and possible traces of varnish.

Figure 15: Underside of the handrail at the top of the stairs, in the West Bedroom. The yellow here is similar to the yellow found on the baluster, and may be the original finish.

Figure 16: Door jamb in between the Parlor and the Hall, facing the Parlor.

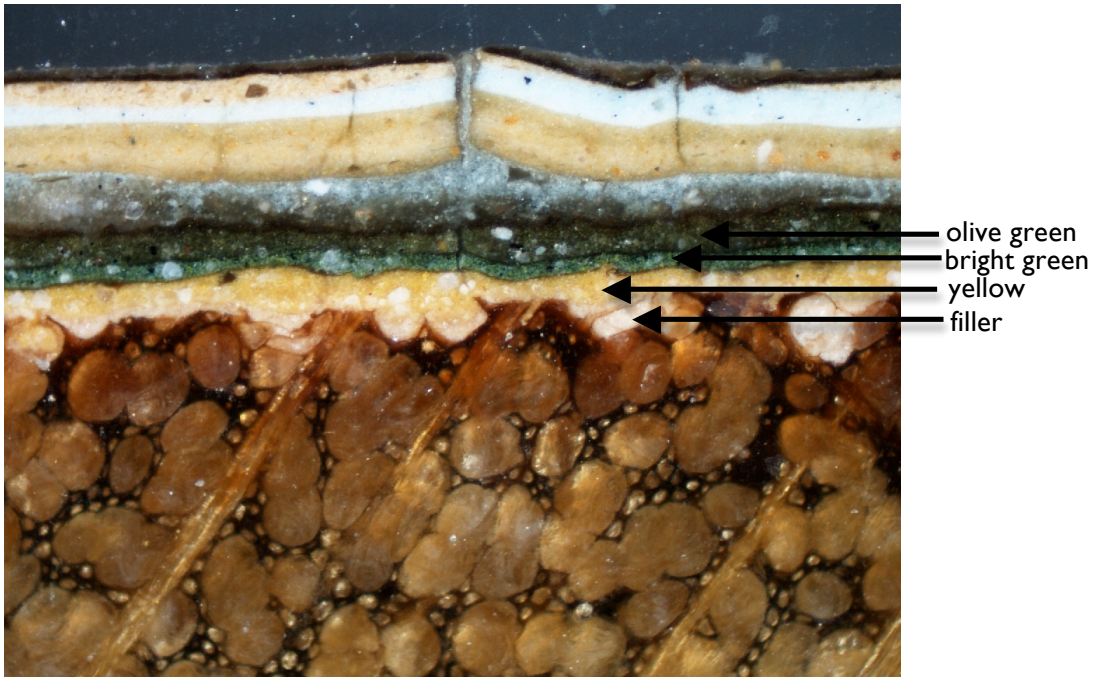


Figure 17: Sample JGH.102.2 (door surround, 100x magnification – visible light). The first finish campaign is a coarsely ground warm yellow, followed by several coarsely ground green layers. Note the cream filler in the pores and the dark saturation at the wood surface.

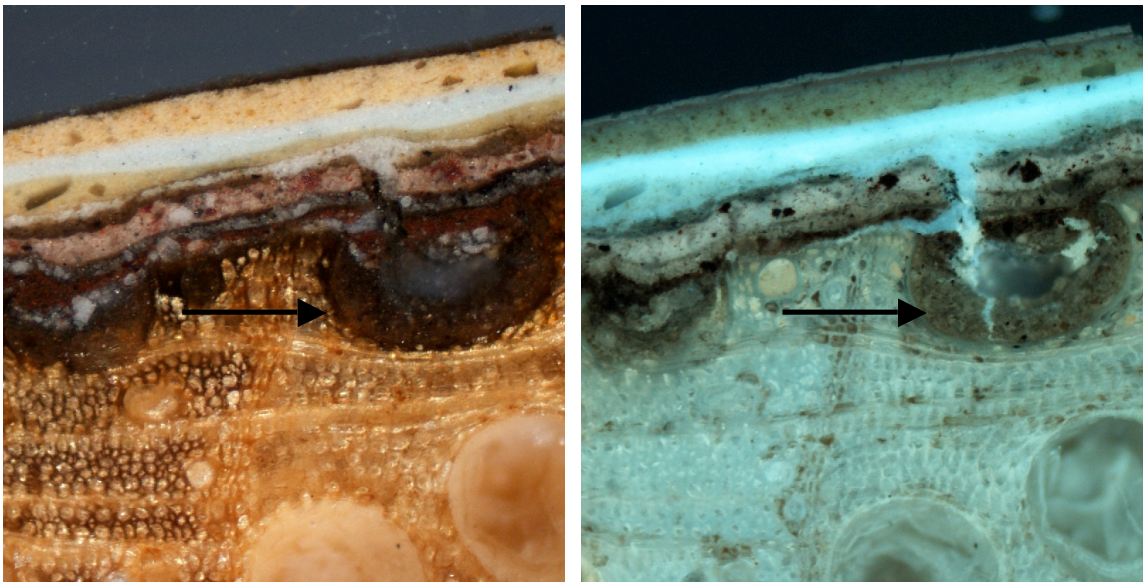


Figure 18: Sample JGH.102.5 (baseboard, 100x magnification - visible light, left, and UV light, right). An early brown paint is visible in the pores of the wood.

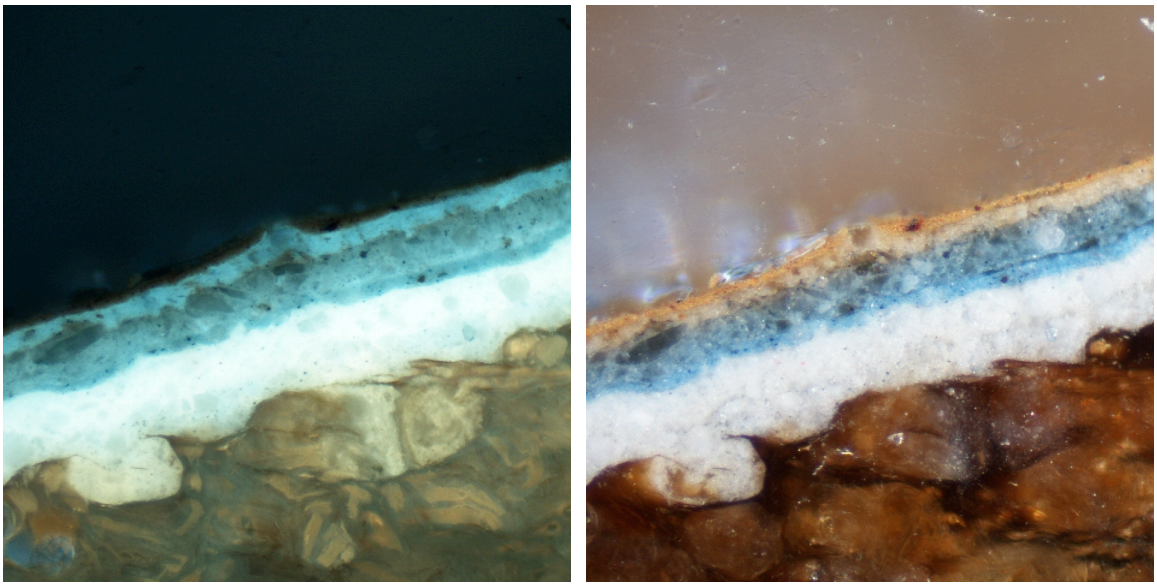


Figure 19: Sample 201.9 (chair rail, 200x magnification - visible light, left, and UV light, right). The first campaign is a white primer and white finish coat.

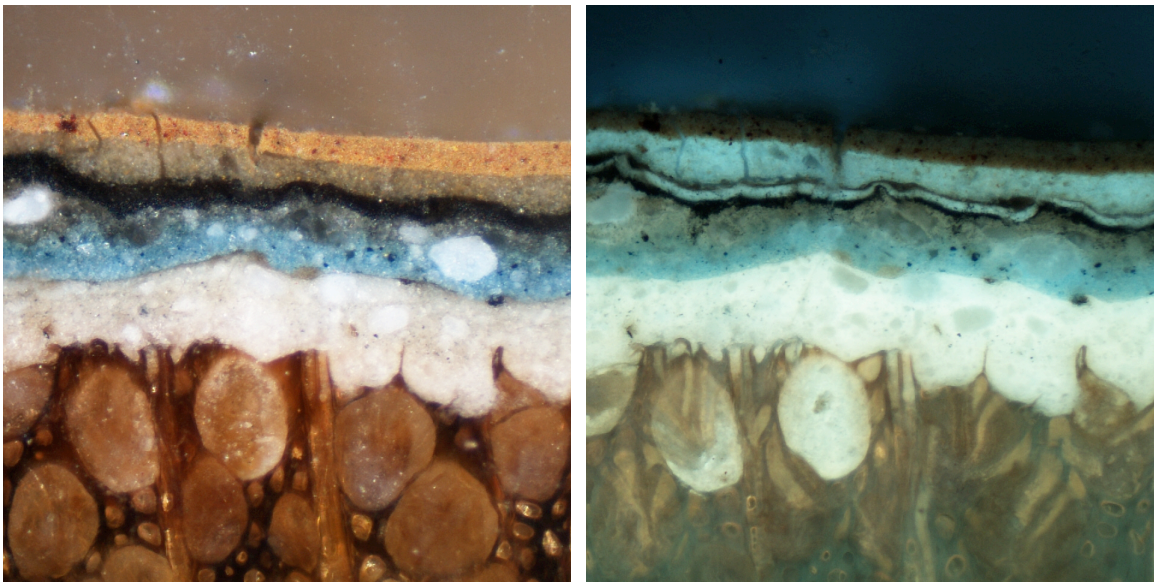


Figure 20: Sample 201.18 (mantel, flat header above firebox opening, 200x magnification - visible light, left, and UV light, right). The first campaign has a white finish. A blue, also found on other samples, is then followed by a varnish.

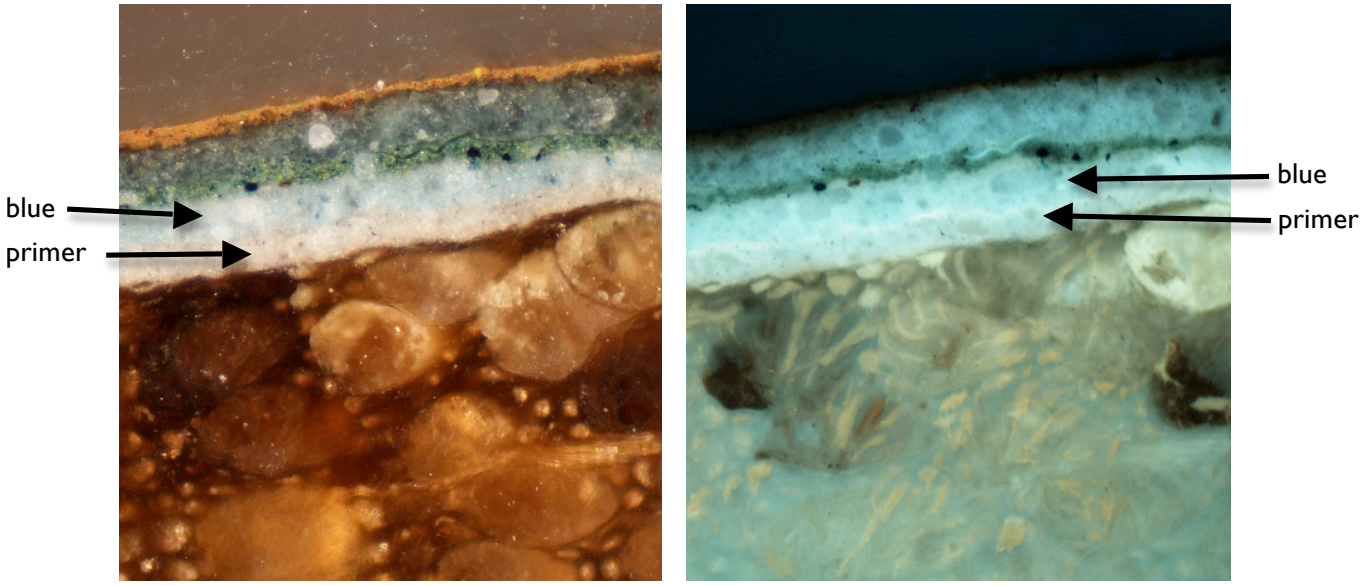


Figure 21: Sample 202.3 (chair rail, 200x magnification - visible light, left, and UV light, right). The first campaign is a white primer and blue finish coat.

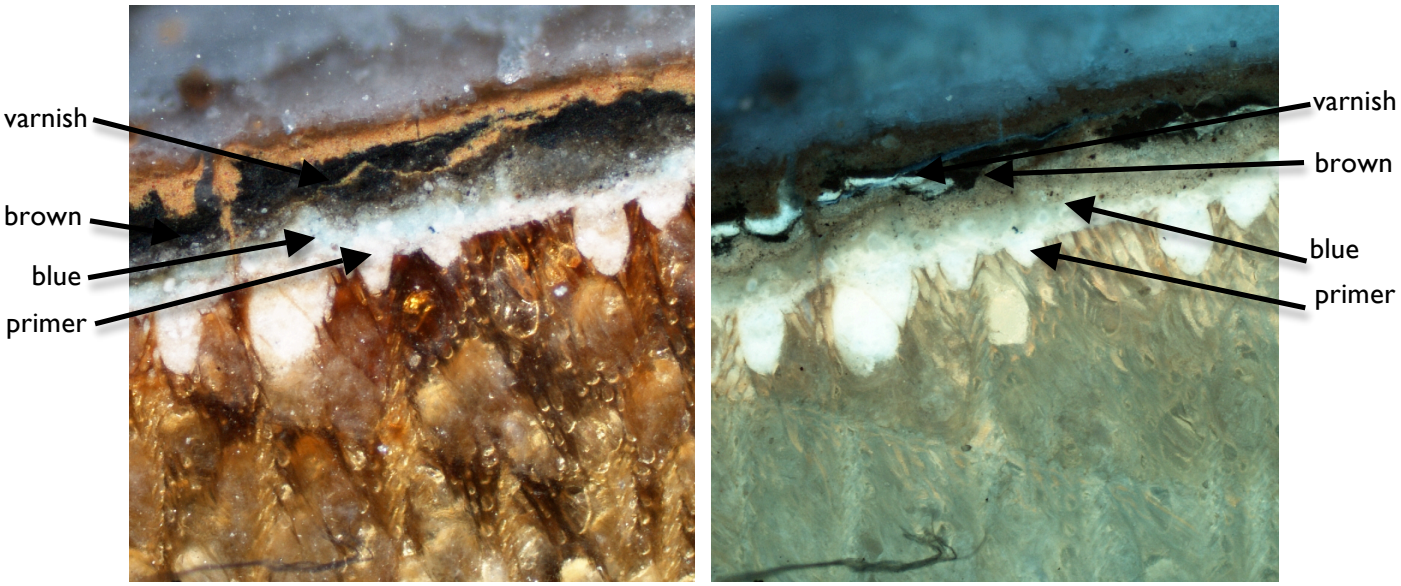


Figure 22: Sample 202.13 (mantel leg, 100x magnification - visible light, left, and UV light, right). The early layers appear similar to those on the other wood trim. Later layers include dark browns and varnish.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The samples removed from the John Gordon House indicate a generally simple color palette with the possibility of some decorative finishing for its earliest finish campaign. Unfortunately, missing original elements, like the walls and ceiling, prevent a full understanding of the original appearance of the building's interior.

The earliest existing finish found in the examined samples indicate that the wood trim in each room (chair rail, window casing, door surround) was painted in matching colors unique to that room – the trim in the Parlor (Room 102) was finished in a warm yellow, the Hall (Room 101) in a light brown, the West Bedroom (Room 201) in white and the East Bedroom (Room 202) in blue. Brown baseboards were found throughout the house.

The two interior doors were finished differently on either side: the side facing west was likely grained, while the side facing east was finished to match the trim of that particular room. The staircase, which was open to the two western rooms, was finished with dark reddish brown inside stringers, rails, and posts, but had warm yellow balusters.

The recommended paint colors for restoration are provided below. Specific color matches have been made to both the standardized Munsell color system and the commercial Benjamin Moore paint palette. Please note that any attempt to reproduce these pages, including printing from the electronic version of the report, will distort the color of the provided chips. Only the actual color chip or notation should be used for paint replication purposes.

