

HAWTHORN HILL: VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN THE TENNESSEE
BACKCOUNTRY

By

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DEDICATION

Dedicated in memory of Michael T. Gavin
In thanks and gratitude for your guidance and support.

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ABSTRACT

Hawthorn Hill, located in Sumner County, Tennessee, is a significant example of southern backcountry vernacular architecture. Built circa 1806 by John Bearden, an early settler in Castalian Springs, Tennessee, this two-story, brick Federal-style dwelling embodies many of the traditional building and construction methods seen throughout the Tennessee frontier. The significance of the home's material culture and design is not limited solely to the frontier era. In 1817, John Bearden sold the home and property to the Bate family. The house remained in the family for more than one hundred years. During that time the house underwent several changes and alterations.

Many view buildings, like Hawthorn Hill, as physical representations of culture; because of their endurance over time they serve as an effective means of understanding the lives of the people of the past. This study takes a vernacular architecture approach to Hawthorn Hill because it stands as an illustrative example of common architectural types of the Sumner County area. This close exploration of a two-story, brick hall-and-parlor plan dwelling in its geographic and thematic context uncovers important new evidence and perspective on backcountry life in Tennessee.

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CHAPTER I: EARLY MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE SOUTHWEST FRONTIER, 1790-1820

When people migrate to new areas, they bring with them cultural traditions, be they specific methods of farming, making clothing, preparing food, and, more importantly for this study, building shelter.¹ A new environment often forced wayfarers to adapt their previous traditions to the new circumstances.² Thus, architecture offers important documentation of how people adapt old customs to new surroundings. Because of the tangible nature of this evidence, this medium proves to be effective at tracing the evolution and development of American culture over time.³

Hawthorn Hill, located in Castalian Springs, Tennessee, is an impressive and significant statement of vernacular architecture on the Tennessee frontier (Figure 1.1). Built circa 1806, this two story brick Federal style home embodies the building traditions and styles found throughout first generations of white settlement in Tennessee. Hawthorn Hill as a place has many contexts: the community of Castalian Springs; the general settlement in the Cumberland

¹ Peirce F. Lewis, "Common Houses, Cultural Spoor," *Landscape* 19, no. 2 (January 1975), 3.

² Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 7.

³ J. Frazer Smith, *White Pillars: Early Life and Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country* (New York: Bramhall House, 1951), introduction; Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*, 35.

country; and the type of elite housing built in Tennessee from 1790 to 1820.

Hawthorn Hill has many stories to tell.



Figure 1.1. Hawthorn Hill, front façade, Sumner County, TN.
(Jessi White)

The first question is the most general. How does Hawthorn Hill reflect and/or represent the context of settlement and development in the southwest frontier, or what some call the southern backcountry at the beginning of the nineteenth century?

By the 1760s, many considered the East Coast of what would become the United States as largely settled. As the population density increased and crowding became a perceived issue, colonists and incoming immigrants began to look toward open lands in the southwest frontier, or generally, the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains in what is now Tennessee, Central Kentucky, and northern Georgia and Alabama. There lay the promise of a vast expanse of virgin land and materials, all of which remained relatively unclaimed and unsettled, and the opportunity to fulfill the dream of gaining landownership and title.⁴

Although settlers had been coming into the territory via the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania since the early 1750s, a marked growth in the number of settlers was not seen in the area until 1800. During this time period smaller clusters of people began to settle in “the southern Great Valley, the Nashville Basin, and the Bluegrass Basin.”⁵ By 1820, settlement in these areas began to intensify and expanded to new regions such as Natchez, Mississippi and lower Louisiana. The southern backcountry entered a new era of development.⁶

Those who settled the southwest frontier had many motivations. Some were drawn to the frontier by bonds of kinship, following family members and

⁴ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 24; John R. Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), xx and 161-162.

⁵ Sam Bowers Hillard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 27; Chase C. Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 101.

⁶ Finger, 311.

friends into the “promised land.”⁷ Still others came into the territory to sate a thirst for adventure in the wilds of the frontier. The most common motivation, however, was the desire to own land. The frontier offered vast amounts of cheap, good land, helping to draw settlers inland. Land played a central role in the lives of frontier settlers. It represented not only their status as community members, but also their plans and aspirations as an economically mobile group.⁸ Through the ownership of property one could gain wealth, power, and independence in an agricultural economy.

The newcomers traveled mostly from the Piedmont region of Virginia and North Carolina, and were typically of English or Scots-Irish descent. As settlement of the southern states progressed, an array of German, Irish, Welsh, and French descendants emigrated from other states such as South Carolina, Georgia, and Pennsylvania and began to filter into the frontier lands. The preponderance of English and Scotch-Irish settlers aided in the formation of strong cultural ties and bonds of kinship within each distinct group, and helped to transfer long held traditions from one generation to the next.⁹

⁷ Owsley, 24.

⁸ Ibid, 24; Finger, xx and 161-162.

⁹ Owsley, 90-91; Donald L. Winters, *Tennessee Farming, Tennessee Farmers: Antebellum Agriculture in the Upper South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 13; Finger, 14, 53, 166, and 168-169; Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov, *The Upland South: The Making of an American Folk Region and Landscape* (Santa Fe, NM: Center for American Places, 2003), 55; John Solomon Otto, *Southern Frontiers, 1607-1860: The Agricultural Evolution of the Colonial and Antebellum South* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 9-10.

Settlements also grew out of a community of friends and relatives who moved as a group into the frontier. Other times, patriarchs of the family or group would come first to the frontier. Typically they would procure a plot of land, build a small dwelling, and plant the first crop before bringing the rest of their family members into the new territory.¹⁰

When settlers set out to find property on the frontier they usually sought two specific qualities. First, they looked for land that was a close match in climate and topography to the land from which they hailed. Seeking to match, as closely as possible, the terrain of their homeland afforded settlers two clear advantages. They were already accustomed to the best farming techniques suited for similar landscapes, and many of the same implement designs used on other plots could be transported to the new farmstead and reused.¹¹ Second, settlers needed land with a viable source of water. Water was not only used for drinking, but was also harnessed as a means of transporting agricultural goods to market.¹² Following in a “westerly direction along those isothermal lines or temperature zones in which they lived in the east,” settlers found in the southwest territory the amenities that best suited their needs for settlement.¹³

After they made land selections, settlers, with the help of slaves, then began building homesteads, clearing land, and planting crops. Although

¹⁰ Owsley, 62; Winters, 15.

¹¹ Owsley, 52.

¹² Ibid, 56.

¹³ Ibid, 76.

settlement communities were often sprawling in a geographic sense, especially when compared to the eastern pattern of town and countryside, members of settlements still banded together to aid one another in establishing a working farm.¹⁴ Be it a new family to the community, an established family who lost a home, or a newly wedded couple setting up a new farmstead, community members worked together to help their neighbors to construct new homes.¹⁵

White settlers were not the only people that helped to tame the wilds of the southwest. African-American slaves were integral participants in frontier development. Early on slaves were brought to the frontier and were used to clear land, construct homesteads and plant and tend crops. As an agriculturally-based market economy developed, slave labor was continually used to support the cash crop system, firmly entrenching slavery in the region.¹⁶ The use and development of slave labor would make a lasting imprint on the development of the southwest frontier. This burgeoning labor force would help to shape the economic development of the antebellum South, and would continue to have a lasting impact on this region after the Civil War.

A more immediate geographic context for Hawthorn Hill is the frontier of Middle Tennessee. The topography, soil composition, plant life, and climate across what became Tennessee varied significantly, with Middle Tennessee alone being composed of the Cumberland Plateau, the Eastern and Western

¹⁴ Winters, 15; Otto, 55-56, Finger, 180.

¹⁵ Owsley, 104.

¹⁶ Ibid, 7-15; Finger, 169; Mooney, 104 and 114.

Highland Rims, and the Central Basin. Settlers sought land that would support a broad range of agricultural pursuits and thus first congregated in the Central Basin.¹⁷ Rich soil and a mild climate provided settlers with an abundance of high-quality farmland, while mountainous terrain and dense foliage created natural barriers between their farms and those of the Great Valley in East Tennessee.

Natural barriers were not the only obstacles that obstructed the flow of settlement and trade into Tennessee. There were political and legal boundaries as well. Settlement moved more rapidly into Middle Tennessee after various land disputes with North Carolina were settled by 1790. In 1796, six years after the Southwest Territory was formed, Congress established the state of Tennessee. The population grew steadily, and by 1830, when the number of permanent inhabitants reached 700,000 people, few people thought of the state as a pioneer settlement.¹⁸

Whatever motivations were at play among Tennessee settlers, from 1790 to 1820 immigrants shared aspirations of economic wealth and prosperity. Landownership served as one means of fulfilling those goals, and stood as an integral representation of social and cultural value. Land played a central part in early settlers' and farmers' beliefs, aspirations, plans, and decisions.¹⁹ Property ownership, more specifically slave ownership, was another way for settlers to

¹⁷ Winters, 1.

¹⁸ Ibid, 11; Finger, 151.

¹⁹ Winters, 96, 116; Finger, xviii, xx, 98, 161-162.

increase their status within frontier communities. Those without slaves desired to become slave owners and those that owned only a few slaves strove to become large slaveholders. Slave ownership not only provided slaveholders with social position and recognition, but it also stood as a representation of one's power and success within a community. Historian Donald Winters emphasizes:

The larger one's slaveholdings, the greater one's perceived success and the more esteemed one's position. People with slaves commanded more respect, enjoyed greater prestige, and exercised more authority in local affairs than people without slaves. They became community leaders with influence in civic and religious matters. It was a social advantage slaveholders—particularly large slaveholders—enjoyed and non-slaveholders aspired to.²⁰

Not only did slave ownership increase an owner's material wealth, it allowed farmers to cultivate more labor-intensive cash crops, which in turn increased production and profit on rural farms.²¹

The 1791 territorial census recorded 3,417 slaves, comprising approximately 10 percent of the overall population. These numbers continued to increase and by 1800, less than ten years after the territorial census, the slave population had increased more than four times to 13,684, comprising nearly 13 percent of the population.²² A full 58 percent of those slaves lived in Middle Tennessee.²³ The majority of slave owners in Tennessee were small time

²⁰ Winters, 154.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Winters, 135; Mooney, 104-113; Hillard, 35.

²³ Ibid.

farmers, and typically owned no more than five slaves.²⁴ Farmers with a large number of slaves, generally owned substantial farms or plantations, and to mark their place within the emerging settlement landscape, these planters, similar to their brethren across the South, directed their slaves to build impressive brick homes. These houses stood as physical representations of a person's social position, cultural ties, and self-perceptions. In the building of these homes design trends and construction traditions came together with outside environmental factors helping to form a uniquely Tennessee vernacular style. As historian Michael T. Gavin stated, "vernacular architecture has been one of the more vital expressions of the collective spirit of the people of Tennessee."²⁵

A third context for Hawthorn Hill is the local Sumner County and Bledsoe's Lick community. The North Carolina legislature formed Sumner County from of part of Davidson County on November 17, 1786. Sumner is the second oldest county in Middle Tennessee. Its boundaries were the state line to the north, Smith County (by 1799) to the east, the Cumberland River to the south, and Davidson County to the west.²⁶ The county's abundance of wildlife had attracted

²⁴ Winters, 142; Finger, 169-171; Mooney, 114; Stanley J. Folmsbee, Robert E. Corlew, and Enoch L. Mitchell, *Tennessee: A Short History* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1969), 217.

²⁵ Michael T. Gavin, "Building with Wood, Brick, and Stone: Vernacular Architecture in Tennessee, 1770-1900," in *A History of Tennessee Arts: Creating Traditions, Expanding Horizons*, edited by Carroll Van West and Margaret D. Binnicker (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 17.

²⁶ Walter T. Durham, *The Great Leap Westward: A History of Sumner County, Tennessee from its Beginnings to 1805* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Public Library Board, 1969), 1-2; Dee Gee Lester, "Sumner County," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, edited by Carroll Van West et al. (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 898-900.

long hunters and explorers to the area decades earlier. Henry Charles, Richard Skaggs, and Joseph Drake, as well as James Smith and his unnamed eighteen-year-old mulatto slave represented the first wave of exploration to occur in the area in 1765 and 1766 respectively.²⁷ The second wave of early hunters came in 1771-1772, and included Kasper Mansker and Isaac Bledsoe among others.²⁸ Some consider Thomas Sharp Spencer to be the earliest settler in Middle Tennessee after he spent several months in 1776 in a hollowed out sycamore tree in the area now known as Castalian Springs. While others dispute this designation, Spencer's occupation points to an early date of settlement and development at Castalian Springs. By 1779, Spencer had built a cabin and planted crops, making his settlement permanent in the area.²⁹

Throughout 1779 and 1780, dozens of families arrived in Sumner County. By late 1779, the first settlement in Sumner County appeared around and nearby the Bledsoe's Lick, present day Castalian Springs. This community included several well-known early names such as Shelby Blackman, Morgan Hall, and Ephraim Peyton.³⁰ Native American hostilities forced the abandonment of the

²⁷ Jay Guy Cisco, *Historic Sumner County, Tennessee* (Nashville, TN: Folk-Keelin Print. Co., 1909), 4; Lester, 898-900.

²⁸ Carroll Van West and Betty Freudenthal, "Mansker, Kasper," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 569; Walter T. Durham, "Bledsoe, Isaac," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 72-73.

²⁹ Durham, *The Great Leap Westward*, 31; Walter T. Durham, "Sharp, Thomas Spencer," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 874-875; Lester, 898-900.

³⁰ Cisco, 15; Durham, *The Great Leap Westward*, 31.

settlement.³¹ Not until Isaac Bledsoe finished constructing his fort in the Bledsoe's Lick area in 1784 did settlers return in number. Bledsoe's Fort offered a secure center of refuge around which settlements flourished.³² In the 1790s, the establishment of new roads, such as the one from Fort Blount, provided settlers with a more direct route into Sumner County, helping to increase the population. In addition, the Ore military expedition on Native American villages to the south helped to end hostilities between the Indians and settlers.³³

Of the thousands of settlers to come to Middle Tennessee in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, many arrived via the Avery Trace.³⁴ This main thoroughfare carved a three hundred mile path from the intersection of the Tennessee and Clinch Rivers to Nashville. The Trace not only supported a

³¹ Winters, 12-13; Harriette Simpson Arnow, *Seedtime on the Cumberland* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), 44-53 and 59; Finger, 289. Centuries prior to the arrival of the white man to Tennessee soil, Native Americans—the Overhill Cherokee of East Tennessee, the Creeks, the Chickamauga, and the Chickasaws of Middle and West Tennessee—inhabited the land that would become Tennessee. These native Tennesseans saw the entrance of settlers as an intrusion, and rejected any claims settlers attempted to make on the land. The key to fully opening the territory up to settlers was the abolition of Native American's claims to the land. The first step towards the displacement of Native Americans occurred shortly after the Revolution in 1777. During the war the Cherokee aligned themselves with the British and as a result lost a large quantity of their land in the Eastern Tennessee Valley. Over the course of the next few decades, both the Cherokees and Chickasaws relinquished their hold in East and Middle Tennessee through a series of informal sales and treaties. Final cessions of Native American lands in Tennessee, as well as in the southern region, were made in 1835 through the Treaty of New Echota. The interplay between white settlers and Native Americans over land rights successfully stymied some frontier movement. Still, settlers' blatant disregard for Indian claims ultimately led to white settlement of the territory and the removal of native tribes from the region.

³² Durham, *The Great Leap Westward*, 32; Kevin E. Smith, "Bledsoe Station: Archaeology, History and the Interpretation of the Middle Tennessee Frontier, 1770-1820," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* LIX, no.3 (2000), 176-178.

³³ Lester, 898-900; Fred S. Rolater, "Chickamaugas," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 150-151; Smith, 176-178.

³⁴ Paul Taylor Hoffman, "The Old Southwest Passage: Exploring the First Road into Middle Tennessee," M.A. Thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2012, 20.

steady flow of settlers into the territory, but also sustained trade and commerce in and out of the state. As a vital artery many found it economically beneficial to settle along the Trace, building farms and other businesses, and significant properties remain, especially in Sumner County.³⁵ Two particular houses, Cragfont and Wynnewood, offer insight into the Castalian Springs community, providing valuable context for Hawthorn Hill.

Cragfont, the home of General James Winchester, was built between 1798 and 1802, and is located four miles west of Hawthorn Hill on State Highway 25 (Figure 1.2). This grand, limestone Georgian-style home stands two stories high and two pens deep with a central hallway. Winchester came to Tennessee in 1785 from Baltimore, Maryland, and played a vital role in Tennessee's early development. Winchester was associated with, among other things, the establishment of Sumner County in 1787 and the founding of Memphis along with the help of Andrew Jackson and John Overton in 1819.³⁶ Winchester commissioned the construction of one of Tennessee's finest early homes as a physical representation of his wealth and prestige. Cragfont reflects not only Winchester's refined tastes, but also his Baltimore heritage through its craftsmanship and design. According to traveling French botanist, Andre Michaux, General Winchester was "engaged in finishing a stone house, very elegant for the country, it contains four large rooms on the ground floor, a first

³⁵ Hoffman, 20-27

³⁶ Linda Ann Thompson, "A Study of Two Early Nineteenth Century Houses in Sumner County, Tennessee," M.A. Thesis, Vanderbilt University Press, 1977, 21-25.

floor and an attic story. The carpenters had been fetched from Baltimore, a distance of near 700 miles.”³⁷ While Baltimore craftsmen constructed the house, much of the finer interior carpentry has been attributed to local carpenter, Francis Weatherred.³⁸



Figure 1.2. Cragfont, front façade, Sumner County, TN. (Abigail Gautreau)

³⁷ Hoffman, 38.

³⁸ Thompson, 36; Veronica Riegel, *A Summary Report on the 1989 Excavations at the Cragfont Historic House Site*, Summary Report (TN: Tennessee Department of Conservation Division of Archaeology, 1991), 12; Ann Eckert Brown, *American Wall Stenciling, 1790-1840* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2003), 145.