<u>Baseboards (All Rooms)</u>
Finish: dark brown
Munsell Color Match: 10YR 2/2
Benjamin Moore Color Match: Bittersweet Chocolate, 2114-10

<u>Chair Rail, Door Surround, Window Casing, Paneling, Room 101</u>
Finish: light brown
Munsell Color Match: 7.5YR 5/4
Benjamin Moore Color Match: Vero Beach Tan, 1085

Chair Rail, Door, Door Surround, Window Casing, Room 102
Finish: warm yellow
Munsell Color Match: between 10YR 7/10 and 2.5Y 7/8
Benjamin Moore Color Match: Glen Ridge Gold, 301

Chair Rail, Door Surround, Window Casing, Mantel, Room 201
Finish: off-white
Munsell Color Match: between 5Y 8/1 and 5Y 9.1
Benjamin Moore Color Match: Morning Dew, OC-140

Chair Rail, Door, Door Surround, Window Casing, Mantel, Room 202
Finish: blue
Munsell Color Match: 7.5B 6/2
Benjamin Moore Color Match: Franklin Lakes, 1643

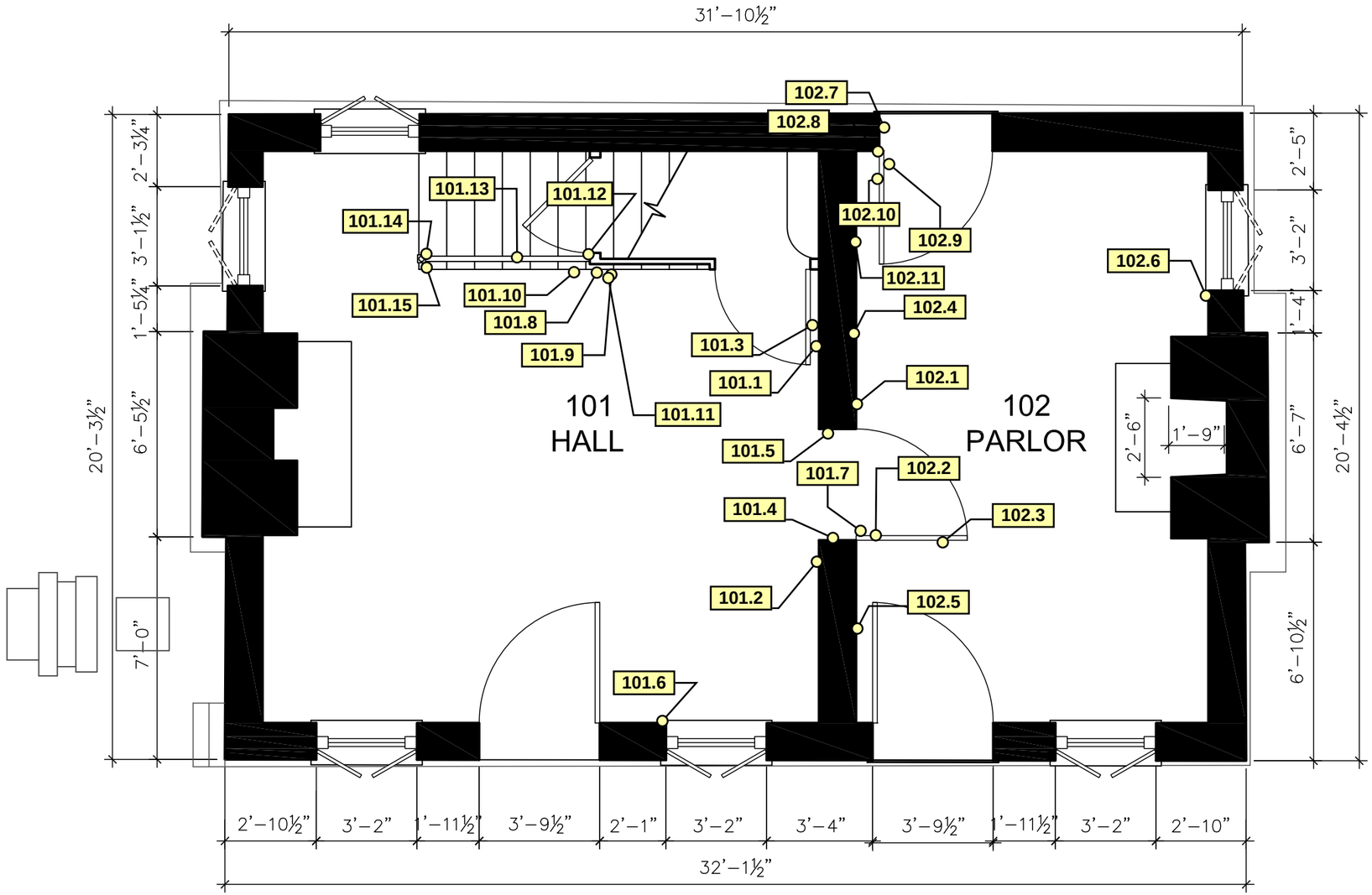
Door, Room 101 and 201
Finish: decorative finish
Munsell Color Match: n/a
Benjamin Moore Color Match: n/a

Staircase Handrail, Posts, Skirtboard, Landing Tread (Rooms 101 and 201)
Finish: dark reddish brown
Munsell Color Match: 2.5YR 3/4
Benjamin Moore Color Match: Chocolate Sundae, 2113-10

Staircase Balusters (Rooms 101 and 201)
Finish: warm yellow
Munsell Color Match: between 10YR 7/10 and 2.5Y 7/8
Benjamin Moore Color Match: Glen Ridge Gold, 301

Appendix A
Sample List

JOHN GORDON HOUSE				
Sample List				
Sample No.	***Room***	***Location***	***Description***	***Notes***
JGH.101.01	Hall	chair rail	central wall, north of door	
JGH.101.02	Hall	baseboard	central wall, south of door	
JGH.101.03	Hall	baseboard	central wall, north of door	
JGH.101.04	Hall	door jamb	inset panel, south jamb	
JGH.101.05	Hall	door jamb	inset panel, north jamb	
JGH.101.06	Hall	window casing	south window, west side	
JGH.101.07	Hall	door	hall face, hinge stile	
JGH.101.08	Hall	stair string	under piece added w/wall addition,1907	current paint is blue
JGH.101.09	Hall	stair string	adjacent to 101.8 but exposed	
JGH.101.10	Hall	paneling	raised panel	
JGH.101.11	Hall	paneling	inset panel	
JGH.101.12	Hall	baluster	room face	
JGH.101.13	Hall	handrail	side facing room	
JGH.101.14	Hall	newel post	just under handrail	
JGH.101.15	Hall	newel post	corner facing room and handrail	
JGH.102.01	Parlor	chair rail	central wall, north of door	
JGH.102.02	Parlor	door surround	central wall, north of door	
JGH.102.03	Parlor	door	central door, hinge stile	
JGH.102.04	Parlor	baseboard	central wall, north of door	
JGH.102.05	Parlor	baseboard	central wall, south of door	
JGH.102.06	Parlor	window casing	east window, south side	
JGH.102.07	Parlor	exterior door jamb	west side	
JGH.102.08	Parlor	exterior door	interior side, corner	
JGH.102.09	Parlor	exterior door	exterior side, hinge stile	
JGH.102.10	Parlor	exterior door	interior side, hinge stile	
JGH.102.11	Parlor	chair rail cap	central wall, north of door	
JGH.201.01	West Bed.	baluster	side facing stairs	only baluster with old paint?
JGH.201.02	West Bed.	skirtboard		
JGH.201.03	West Bed.	landing tread	edge of tread, under balustrade at top of stairs	
JGH.201.04	West Bed.	handrail	underside	
JGH.201.05	West Bed.	handrail	top	
JGH.201.06	West Bed.	newel post		
JGH.201.07	West Bed.	bottom rail		
JGH.201.08	West Bed.	stair nosing		
JGH.201.09	West Bed.	chair rail	central wall	
JGH.201.10	West Bed.	chair rail cap	central wall	
JGH.201.11	West Bed.	baseboard cap	west wall	
JGH.201.12	West Bed.	baseboard	west wall	
JGH.201.13	West Bed.	window casing	top portion	mldg. above is replacement
JGH.201.14	West Bed.	door jamb	center door, inset panel	
JGH.201.15	West Bed.	door	hinge stile	
JGH.201.15b	West Bed.	door surround	south side	
JGH.201.16	West Bed.	door	raised panel	
JGH.201.17	West Bed.	mantel	plinth of pilaster (mantel leg)	
JGH.201.18	West Bed.	mantel	flat header above firebox opening	
JGH.201.19	West Bed.	mantel	top of shelf	
JGH.201.20	West Bed.	mantel	crown molding under shelf	
JGH.201.21	West Bed.	mantel	vertical flat pilaster, north side	
JGH.201.22	West Bed.	mantel	vertical flat side piece, south side	
JGH.201.23	West Bed.	mantel	nose of mantelshelf	
JGH.202.01	East Bed.	window casing	outer molding, south window	
JGH.202.02	East Bed.	chair rail cap	north wall	
JGH.202.03	East Bed.	chair rail	flat molding, north wall	
JGH.202.04	East Bed.	baseboard cap		
JGH.202.05	East Bed.	baseboard		
JGH.202.06	East Bed.	door	hinge stile	
JGH.202.07	East Bed.	door surround	south side	
JGH.202.08	East Bed.	mantel	flat header above firebox opening	
JGH.202.09	East Bed.	mantel	nosing of shelf	
JGH.202.10	East Bed.	mantel	cap above firebox opening	
JGH.202.11	East Bed.	mantel	flat portion of crown molding under shelf	
JGH.202.12	East Bed.	mantel	top of mantelshelf	
JGH.202.13	East Bed.	mantel	vertical flat mantel leg	
JGH.202.14	East Bed.	mantel	molding on header above firebox opening	



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

6" 2' 4' 10'
0' 1' 3' 5'

COMPASS NORTH
PLAN NORTH

NOTE: THE GORDON HOUSE FACES SOUTHEAST BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT THE HOUSE IS DESCRIBED AS FACING SOUTH.

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

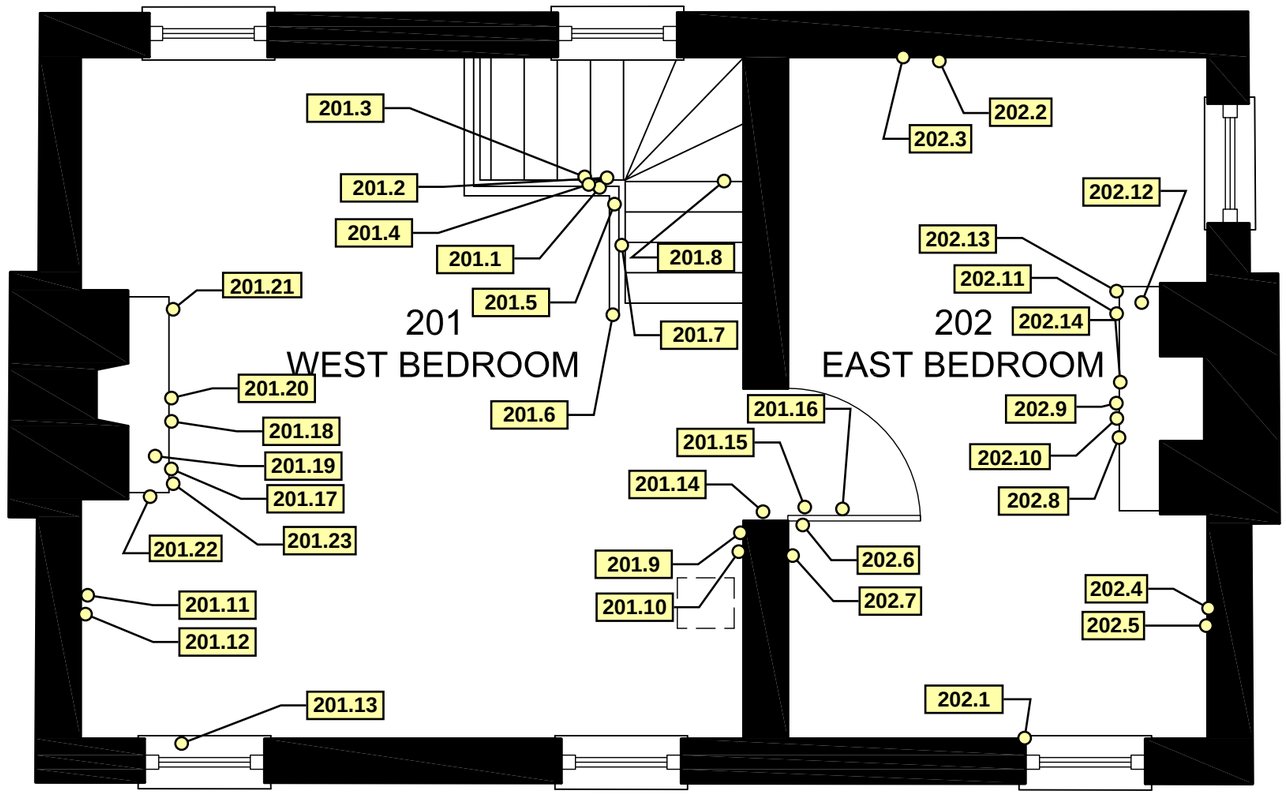
JOHN GORDON HOUSE

- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 2 OF 8 SHEETS



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

6" 2' 4' 10'
0' 1' 3' 5'

NOTE: THE GORDON HOUSE FACES SOUTHEAST BUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT THE HOUSE IS DESCRIBED AS FACING SOUTH.

RECORDED BY
Joseph K. Oppermann,
drawn by Rebecca McCormick

JOHN GORDON HOUSE

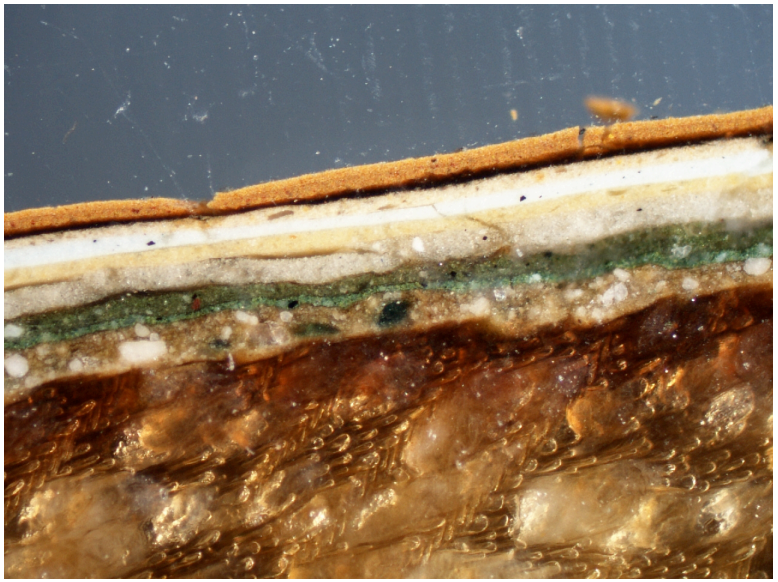
- NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, TENNESSEE -

DATE: MARCH 2010

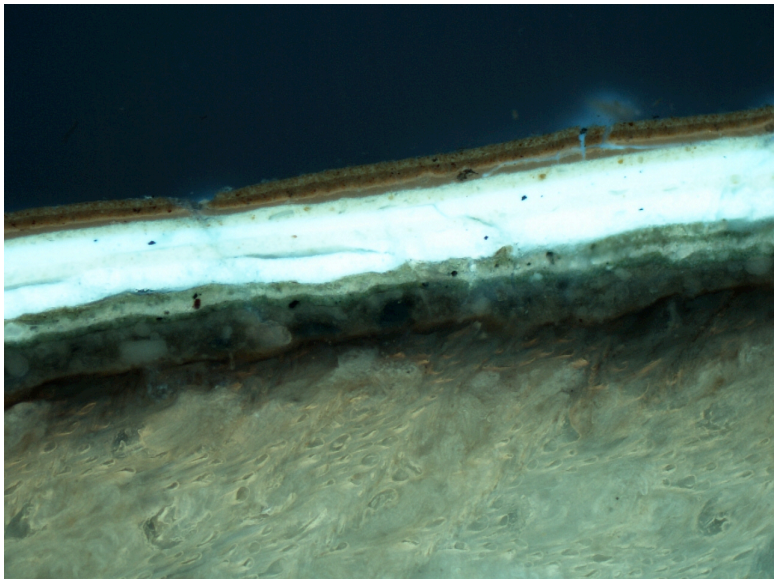
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

APPENDIX B
AS-FOUND DRAWINGS
SHEET 3 OF 8 SHEETS

Appendix B
Photomicrographs



Visible light, 100x

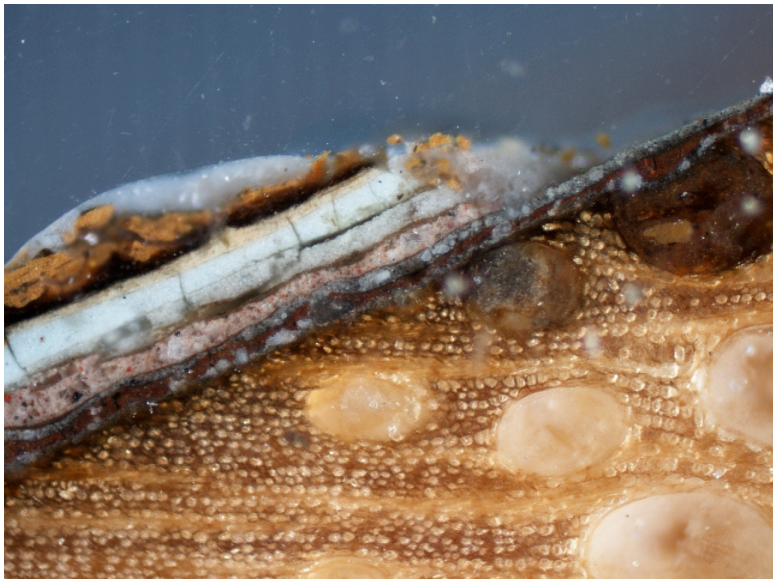


UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.1
LOCATION:	Chair rail

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Sat. in wood; autofl. slightly
1	Light Brown	Green pigment within; coarse
Dirt		
2	Green	Coarse
Dirt		
3	Green	Coarse
Dirt		
4	Cream	
Dirt/Sep.		
5	Yellow-peach	
6	White	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
7	Light peach	
8	Red-brown	
9	Orange-brown	
10	Orange-brown	



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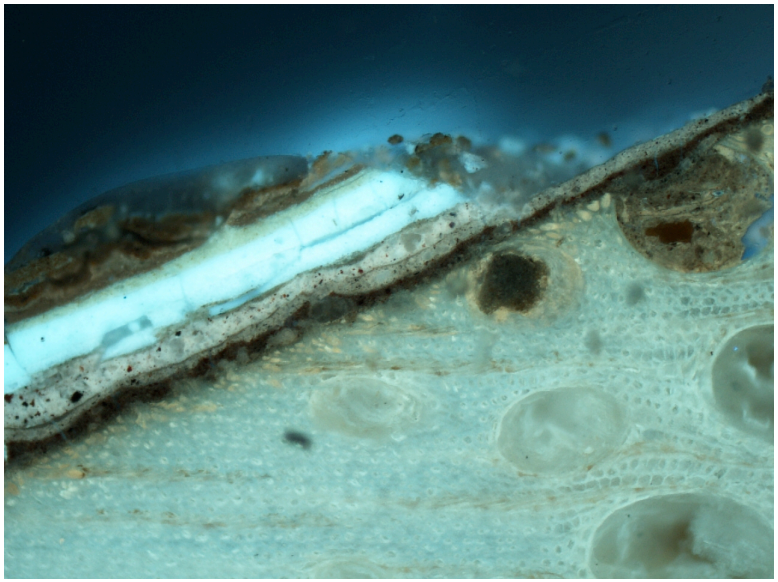
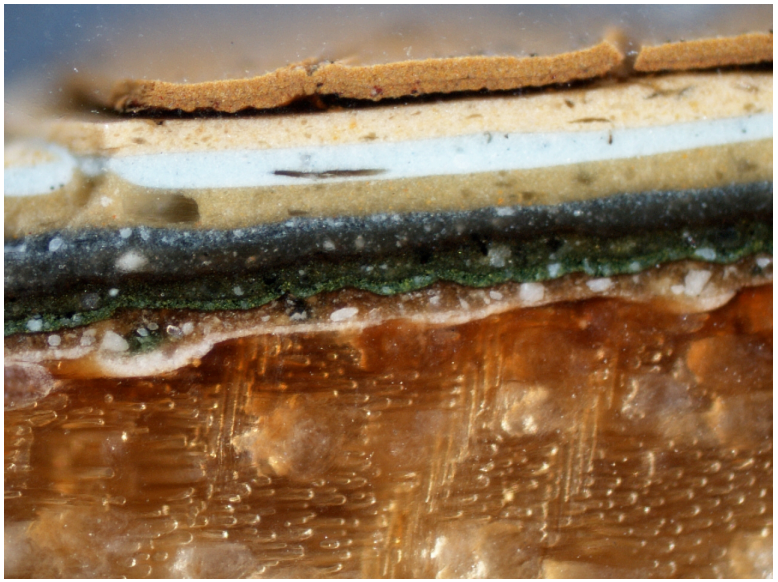


UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.3
LOCATION:	baseboard

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	
1	Brown	Only in pores
2	Blue-gray	Thin
Dirt		
3	Brown	
Dirt		
4	Gray-blue	
Dirt		
5	Pink	
Dirt		
6	Gray/Light blue	
Dirt/sep		
7	Light aqua blue	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
8	Yellow-peach	
9	Brown	
10	Brown	
11	Orange-brown	
Dirt/sep.		
12	Orange-brown	



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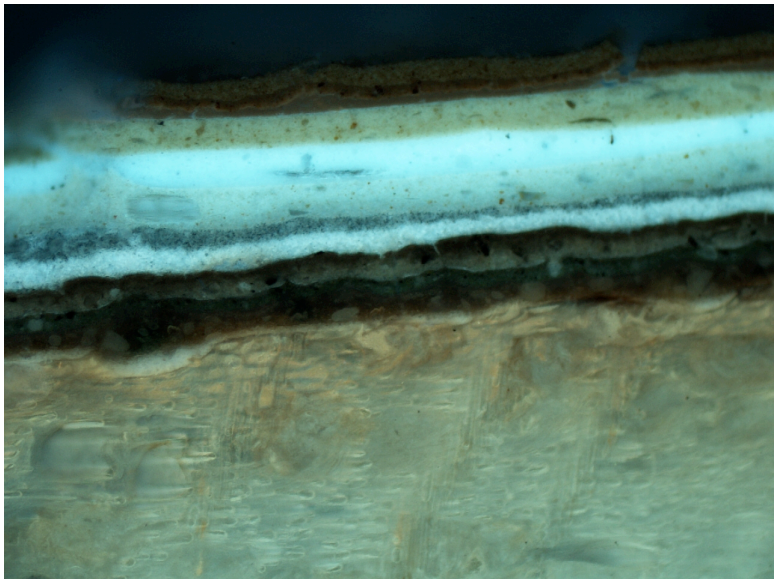
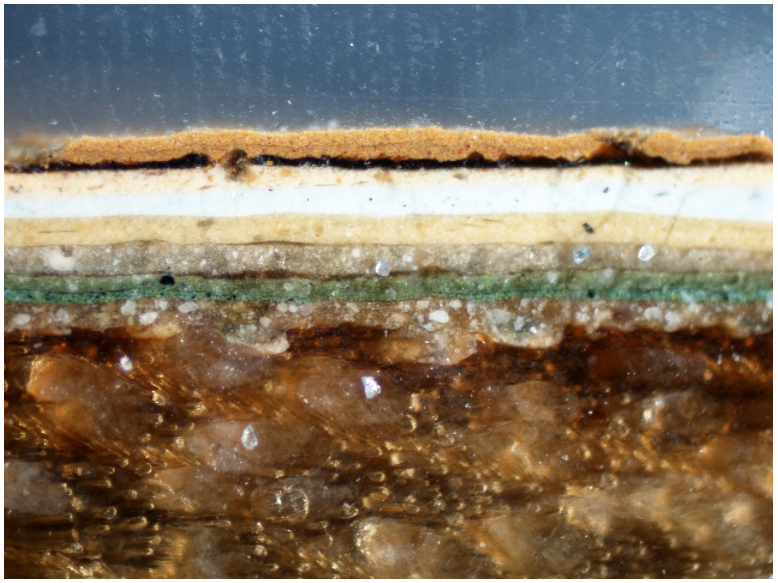


UV Light, 100x

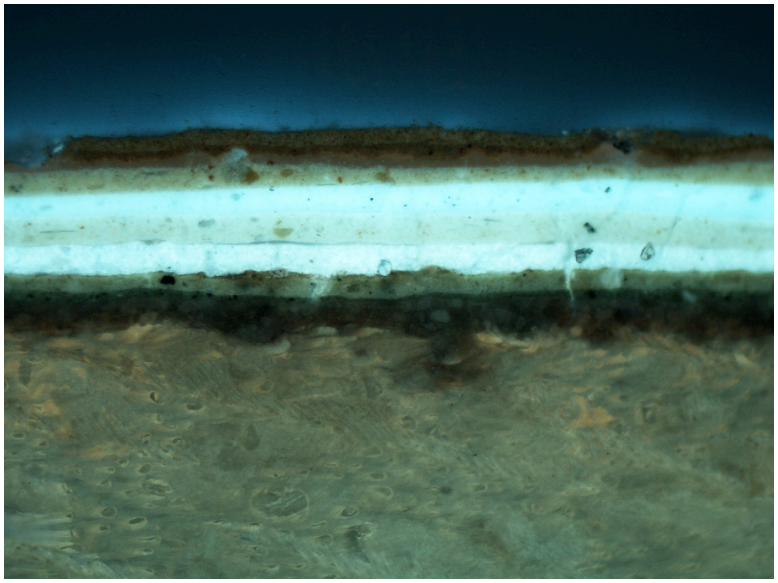
SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.5
LOCATION:	Door jamb

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Sat. in surface; autofl. orange
1	Cream	Thin, in crevices 2.5-5Y 9/2
2	Light Brown	Coarse
Dirt		
3	Green	Coarse
Dirt		
4	Green	Coarse
5	Brown	
Dirt		
6	Gray	
7	Blue	
8	Peachy-tan	
9	White	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
10	Peach	
11	Brown	
12	Orange-brown	
Dirt		
13	Orange-brown	



Visible light, 100x

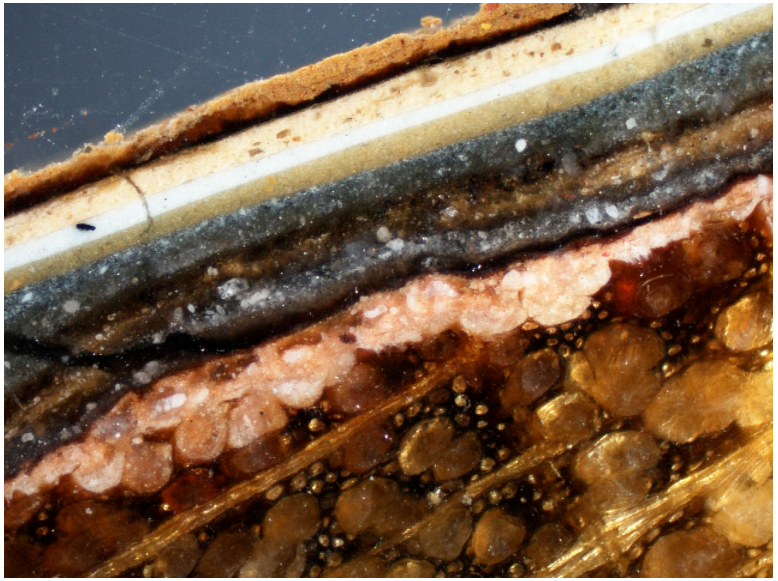


UV Light, 100x

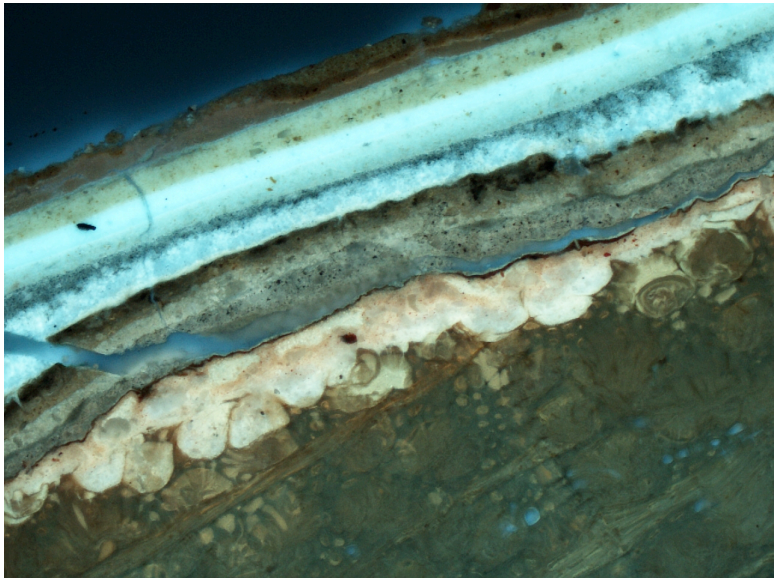
SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.6
LOCATION:	Window casing

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Sat. in surface; autofl. orange
1	Cream	Traces only, in crevices
2	Light brown	Coarse
3	Green	Thin in places
4	Yellowish Green	
5	Brown	Traces
Dirt		
6	Gray	
Dirt/sep.		
7	Yellow-peach	
8	White	
9	Peach	
10	Brown	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
11	Orange-brown	
Dirt		
12	Orange-brown	



Visible light, 100x

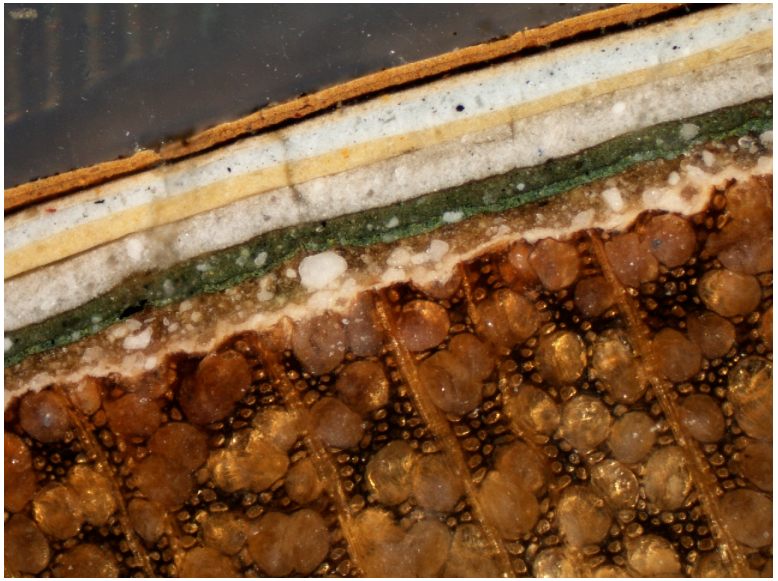


UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.7
LOCATION:	Door

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red sat. in surface; autofl.
1	Cream	Thin, in pores, 5Y 9/2
2	Peachy-pink	
3	Red	Very thin, decorative?
Dirt/Sep.		
4	Gray	
Dirt		
5	Light brown	
6	Brown	
Dirt		
7	Gray	
8	Gray-blue	
9	Yellow-peach	
10	White	
11	Peach	
12	Brown	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
13	Orange-brown	
Dirt		
14	Orange-brown	



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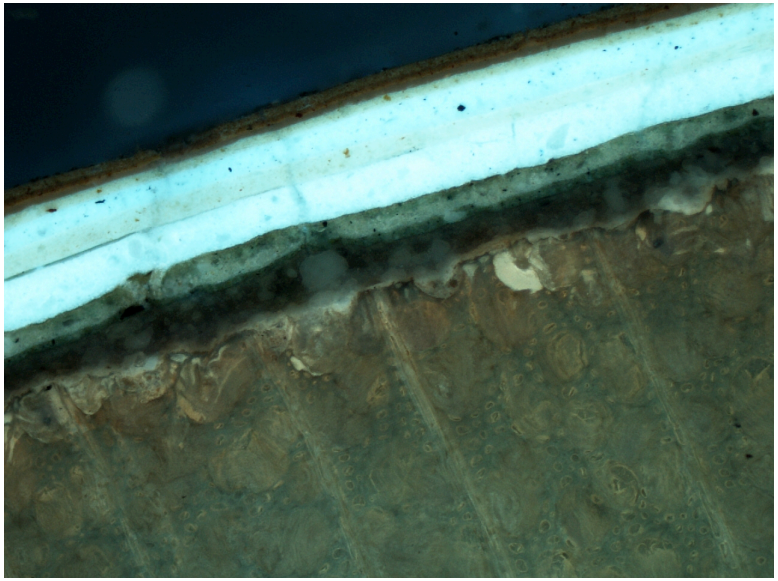
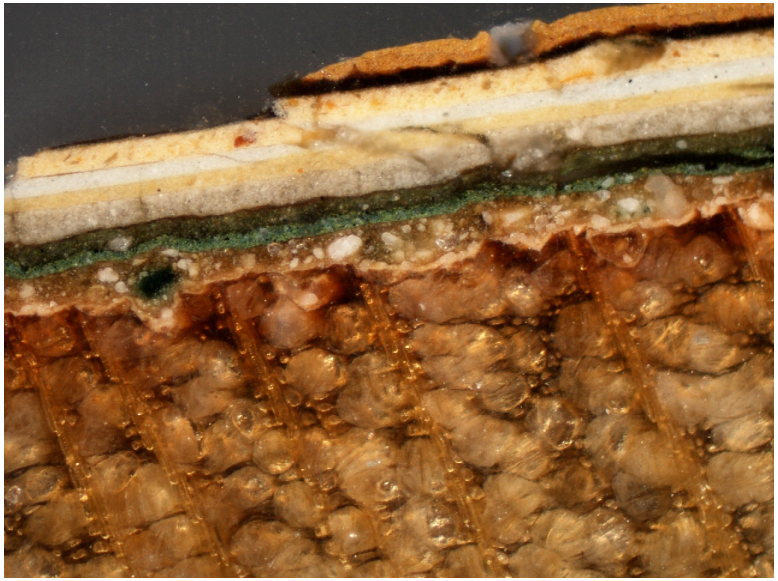


UV Light, 100x

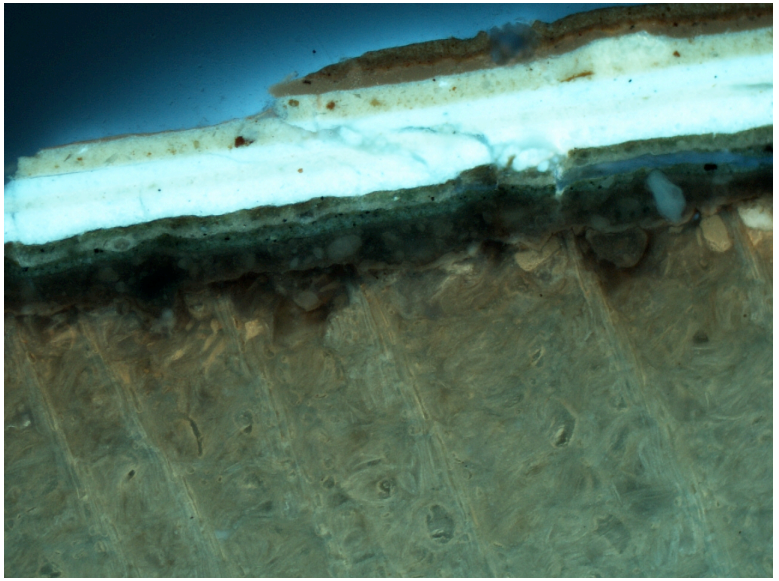
SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.9
LOCATION:	Stair string

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red sat. into surface; autofl. orange
1	Cream	Thin, uneven
2	Light brown	Very coarse
Dirt		
3	Green	Coarse
4	Yellow-green	Coarse
Dirt		
5	Whitish	
Dirt/Sep.		
6	Yellow-peach	
7	White	
8	Light peach	
9	Brown	
10	Orange-brown	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Dirt		
11	Orange-brown	



Visible light, 100x

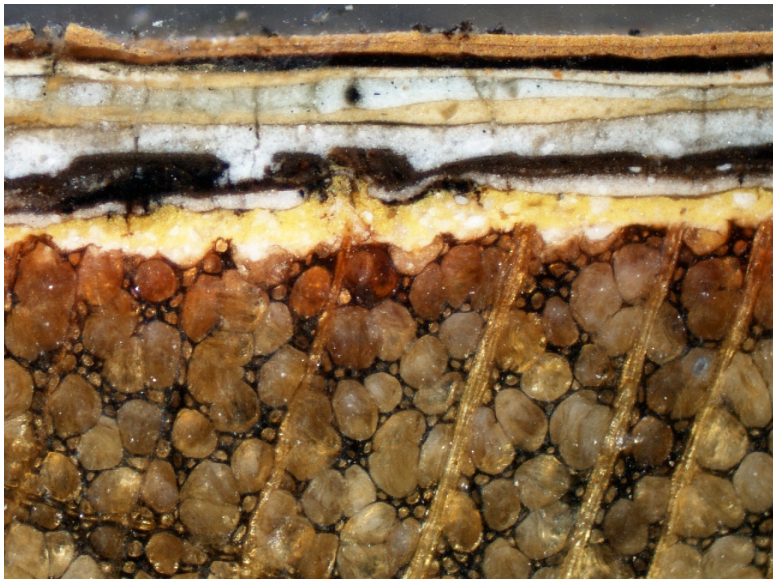


UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.11
LOCATION:	paneling

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red sat. into surface; some autofl.
1	Cream	Very thin & uneven
Dirt		
2	Light brown	With green blobs; very coarse
Dirt		
3	Green	
Dirt		
4	Green	
Dirt		
5	Whitish	
6	Yellow-peach	
7	White	
8	Peach	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
9	Brown	
10	Orange-brown	
Dirt		
11	Orange-brown	