Roughly one mile west of Hawthorn Hill on Old Highway 25 is Wynnewood, a historic log inn owned by the Wynne family (Figure 1.3). Originally built as a travelers' stop in 1828, by Colonel Alfred R. Wynne, Stephen Roberts, and William Cage, this mammoth log inn features both single and double stories as well as a central dog-trot. The three business partners built the inn in the hopes of -attracting wayfarers traveling along the Avery Trace. By 1834, however, the inn had foundered after the main road was rerouted to Wilson County. Soon after the business's failure, Roberts and Cage sold their interests to A.R. Wynne and his wife Almira—daughter of James Winchester. The home remained in the family until 1971 when it was purchased by the state of Tennessee.³⁹ While these three homes vary dramatically in their material, scale, design, and refinement, they do, however, stand as architectural representations of the collective Castalian Springs community and its transition overtime.

³⁹ Hoffman, 32-33; Thompson, 65-66.



Figure 1.3. Wynnewood, front façade, Sumner County, TN. (Dr. Carroll Van West)

Another way of understanding the development of Castalian Springs is through extant county tax records for the years of 1817 and 1820. As a source, tax records have advantages and drawbacks. Specific names listed in tax records indicate who lived there during a specific time. Tax records also help identify the approximate amount of property owned by each individual including acreage, additional town lots, slaves, stud horses, and wheeled pleasure carriages. Tax records also offer a rough snapshot of the economic base for the community of Bledsoe's Lick; the record is imprecise, as tax records fail to accurately record all of the people in a known area as a census would. These documents also fail to provide a complete record of the exact amount of land and

slaves owned. Despite the limitations, these documents still offer valuable insight into the economic base of an area, and remain one of the best means of portraying community development.

According to the 1817 tax records, fifty-six property owners lived in the Castalian Springs area, owning some 13,302 acres, five town lots, one hundred and twenty-three slaves, one stud horse, and one wheeled pleasure carriage. Dividing individuals into six property brackets, one can determine general economic divisions within the community (Figure 1.4). The two smallest groups of landowners were composed of those in the 50 to 100 acre percentile and the 400 to 1,000 acre percentile. The majority of property owners only owned between 200 and 300 acres. Likewise, the people with smaller tracts of land owned the smallest total number of slaves, while those with large plots of land, in the 300 to 400 acre range, owned the largest total number of slaves. People in the 200 to 300 acre percentile generally owned two to six slaves (Figure 1.5). Only one person is listed as owning both a studhorse and a carriage.⁴⁰ This man, Robert Ellis, also owned 302 acres, placing him just above the average range.⁴¹ By 1820, Ellis was no longer listed in the community.

⁴⁰ Owlsey, 7-15; Mooney, 114; Folmsbee, 217.

⁴¹ "Sumner County Tax Lists 1817-1825," *Tax Lists* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Archives, 1817 and 1820), 1205-1306.

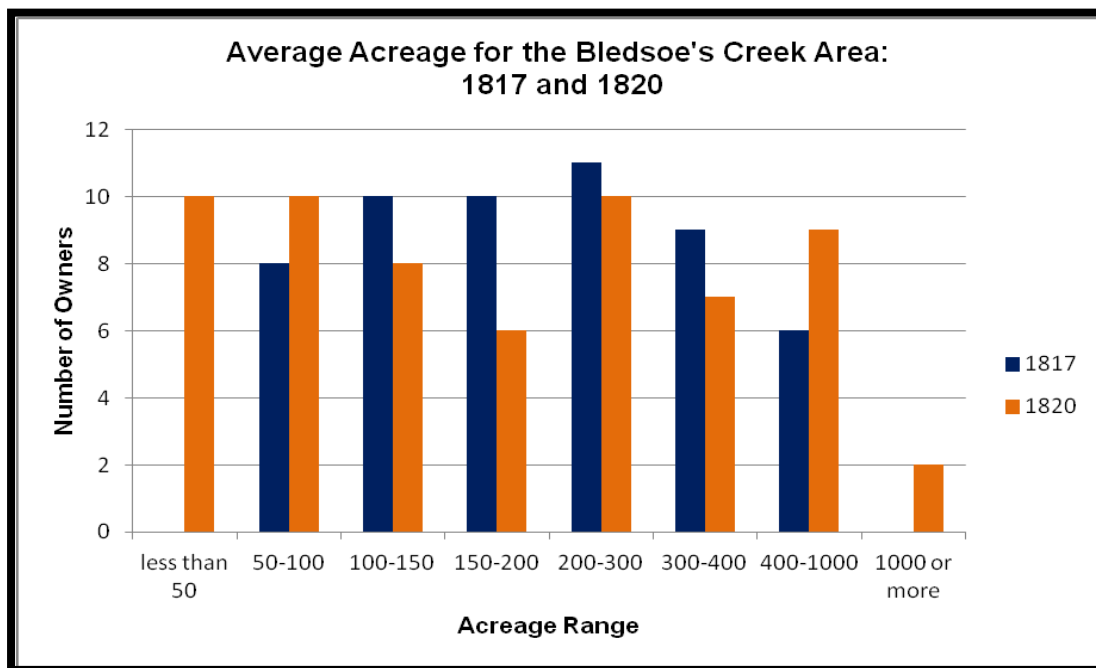


Figure 1.4. Bar graph for the Average Acreage for the Bledsoe's Creek Area: 1817 and 1820. (Jessi White)



Figure 1.5. Bar graph for the Total Number of Slaves: 1817 and 1820. (Jessi White)

By 1820, the taxable population had increased to sixty-four individuals, who owned 17,484 acres, fifteen town lots, and 115 slaves. Even though the taxable population had slightly increased, the average range of acreage still remained in the 200 to 300 acre percentile. The range of property ownership did shift by 1820, however. In this time period two new distinct groups emerged. Prior to 1820 the tax records list the smallest land holding as fifty acres. By 1820, ten people were listed as having fifty acres or less. The number of people owning 50 to 100 acres also increased to ten, while the total number of people in the 200 to 300 acre percentile, previously the largest segment of the population, decreased by one to ten. Interestingly enough, another much smaller group also emerged during this time, those with more than one thousand acres of land.⁴²

Three possibilities surface when examining the emergence of the smaller land categories. On the one hand, these smaller tracts of land could demonstrate more and more settlers came in search of land. In some cases people were unable to afford land and instead chose to rent property.⁴³ On the other hand, the rise of smaller tracts of land may point to rising land prices in the nineteenth century. As prices rose, settlers were only able to purchase small plots of land.⁴⁴ Another reason is the Depression of 1819. This depression lasted well into 1822 and was highlighted by substantial bank failures, business

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Winters, 97-99.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 97.

bankruptcies, unemployment, inflation in the prices of goods, and a decline in property values. This depression was felt both nationally and internationally.⁴⁵

A likely explanation also emerges when one looks at the development of the large land owning class. A closer examination of the ratio of slaves to land in this category reveals that there are not a sufficient number of slaves to work such vast tracts of land. Further research into one of the land owners, General James Winchester, reveals that he was active in both land speculation and the slave trade.⁴⁶ This helps to support the idea that some of the larger tracts of land belonged to land speculators.

When examining the eighteen individuals listed in both the 1817 and 1820 tax record, an increase in property ownership is noted. Twelve out of the eighteen settlers listed in both of these records showed an increase in the number of acres they owned. An overall increase in property, both acreage and slaves, reflects the economic mobility of landholders who sought to increase their prosperity and status within the community.

Best evidence indicates that Hawthorn Hill was built in the early 1800s, about two mile east of Wynnewood and four miles southeast of Cragfont. A closer inspection of two contributing homes in the Castalian Springs community, Cragfont and Wynnewood, provides architectural context for Hawthorn Hill. At the same time tax records from the time period situate Hawthorn Hill within the

⁴⁵ Samuel Reznick, "The Depression of 1819-1822, A Social History," *American Historical Review* 39, no. 1 (October 1933), 28-29.

⁴⁶ Walter T. Durham, *James Winchester: Tennessee Pioneer* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Library Board, 1979), 72-83.

community's economic base. Further investigation into the architectural trends and traditions of Middle Tennessee and the Castalian Springs community will provide deeper insight into Hawthorn Hill.

CHAPTER II: THEMES IN EARLY TENNESSEE VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

According to geographer Peirce F. Lewis, a house is one of the single most important aspects of culture. It represents more than just shelter; it is an emulation of one's social position, a symbol of the character of individuals. Through a house—be it high style mansion, or simple domestic dwelling—"man etches his culture into the landscape."¹

One can learn many things by looking at houses. The dwellings that people construct often subconsciously offer insight into a person's culture, society, time period, and self-perceptions. Common, unprepossessing houses generally provide the most interesting insight into culture. When examining these domestic spaces one can see how people of few or lesser means inventively translated the predominant cultural and social trends of their time. This direct correlation between culture and architecture reveals that common house-types change along with transformations in culture. Vernacular architecture tends to be more fundamentally resistant to change as people are slow to relinquish familiar traditions and customs. Architectural structures, as an aspect of material culture, stand as one of the best examples of substantial and lasting cultural norms. The ties between culture and architecture are so strong in some cases that people tend to adhere rigidly to architectural forms familiar to them, rather than devising

¹ Peirce F. Lewis, "Common Houses, Cultural Spoor," *Landscape* 19, no. 2 (January 1975),1.

a style that fits more coherently within a new environment, regardless of the uncomfortable results.²

Built circa 1806, Hawthorn Hill, located on Old Highway 25 East, is a two-story, brick, one-pen deep Federal style house. This dwelling has a hall-and-parlor floor plan, a side-gable roof, and a shed roof porch. The roof is composed of cedar wood shingles while the walls, chimney, and porch column piers are finished in brick. The exterior brick walls of the house rest on a continuous limestone foundation, while interior walls and log sleeper joists are supported by stacked limestone block piers. Both the exterior and interior of the house reflect the Federal style in the restrained yet elegant architectural detailing, millwork, and symmetrical three-bay design. Hawthorn Hill as a significant piece of domestic architecture fits into a longer vernacular building tradition in Tennessee.³

When responding to the necessity of sheltering themselves, Tennesseans often relied on upon natural materials that were close at hand. Through the use of nearby natural materials in the creation of physical forms that Tennesseans have emulated a “spirit” of cultural unity and fundamental conservatism. Grounded in practical use and tradition, rather than in pretense or fashion, the dwellings built by the common person were representative of a collective

² Lewis, 2.

³ Jessi White, *Hawthorne Hill Property: Sumner County, Tennessee*, History, Conditions Assessment, and Maintenance Recommendations Report (Murfreesboro, TN: Tennessee National Civil War Heritage Area, 2012), 7.

character of early settlers in the Volunteer State.⁴ The rate at which individual buildings were replaced was high; although vernacular houses maintained the same fundamental elements over extended periods of time. The use of vernacular interpretations of high style architectural elements and motifs was not uncommon in Tennessee, and in some cases a mix of unrefined and sophisticated designs resulted in a uniquely Tennessee style. As Carl Lounsbury states in his article “The Dynamics of Architectural Design in Eighteenth-Century Charleston and the Lowcountry,” “academic design concepts did not displace local patterns but became intricately woven into the native building traditions, creating distinctive regional forms.”⁵ Because Tennesseans were forced to rely heavily on the handiwork of local craftsmen and ordinary citizens for the construction of buildings, the need for specialists and master builders was slow in developing. Wood, stone, and brick were the primary materials used in the construction of early dwellings, although Tennesseans used a variety of resources.⁶

The untamed nature of the landscape was key in shaping early settlement. The unfamiliar environment often pushed settlers to build dwellings that were simple in design and easy to put together. Settlers typically used logs as their

⁴ Lewis, 2; Gavin, 17.

⁵ Carl Lounsbury, “The Dynamics of Architectural Design in Eighteenth-Century Charleston and the Lowcountry,” in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture: Exploring Everyday Landscapes, VII*, edited by Annmarie Adams and Sally McMurry (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 66.

⁶ James Patrick, *Architecture in Tennessee, 1768-1897* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 16-30; Gavin, 18.

primary material.⁷ These buildings could be quickly assembled, and there was an abundant local supply of the materials used to construct single-pen cabins. When families decided to enlarge the cabin they found it difficult to incorporate an addition directly onto an existing log cabin. To solve the problem they constructed a separate cabin several feet away and then connected the two via a “breeze way” or “dog-trot.” They would continue to use this basic form, even as homes became larger and more complicated, typically in the connection of service quarters with the main house. Because of the practical and easy to construct nature of log homes, the style was not readily abandoned, until the twentieth century.⁸

Measuring approximately 142 feet in length, Wynnewood stands as one of Tennessee largest and oldest log structures. The dwelling was built using oak, walnut, ash, and cedar logs, measuring, in some cases, roughly 32 feet in length. The dwelling’s foundation and chimneys are composed of limestone blocks quarried on site, while its gable roof is clad in split wood shingles (Figure 2.1).⁹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cochran, 7.

⁹Hoffman, 32-33; Walter T. Durham, *Old Sumner: A History of Sumner County Tennessee from 1805 to 1861*.

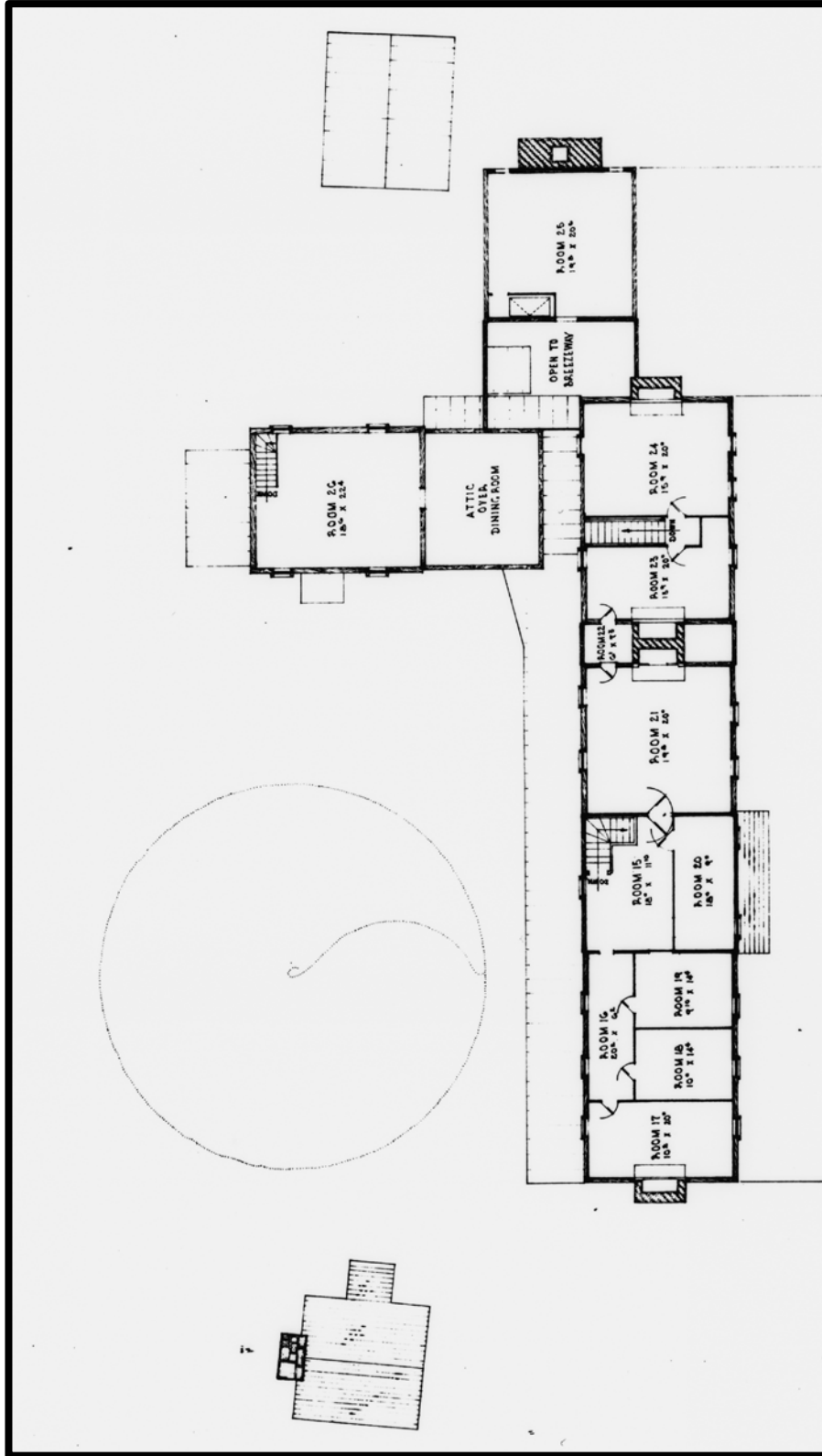


Figure 2.1. Wynnewood, floor plan, Sumner County, TN. (HABS image)

Since its construction in 1828, the building has remained functional, serving as an inn, private dwelling, and most recently as a historic house museum. Originally, business owners Colonel Alfred Royal Wynne, Stephen Roberts, and William Cage envisioned the inn as a successful resort and spa. In 1834, however, when the main stage coach route between Nashville and Knoxville was moved to Wilson County the business failed, and the partnership was dissolved. It was at that time that Alfred and his wife Almira purchased the house and converted it into a private dwelling where they raised their fourteen children. Wynnewood remained a private residence until after the Colonel's death in 1893. Four of Wynne's surviving children— Mary Meriwether, Susan, Louise, and Winchester— reopened the inn as a mineral springs resort at the turn of the century. The inn remained open until 1915, when the dwindling number of customers forced the resort to close for good. George Winchester Wynne, son of Winchester and Dora Wynne, took ownership of the site in 1948. It remained in his possession until 1971 when he sold the house to the State of Tennessee to ensure its preservation as a state historic site.¹⁰

Also among some of the first buildings to be constructed in Tennessee were stone and rock houses. These often crudely built dwellings served as a transition from the quickly erected log structures of first generation settlers to more enduring buildings of the early statehood period. Considered one of the most durable materials of the settlement landscape, the collection, shaping, and

¹⁰ Thompson, 60-68.

assembly of stone structures was by far one of the most exhaustive forms of construction, and required the services of slave labor and highly skilled masons. Due to the labor-intensive process in cultivating the material and the expense involved, stone did not experience wide use. Stone structures did, however, offer a sense of stability and permanence, which proved attractive to pioneers who wished to set up permanent residence in an area.¹¹

Located on a hillside bluff overlooking Bledsoe's Creek in Sumner County, Tennessee, Cragfont, the home of General James Winchester, is fine example of frontier era stone architecture (Figure 2.2).¹² Cragfont is a three-bay, two-story ashlar cut limestone house, built in the late-Georgian style with Federal elements. The house features a central hall floor plan, measuring two pens deep with a "T" addition to the rear. The house's double entry doors and eight-light transom are centered along the main façade and two sets of twelve-over-eight double-hung windows flank the doors. The second floor features five twelve-over-eight double-hung windows repeating the layout of the first floor. Radiating jack arches with center keystones cap all apertures. Seven six-pointed stars spaced along the façade (three on the foundation level, and four in the plenum space between the first and second floor) of the house serve as anchors to a

¹¹ Gavin, 24-25.

¹² Ruth Bedrosian, et al, *Historic Structures Report: Cragfont Castlian Springs, TN*, Historical Structures Report, (Murfreesboro: Middle Tennessee State University, 1982),113; J. Frazer Smith, *White Pillars: Early Life and Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country*, (New York: Bramhall House, 1951), 30; Roberta Seawell Brandau, ed., *History of Homes and Gardens of Tennessee*, (Nashville, TN: Parthenon Press, 1936),281; Carroll Van West, *Tennessee's Historical Lanscapes: A Traveler's Guide*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 315-316.

turnbuckle system that runs the width of the house, tying the dwelling together. Decorative dentil brackets are located just below the projecting soffit. A decorative cornice composed of cyma and fretted moldings are located just below the dentil brackets coming together to form an entablature that runs along the façades of the north and south of the house.¹³ The east and west gable ends of the house both have wide chimneys, indicative of Georgian architecture, with a single weathering. The chimneys only extend out from the exterior wall by approximately six inches, while the bulk of the chimney projects into the interior of the house, representing one of the vernacular trends seen on the frontier. Oval vents located on either side of the chimneys are the only openings on the east and west façades.

James Winchester began the construction of Cragfont in 1798. According to François André Michaux, a French botanist who stayed at Cragfont, Winchester had recruited the work of skilled workmen from Baltimore to assemble the house.¹⁴ The first floor plan has a central hall with a grand staircase located on the right interior wall of the hall. The right side of the house is divided into two smaller rooms, while the left side of the house is composed of a single grand parlor. This plan was replicated onto the second level of the house. The second level served as the family's sleeping quarters. During or shortly after the construction of the main block of the house, Winchester added a rear two-story addition, converting Cragfont into a "T" shaped plan. The first floor

¹³ Riegel, 9.

¹⁴ Thompson, 28.

of this addition is four rooms deep, containing a transition hall, a dining room, a kitchen, and a smoke house. The second floor of the addition has only two rooms, a grand ballroom, and a secondary dining room.¹⁵

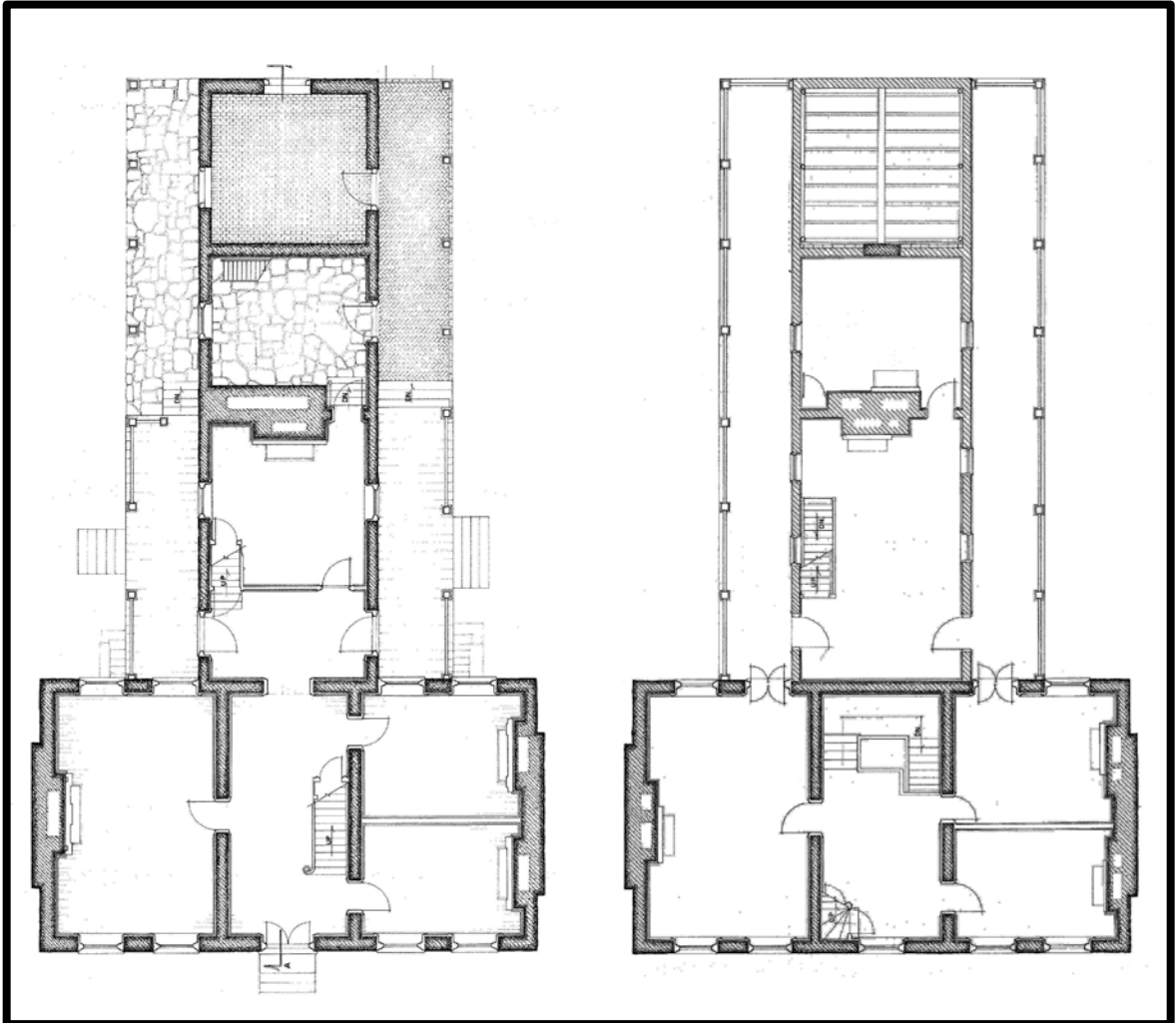


Figure 2.2. Cragfont, floor plans, Sumner County, TN (HABS image).

¹⁵ Riegel, 9-10; J. Frazer Smith, *White Pillars: Early Life and Architecture of the Lower Mississippi Valley Country*, (New York: Bramhall House, 1951), 29-30.

Tradition holds that local carpenter Frank Weatherred completed most if not all of the carpentry within this block of the house.¹⁶ The details seen in most of the millwork in the house show Georgian and Federal influences and include: deep reveals with molded architraves and full ears; bolection molding; a dog-leg staircase with a molded cherry handrail, ending in a decorative scroll and supported by a spiral newel post and square balusters; and a floor to ceiling wood mantel and over mantel (Figure 2.3).¹⁷ Decorative stenciling can also be found throughout the home's interior. These patterns include vine and leaf, bird and shell, diamond and petal, snowflake, and sliced egg motifs (Figures 2.4 and 2.5).¹⁸ According to the family history the stenciling was done by "an itinerant artist who spent some months at Cragfont and did the stenciling as a gift," sometime around 1830 to 1835.¹⁹

¹⁶ Thompson, 36; Riegel, 12; Brown, 145.

¹⁷ Riegel, 12; Brandau, 281; Thompson, 37.

¹⁸ Brown, 145.

¹⁹ Brown, 146.



Figure 2.3. Cragfont, Mantel and over mantel, Sumner County, TN.
(Abigail Gautreau)



Figure 2.4. Cragfont, bird and shell, diamond and petal, and snowflake stencils, Sumner County, TN. (Abigail Gautreau)

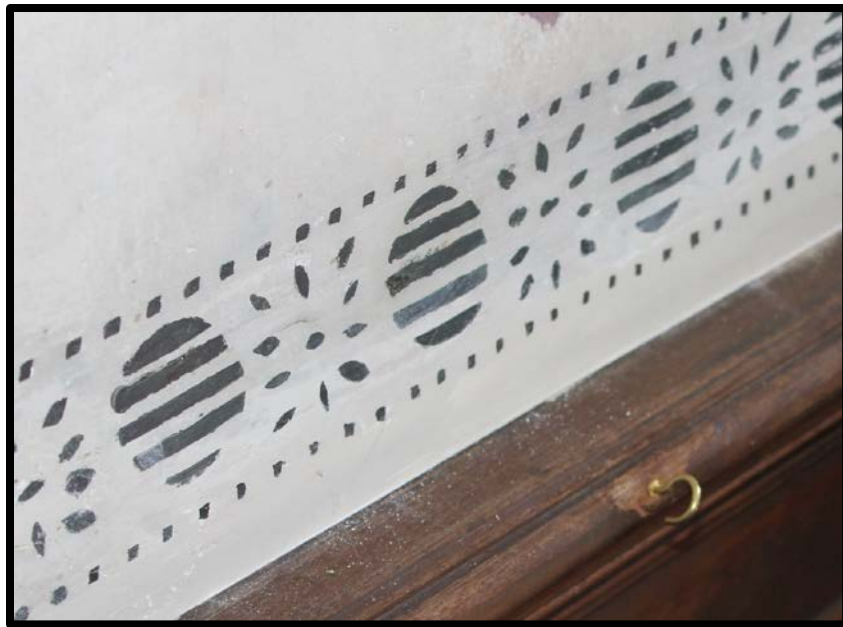


Figure 2.5. Cragfont, sliced egg stencil, Sumner County, TN. (Abigail Gautreau)

Because of the intensive nature and difficulty of stone construction, brick quickly became the choice alternative for many Tennessee settlers, offering the same sense of stability and stylish look while using less effort. Bricks could easily be produced on site through the use of local clay deposits, and kilns assembled on the property. Slaves typically made the bricks and constructed the houses. Making brick on site helped to eliminate cost and transportation issues, making brick a suitable alternative to stone masonry. Furthermore, unlike stone, bricks could be produced in somewhat standard sizes making building construction more uniform and less labor intensive.²⁰

In a short period of time settlers were able to adapt to their surroundings, taming the wild landscape and developing prosperous surroundings where more refined dwellings could be constructed.²¹ Early southwest frontier buildings reflected Scottish and English medieval dwellings, influenced by sixteenth century English Neoclassicism and designs from the Virginia and Pennsylvania colonies.²² By the 1810s Georgian and Federal designs had found their way to Tennessee from the coastal cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston. The appearance of these sophisticated architectural styles helped to link the emerging elite class of the backcountry to the established elite culture of seaboard cities. During this time the second generation settlers' desire to fulfill

²⁰ Gavin, 25-27; Cochran, 11.

²¹ Cochran, 8.

²² Patrick, 61.

an aesthetic and social void became apparent.²³ The transition from a frontier state to a settled state allowed builders to engage in design with a more fashionable aesthetic appeal. While Federal style architecture was the prominent form used during this time on the eastern seaboard, middle period Georgian architecture dominated in the west. Is it any surprise then that the Middle Tennessee region witnessed a mixture of Georgian and Federal architecture, described as “Tennessee Federal” by historian James Patrick, as early as the 1790s.²⁴

The vernacular of the Southwest frontier also reflected environmental influences. Due to the warmer climate of the southern region, ceilings were high, for better circulation allowing heat to rise. To accommodate the high ceilings windows were often elongated as well, giving homes a narrower appearance. Narrow proportions were a pattern typical of Tennessee vernacular architecture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²⁵

Floor plans, however, reflected both environment and past cultural traditions. Two plans common of the eastern seaboard dominated: the hall-and-parlor plan and the central hall plan.²⁶ The hall-and-parlor plan was commonly used in England and Wales long before early settlers brought it to Virginia and

²³ Gavin, 26-27.

²⁴ Patrick, 81.

²⁵ Cochran, 11.

²⁶ Clifton Coxe Ellis, “Houses, Early Vernacular Plans,” *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, 439; Patrick, 61.

New England (Figure 2.6).²⁷ This plan was composed of two rooms of unequal size. The larger of the two rooms, the hall, served as a community space for dining, entertaining, and work. The smaller of the two spaces, the parlor, was often used as a bedchamber or secondary work area. During the eighteenth century, this plan was often duplicated onto a second floor converting the house into a four-room dwelling. An open, straight string stair located along the back of the room was used to access the upper levels of the house. Box staircases, also known as cabinet or sealed stairs, were also used, and were generally located in the corner of the room adjacent to the fireplace.²⁸

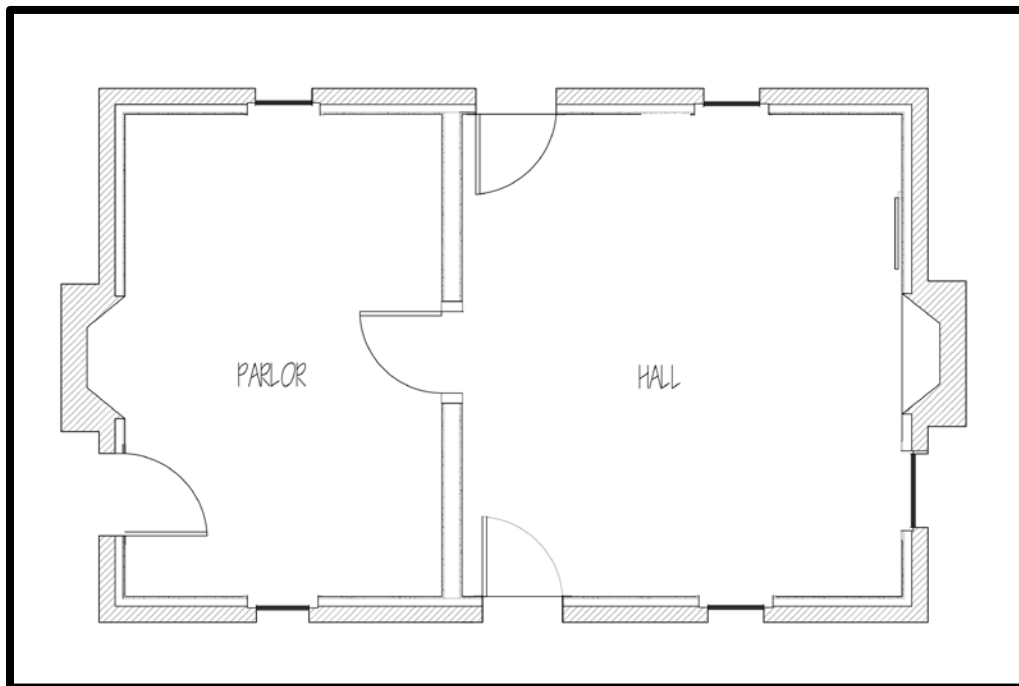


Figure 2.6. Hall-and parlor floor plan. (Jessi White)

²⁷ Ellis, 440.

²⁸ Ibid; Mark R. Wenger, "The Central Passage in Virginia: Evolution of an Eighteenth-Century Living Space," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, II*, edited by Camille Wells (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 137-138.

The façade of the hall-parlor plan was typically an asymmetrical three-bay layout with a central entry door.²⁹ The multi-purpose use of the rooms within the hall-and-parlor plan, as both entertaining and living spaces, reflects the importance of socialization and community ties. The lack of individual or private spaces was seen not as an imposition, but rather as a commonly accepted social trend rooted in the need for a collective community bond. In the coastal states, the hall and parlor floor plan receded in popularity in the late eighteenth century, giving way to the use of the central hall plan. Tennesseans, however, continued to use this floor plan into the nineteenth century, examples of which were built as late as the 1820s.³⁰

The central-hall plan, also prevalent in Tennessee, was typically laid out in a central passage configuration (Figure 2.7). These houses were typically composed of a central hallway flanked by two equal sized rooms. Central hall houses displayed a symmetrical three- to five-bay façade with a central entryway. These houses could be built using brick, stone, or wood framing materials. Decoration was often simple, displaying neoclassical details such as voussoirs, keystones, water tables, quoins, and stringcourses.³¹ These particular plans served several purposes. First and foremost, the use of this plan reflected the evolution of cultural trends as central hall layouts came to represent the

²⁹ Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture*, 64-68; Patrick, 69.

³⁰ Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 55 and 82; Ellis, 440.