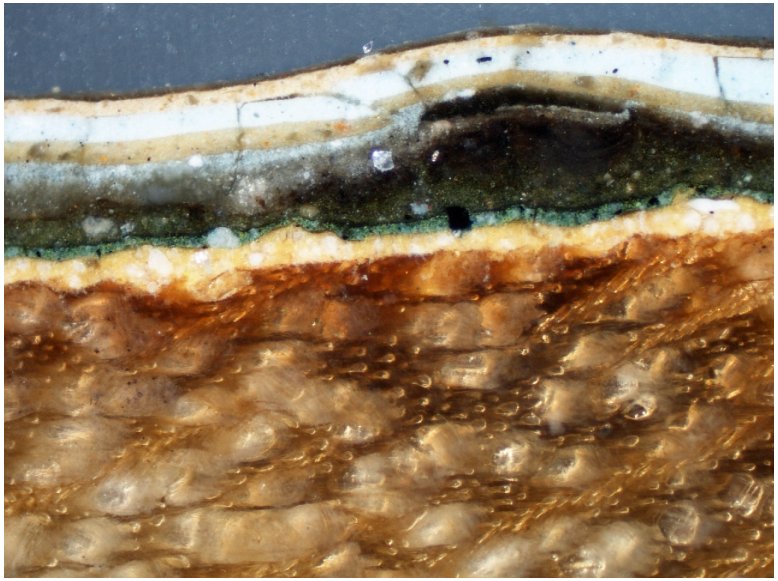
Visible light, 100x

UV Light, 100x

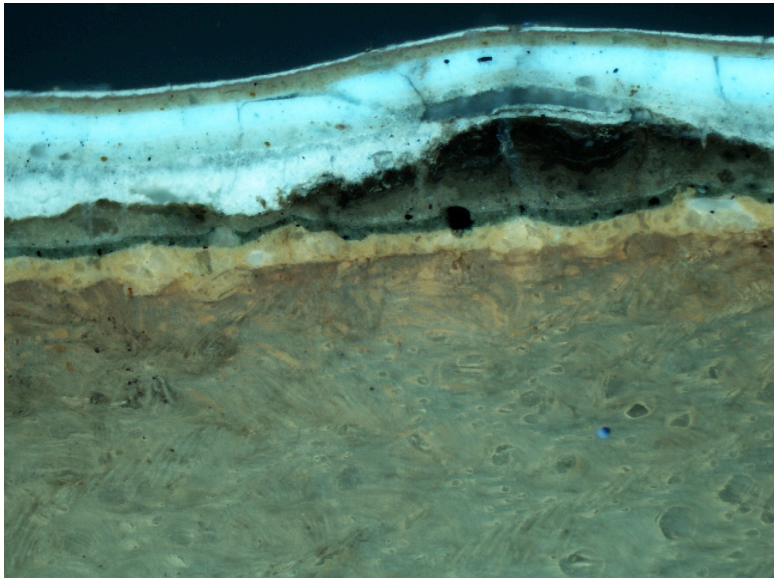
SAMPLE NO:	JGH.101.12
LOCATION:	baluster

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red sat. in wood; autofl. orange
1	Cream	Only in crevices
2	Yellow	Coarse
Dirt		
3	Whitish	
Dirt		
4	Brown	Varnish?
5	Brown	
6	Whitish	
Dirt		
7	Peach	
8	Whitish	
Dirt		
9	Light peach	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
10	Brown	
11	Orange-brown	
Dirt		
12	Orange-brown	



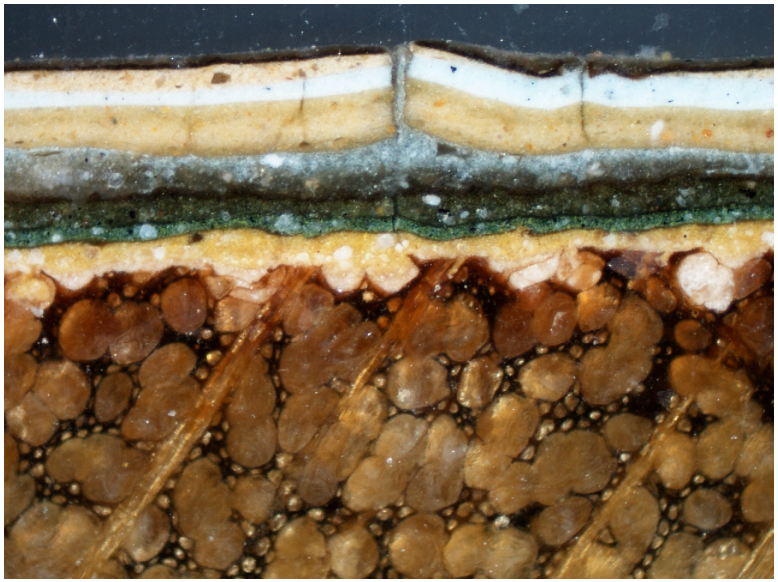
Visible light, 100x



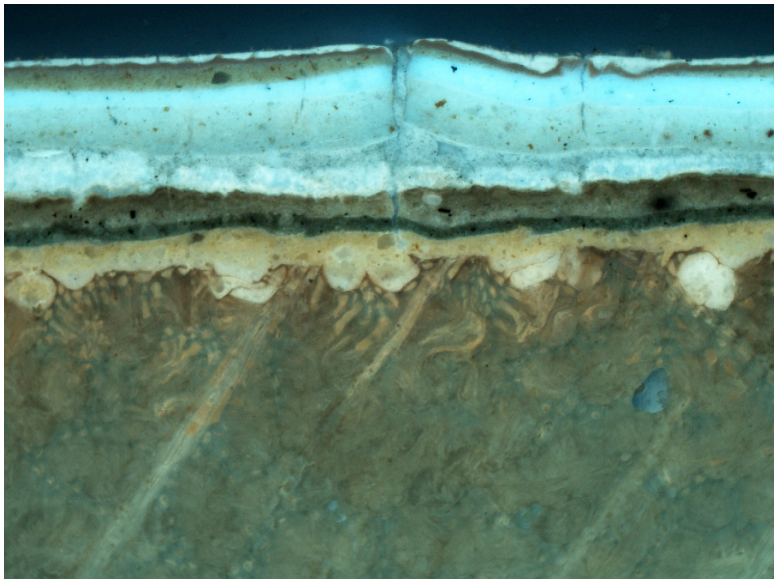
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.1
LOCATION:	Chair rail

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturation at surface but no pigment particles; autofl. slightly
1	Yellow	Coarsely ground
Dirt		
2	Green	Thin
Dirt		
3	Yellow-green	
4	Brown	
Dirt		Potentially a different brown layer
5	Gray	
6	Blue-gray	
Dirt		
7	Peach	
8	White	
9	Light peach	
Dirt		
10	Brown	Current graining
11	Brown/Varnish	Current graining



Visible light, 100x

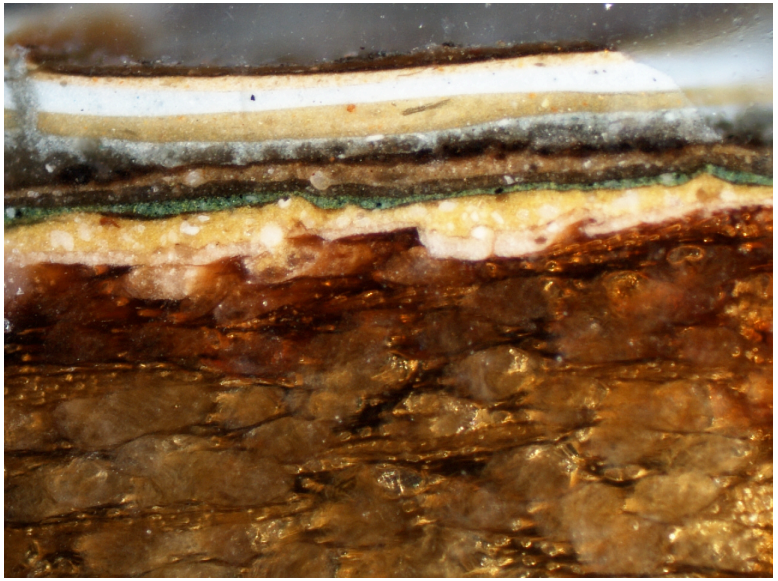


UV Light, 100x

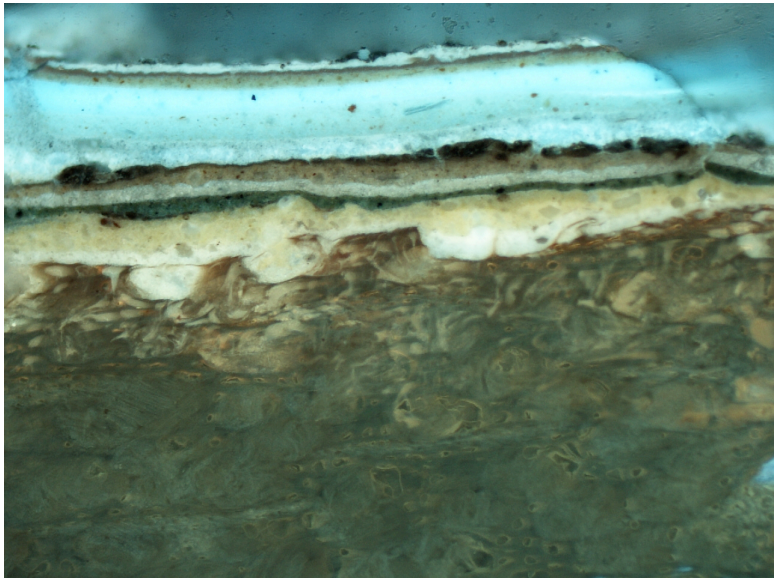
SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.2
LOCATION:	Door surround

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Sat. surface; no pigment; autofl. slightly
1	Cream	Traces, in pores; some sep. in areas
2	Yellow	Coarse pigment
Dirt/Sep.		
3	Green	Coarse
4	Green	Coarse
5	Brown	
6	Gray	Coarse
7	Blue-gray	
8	Peach	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
9	White	
10	Light peach	
11	Brown	Current graining
12	Brown/Varnish	Current graining



Visible light, 100x

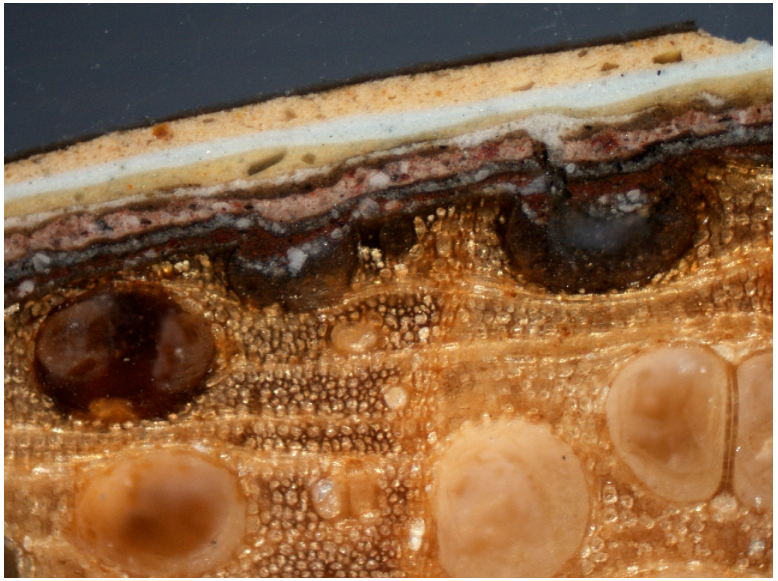


UV Light, 100x

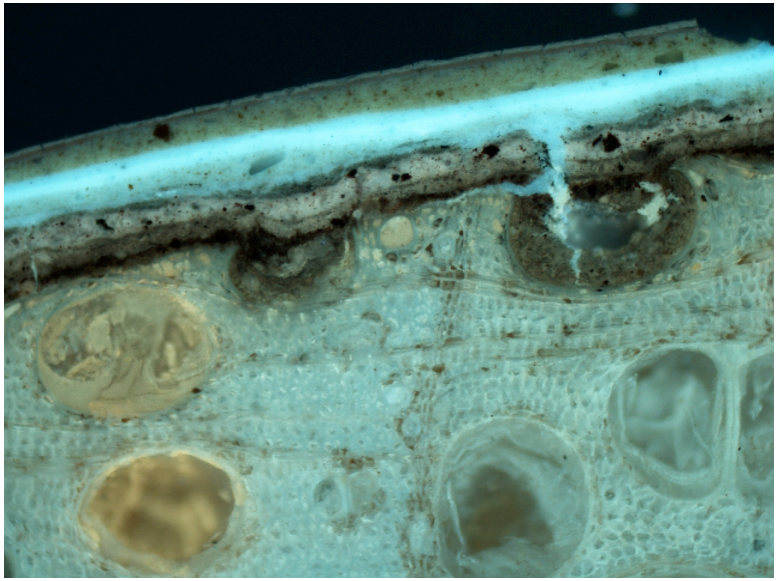
SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.3
LOCATION:	door

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red sat. into wood; autofl. orange
1	Cream	Traces in crevices, thin
Dirt/Sep.		Between cream and yellow
2	Yellow	Coarsely ground
Dirt		
3	Greenish brown	
4	Brown	
5	Light brown	Coarse
6	Brown	
7	Gray	
8	Peach	

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
9	Light blue	
10	Light peach	
11	Brown	Current graining
12	Brown/Varnish	Current graining



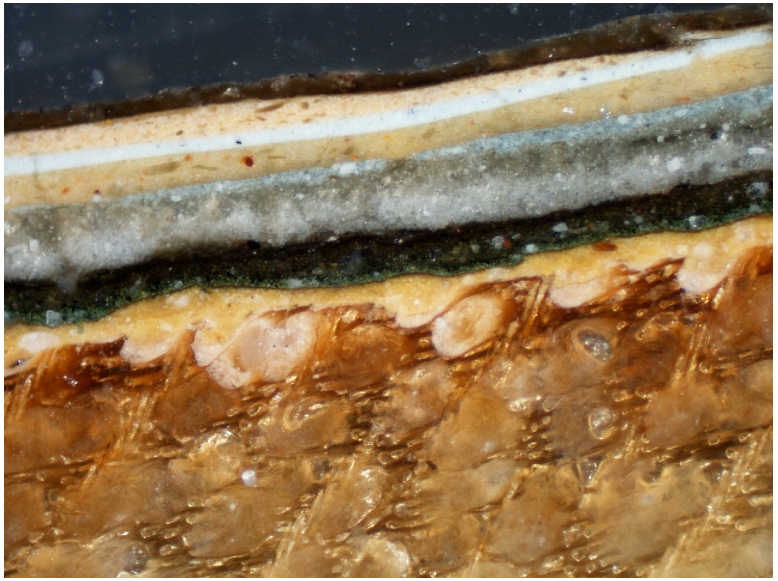
Visible light, 100x



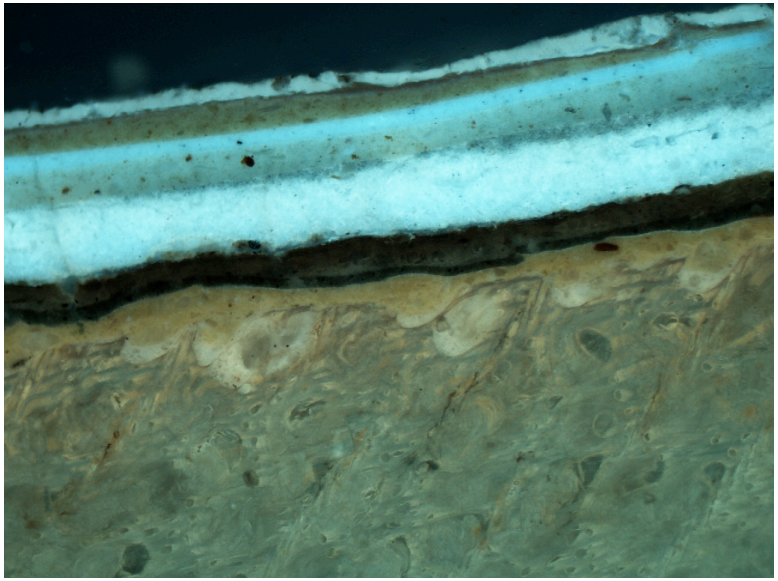
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.5
LOCATION:	baseboard

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	
1	Brown	In crevices only
2	Blue-gray	Coarser than 2nd blue-gray
3	Red-brown	
Dirt		
4	Blue-gray	
Dirt		
5	Pink	Multicolored pigments
6	Brown	Partial; damaged
7	Whitish	
Dirt		
8	Peach	
9	White	
10	Light peach	
11	Brown	Current graining
12	Brown/Varnish	Current graining



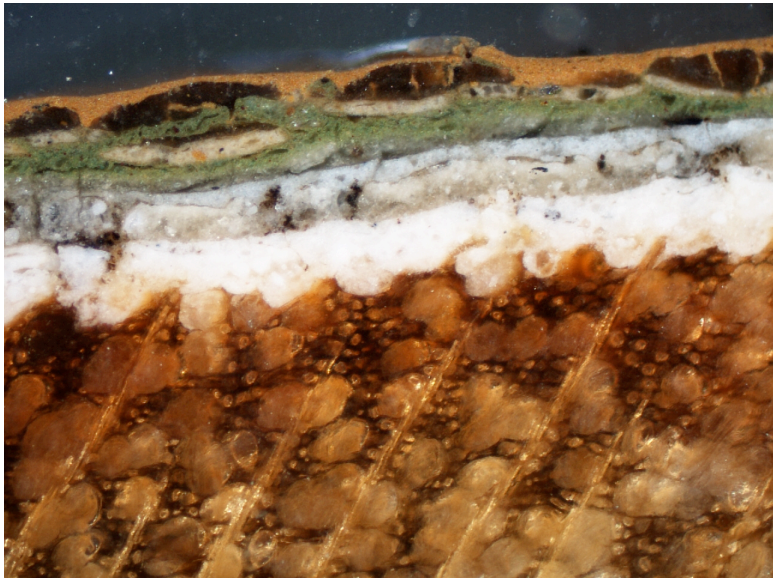
Visible light, 100x



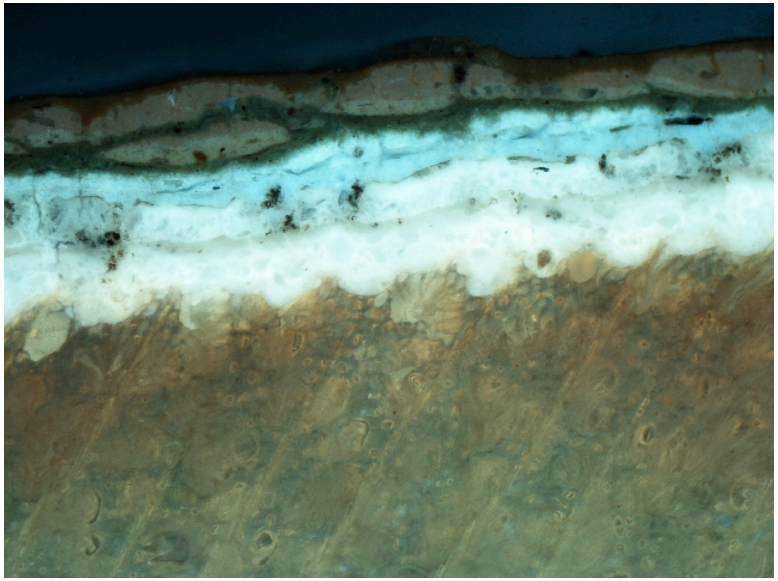
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.6
LOCATION:	Window casing

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturation at surface; some autofl. orange
1	Cream	Traces in pores
Dirt/Sep.		Some small separations
2	Yellow	Coarse
Dirt		
3	Green	Coarse
4	Greenish-brown	
5	Brown	
6	Gray	
7	Blue-gray	
8	Peach	
9	White	
10	Light peach	
11	Brown	Current graining
12	Brown/Varnish	Current graining



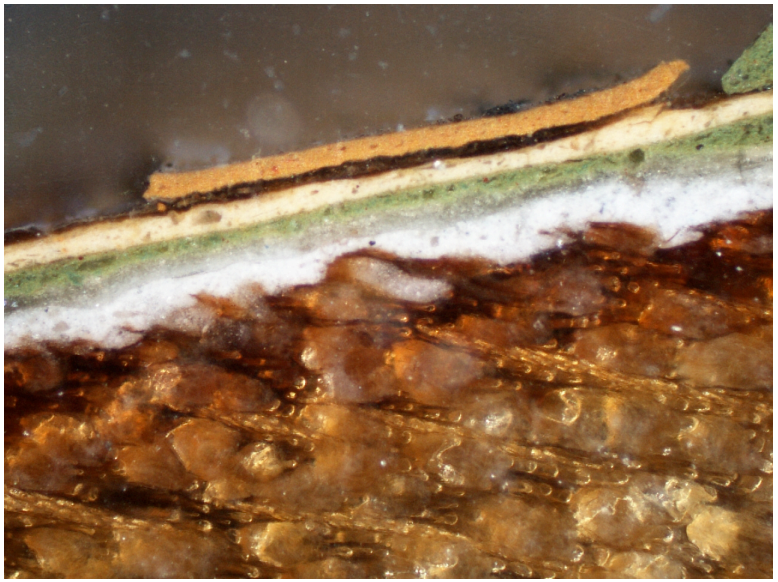
Visible light, 100x



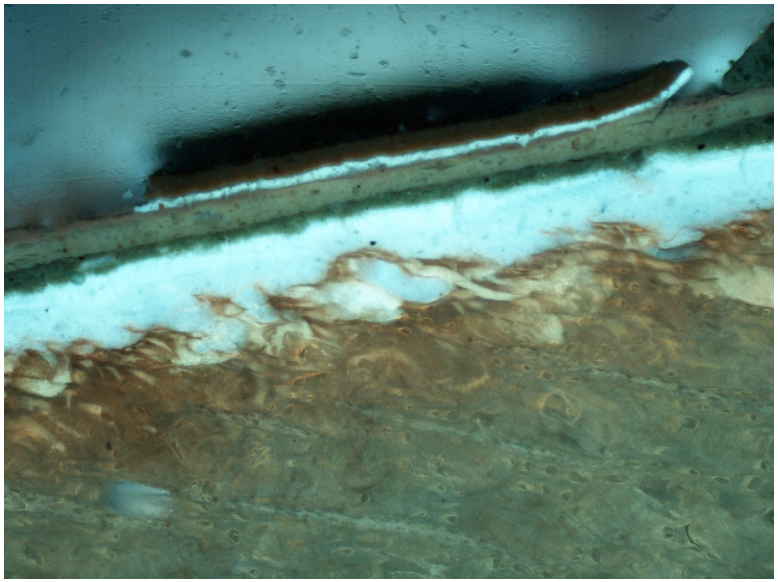
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.7
LOCATION:	Exterior door jamb

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturated wood surface; autofl. orange
1	Cream	2.5Y 9/2
Dirt		
2	Cream	
Dirt		
3	Light gray	Damaged
Dirt		
4	Gray	Damaged
5		
6	Green	Damaged
Dirt		
7	Cream	Damaged
8	Brown	Damaged
9	Orange-brown	



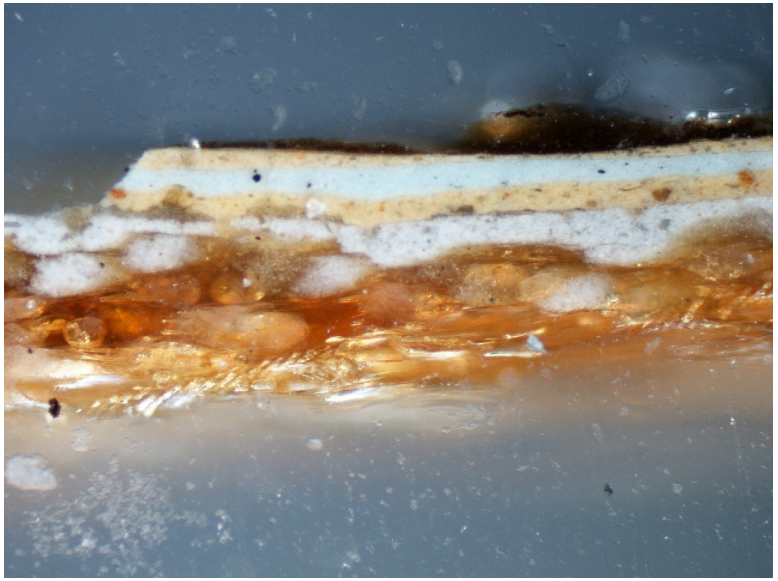
Visible light, 100x



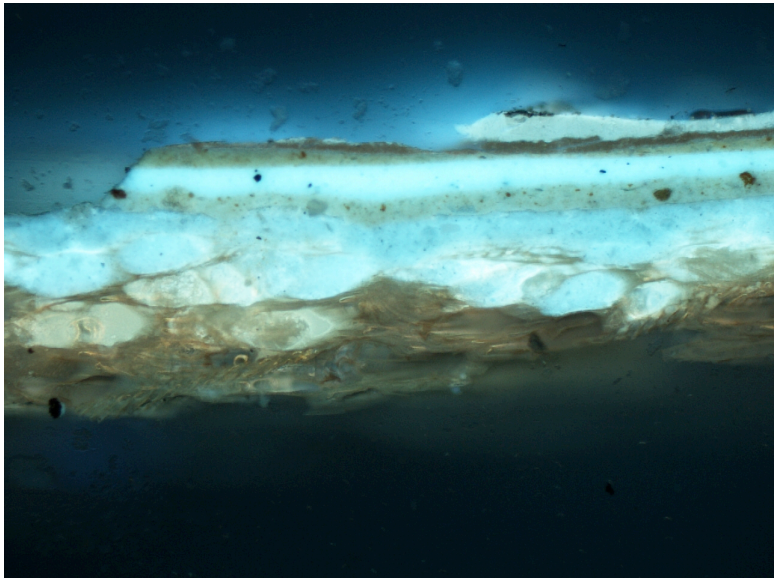
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.9
LOCATION:	Exterior door, exterior side

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturation at surface; autofl. orange; surface looks damaged – missing early paint
1	White	
2	Gray	
3	Green	
Dirt		
4	Cream	
5	Yellow-peach	
6	Brown	Thin
7	Brown	Varnish
8	Orange-brown	



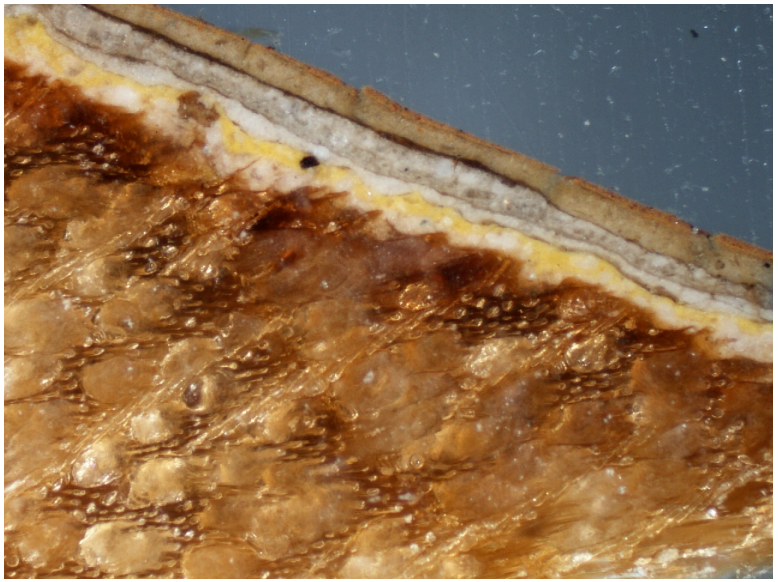
Visible light, 100x



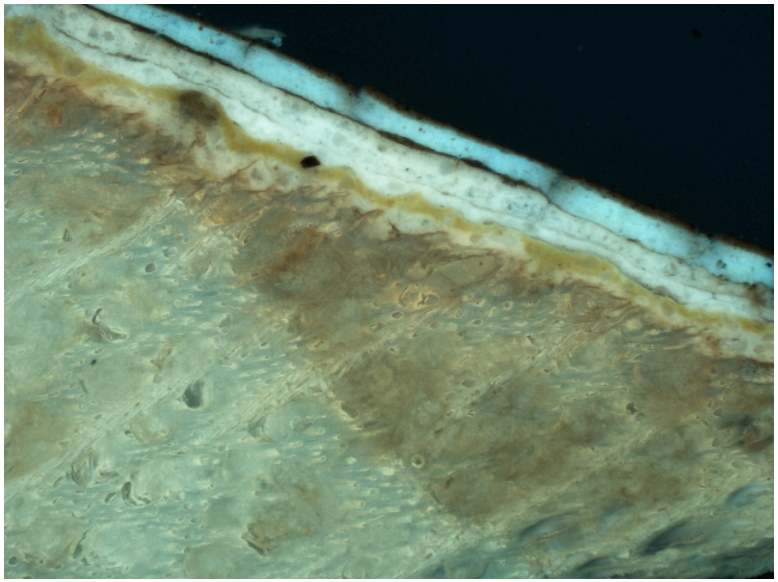
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.102.10
LOCATION:	Exterior door, interior side

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Missing early paint
1	Blue-gray	
2	Yellow Peach	
3	White/Light aqua	
4	Light peach	
5	Brown	
6	Brown/Varnish	



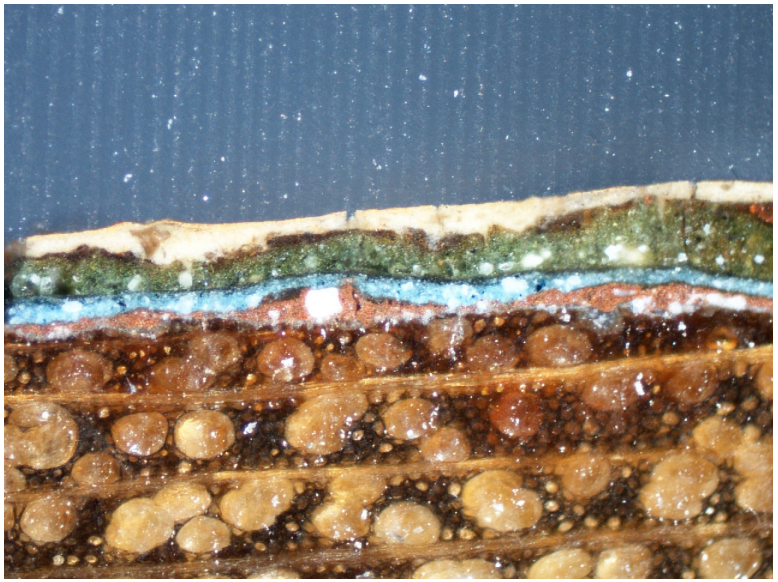
Visible light, 100x



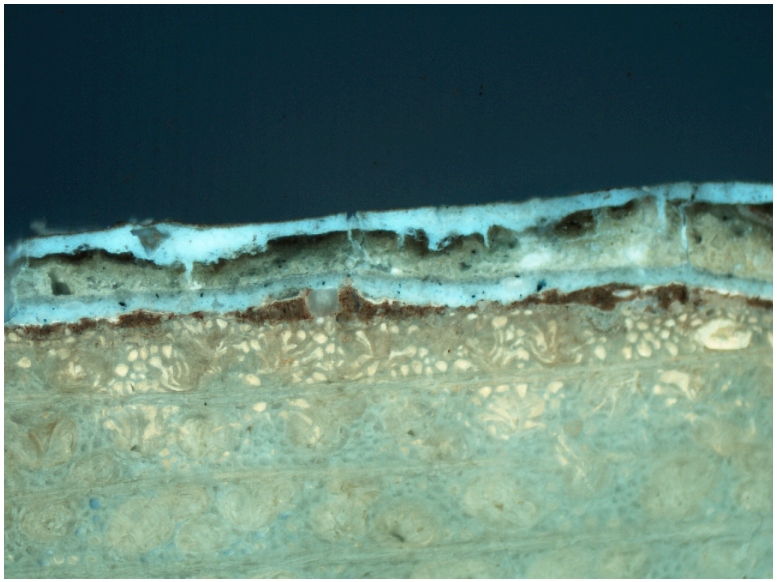
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.1
LOCATION:	baluster

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Something reddish and autofl. saturated into surface
1	Cream	Thin, traces
2	Yellow	Coarsely ground
Dirt		Or thin, uneven brown
3	White	
Dirt		
4	Whitish	
5	Whitish	
	Brown	Thin
6	Tan/cream	
7	Orange-brown	



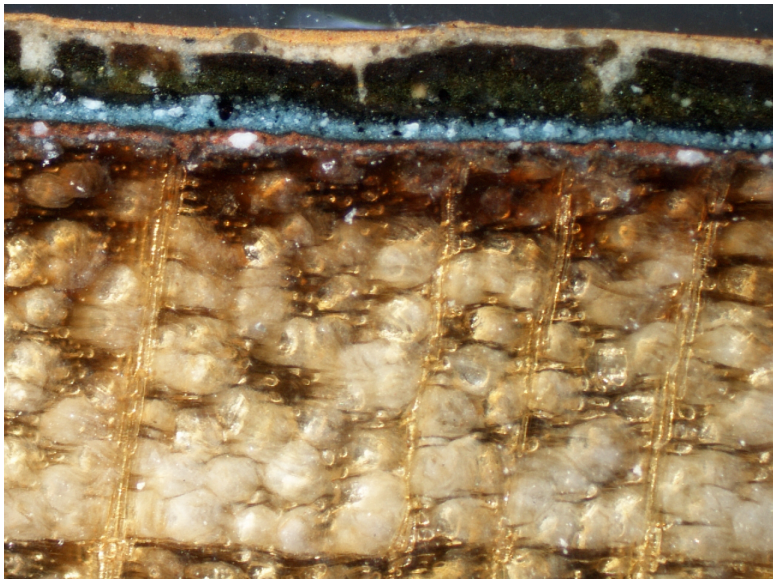
Visible light, 40x



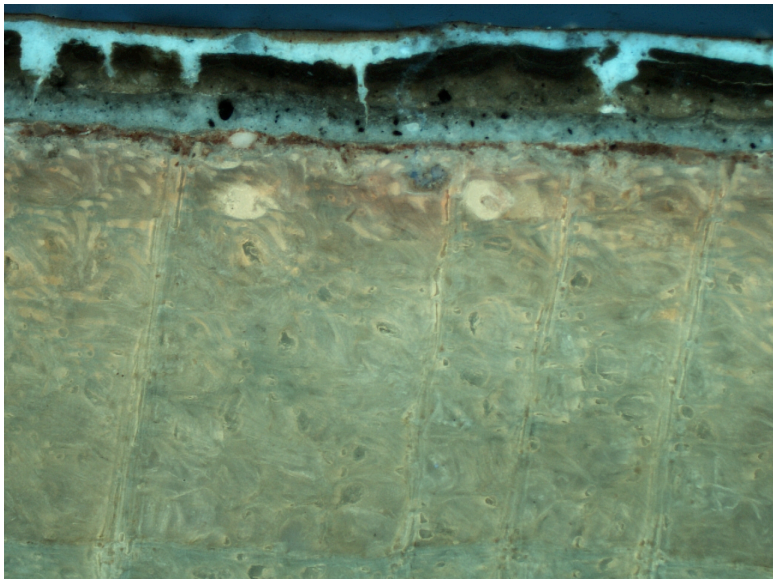
UV Light, 40x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.2
LOCATION:	Stair string

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Reddish saturation in surface; autofl.
1	Gray	Very thin
2	Red-brown	
3	Brown	Thin, varnish?
4	Blue	
Dirt		
5	Yellow Green	Damaged
6	Brown	Damaged
7	Cream	
8	Orange-brown	



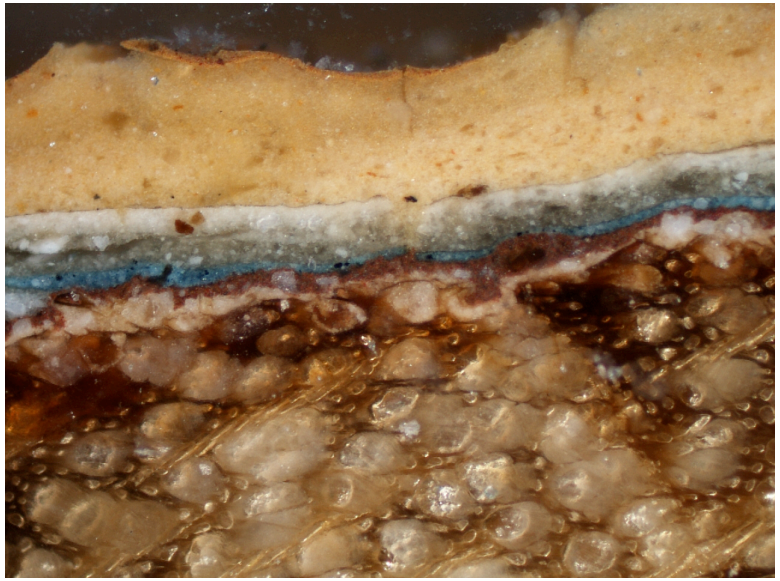
Visible light, 100x



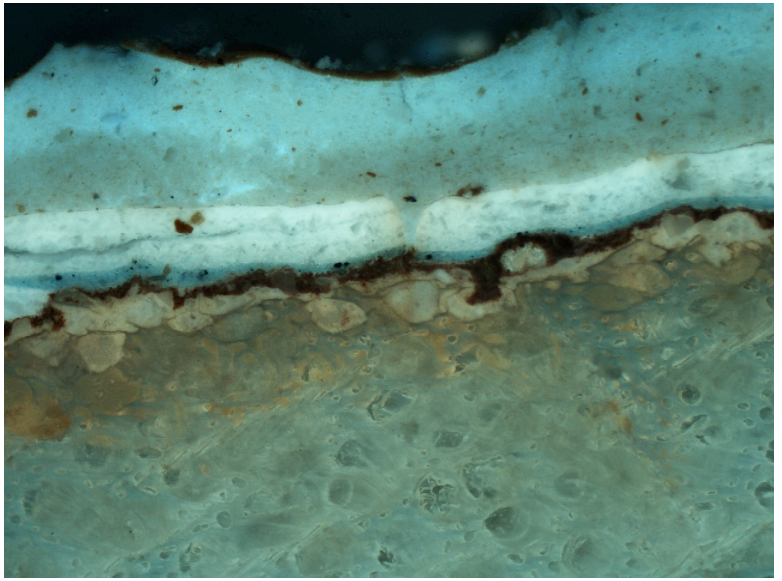
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.3
LOCATION:	Floor nosing