³¹ Carroll Van West, *Tennessee's Historic Landscapes: A Traveler's Guide* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 139; Patrick, 69; Ellis, 439.

formalization of social relationships through the addition of a transitional space (i.e.-the central hall), which separated private spaces from public entertaining spaces. Second, the central passage could serve a practical purpose through the use of the hall as a breezeway, cooling adjacent spaces via cross ventilation. Finally, the plan served as an outward symbol of one's social and economic standing within a community. Early examples of the central hall house can be seen in Tennessee as early as the 1790s, but the style remained popular into the later decades of the nineteenth century.³²

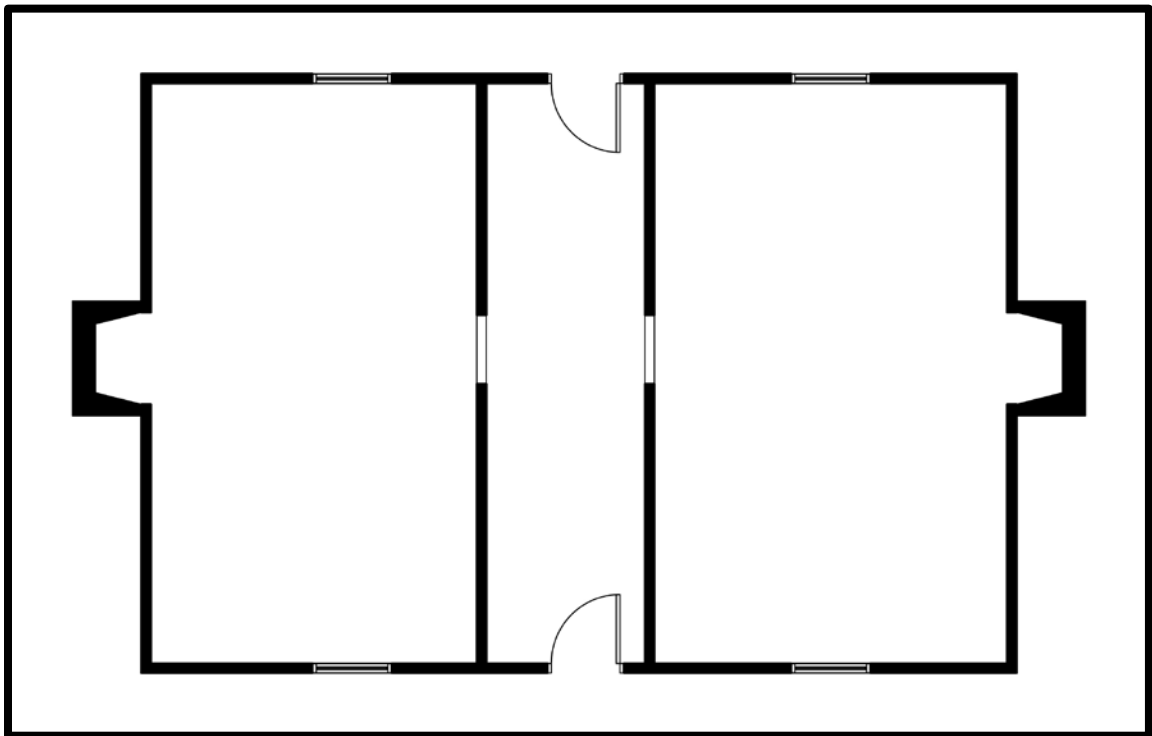


Figure 2.7. Central hall floor plan. (Jessi White)

³² Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia*, 84 and 93-95; Ellis, 440; Wenger, 138-149.

Variations in vernacular architecture can also be traced through Tennessee chimneys. In the early-eighteenth century three common chimney arrangements came to Tennessee from North Carolina and Virginia. First, the indoor stack, also known as a center room chimney, positioned fireplaces back to back along a central interior wall. These particular fireplaces were uncommon to Tennessee. More common to the Cumberland region was the exterior chimney. This chimney pattern was almost always located on the gabled end of the house. These chimneys were constructed outside of the house and in theory could stand independently from it. Exterior chimneys were generally built in a pyramid-like shape with successive weatherings that gradually reduced in size from firebox to the pitch of the roof, moderating the size of the stack. A third chimney type was the interior gable-end chimney. Located along the gable end of the house, this chimney projected into the house, creating two interior nooks, while leaving the exterior flush. In many cases one of the two nooks created by this chimney was often used to conceal a boxed stair. As the central hall plan became more popular chimneys were gradually extended out to the exterior surface of the wall. Interior chimneys were prevalent before 1810, but by 1825 exterior chimneys had become more popular.³³

The cultural influences of buildings can be traced not only by examining floor plans, construction methods, and materials, but also through architectural styles. Even in simple dwellings stylistic variations can be identified. Every building, large or small, exhibits its own unique design indicative of a specific

³³ Patrick, 69-70; Ellis, 440.

time period, region, or people. Many of the early houses of the southern backcountry display their own unique perspective on certain academic styles, making it difficult to group them into a particular category. These dwellings do, however, display several recognizable features indicative of specific styles. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century two styles, Georgian and Federal, dominated the southern region.

Georgian style architecture, prevalent in the eighteenth century, is identifiable by its rectangular form. These houses are typically composed of one- or two-stories, usually one room deep (Figure 2.8). The doors and windows generally adhere to strict symmetry. Windows are usually spaced horizontally and vertically in symmetrical rows, and are ranked in five, three, or seven bays.³⁴ Georgian homes have central paneled entry doors, topped by an intricate entablature supported by decorative pilasters. A transom located beneath the crown, or within the door is common. A decorative cornice located just below the soffit-line of the roof is commonly composed of dentil molding. Georgian windows were frequently double- hung sashes, composed of nine-over-nine,

³⁴ William Morgan, *The Abrams Guide to American House Styles* (Abrams, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 51; Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 124.

twelve- over-twelve, nine-over-six, or twelve- over- eight lights. The panels of glass are usually separated by thick wooden muntins.³⁵



Figure 2.8. Wythe House, Williamsburg, James City County, VA. (Dr. Carroll Van West)

³⁵ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), 139-143; Stephen Calloway, ed., *The Elements of Style: A Practical Encyclopedia of Interior Architectural Details From 1485 to the Present* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 1991), 74; Carl R. Lounsbury, *An Illustrated Glossary of Early Southern Architecture and Landscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 96, 111, 132, 238, 272, and 378; Karen Koepler, "Building in Stone in Southwestern Pennsylvania: Patterns and Process," in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, V: Gender, Class, and Shelter*, edited by Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 202; Lanier, 124-125.

Early in the development of the style walls typically observed a three-part division, composed of a frieze, field, and dado.³⁶ Floor to ceiling wooden paneling remained fashionable, although it was seen less after the 1740s. In rooms where cheaper wood was used to make paneling, paint was often used to cover it. In some cases decorative stenciling was added to enhance the appearance of the wood. Decorative papers and fabrics were also used.³⁷ Paneling and wall coverings were often used in the more prominent rooms of the house, while plaster or stucco was used in less important rooms. Stucco walls were often left plain, but in some cases they were scored to resemble masonry. Plaster, in any case, was washed with color or lime washed. Periodically, craftsmen added decorative stenciling to the plasterwork.³⁸

Ceilings in more common homes were formed using the underside of the second story floor timbers (joists). The spaces between the timbers were sometimes roughly plastered. In more sophisticated homes a similar design was used to form the more refined coffered ceilings. The standard Georgian ceilings were typically more complex in their construction. These ceilings were often comprised of lath work nailed directly on to the underside of joists, and were then covered in three layers of plaster: a scratch coat, brown coat, and finish coat.³⁹ Decorative moldings were either cast directly on to the ceiling surface, or cast

³⁶ Lounsbury, 109 and 151.

³⁷ Morgan, 51, Calloway, 85.

³⁸ Morgan, 50; Calloway, 85; Lounsbury, 279 and 360.

³⁹ Lounsbury, 207 and 279.

separately and applied later. Decorative details and moldings were usually applied around the perimeter of the room, typically with a circular medallion in the center. During the late seventeenth century heavy ornamentation was very popular, but this gave way to the shallower relief of Palladian detail work. Friezes and modillion cornices generally displayed classical motifs.⁴⁰ Rococo elements and motifs such as leaf, shell, and bird forms became popular by the 1730s and 1740s. This style, however, was later replaced neoclassical detailing in the 1750s and 1760s. Ornately painted ceilings were fashionable in the more affluent homes early in the Georgian period. While whitewash predominated in more common homes, small painted insets composed of scenes or coats of arms could also be found.⁴¹

Stone pavers were used for the floors in the entrance halls, while wood plank floors, laid over joists, were typical elsewhere in the house. Early on, wood floors were made of oak. Later variances used elm, and by the mid-eighteenth century floorboards were made up of fir or pine. Early boards measured more than twelve inches in width, but as the style evolved the boards became narrower, often eight to ten inches wide. These floors were often stained and polished⁴²

The fireplace served as the centerpiece of Georgian parlors. In some cases statuary marble with colored marble inlays was used, however, marbles

⁴⁰ Ibid, 233, and 389-390.

⁴¹ Calloway, 88.

⁴² Ibid, 91.

were generally reserved for upper class homeowners. Scagliola work (gypsum mixed with glue) served as an inexpensive substitute for marble.⁴³ In most cases fireplace surrounds were composed of wood. Mantels were often broken into sections. Details were generally carved or applied directly to the mantel, and included heavy pilasters and entablatures painted with bright colors.⁴⁴

In more affluent households a main staircase was located in the main entrance hall, while a secondary back stair was in place for servants. In common houses there was generally one set of wooden stairs, composed of straight stringers capped by landings. The more decorative portions of the stair were usually reserved for the first floor. Decorative detail lessened as stairs ascend to the upper levels. Open string stairs were popular during this time; balusters were affixed to the treads allowing for carved detailing and decoration to be added to the tread-ends.⁴⁵ The handrail and treads of the stairs were generally polished wood, although some stairs were finished in trompe-l'œil wood graining, or flat chocolate paint. In finer houses stone was used for the stairs, while wrought iron and cast-iron was used for the balustrade.⁴⁶

The Federal style house, like the preceding Georgian, is generally a simple rectangular plan, one- to two- pens deep, with doors and window arranged symmetrically (Figure 2.9). Unlike Georgian houses, however, wings

⁴³ Lounsbury, 318.

⁴⁴ Calloway, 93; Morgan, 51; Lanier, 125; Lounsbury, 132 and 272.

⁴⁵ Lounsbury, 17, 204-205, and 346.

⁴⁶ Calloway, 98.

were often attached to Federal house plans. Polygonal or curved projections off of the side or rear of buildings have been seen on a few high-style examples, but this variation is rarely found in Tennessee.⁴⁷ Federal or “Adamesque” design served as an improvement and refinement of the earlier Georgian form, with more delicate detailing. The wealthy merchant class along the New England seaboard first embraced the style. It often incorporated fashionable European trends. Federal design served as the predominate style of the recently developed United States from 1780 to 1840. The style crested in popularity along the flourishing port cities of the east coast. Most high-style examples are concentrated in these areas, however, some examples have been found elsewhere.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Mills Lane, *Architecture of the Old South* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1993), 98. McAlester, 153; Morgan, 61 and 69; Lane, 122 and 127.

⁴⁸ McAlester, 156 and 158; Morgan 60; Lanier 127-130; Lane, 100-102, 109, and 115.



Figure 2.9. Woodlawn, 9000 Richmond Highway, Mount Vernon, Fairfax County, VA.
(HABS image)

The main entry door on Federal houses served as the central feature of the façade. In many cases a semi-circular or elliptical fanlight could be seen over the entry door. The fanlight was often incorporated in the more intricate door surround.⁴⁹ The surround or portico framed doors with pilasters and elegant woodcarvings in the entablature. Carving motifs included oval patera, urns, and swags, as well as a variety of other classical ornamentations.⁵⁰ Both interior and exterior doors tended to use pine; however, this varied regionally as the use of

⁴⁹ McAlester, 153; Morgan, 61; Lane, 153; Patrick, 81.

⁵⁰ Lounsbury, 263.

other materials such as maple, poplar, and cypress have also been seen.

Interior doors were frequently grained with a mahogany trompe-l'œil effect. The casings of some interior doors took on a Neo-classical design and were often decorated with wooden tracery and stuccowork.⁵¹

Windows on Federal style houses were aligned both horizontally and vertically in symmetrical rows, creating a three-, five-, or seven- bay façade, five-bay being the most common. There are several defining features that distinguish Federal windows from those of the previous Colonial period. While both Federal and Georgian window designs were made up of double-hung sashes placed in symmetrical rows, Georgian windows generally have smaller panes of glass in comparison to Federal houses. Prior to the American Revolution typical pane size measured approximately six inches by eight inches; panes increased in size after the Revolution, and measured approximately eight inches by twelve inches. Windows were generally arranged with sashes of six-over-six in the northern colonies, and nine-over-nine in the southern colonies. On occasion nine-over-six, eight-over-eight, and other combinations could be found. In some cases decorative Palladian-style windows could be seen positioned over the main entry door.⁵² Windows in both Georgian and Federal designs sometimes displayed elaborate decorative entablatures, although the Federal design was often more delicate than its Georgian counterpart. In the Georgian style these ranged from

⁵¹ Calloway, 207; Lanier, 131-132; Lounsbury, 360.

⁵² Lounsbury, 389; Lane, 105 and 109; Patrick, 81.

formal pediments matching the pattern of the door pediments, to simple decorative molding similar to those found on the cornice. Full-scale pediments were uncommon in Federal design, although intricately decorated friezes or cornice molding were more prevalent.⁵³

Various other decorative elaborations can be found on the façades of Federal homes, and were often carried over from the Georgian period. It is important to mention, however, that Federal details were often described as being more delicate than Georgian features. Roofline balustrades were popular, especially in the north. Builders used quoins, two-story pilasters, belt courses, dentils, and classical columns and pilasters.⁵⁴ Federal-style masonry houses usually displayed a flat lintel, lintel with keystone, or keystone without a lintel over doors and windows. More commonly, windows set in masonry were framed in a wooden surround. Federal-style interiors display delicate decorative ornamentation, such as swags, garlands, urns, and other classic geometric patterns, throughout. This ornamentation could either be carved or cast in place, and was often applied to mantels, walls, and ceilings.⁵⁵

One of the most prominent changes to wall treatments during the Federal period is the elimination of floor-to-ceiling paneling, except on the fireplace wall. For the most part wainscoting was taken to the dado level only, while the field above the dado was generally made up of plain plaster with a whitewash finish.

⁵³ McAlester, 154-156; Lanier, 130-132; Lounsbury, 96, 151, and 265.

⁵⁴ McAlester, 154; Lounsbury, 32, 111, and 303; Lane, 119.

⁵⁵ McAlester, 154; Lanier, 130; Lounsbury, 199, 214, and 223.

In more affluent houses wallpapers would have been used.⁵⁶ Wallcoverings prior to the end of the eighteenth century were often plain, while intricate festooned borders could be seen at the cornice level, and around wainscoting and doors. Decorative gouge work, carved foliage and frets, and other classical motifs often decorated dadoes and entablatures. Carpenters typically painted or grained millwork to look like mahogany.⁵⁷ Ceilings in simple Federal-style houses were typically composed of white washed boards, while flat-plaster donned middling houses.⁵⁸

Floors were typically yellow pine which had long been used in the mid-Atlantic and southern states. Floorboards in wealthier houses were often tongue-and-groove, while random-width boards nailed directly onto joists were often used in more modest homes. In some cases flooring was painted or stenciled with decorative patterns, or painted in solid colors. Marble and other stones were used in the entryways of grander houses.⁵⁹

Fireplaces served as the focal point of many rooms, and were often decorated with molded urns, swags, garlands, patera, and figures. More common mantels featured simple patterns. In some cases marble fireplaces

⁵⁶ Lounsbury, 109 and 394.

⁵⁷ Calloway, 214; Lounsbury, 138, 151, and 164; Lane, 116.

⁵⁸ Calloway, 216; Lounsbury, 259, 280-281, and 360.

⁵⁹ Calloway, 218; Lounsbury, 195-198.

were imported by the wealthy, and were often made up of columns or pilasters supporting a decorative entablature.⁶⁰

The use of straight, quarter-turn, and dog-leg staircases were common in Federal design of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. In most cases the decorative motifs displayed on the stair-ends was simpler than designs seen on Georgian stairs. In grander houses mahogany was used on the balustrade.⁶¹

Essential to our understanding the importance of architectural forms as a means of studying cultures of the past is the identification of specific methods of construction, forms of spatial layout, stylistic variations, and the diffusion of these ideas and traditions. When one examines the early architectural landscape of Castalian Springs two houses, Cragfont and Wynnewood, stand out, providing valuable insight into the architectural and cultural development of the community, as well as providing further context for Hawthorn Hill. Furthermore, an in-depth look at architectural development helps to set the stage for a more detailed investigation of Hawthorn Hill and its evolution over time.

⁶⁰ Calloway, 219; Lanier, 131-132.

⁶¹ Calloway, 223; Lounsbury, 17 and 346.

CHAPTER III: HAWTHORN HILL- A HOUSE IN MOTION, 1800-2013

Hawthorn Hill provides a window to explore the emerging culture of Castalian Springs. This dwelling has survived since the early 1800s and stands as a representative example of Tennessee vernacular architecture. Hawthorn Hill was a frontier-era farm located ten miles outside of Gallatin, Tennessee in the unincorporated town of Castalian Springs, formerly Bledsoe's Lick. The farm began as a 208 acre tract, worked by approximately four slaves in 1820.¹ By 1860 the farm owner had increased his slave holdings to seven slaves, placing the farm slightly above the state wide average.² The mobility of this particular farming family highlights their continuous pursuit of prosperity and social status. Slave and land ownership were not the only means of displaying wealth. Hawthorn Hill, the substantial brick home of the Bate family, stands as a physical representation of those economic and social aspirations. An in-depth examination of Hawthorn Hill may offer further insight into the cultural norms and social trends of this aspiring farming community. Furthermore, the methods of construction and stylistic alterations seen at Hawthorn Hill help to support an understanding of broader building traditions and transitions seen across Middle Tennessee and the southern region. Through and examination of Hawthorn Hill's

¹ "Sumner County Tax Lists 1817-1825," *Tax Lists*, (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Archives, 1817 and 1820), 1311.

² "Ann F. Bate," *1860 Sumner Co, TN Slave Census* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Archives, 1860), 3235.

floor plan, materials, methods of construction, and building style, one can begin to better understand the people of the past through this architectural form.

According to North Carolina land warrants Hawthorn Hill was originally part of a 400-acre grant sold to Charles Carter by Neil McLaughlin on December 1, 1792.³ By May 17, 1806, Carter had conveyed 208 acres of the original 400 acres to John Bearden, a native of Caroline County, Virginia.⁴ The house is not mentioned in any of the early deed records. Walter T. Durham states in his book *Old Sumner: A History of Sumner County, Tennessee From 1805-1861* that:

One of the brothers, William or John Bearden, built a brick house about a mile from the sulphur springs which later became known as the Dr. Humphrey Bate house. Local tradition is that the house was built while Sumner County was still a part of North Carolina, but this is hardly possible as such a date would have been prior to 1790.⁵

These oral traditions coupled with the materials used in the house and the methods of construction point to an early date of construction, circa 1806, about the time Bearden purchased the farm (Figure 3.1).