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Dark reddish saturation in surface; autofl. orange
1	Gray	Thin
2	Red-brown	
Dirt		
3	Blue	
Dirt		Or discolored previous surface
4	Yellow-green	Damaged
5	Brown	Damaged
6	Cream	Thin
7	Orange-brown	



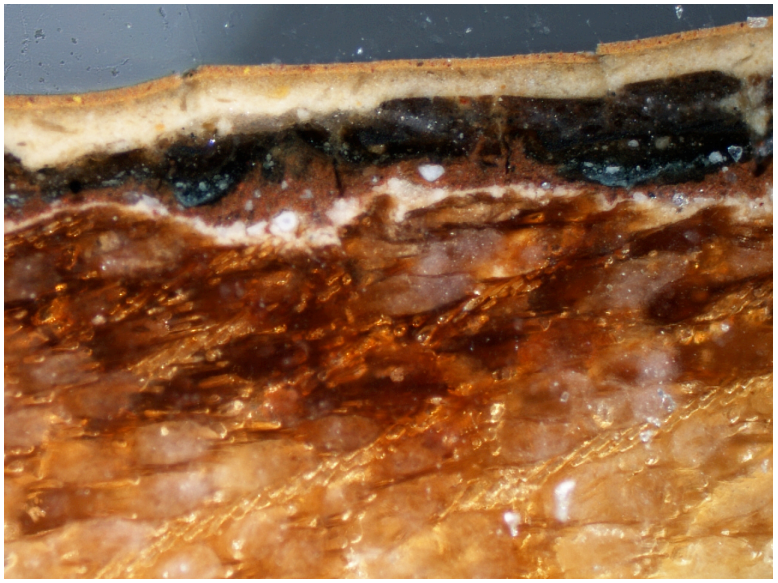
Visible light, 100x



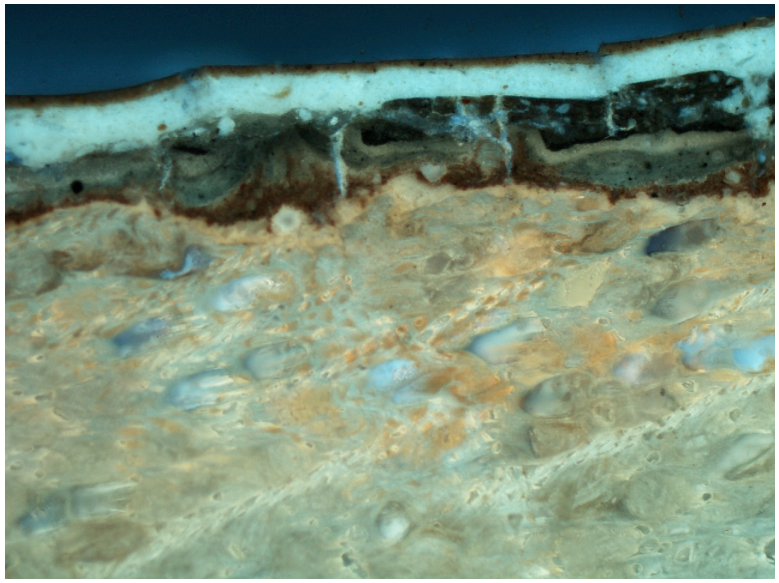
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.4
LOCATION:	Hand rail

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturation in surface; autofl. orange
1	Cream	Thin, uneven
2	Red-brown	
Dirt		
3	Blue	Thin
4	Gray	
5	Whitish	
Dirt		
6	Peach	Thick
7	Orange-brown	Thin



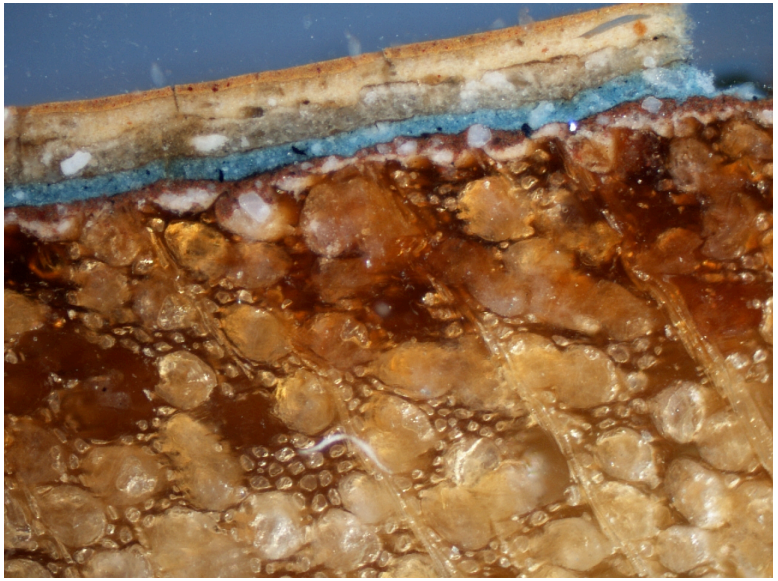
Visible light, 100x



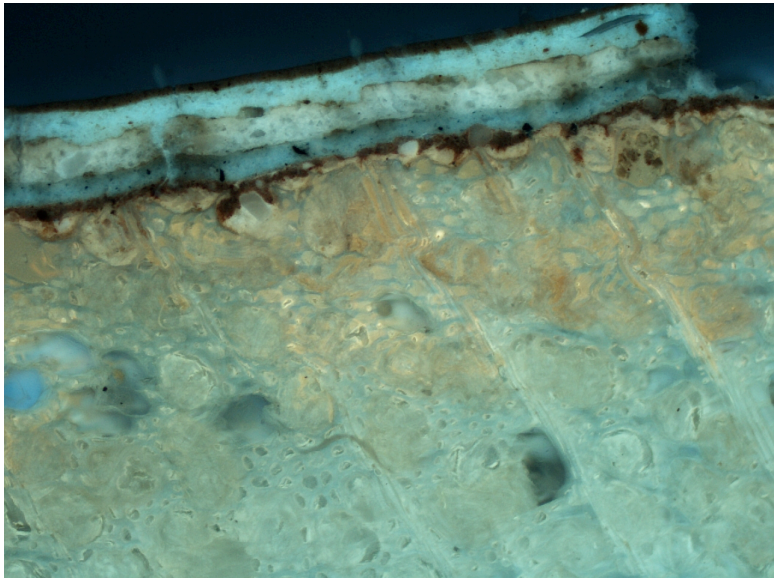
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.5
LOCATION:	handrail

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red saturation in surface
1	Cream	Thin, uneven
2	Red-brown	
3	Blue	
4	Gray	
5	Brown	Varnish; damaged
6	Brown	Damaged
7	Cream	
Dirt		
8	Orange-brown	



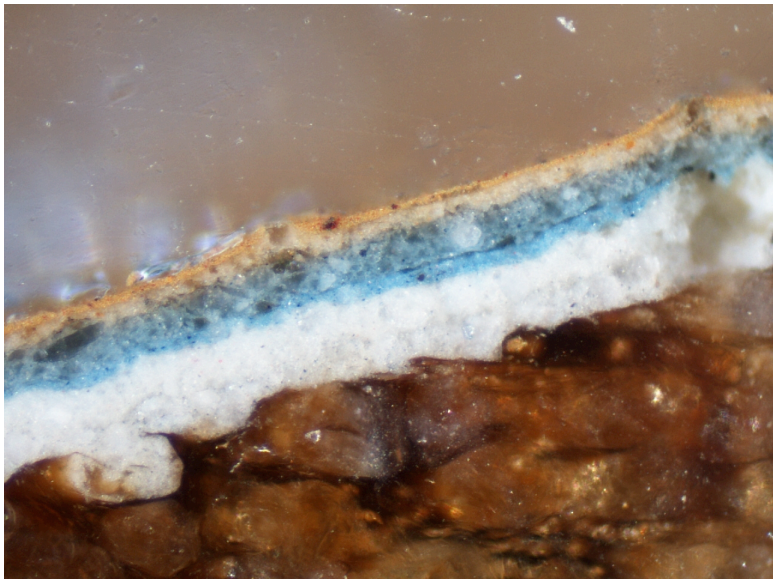
Visible light, 100x



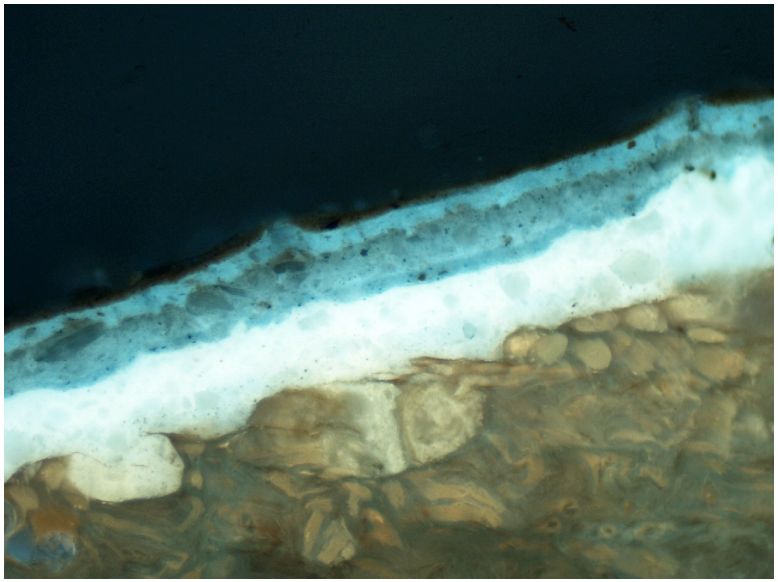
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.6
LOCATION:	Newel post

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red saturated in surface
1	Cream	Partial, thin
2	Red-brown	
Dirt		
3	Blue	
Dirt		
4	Gray	
Dirt		
5	Cream	
Dirt		
6	Orange-brown	



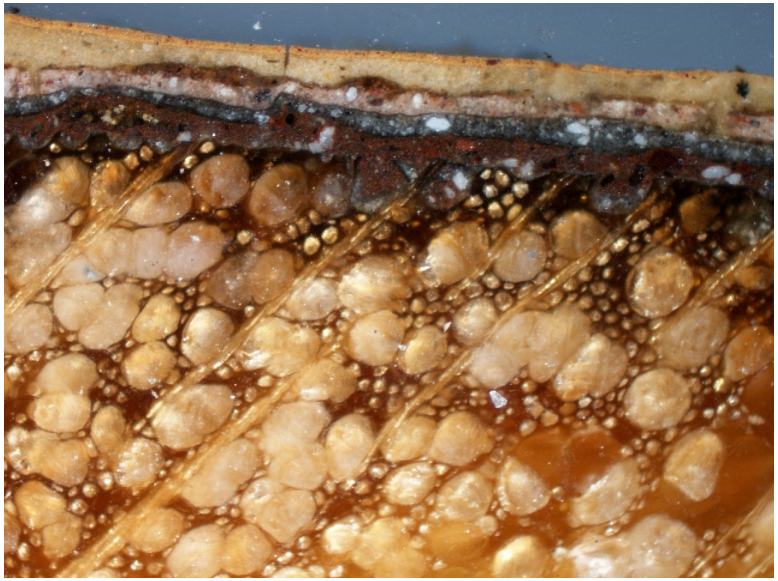
Visible light, 200x



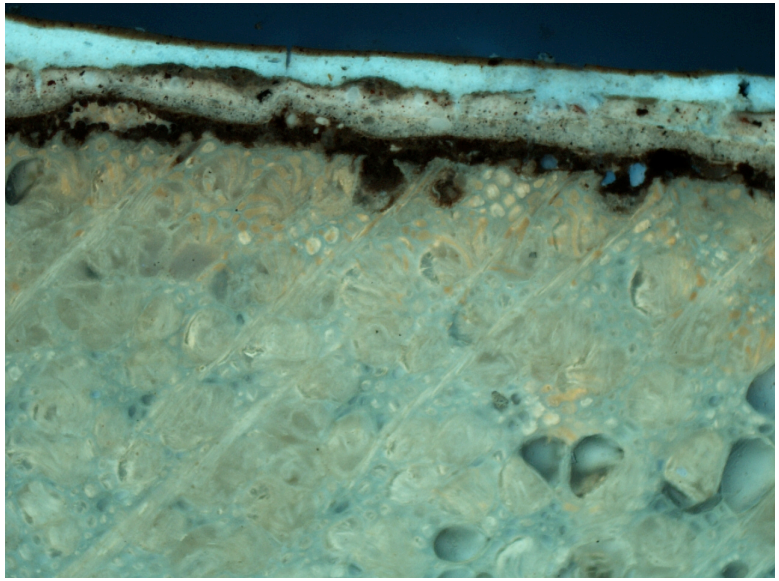
UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.9
LOCATION:	Chair rail

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	
1	Light gray	
2	Whitish	
3	Bright blue	
4	Gray-blue	
5	Peachy cream	
6	Orange-brown	



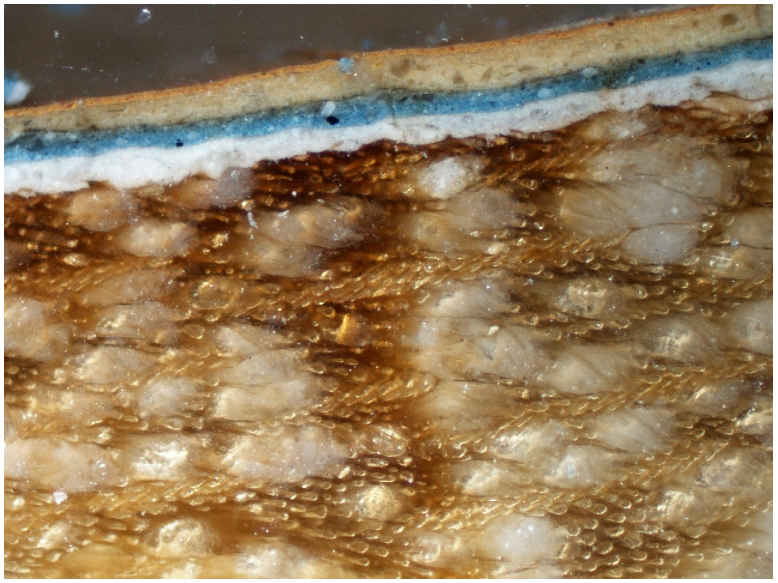
Visible light, 100x



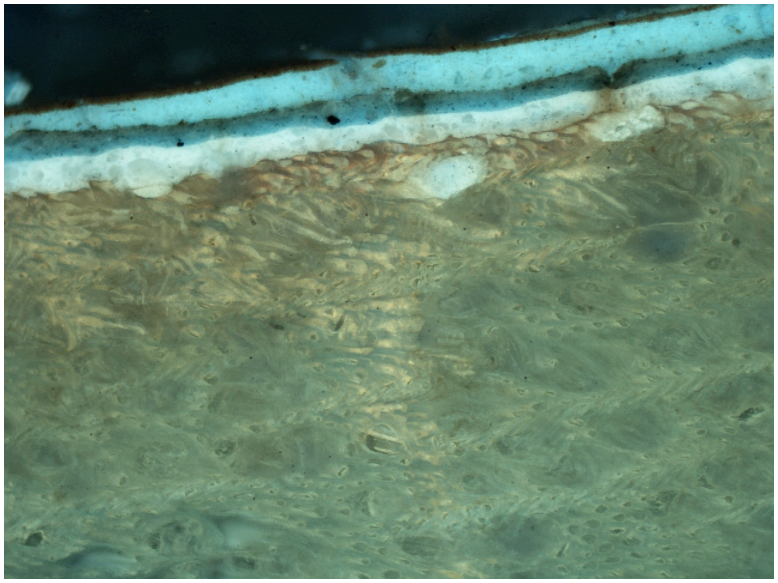
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.12
LOCATION:	baseboard

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturation in surface; autofl. orange
1	Gray	Thin, uneven
2	Red-brown	Coarse
Dirt		
3	Gray	Coarse
4	Pink	Coarse
5	Brown	Partial
6	Yellow-peach	
7	Orange-brown	



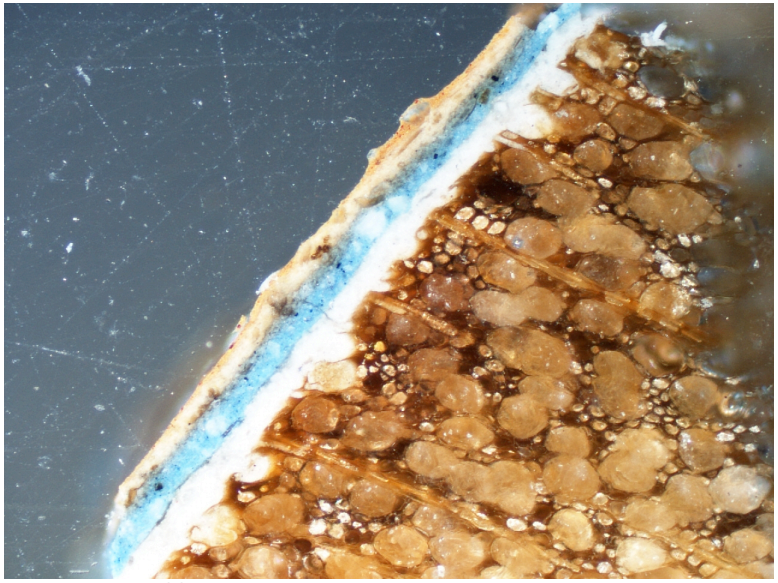
Visible light, 200x



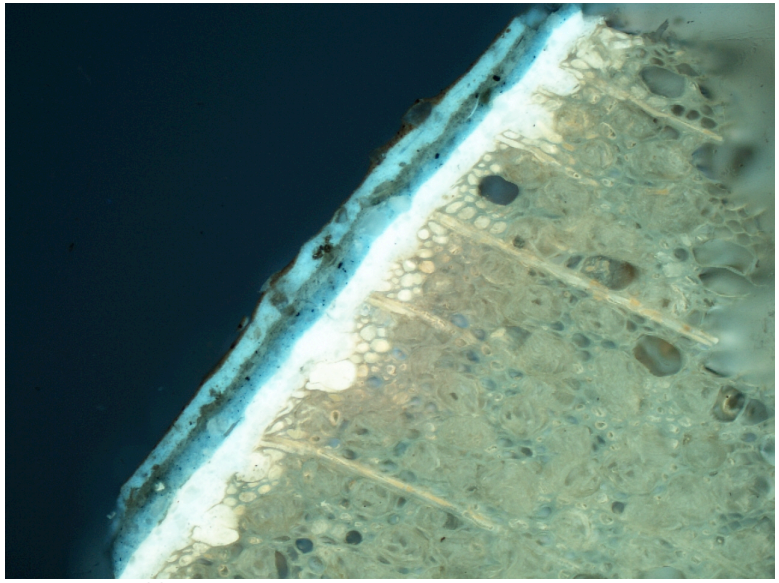
UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.13
LOCATION:	Window casing - top

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturated surface; autofl. slightly orange
1	Whitish	
2	White	Thin
3	Blue	
4	Gray-blue	
Dirt		
5	Peachy cream	
6	Orange-brown	



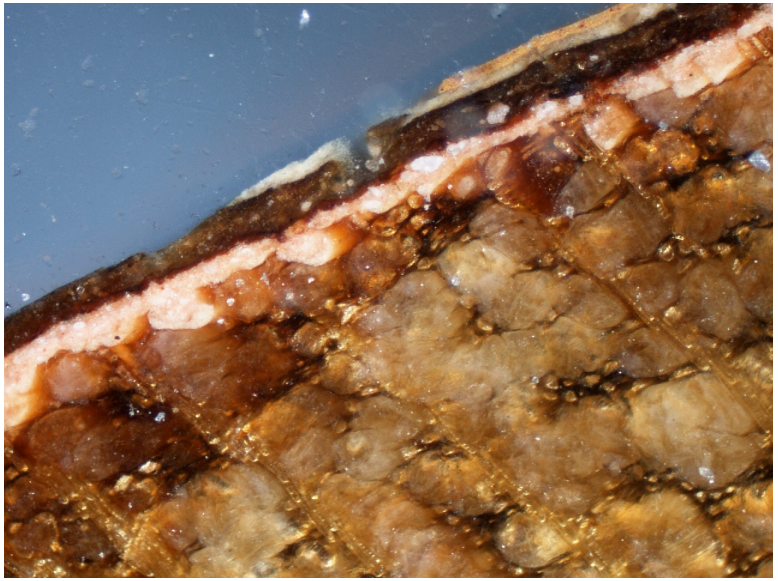
Visible light, 100x



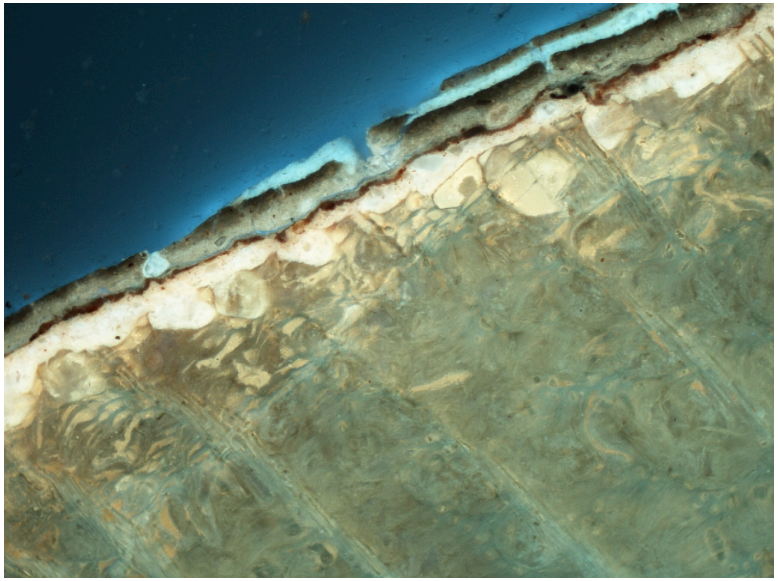
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.14
LOCATION:	Door jamb

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturated at surface; autofl. bright white
1	Whitish	
2	Whitish	
Dirt		
3	Blue	Coarse
4	Blue-gray	
5	Peachy cream	
6	Orange-brown	



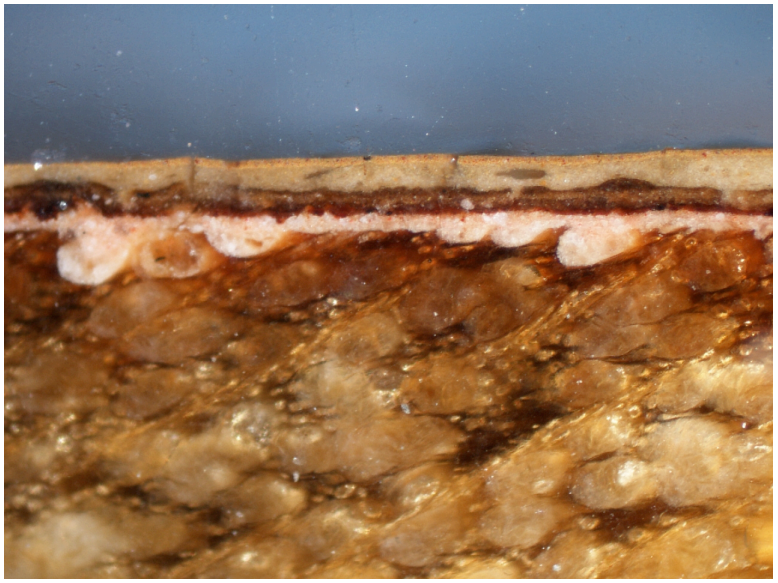
Visible light, 100x



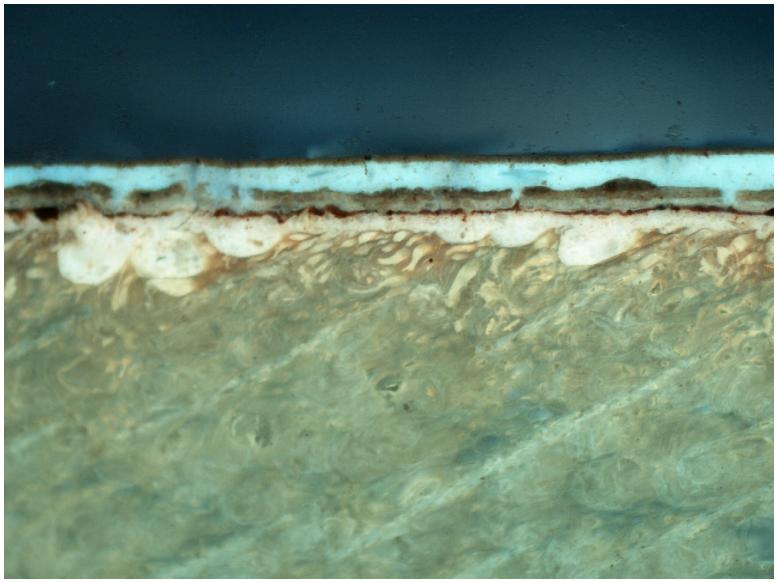
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.15
LOCATION:	Door, hinge stile

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Reddish saturation in surface; autofl. bright orange
1	Cream	5Y 9/2
2	Peachy-pink	
3	Red	Thin, uneven; possible decorative finish
4	Brown	
5	Brown	
6	Brown	
7	Peachy cream	
8	Orange-brown	



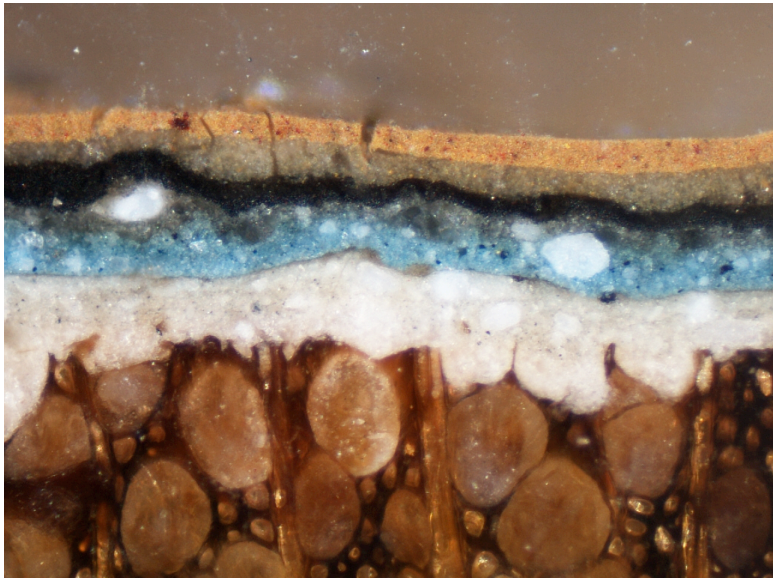
Visible light, 100x



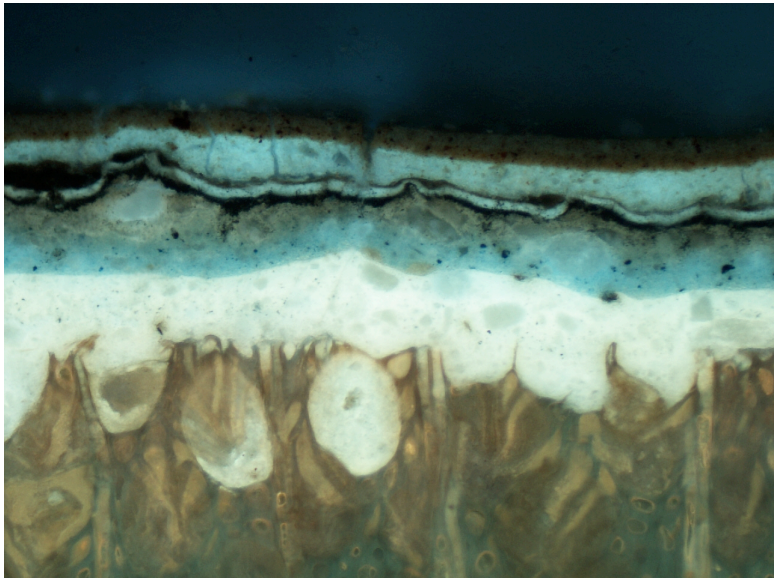
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.16
LOCATION:	door

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Reddish saturation in surface; autofl. bright orange
1	Peachy-pink	
2	Red-brown	Very thin and uneven; possible decorative finish
3	Brown	
4	Brown	
5	Brown	
6	Yellow-peachy cream	
7	Orange-brown	



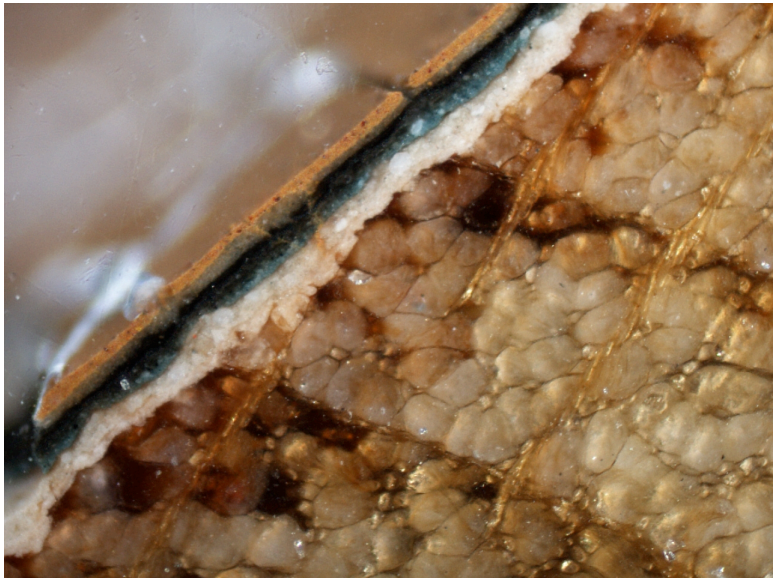
Visible light, 200x



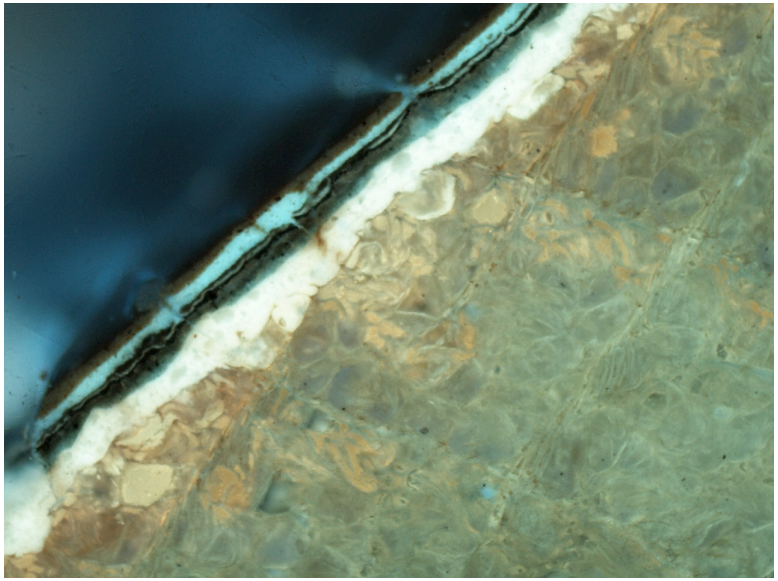
UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.18
LOCATION:	Mantel, flat piece above firebox opening

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red saturated in surface
1	Cream/Off-white	
2	Cream/Off-white	
Dirt		
3	Blue	Coarse
4	Gray	
5	Brown	
6	Brown	Varnish – autofl. bright blue
7	Brown	
8	Tannish-cream	
9	Orange-brown	



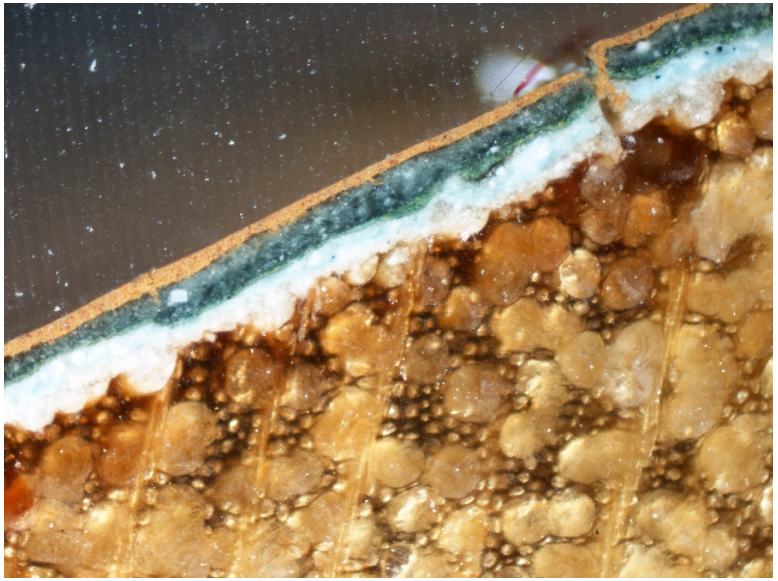
Visible light, 100x



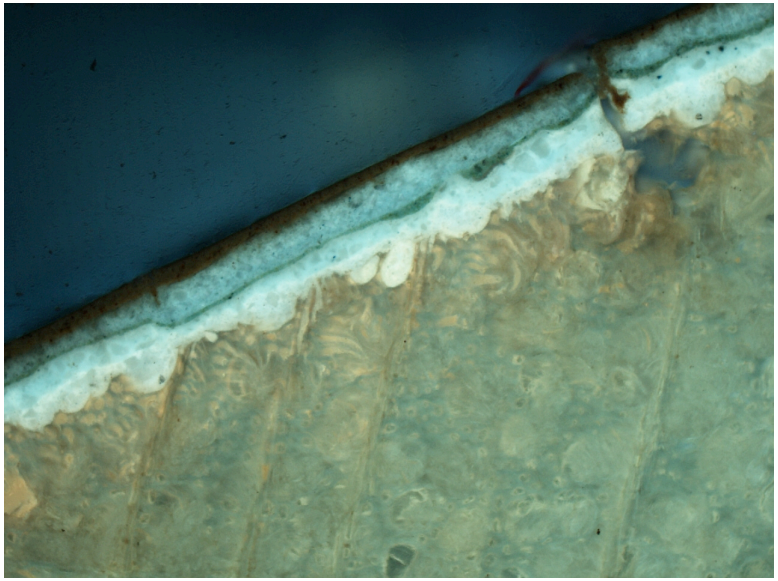
UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.201.21
LOCATION:	Mantel, vertical middle piece (same as 201.18)

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Red saturation in surface; autofl. orange
1	Whitish/Cream	
2	Whitish/Cream	
3	Blue	Thin; coarse
4	Gray	Thin
5	Brown	
6	Brown	Varnish – autofl. bright blue
7	Brown	
8	Gray-tan	
9	Orange-brown	