³ Doug Drake, Jack Masters, and Bill Puryear, *Founding of the Cumberland Settlements: The First Atlas 1779-1804 Data Supplement 1 North Carolina Warrants, Surveys and Surveyor Plats* (Gallatin, TN: Warrioto Press, 2009), 151.

⁴ "A deed for 205 acres of land: Charles Carter to John Bearden," Deed Book 5(Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, May 17, 1806), 118; A deed for 208 acres of land: Charles Carter to John Bearden," Deed Book 5(Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, June 2, 1810), 194; Mary Mastripolito, *John Bearden*, in ancestry.com, <http://awt.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:3370624&id=I40009> (accessed March 7, 2013).

⁵ Walter T. Durham, *Old Sumner: A History of Sumner County, Tennessee From 1805-1861* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Public Library Board, 1972), 28; Walter T. Durham, *Before Tennessee: The Southwest Territory, 1790-1796* (Piney Flats, TN: Rocky Mount Historical Association, 1990), 98.

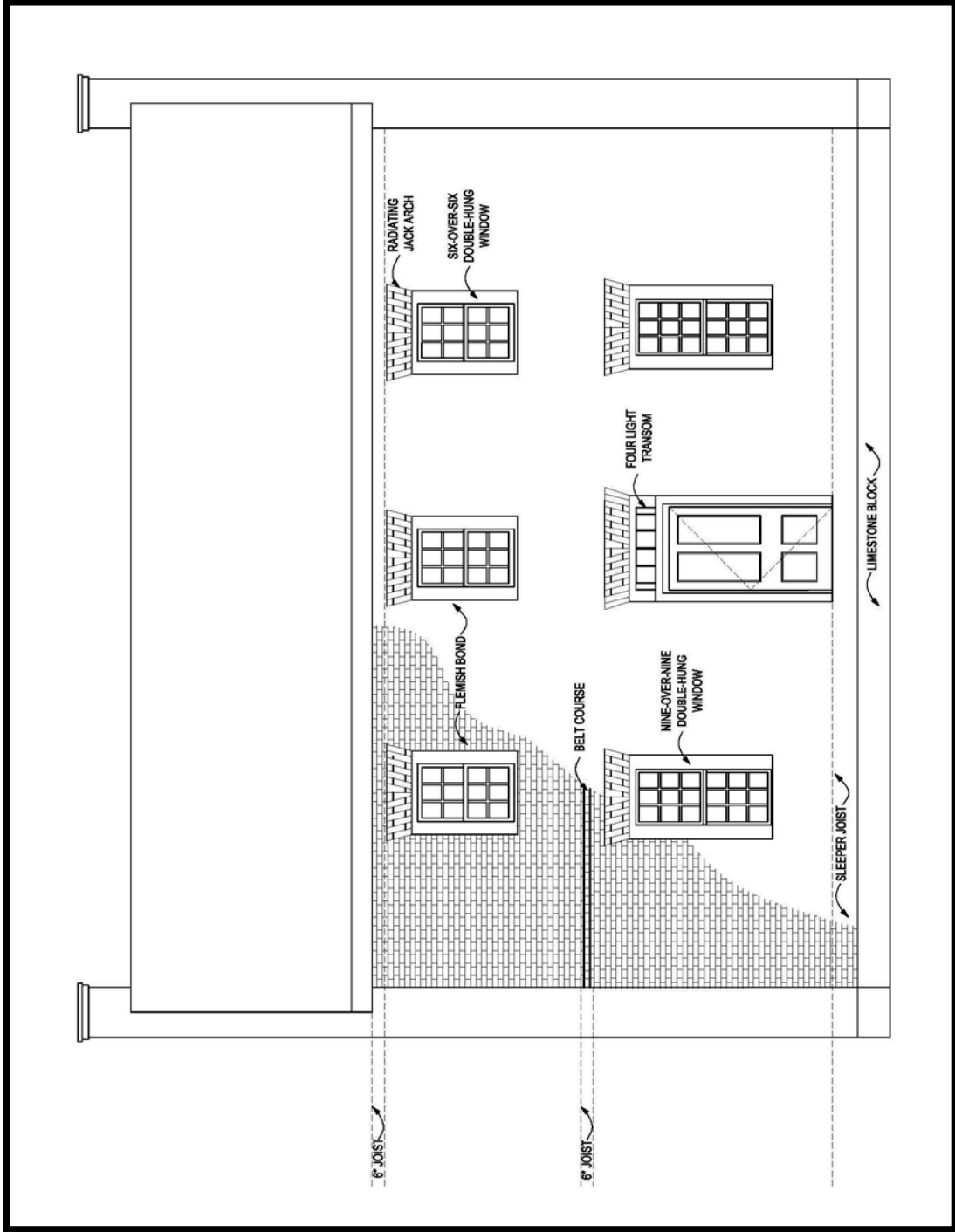


Figure 3.1 Hawthorn Hill, 1800 front façade, Sumner County, TN. (Jessi White)

Hawthorn Hill a two-story, brick, hall-and-parlor dwelling built in the Federal style (Figure 3.2 and 3.3). The use of the hall-and parlor layout reflects the influence of European building traditions, as these floor plans were commonly seen in England and Wales during the late seventeenth century.⁶ This traditional layout was brought to America where it migrated from Virginia and other coastal states inland.

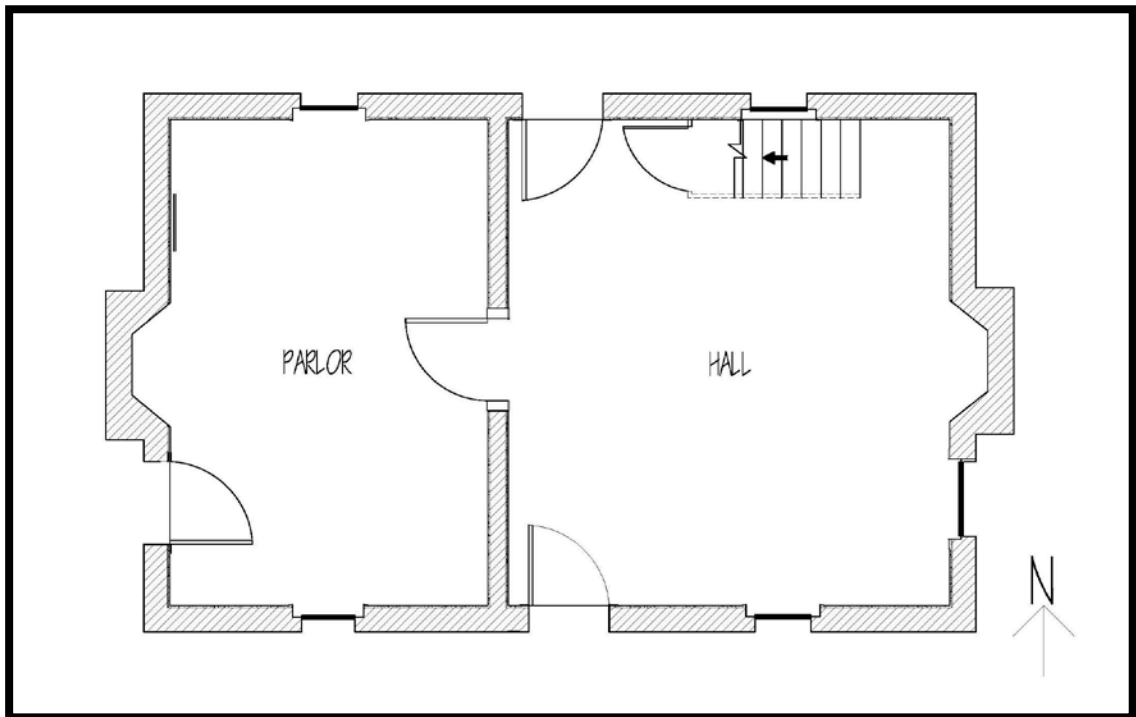


Figure 3.2. Hawthorn Hill, first floor plan, 1800, Sumner County, TN. (Jessi White)

⁶ Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture*, 64-68; James Patrick, *Architecture in Tennessee, 1768-1897* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 69.

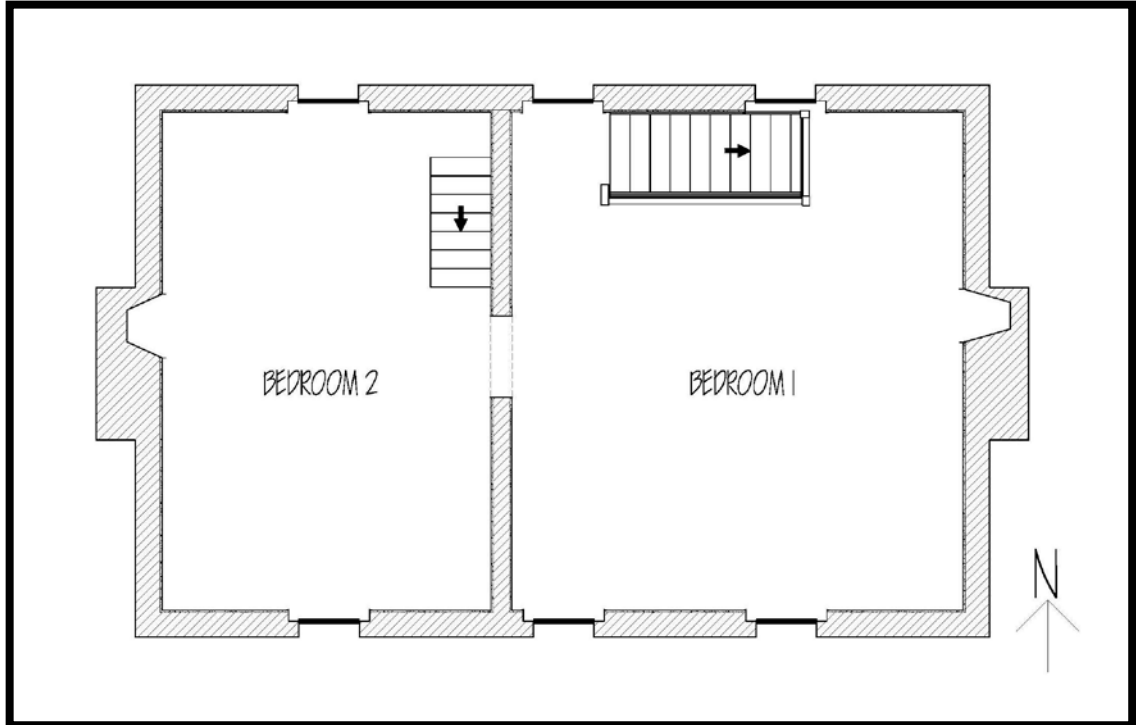


Figure 3.3. Hawthorn Hill, second floor plan, 1800, Sumner County, TN. (Jessi White)

The use of the Federal style in the design of the house helps to further illustrate the cultural trends that were popular during the time that Hawthorn Hill was constructed. The term Federal is used loosely here, as Hawthorn Hill is not an exact example of the pure academic style and shows influences from the Georgian style as well. It does, however, employ the use of several Federal features. These include the home's symmetrical three bay design and restrained decorative detailing. The variations seen in the design of this home give it its vernacular styling making it a unique Tennessee derivation of the Federal style.

An examination of the house's construction methods serves as yet another means of better understanding the people who built, occupied, and altered the house over time. Construction methods not only offer insight into the

people associated directly with the house, but they also help to illustrate how outside trends, traditions, environment, and people helped to influence this particular house's form.

The house itself was constructed using common eighteenth century building methods, including mortis-and-tenon and half lap-and-peg joinery (Figure 3.4).⁷ The body of the house was constructed atop a continuous, rough-cut limestone block foundation. Poplar log sleeper joists were mortised directly into the foundation and brick wall surfaces. Stacked limestone block piers were added intermittently for additional support for the spanning sleeper joists (Figure 3.5). The second story and attic story joists are more refined in appearance, measuring roughly six inches wide by ten inches tall. The joists were mortised directly into the brick walls of the home and a decorative bead was added to the edges of each beam (Figure 3.5). These beams were initially left exposed and the beading was used as a simple decorative ceiling detail. Tongue-and-groove ash and poplar flooring was then nailed directly to the tops of joists on the first, second, and attic stories.⁸ The use of local materials, such as limestone and poplar, coupled with the use of traditional building methods, such as the mortise

⁷ Gabrielle M. Lanier and Bernard L. Herman, *Everyday Architecture of the Mid-Atlantic: Looking at Buildings and Landscapes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 79-81. A mortis-and-tenon joint is created when a projection at the end of a piece of wood, also known as a tenon, is inserted into an opening of the same size, also known as a mortis. Half lap-and-peg joints are created when a notch measuring half the width of a wood member is joined with a notch from an intersecting wood member. The pieces are typically secured in place by a peg.

⁸ Ibid. A tongue-and-groove joint is formed when a projecting tongue of one floorboard is inserted into a matching groove of another.

joinery and sleeper joists, show how the home's builder adhered to familiar building traditions while at the same time incorporating local, sometimes unfamiliar, building materials.

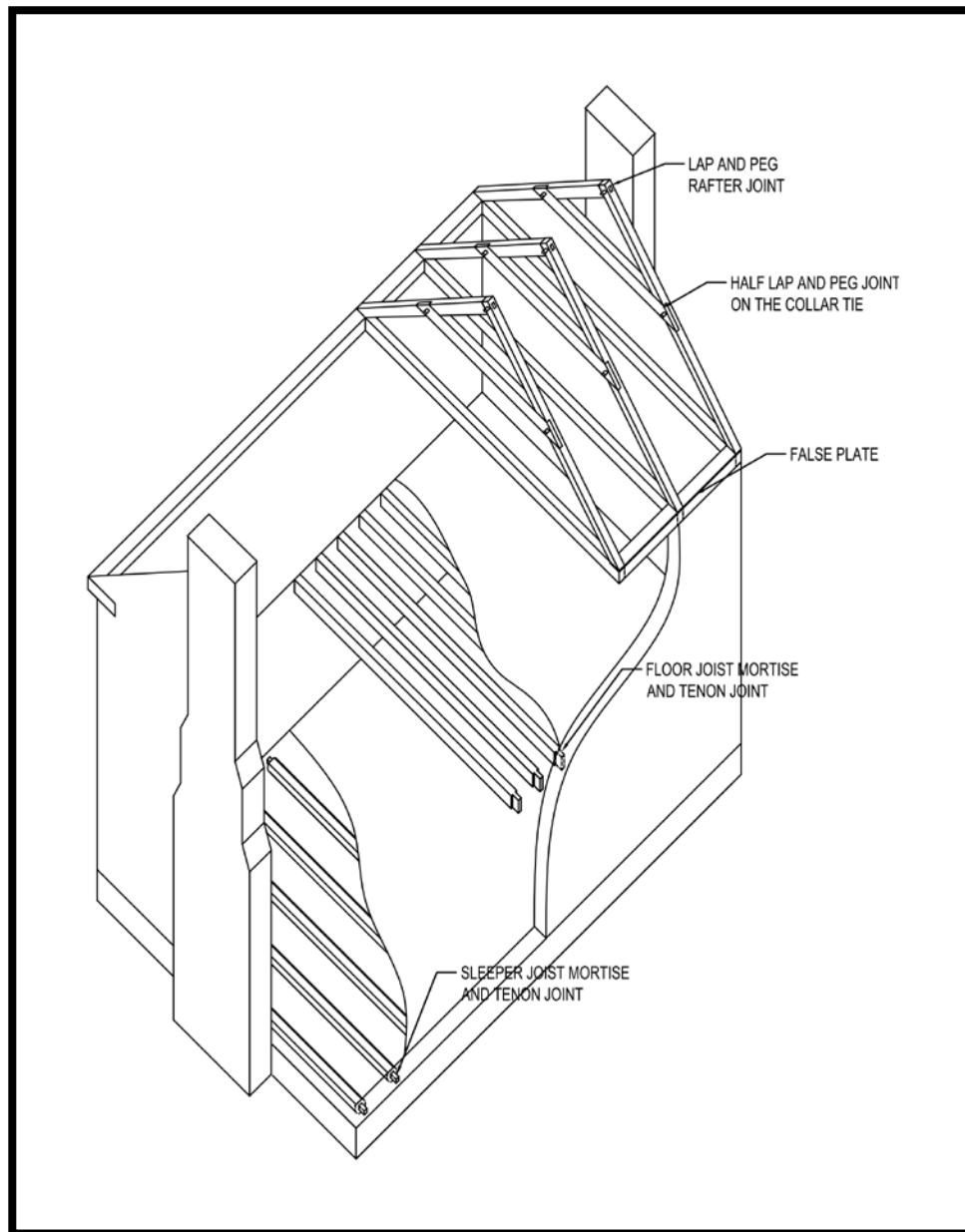


Figure 3.4. Isometric view of Hawthorn Hill, 1800, Sumner County, TN.
(Jessi White)



Figure 3.5. Log sleeper joists and limestone supports, Hawthorn Hill.
(Jessi White)



Figure 3.6. Second story joist with bead, Hawthorn Hill.
(Jessi White)

Once the foundation and floor platform was completed the builders then constructed the walls of the home. Both the exterior and interior walls of the building are of brick. As is commonly seen in many early southern brick buildings, Hawthorn Hill's bricks could have been made using local clay and silt deposits and the work of skilled slave laborers. Initials found on the surface of several bricks at Hawthorn Hill could have been left by brick makers (Figure 3.7 and 3.8). The builders chose brick not only for its durability, but also for its uniformity, which added to the ease of construction and sophisticated appearance. Hawthorn Hill's builders incorporated the use of two brick designs: the Flemish bond pattern and the common bond pattern.⁹ The brick work on the front and two adjacent gable-end elevations were done in the Flemish bond pattern with decorative blue-glazed headers, while the rear elevation was built in a common bond pattern. A belt course composed of blue glazed headers was also added to the façade of the house between the first and second floors. The Flemish bond pattern, a decorative pattern that dates to the Tudor period in England and was commonly used in nineteenth century construction, was used on the viewable elevations of the house, while the less decorative common bond was used on the rear of the house. The public did not usually see this side of the house, so the builders employed a less expensive and less ornate brick pattern. The use of the Flemish bond pattern on the publicly viewable sides of the house

⁹ Ibid, 97-105. A Flemish bond pattern is made up of alternating headers and stretchers. When the rows of brick are stacked they form a cross pattern. The common bond is recognizable through its use of rows of running stretchers interrupted every third, fifth, or seventh by a row of headers.

not only illustrates the social trends of the time, but also showcases the homeowner's refined tastes. Furthermore, the use of blue-glazed header bricks within the pattern impresses upon the viewer the homeowner's wealth, as these contrasting bricks were often an added expense. Radiating flat jack arches top all of the openings of the house, adding simple embellishment and aesthetic appeal further accentuating the status of the homeowner. Most of these details were restrained or minimal, a common attribute in early pioneer homes.¹⁰



Figure 3.7. Maker's mark on brick work "M", Hawthorn Hill.
(Jessi White)



Figure 3.8. Maker's mark on brick work "OBC", Hawthorn Hill.
(Jessi White)

¹⁰ Lanier and Herman, 97-105.

Hawthorn Hill's chimneys also display its ties to tradition and common construction types. The house has two exterior gable end chimneys, one of three styles common to Tennessee. The chimneys were built by adding two sets of shoulders that narrowed the width of the chimney at the top giving it a Tidewater appearance (Figure 3.39). These chimneys served not only an aesthetic purpose but a practical use as well. The spacing of the chimney on each gable end of the house added to the home's symmetrical Federal appearance. At the same time, the chimneys helped to heat the home more efficiently during the cold winter months by radiating heat from the gable ends of the house to its core.¹¹

¹¹ Jessi White, *Hawthorne Hill Property: Sumner County, Tennessee, History, Conditions Assessment, and Maintenance Recommendations Report* (Murfreesboro, TN: Tennessee National Civil War Heritage Area, 2012), 23.



Figure 3.9. West wall chimney, Hawthorn Hill.
(Jessi White)

The home was built three bays wide with a central entry door and flanking nine-over-nine double-hung windows on the first floor and a set of three symmetrically spaced six-over-six double-hung windows on the second floor. This pattern was repeated on the rear of the house. Secondary entry doors were added to the first floor gable ends of the dwelling. Small vent opening were also added to the gable ends of the house to ventilate the third floor attic space. The

use of nine-over-nine and six-over-six windows, as well as the incorporation of a three-bay layout were common features of the Federal style. Federal elements, however, were not the only stylistic elements included on the house. The builder also incorporated a four light transom above the main entry door, a common feature of Georgian style architecture. The use of both Federal and Georgian elements further illustrates this building's importance as a unique vernacular architectural form.

Plasterwork was used to cover the interior walls of the home, although the brick may have been left exposed for a time. A simple chair rail, wainscoting, and baseboard trim the interior rooms of the house (Figure 3.10). The windows are outlined in a molding similar to the one used for the chair rail, and have a simple projecting wooden apron adorning the top (Figure 3.11). The molding and casework on the first floor of the home tend to be more ornate (Figure 3.12 and 3.13), while the molding and casework on the second floor is more simplistic (Figure 3.14 and 3.15). The use of more refined materials on the first floor suggests that these spaces were meant for public entertainment, and were used to display the family's prosperity. The molding on the second floor was simpler in design, because these spaces were used mainly by family members and were not viewed extensively by members of the public.

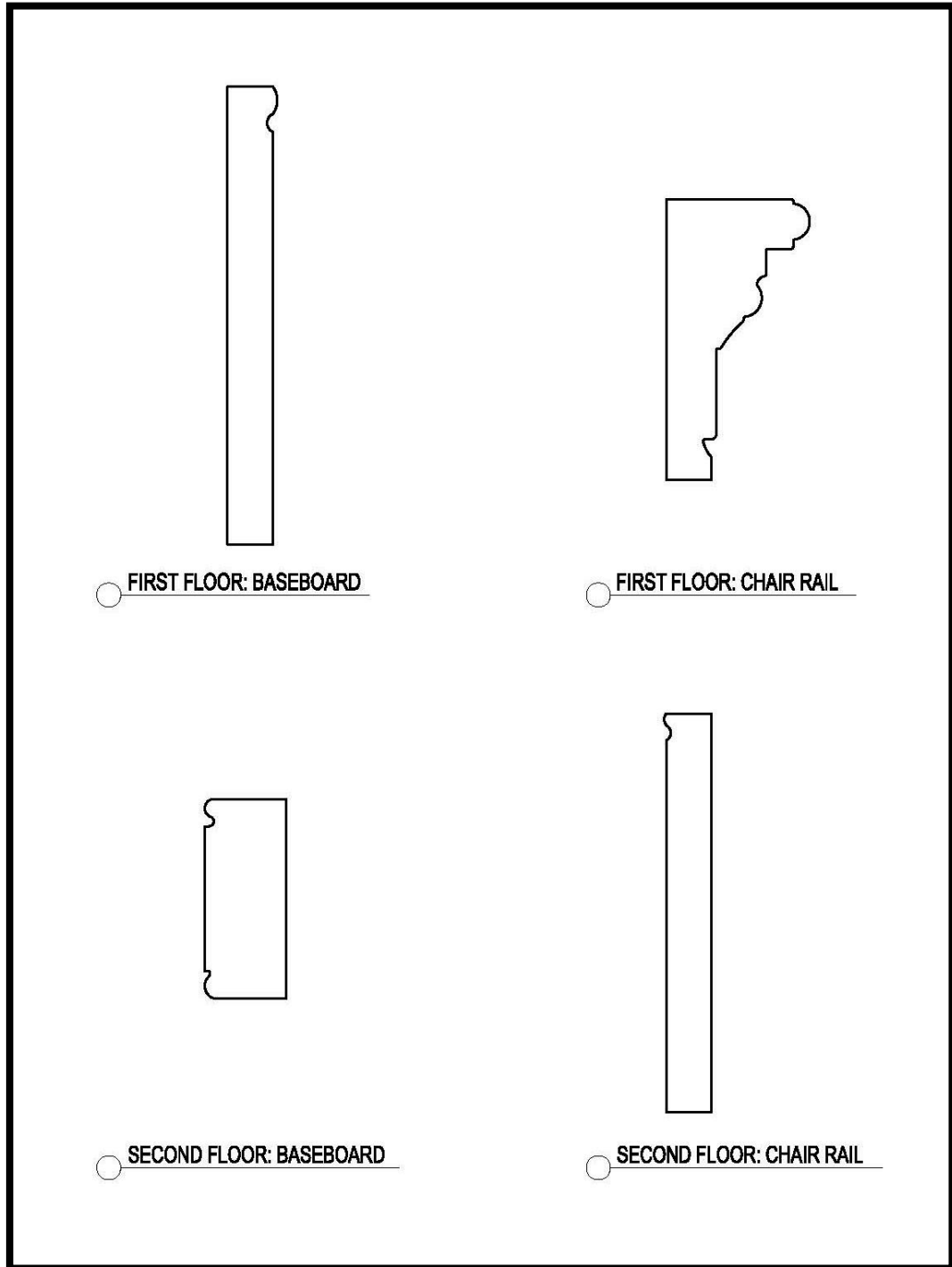


Figure 3.10. First and second floor molding profiles, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.11. Second floor window molding and apron, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.12. First floor chair rail, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.13. First floor baseboard, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.14. Second floor chair rail, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)

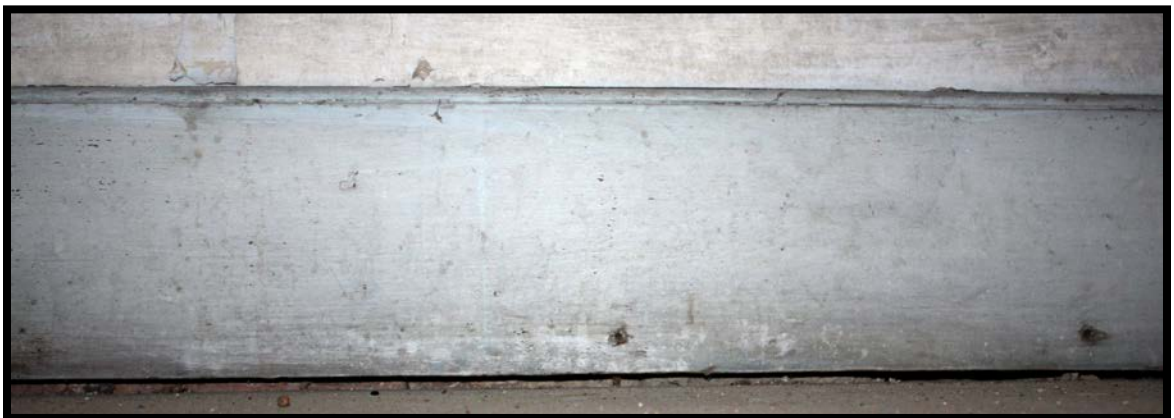


Figure 3.15. Second floor baseboard, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)

Finally, the home's roof framing was built using six inch wide by ten inch tall poplar ceiling joists. Each set of rafters were half-lapped and pegged at the roof's ridge and were braced using horizontal collar ties that were half-lapped at each end to the sides of the rafters (Figure 3.16). Each rafter was then pegged through a false plate that rested directly on the joists of the attic space (Figure 3.17). Wood lathing was added atop the rafter framing, providing a surface on which the roofing material could be attached. The use of these nineteenth century building techniques further supports the notion that the builder followed familiar building traditions.



Figure 3.16. Lap-and-peg joinery and collar ties, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.17. False plate, ceiling joists, and rafters, Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)

In its construction details, Hawthorn Hill reveals more than the migration of building methods. The quality of material used, the layout and use of spaces, and the refined use of decorative detailing also adds to one's understanding of the social aspirations of the home's builder, and the cultural expectations of the surrounding community.

On March 3, 1817, John Bearden conveyed 208-acres of the original 400-acre tract of land to Colonel Humphrey Bate.¹² Colonel Bate, a native of Bertie

¹² "J. Bearden to H. Bate deed 208 acres of land," *Deed Book 8* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner county Register of Deeds Office, March 3, 1817), 75.

Co., North Carolina, was a veteran of the War of 1812 where he served in Troop #3 of the Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry led by Colonel Coffee in the Natchez Expedition of 1812 (Figure 3.18).¹³ Bate moved into the house with his first wife Elizabeth Pollock Brimage and their two surviving children James Henry (November 25, 1804- April 14, 1842) and Thomas West (June 1, 1812- April 26, 1839). On November 16, 1820, Elizabeth, Colonel Humphrey's first wife, passed away.¹⁴ There is no existing evidence that changes were made to the house while Elizabeth was still alive.

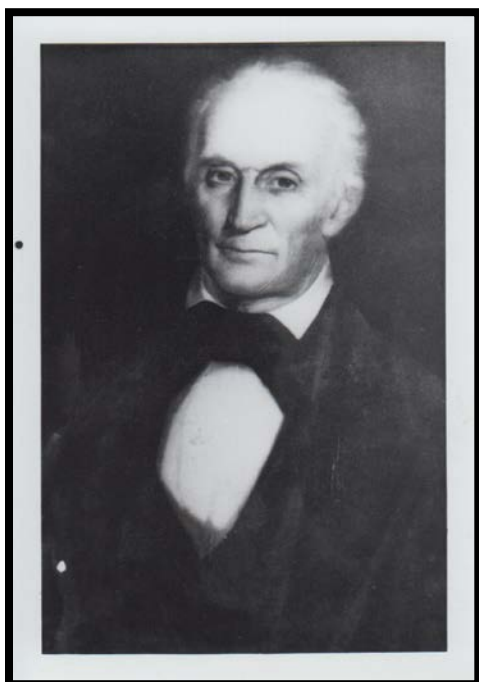


Figure 3.18. Portrait of Colonel Humphrey Bate. (Nancy Hunt)

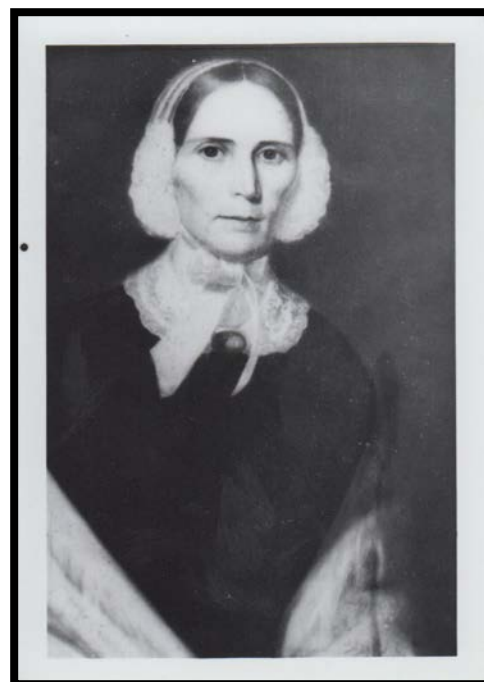


Figure 3.19. Portrait of Anne Franklin (Weatherred) Bate. (Nancy Hunt)

¹³ The USGenWeb Project, "War of 1812 Muster Rolls," <http://www.rootswb.ancestry.com/~tnsumner/sumn1812.html> (accessed December 13, 2011); Nancy Hunt, *The Bate Family History*, personal family genealogy, 1.

¹⁴ Hunt, 6-8.

One year after Elizabeth's death, on September 9, 1821, Colonel Humphrey married Anne Franklin Weatherred (Figure 3.19). Together the two had nine children including: Mary Eliza Spivey (June 4, 1823- September 1, 1883); Eugenie Patience (September 6, 1826- December 9, 1906); Willa Anne (October 17, 1828- October 12, 1859); William George Weatherred (April 2, 1831- Jan 7, 1912); Agnes Elizabeth (September 21, 1834- June 15, 1920); Amanda Malvina (October 23, 1836- July 23, 1872); Henry Clay (July 28, 1839- May 2, 1917); Humphrey Howell (February 1, 1844- June 8, 1911); and Aaron Spivey (April 30, 1846- August 6, 1863).¹⁵ The Bates made several changes to the home during 1830s. They converted the hall-and-parlor floor into a central-hall layout by adding a second interior wall on the hall side of the home. The transition was made through the addition of a five foot six inch hallway down the center of the house (Figure 3.20). In addition to the construction of a central hallway, the Bates built a wall that partitioned the main staircase from the hall room of the house. A small entry door was added along the partition, allowing access to the stairway (Figure 3.21 and 3.22).

¹⁵ Hunt, 6-22.

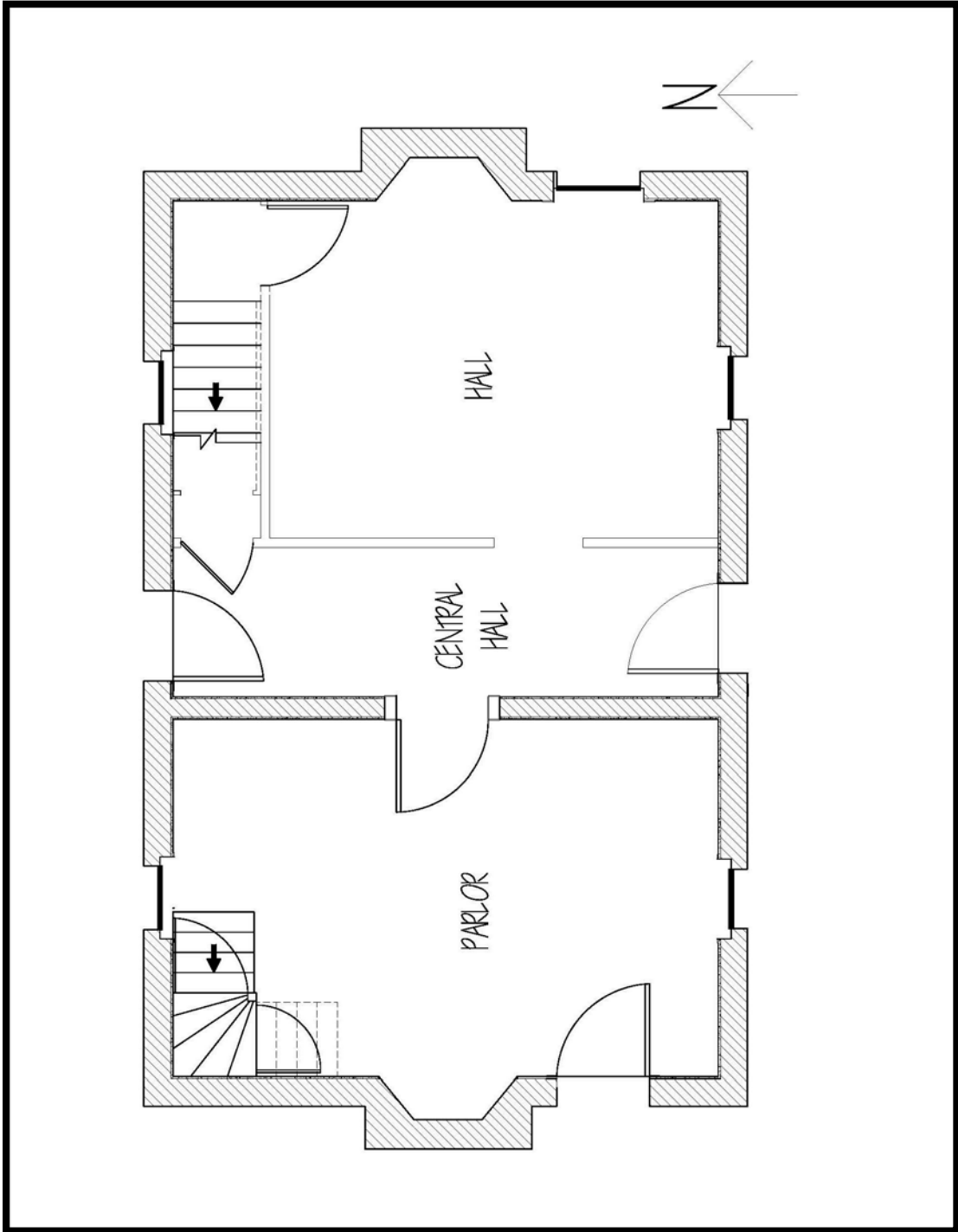


Figure 3.20 Hawthorn Hill, 1830 floor plan, Sumner County, TN. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.21. Partition wall ghost marks. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.22. Partition wall ghost marks. (Jessi White)

Shortly after the walls were added to the hall portion of the house, decorative stenciling and sponge painting was added to the hall, central hall, parlor, and east bedroom. The hall, central hall, and parlor sections of the dwelling featured deep blue paint—most likely Prussian blue—on the molding, millwork, and wainscoting (Figure 3.23).¹⁶ The field above the chair rail was painted light blue-gray using a cloud-like sponge technique (Figures 3.24 and 3.25). Two decorative stenciling motifs were used in the central hall and hallway portions of the house—the “bird and shell” frieze and the “sliced egg” border (Figures 3.26 and 3.27). The “bird and shell” frieze borders the perimeter of the central hall and hall, acting as a painted entablature. The “sliced egg” border outlines the chair railing, doorways, and windows.¹⁷ An itinerant painter added these identical templates to the Winchester home, Cragfont, sometime between 1830 and 1835.¹⁸ The stencils in Cragfont, however, were painted yellow and green, while the stenciling at Hawthorn Hill was painted blue and green.