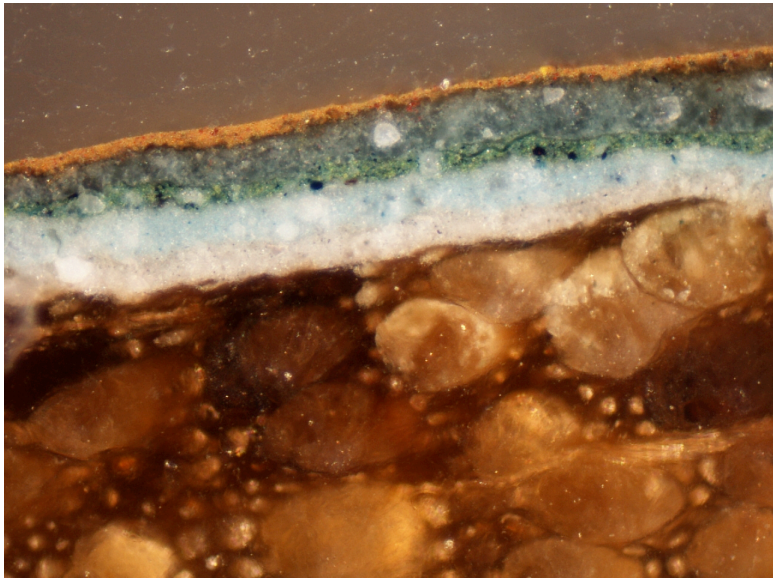
Visible light, 200x



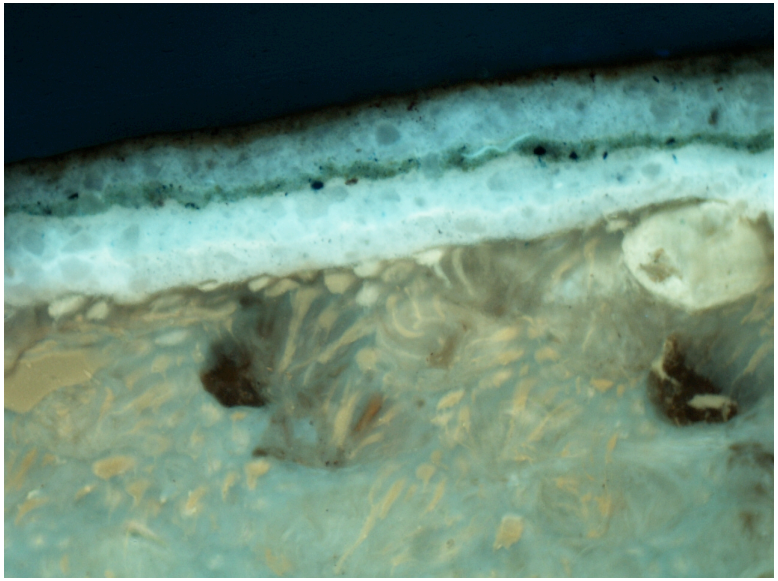
UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.202.1
LOCATION:	Window casing

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Reddish saturation in surface; autofl. orange
1	Cream/Whitish	In pores only
2	Light blue	Coarse
3	Green	Thin
4	Blue	Coarse
Dirt		
5	Grayish blue	Coarse
6	Orange-brown	
7		



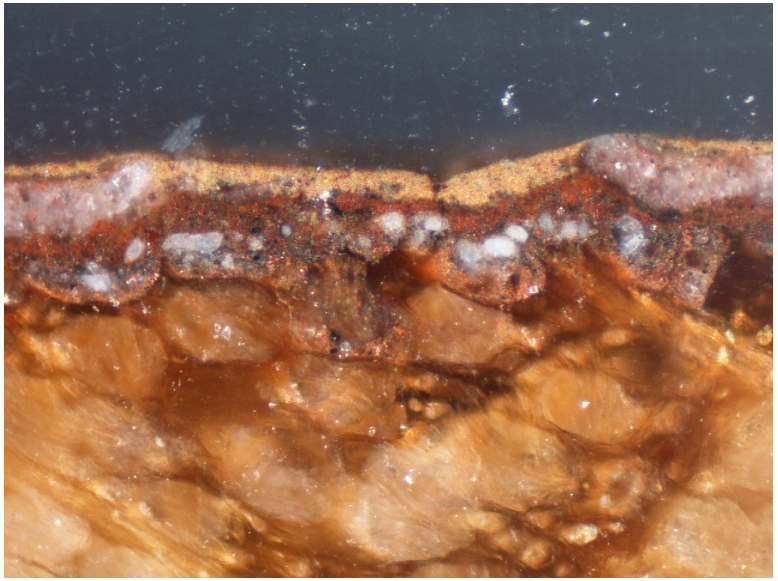
Visible light, 200x



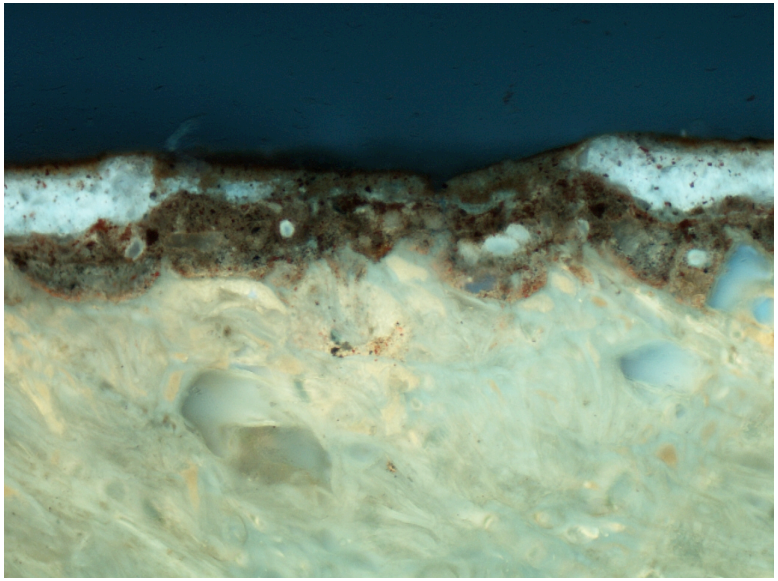
UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.202.3
LOCATION:	Chair rail

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Saturation at surface; autofl. orange
1	Whitish	
2	Light blue	Coarse
3	Green	
Dirt/sep.		
4	Gray-blue	Coarse
Dirt		
5	Orange-brown	
6		



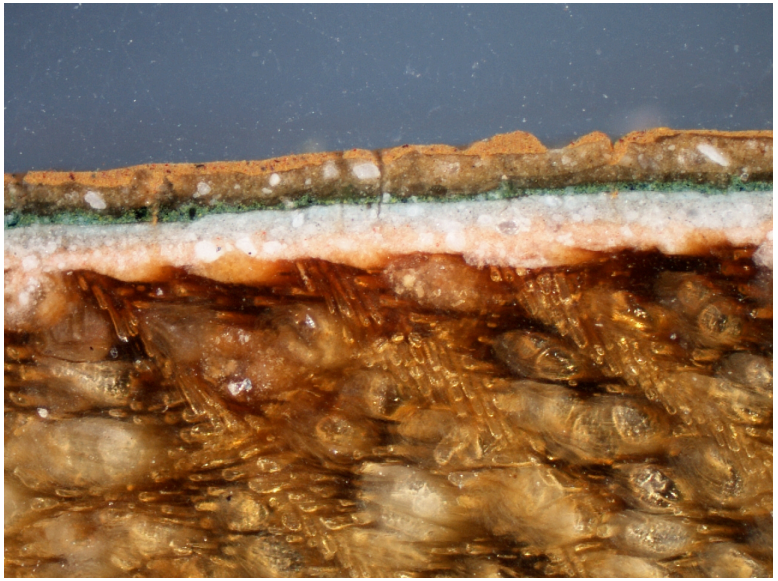
Visible light, 200x



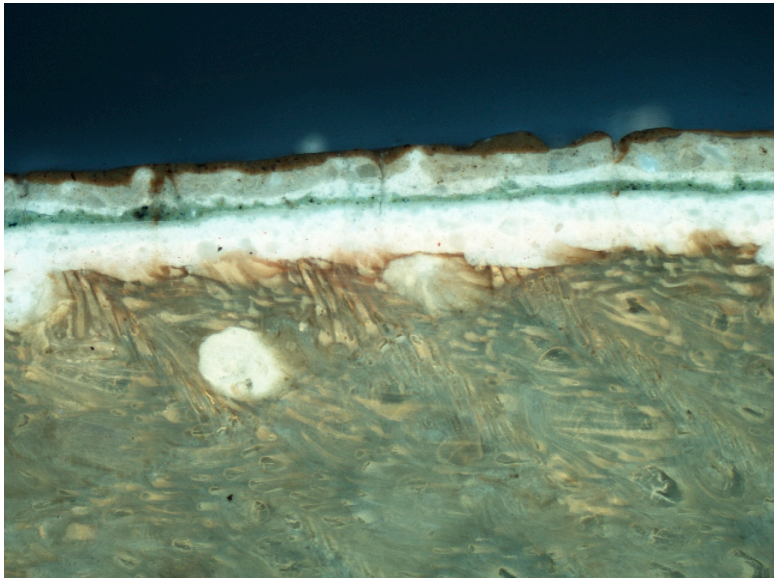
UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.202.5
LOCATION:	baseboard

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	
1	Brown	Damaged
2	Red-brown	Damaged
3	Pinkish	Damaged
4	Orange-brown	



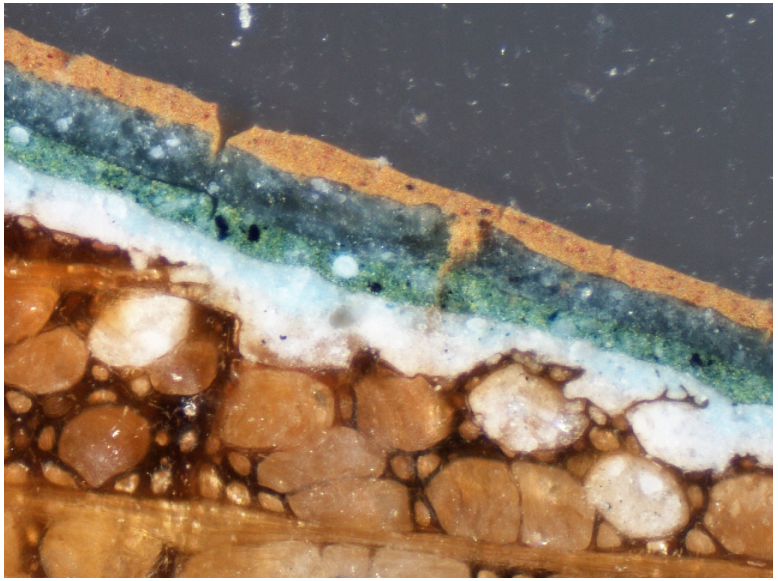
Visible light, 100x



UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.202.6
LOCATION:	door

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	
	Cream	Coarse
	Cream/Pink	in crevices; coarse
	Light blue	
Dirt		
	Green	Coarse
	Light brown	
	Light brown	Coarse
Dirt		
	Orange-brown	



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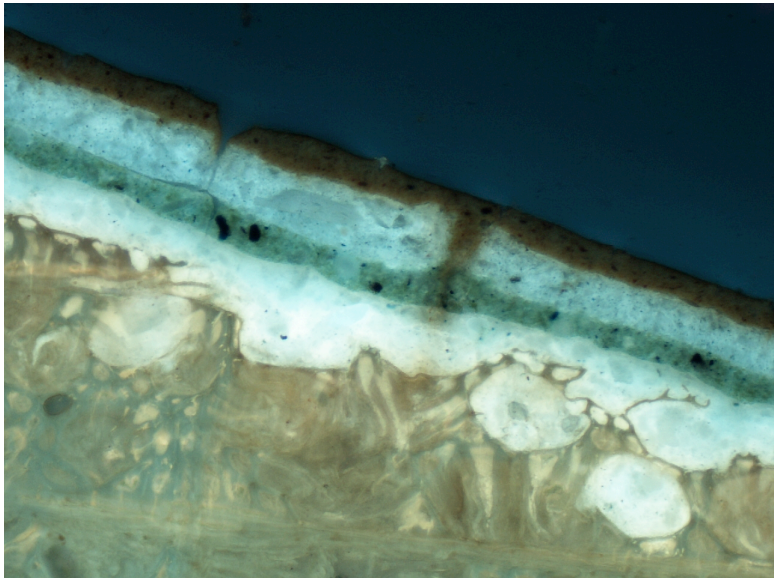
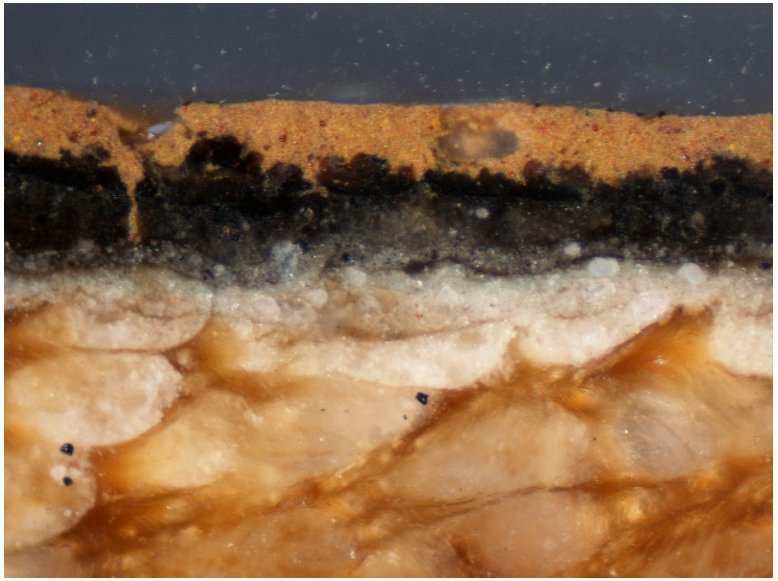


UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.202.7
LOCATION:	Door surround

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Reddish saturation in surface
1	Whitish	
2	Light blue	Coarse
3	Green	Coarse
Dirt/Sep.		
4	Blue-gray	Coarse
5	Orange-brown	



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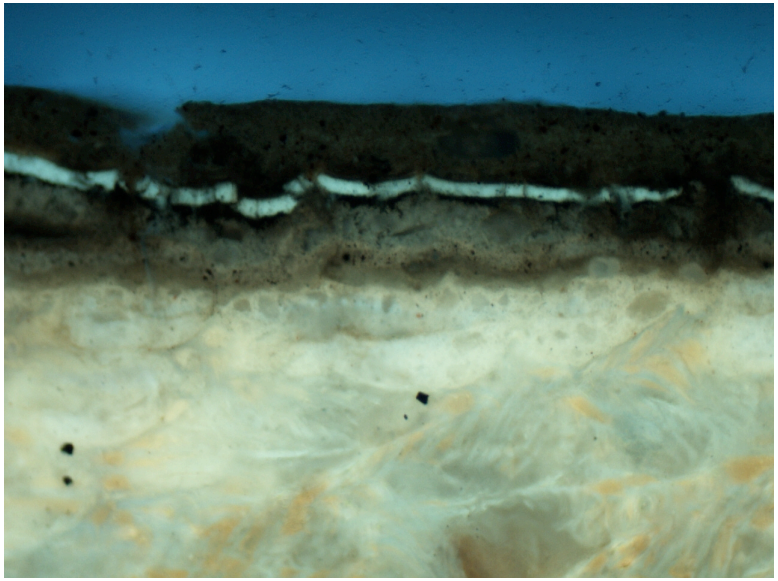
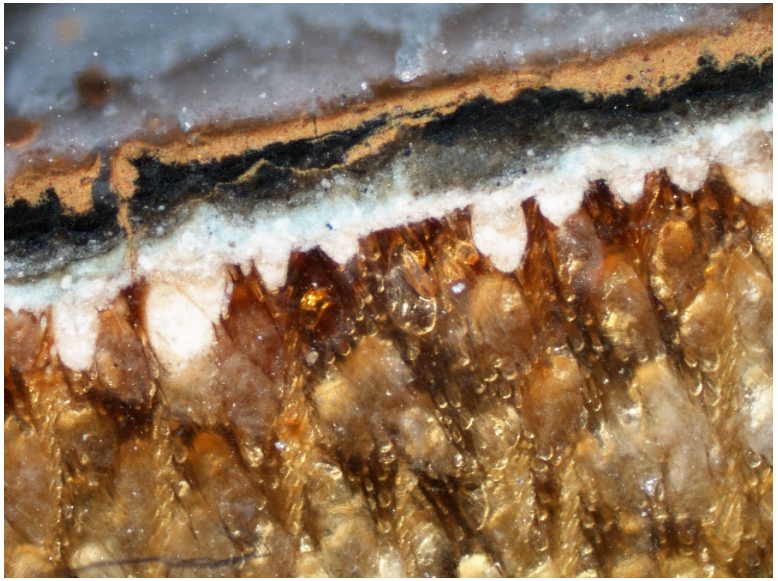


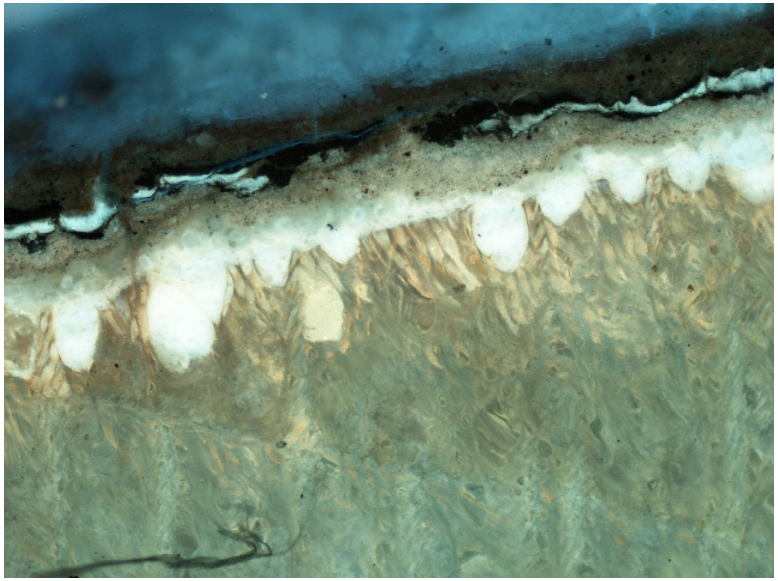
UV Light, 200x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.202.11
LOCATION:	Mantel, flat molding under mantelshelf

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	
1	Cream	
2	Cream	
3	Grayish green	Worn/damaged
4	Brown	Thin, worn, damaged
5	Brown	Varnish; damaged
6	Brown	Very worn
7	Orange-brown	



Visible light, 100x



UV Light, 100x

SAMPLE NO:	JGH.202.13
LOCATION:	Mantel, molding above firebox opening

LAYER	***COLOR***	***NOTES***
Substrate	Wood	Reddish saturation in surface; autofl. orange
1	Cream	in crevices
2	Blue-green	Partial only
Dirt		
3	Blue-gray	Uneven
4	Brown	Thin, damaged
5	Brown	Varnish; damaged
6	Brown	Worn, uneven
7	Orange-brown	

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

NPS 604/115630, July 2012

Natchez Trace Parkway

John Gordon House Historic Structure Report