¹⁶ Nathaniel Whittock, *The Decorative Painters' and Glaziers' Guide* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1832), 11.

¹⁷ Brown, 145.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 146.



Figure 3.23. Dark blue trim paint.
(Jessi White)



Figure 3.24. Hall light-blue sponge technique.
(Jessi White)



Figure 3.25. Parlor grey-blue sponge technique.
(Jessi White)



Figure 3.26 Hawthorn Hill, 1830 "bird and shell" frieze, Sumner County, TN. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.27 Hawthorn Hill, 1830 "sliced egg" border, Sumner County, TN. (Jessi White)

Two possibilities surface when one considers the presence of these patterns in both Cragfont and Hawthorn Hill. First, the Bate family may have commissioned the work of the same traveling artistian who executed the faux painting and stenciling at Cragfont. A second explanation surfaces involving family ties to Cragfont. When Cragfont was built in the early nineteenth century, Winchester contracted Francis Weatherred to complete the interior carpentry.¹⁹ Francis (Frank) Marcus Weatherred (1739-1835) was the grandfather of Anne Franklin Weatherred Bate, Colonel Humphrey's second wife.²⁰ While working at Cragfont Weatherred may have been exposed to the paint work in the house and could have later shared the patterns with the Bates. Whatever means were used to procure these stencils, their use in the public spaces of the home further supports the notion that the family wanted these spaces to display their wealth and social standing.

The Francis Weatherred home, Locust Grove, was built in 1817, and is located approximately four miles from Hawthorn Hill (Figure 3.28). This two story, Federal style, brick home shares many features with Hawthorn Hill. The home has a hall-and-parlor floor plan, and features a symmetrical three-bay façade with Flemish bond patterned brickwork on the façade and east wall (the east wall has decorative blue glazed headers), and three-course common bond brick work on the west wall gable end and rear of the house. The openings on

¹⁹ Thompson, 36; Riegel, 12.

²⁰ Sharon Clark, "Family of Francis (Frank) Marcus Weatherred and Agnes Suddarth," <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tnsumner/weather3.htm> (accessed February 14, 2013).

the façade of the house feature radiating jack arches above the doors and windows. The home also features two gable end interior brick chimneys, flanked by ventilation windows in the attic story of the house. The interior of the house features finely detailed millwork including paneled wainscoting in both the hall and parlor rooms and an ornate mantel and over mantel, similar to the one at Cragfont, flanked by two early cherry cupboards in the west room of the home. Through his carpentry work at Cragfont and his connection to the Bate family, Weatherred was exposed to popular construction methods and styles which are reflected in the craftsmanship of Locust Grove.²¹

²¹ William B. Bate, Jr., "Locust Grove," *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Castalian Springs, TN: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1978). The National Register nomination was file in June of 1978 by William B. Bate, Jr., the owner of the property. William B. Bate, Jr., also known as "Buzzy" Bate was the great-grandson of James Henry, the son of Colonel Humphrey Bate, and Amanda Patience Weatherred Bate, Anne Franklin's sister and Francis Weatherred's granddaughter. Locust Grove came under the ownership of Bate family members after Francis' death. Sharon Clark, "Family of Francis (Frank) Marcus Weatherred and Agnes Suddarth," <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tnsumner/weather3.htm> (accessed February 14, 2013); Hunt, 7-8; Ancestry.com, "William Brimage Bate, 3 Jan. 1897," *Tennessee, Delayed Birth Records, 1869-1909*, http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=2282&iid=33117_266967-00853&fn=William+Brimage&ln=Bate&st=r&ssrc=&pid=315243 (accessed February 14, 2013); Ancestry.com. "William Brimage Bate," *1930 United States Federal Census*, <http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1930usfedcen&indiv=try&h=66186448> (accessed March 2, 2013).



Figure 3.28. Locust Grove, 1817, Castalian Springs, TN. (Rick Hendrix)

Minimal paint and painting techniques were added to the second story, and were limited to the east bedroom—directly above the hall section of the house. The artist painted the millwork and molding a pale blue-gray and applied a cloud-like sponge technique to the fields above and below the chair rail (Figure 3.29). While less ornately decorated when compared to the lower story rooms, the presence of paint and faux sponge painting in the eastern bedroom suggests that this room was semi-accessible to guests. The west bedroom was unpainted. In a letter to his to his mother Anne Franklin, Humphrey Howell reminisces:

Nashville, Tenn. Dec. 3rd, 1866— it afforded me very great pleasure indeed, to know that you were all so comfortably situated around

our old family hearthstone (the dearest spot on earth to me) where so many displaced have been comforted, where so many hungry have been fed, and where so many weary travelers have found rest. When I read your letter I could scarcely refrain from shedding tears of very joy.²²

Although Humphrey makes no specific reference to individual rooms or room finishes, he does mention that Hawthorn Hill frequently entertained visitors. As societal norms shifted, public entertaining spaces separate from private family spaces became a necessity. Adopting this social norm required new methods for displaying status and prestige through the physical environment. This claim helps to explain the presence of paint and stenciling in publicly accessible portions of the house.

²² Humphrey Howell Bate, "Humphrey Bate to Anne F. (Weatherred) Bate, Nashville, TN., December 3, 1866," in *Bate Family Tree*, trans. by Angela H. Sanders (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Archives, 1989), 55.



Figure 3.29. East bedroom trim paint and sponge technique.
(Jessi White)

Sometime after the walls of the home were painted, the family enclosed the interior doorway separating the east and west bedrooms (Figure 3.30). A secondary boxed, winder staircase was added to the parlor at the same time, providing direct access to the west bedroom (Figure 3.31). Nail evidence from the boxed staircase date these additions prior to the Civil War. Also, builders placed the stairway directly on top of preexisting wall paint helping to narrow the construction dates considerably (Figure 3.32). Family history further reduces the time gap. Around 1848 Colonel Humphrey Bate and his family moved to San Augustine, Texas, and stayed there until the end of 1852. E.W. Bush had this to say in his diary when he visited Texas to purchase land:

October 30 Saturday 1852— Went with Col. Bate to San Augustine... Have been making inquiry relative to land in this county. Find that they have but few good land these laying in the creeks and water courses. Some tolerable good land selling for about \$2 improved land. Col. Bate has 400 acres, 70 cleared a double log (pine) house with 2 shed rooms and three brick chimneys. Out houses not good. Water the best we have had in Texas. Spring and well both lasting. He offers for \$800.²³

The Bates retained ownership of Hawthorn Hill during this five year time period, and presumably no changes were made to the house while the family was away. According to this time frame, the winding staircase and the enclosed doorway would have been added some time during the late 1830s to early 1840s.

²³ E.W. Bush, "Diary entry October 30 Saturday 1852, San Augustine, TX," in *Bate Family History*, trans. by Nancy Hunt (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Archives), 2.



Figure 3.30. Interior second story doorway with lath and plaster ghost marks
(Jessi White)



Figure 3.31. Boxed winding staircase, parlor. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.32. Interior view of boxed stair showing paint line where the stair was cut in. (Jessi White)

The addition of the stairway and enclosed entryway has typically been attributed to the separation of the sleeping quarters of the male and female children in the household. When one examines the family genealogy, however, several inconsistencies appear. The births of the Bate children happened between 1824 and 1846.²⁴ Assuming that all of the children, both male and female, stayed in the house until they married the ratio of male to female children would not have reached its peak until roughly 1846, two years before the family moved to Texas. A more likely reason for the stair and wall additions can be linked to the need for the separation of private spaces.

On September 1, 1856, at the age of 77, Colonel Humphrey died and was buried in the family graveyard to the west of the house. Ownership of the house then passed to his wife Anne Franklin. According to an assessment of nails found at the site a small board-and-batten kitchen wing was added to the rear of the house and a wing was added to the east side of the house (this addition was later used as a physician's office) in the 1850s (Figures 3.33 and 3.34). Anne Franklin Bate passed away April 1, 1875. In a will dated March 31, 1858, Anne bequeathed Hawthorn Hill to her two eldest sons William W. Bate and Henry Clay Bate. She stipulated in her will that:

my two youngest children Humphrey H. Bate Jr. and Aaron S. Bate are comparatively unprovided for and yet to be educated, I therefore desire and hereby direct that they, my said two youngest children, shall have my tract of land lying and being in the county of San Augustine, State of Texas containing by estimation between

²⁴ Hunt, 6-22.

three and four hundred acres and conveyed to by one [?] Payne and that their respective interests in the same shall be equal.²⁵

After Anne's death in 1875, however, the property came under the ownership of Humphrey Howell Bate. It is possible that Humphrey gained sole ownership of the house from his eldest brother William George Weatherred Bate, who lived in San Augustine, Texas, and his second oldest brother Henry Clay Bate, who lived in Davidson County, Tennessee. His younger brother Aaron died in Rome, Georgia, at the end of the Civil War, on August 6, 1865.²⁶

²⁵ Anne Franklin Bate, "Will of Anne Franklin (Weatherred) Bate, March 31, 1858, TN," in *Bate Family Tree*, trans. by Angela H. Sanders (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Archives, 1989), 172.

²⁶ Hunt, 6, 12, 16, 19, and 22.

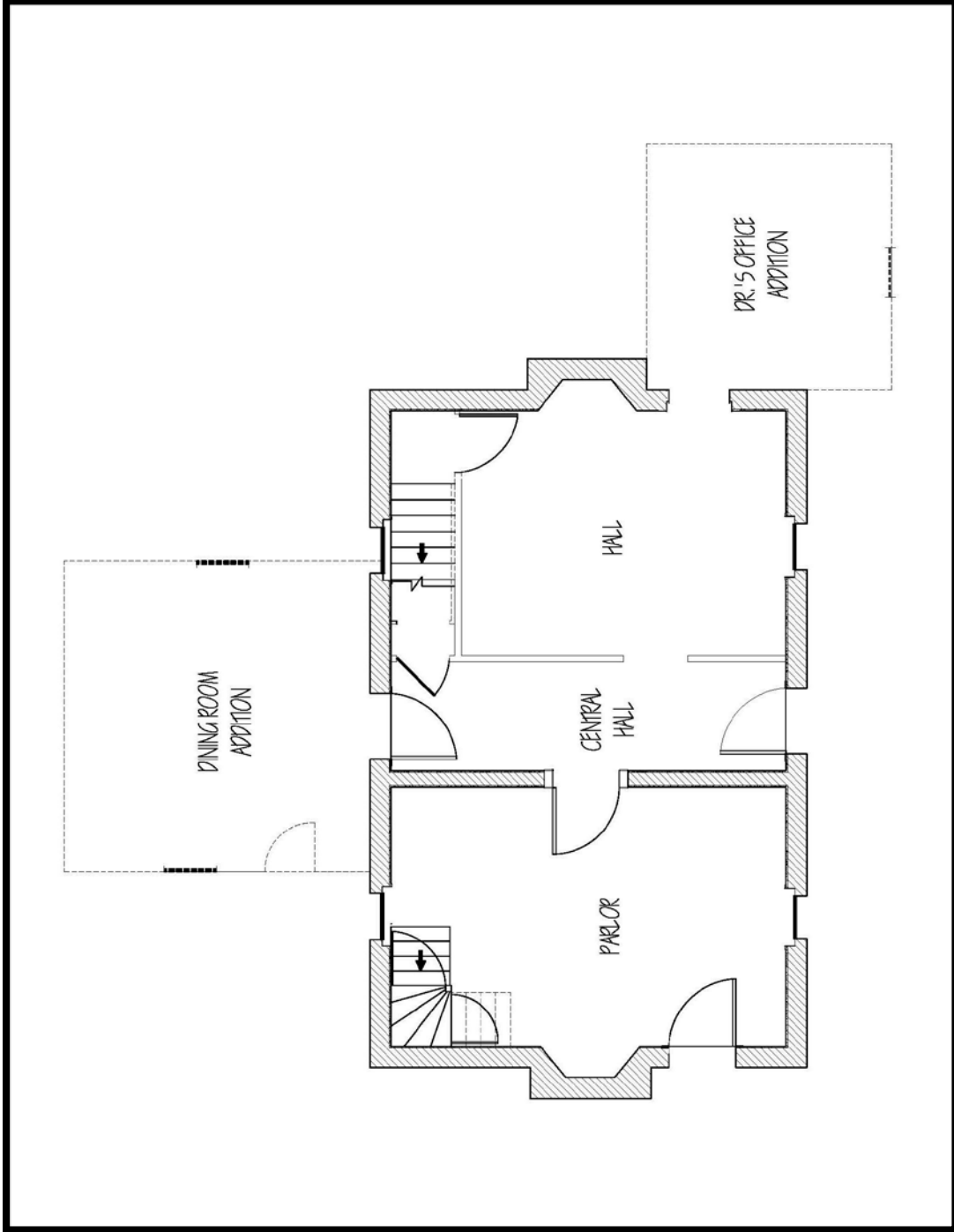


Figure 3.33 Hawthorn Hill, 1850 floor plan, Sumner County, TN. (Jessi White)

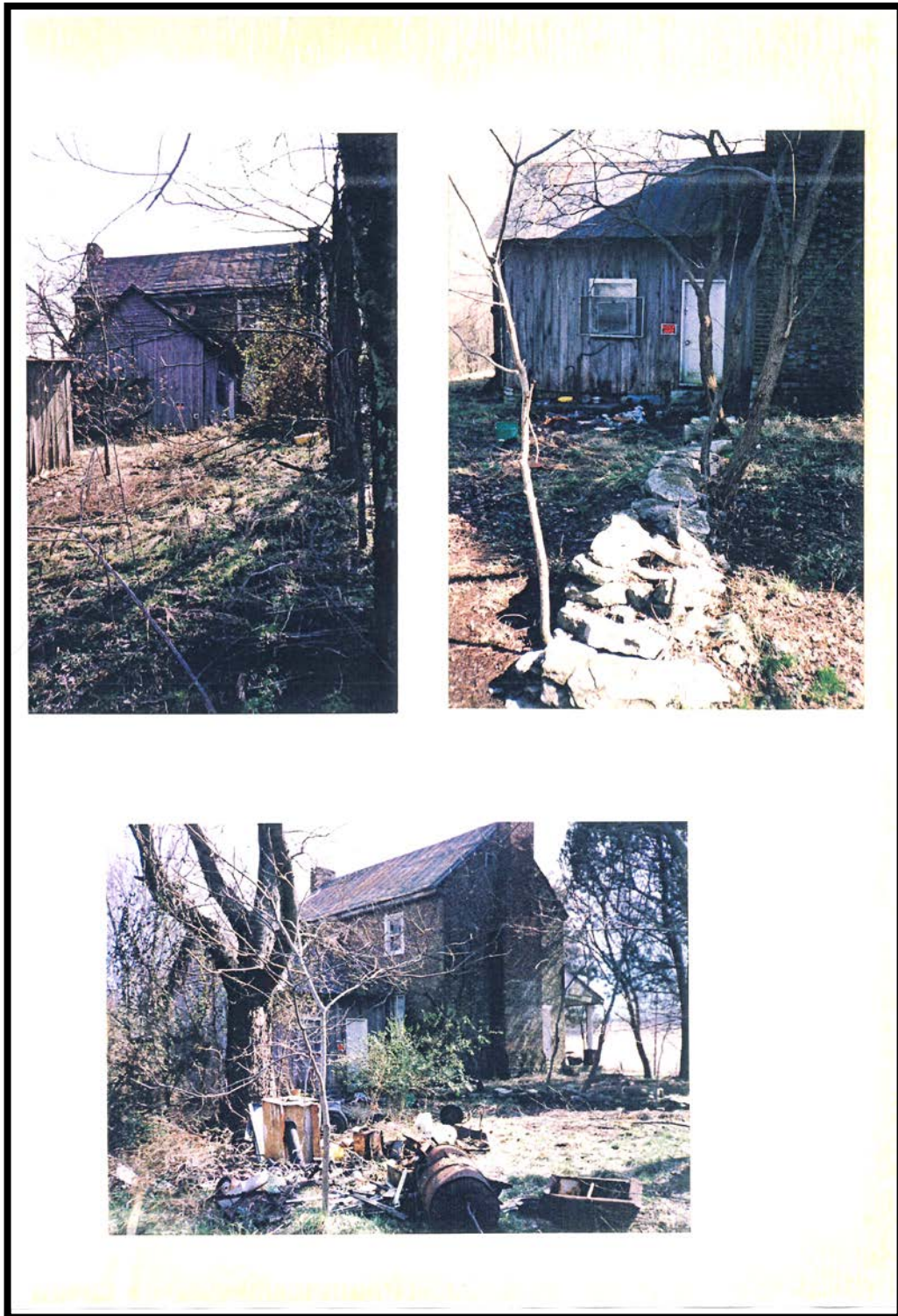


Figure 3.34. Photographs of the rear kitchen addition prior to demolition, 1992.
(Tracey Parks)

Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr., was born February 1, 1844 at Hawthorn Hill (Figure 3.35). At the age of seventeen he entered the Civil War and served as a private in Company K of the 2nd Tennessee Infantry Regiment. On April 6, 1862, he was wounded through the neck, left shoulder, right leg, and left knee joint at the Battle of Shiloh. On July 19, 1864 he was discharged on disability and returned to Sumner County. In 1866, Humphrey entered medical school at the University of Nashville. He graduated in 1868 and returned to Sumner County where he practiced medicine from the east wing addition at Hawthorn Hill.²⁷ In 1869, Bate married Martha A. Franklin. Martha passed away two years later in 1871. In 1873 Humphrey married a second time to Nancy Drucilla Simpson (Figure 3.36). The two had four children including: Humphrey Howell, Jr. (May 25, 1875- June 12, 1936); a stillborn son (1876-); a stillborn son (1877-); and Annie Bate (November 25, 1878- June 14, 1959).

²⁷ Ibid., 19-22.

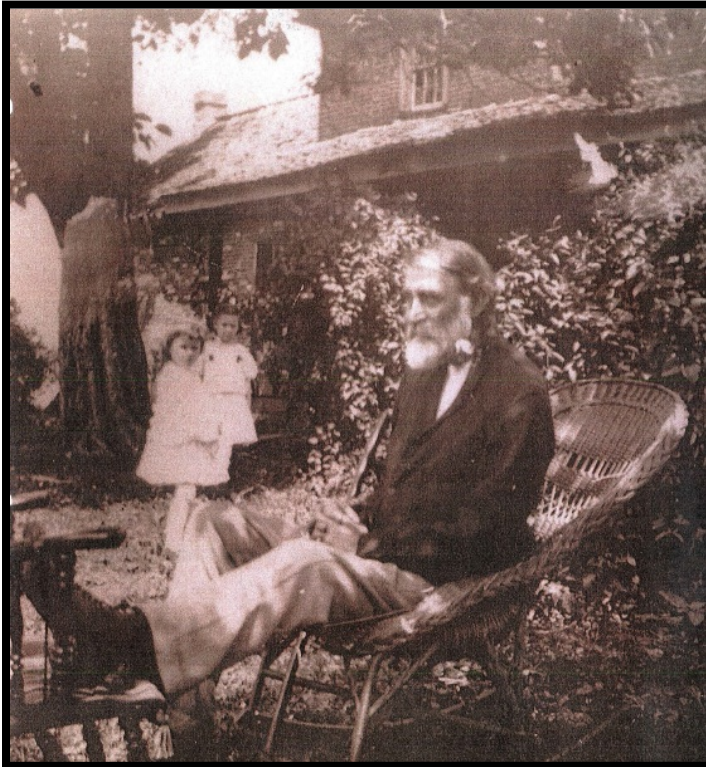


Figure 3.35 Dr. Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr. In front of Hawthorn Hill, circa 1900. Note the Kitchen addition in the background. (Nancy Hunt)



Figure 3.36. Nancy Durcilla Simpson Bate at Hawthorn Hill, circa 1920. (Nancy Hunt)

Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr. and Nancy Drucilla made several alterations and additions, including a front porch and west wing kitchen addition. As of yet, an exact date of construction has not been determined for the west wing kitchen addition. The kitchen was originally detached from the rest of the house, an attribute commonly seen in the nineteenth century. The early kitchen was later hyphenated onto the main block of the house—likely under the ownership of Humphrey Sr. Photographs taken of the house in the early twentieth century serve as the earliest surviving images of the kitchen addition, as well as the front porch and physicians

office additions (Figure 3.37). Furthermore, discussion on October 11, 2012 with Nancy Hunt, a surviving Bate family member, offers further insight into the kitchen wing. As a child Hunt visited “Auntie Annie” (Bate) Brown, the daughter of Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr. and primary owner of Hawthorn Hill during the time. About the kitchen she recalled:

this [the floor of the hyphen] used to be covered with either bricks or rocks and I can't remember which one. Tracey [former owner Tracey Parks] found some of the rocks or bricks or whatever down through here. And then right... lets see... yeah the kitchen... you came down this way to a door right about here [southeast corner of the kitchen]. And you had to walk down this way and you're standing in the kitchen. And I can't remember if the kitchen door was over there going out or if there was a door right here [centered along the kitchen wall or in the southeast corner]. That I cannot remember. That went out to you know the back. There had to be a door somewhere to go out to the back. I don't remember I just know you came down this and you... The kitchen was wooden. And I remember the floors slanted just a little bit... Cause I thought Wow! You know Annie how can you stand up in here and I don't know why that floor slopes it probably sank or whatever. And in here... I don't remember too much about the kitchen I remember there was a big old table in the middle of it. I don't know where there was an oven or anything like that I really don't remember a lot about the inside of the kitchen I just remember where it was and I was in there and it was all wooden and the floor was wooden and the floor slanted a little bit. That's about all I remember.²⁸

²⁸ Nancy Hunt, interview by Rick Hendrix, *Hawthorn Hill, Castalian Springs, TN* (October 11, 2012).



Figure 3.37. Photograph of Hawthorn Hill, circa 1920. Note the kitchen wing to the left of the frame and the physician's office in the right of the frame.
(Nancy Hunt)

Hunt's description of the kitchen illustrates the space's design, materials, and purpose. Originally detached from the rest of the house, the kitchen was later connected to the house by a small passageway. Hunt noted that the floor level of the hyphen passageway was substantially lower than both the parlor and kitchen floors. One had to step down into the passageway. Preliminary archaeological work around the location of the kitchen reveals that bricks were laid directly on the dirt substrate forming the flooring for the hyphen. Change in flooring material— wood in the kitchen and parlor and brick in the passageway— further supports the notion that the kitchen was originally detached. When discussing the interior of the kitchen, Hunt stated that, to her recollection, there was a large fireplace and table, but no stove. Obviously the fireplace was originally used for cooking, while the table, if it was an early piece, would have been used for food preparation and informal dining space.

Nails taken from the framework of the existing porch indicate that the porch was installed to the front of the home sometime in the 1880s or 1890s. When it was constructed, it featured a wood plank floor, round wood Doric columns, and a wood banister and balustrade. Photographs from the early twentieth century show that porch extended across the length of the main house and kitchen wing. Physical evidence shows that the porch, when first built, only ran along the main block of the house. Once the detached kitchen was hyphenated onto the house, the front porch

was expanded to include the length of the wing. This evidence further supports the notion that Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr. was responsible for the construction of the kitchen wing and front porch.

On June 8, 1911, Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr. passed away at the age of 67. Ownership of the house was split between Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr.'s wife Nancy Drucilla, and his two children Humphrey Howell Bate, Jr. and Annie (Bate) Brown.²⁹ According to the 1920 Census records, Annie, her husband Russell Marcellus Brown, and a black domestic servant, Lucinda "Cindy" Stanfield, lived with Nancy at Hawthorn Hill (Figures 3.38, 3.39, and 3.40).³⁰ After Nancy Bate passed away on March 4, 1925, ownership of the house was divided between her children Humphrey, Jr. and Annie. On May 6, 1925, Humphrey Howell Bate, Jr. sold his portion of the property to his sister Annie.³¹

²⁹ "Humphrey Howell Bate, Sr. deed to Nancy D. Bate, Annie Bate Brown, and Humphrey Howell Bate, Jr.," in *Deed Book 66* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, Jan.4, 1913), 426.

³⁰ Ancestry.com, "Annie B. Brown," *1920 United States Federal Census*, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1940usfedcen&h=35325735&indiv=try&o_vc=Record:OtherRecord&rhSource=6061 (accessed March 5, 2013).

³¹ "Humphrey Howell Bate, Jr. deed to Annie Bate Brown," in *Deed Book 93* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, May 6, 1925), 577.



Figure 3.38. Annie (Bate) Brown, circa 1900. (Nancy Hunt)

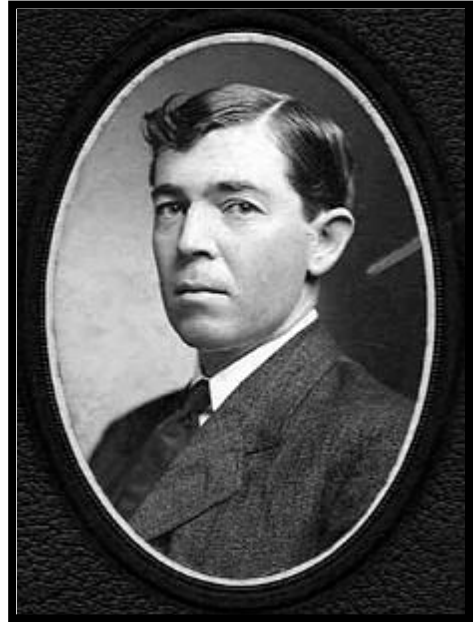


Figure 3.39 Russell Marcellus Brown, circa 1900. (Nancy Hunt)



Figure 3.40. Lucinda "Cindy" Stanfield, in front of one of Hawthorn Hill's slave cabins, circa 1924. Cindy lived in this particular cabin for several years. (Nancy Hunt)

Although Humphrey Bate, Jr., did not have direct ownership of Hawthorn Hill, and made no significant changes to the house or property, his importance as a key musical figure in the state of Tennessee deserves recognition. Humphrey Howell Bate, Jr. is best known for his role as the “Dean” of the Grand Ole Opry. He was born on May 15, 1875 at Hawthorn Hill. As a young boy Bate’s interest in music was sparked when a former slave taught him a few tunes on the harmonica. From that point forward he continued to hone his skills on the instrument performing on the steamboats that ran up and down the Cumberland River.³²

Humphrey Jr. initially sought a career in medicine, following in the footsteps of his father. In 1897, he graduated from the University of Nashville Medical School. Bate then served in the Medical Corps during the 1898 Spanish-American War. After the war Humphrey returned home and took over his father’s medical practice, working, for a time, out of Hawthorn Hill. Bate later moved his practice to his own home, which was constructed circa 1917 on Old Highway 25 East, half a mile west of Hawthorn Hill (Figure 3.41).³³

³² Laura Garrard, Daniel Cooper, and John Rumble, *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 30; Tony Russell, *Country Music Originals: The Legends and the Lost* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1-2.

³³ David Dicaire, *The First Generation of Country Music Stars: Biographies of 50 Artists Born Before 1940* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2007), 17.



Figure 3.41. Dr. Humphrey Howell Bate, Jr.'s home, located half a mile west of Hawthorn Hill.
(Rick Hendrix)

Even as a practicing physician, Bate kept performing. Bate did not give consistent attention to his music until the 1920s. By 1925, Bate and his string ensemble—composed of Bate on harmonica; Burt Hutcherson and Stanley Walton on guitar; Oscar Albright on bowed string bass; his son, Buster Bate on guitar, tippie, harmonica, and jew's harp; Walter Ligget on banjo; and Oscar Stone on fiddle. His daughter, Alcyone Bate added vocals along with playing the ukulele, and piano. They began to

perform on one of the newly established country radio stations in Nashville, WDAD.³⁴

By 1926, Bate had become a regular on the “barn dance” program that would later become the Grand Ole Opry. While Bate’s band is not considered one of the founders of the Grand Ole Opry, the music that it produced was vital to the development of the show, and influenced several other artists such as the Crook Brothers and Uncle Dave Macon. “Judge” George D. Hay later named Bate’s band the Possum Hunters. Shortly after their debut on the Opry the band signed a recording contract with Brunswick. Dr. Bate and his Possum Hunters rose in fame and often opened the set of the Grand Ole Opry. The Possum Hunters, in many respects, were considered the “darlings” of the early Opry, and helped to increase the popularity of the show (Figure 3.42).³⁵ Bate continued to play an integral role in the Opry until his death on June 12, 1936.³⁶ Although Humphrey Jr. did not live at Hawthorn Hill during his time in the Grand Ole Opry, his early fascination with old time country music was likely nourished and cultivated while living in the house.

³⁴ Richard Carlin, *Country Music: A Biographical Dictionary*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 24-25; Russell, 1.

³⁵ Garrard, Cooper, and Rumble, 30.

³⁶ Charles K. Wolfe, *A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry*, (Nashville, TN: Nashville Country Music Foundation Press, 1999),60; Carlin, 2.



Figure 3.42. Photograph of Humphrey Howell Bate, Jr. and the Possum Hunters. From left to right: Oscar Albright; Staley Walton; Jimmy Hart; Humphrey Howell, Jr.; Oscar Stone; and Walter Leggett. (Nancy Hunt)

Hawthorn Hill had few physical changes during the ownership of Annie Bate. While she did not construct additions or alterations, she did change certain functions of the house. Born at Hawthorn Hill in 1878, Annie lived at the house until she married Russell Marcellus Brown on March 10, 1907.³⁷ Census records from 1910 show the couple living in district 11 of Davidson County, Tennessee.³⁸ Annie and Marcellus Brown returned to Hawthorn Hill by 1920, to care for her widowed mother, who passed away five years later. According to deed records the couple sold the house in 1936 to L.H. Ray, but they continued to live together in the house until Russell's death in a car accident on March 27, 1937.³⁹ After Russell's death the owner began to rent out half of Hawthorn Hill. According to Nancy Hunt:

She [Annie] moved back up here after her father died in 1911. And that left her mother up here alone. And she said I've got to go back and take care of my mother. So she moved back into this house, she and her husband Russ. She was married by that time to Russ Brown. And so they moved up here and they lived up here until he got killed on that curve by a car coming around the curve... When Annie used to live here, when I used to come here all the time. This door came from her [west parlor door]... She used to use that [the parlor] as her bedroom right there. And she cooked in the fireplace that was right there. Barbra my sister used to stay a lot with her up here and she said that Amy did a lot of her cooking in you know pots and things... And I've often wondered about the curly stairs [winding stairs] that went up from this room. You know that goes upstairs. I know Annie would never ever let us go upstairs

³⁷ Hunt, 49-50.

³⁸ Ancestry.com, "Annie Brown," *1910 United States Federal Census*, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1910USCenIndex&h=136242087&indiv=try&o_vc=Record:OtherRecord&rhSource=2442 (accessed March 5, 2013).

³⁹ "Annie Bate Brown deed to L.H. Ray," in *Deed Book 110* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, March 25, 1936), 7.

from there from her room. Never. And we were never allowed across the hall, because she rented it out. For quite a few years she rented out that part of the house [the hall] to Clark. What was his name? We called him Pappy Clark. I think his name was Charles. Anyways his name was Clark and he had a daughter. Oh memory. But for many years she rented that part of the house out to them. Until she had her stroke...

According to Hunt's recollections Annie Bate Brown completely altered the functionality of the house, shifting the use of public and private spaces and restraining access to certain rooms. The interview shows that Annie limited her living space to the parlor section of the house, using it as a bedroom, kitchen, and dining area. By using this space as the main living, cooking, and dining space, Annie reduced the frequency of use in the west kitchen wing. She further restricted the use of the upper story bedroom, never allowing visitors into the above space. The hall section of the house, rear wing, and second story bedroom were converted into a second apartment and were used primarily by the Clarks, who rented the space for a number of years.

Annie stayed in the house until the late 1940s when she suffered from a severe stroke and was moved to nursing home in Nashville. Annie passed away several years later on June 14, 1959.⁴⁰ After Annie left Hawthorn Hill the house changed hands several times. Owners included George P. Canter (February 11, 1948 - July 1950); J.C. Schell (July 1950 – June 6, 1970); A.A. Apple (June 6, 1970- October 6, 1970); William P. McLaughlin (June 7, 1972 – December 6,

⁴⁰ Hunt, 49-50.

1992); Tracey Parks (December 6, 1992 – August 10, 2007); and State of Tennessee (August 10, 2007- present).⁴¹

Several major alterations occurred in the house over this fifty-four years after Hawthorn Hill was sold out of the Bate family. Six of these changes reflect evolving historic preservation methods during that time span. Two of the earliest of these alterations occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s and consisted of a partial reconstruction of the east wall, which was failing due to faulty foundation support and alterations to the front porch. In an effort to preserve the house, parts of the east wall were deconstructed and reconstructed. The mason, however, was not sensitive to the historic appearance of the home altering the brick and chimney patterns (Figure 3.43).

Around the same time the east wall was altered the 1890s front porch was altered. A poured concrete porch floor replaced the original wood deck, square brick column bases were added and the Doric columns were shortened, and the balustrade and banister was completely removed (Figures 3.44 and 3.45).

⁴¹ “L.H. Ray deed to George P. Canter,” in *Deed Book 137* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds office, February 11, 1948), 208; “George P. Canter deed to J.C. Schell,” in *Deed Book 145* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, July 1950), 218; “J.C. Schell deed to A.A. Apple,” in *Deed Book 292* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, June 6, 1970), 250; “A.A. Apple deed to William P. McLaughlin,” in *Deed Book 297* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, October 6, 1970), 212; “Widow Marion Johnson McLaughlin deed to Tracey Parks,” in *Deed Book 294* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, December 6, 1992), 368; “Tracey Parks deed to State of Tennessee,” in *Deed Book 2814* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Register of Deeds Office, August 10, 2007), 342.



Figure 3.43. East wall and chimney alteration, Hawthorn Hill. (Dr. Carroll Van West)



Figure 3.44. Porch alterations at Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)



Figure 3.45. Brick column base and concrete pad added, circa 1960 to Hawthorn Hill. (Jessi White)

Four later alterations show the evolution of preservation methods. Under the ownership of William P. McLaughlin the central hall, stair, and second story partition walls were removed. This was done after the owner discovered that the alterations were not original to the house. The house was further altered under the ownership of Tracey Parks. In 1992, Parks removed the later 1850s rear kitchen addition, extended the height of the chimneys so that the proportions followed the “golden ratio,” and replaced the raised seam metal roof with wood shingles (which would have been the original roofing material). Both of these owners attempted to convert the house to its original 1806 appearance, in the process removing several significant layers of the home’s history. These preservation efforts are reflective of the larger preservation field as many preservationists during this time sought to essentially freeze a site in time by stripping away all elements not associated with the period of significance.

In 2007, the State of Tennessee bought the property from Tracey Parks. The house has not been altered further since its purchase in 2007. The State has however, taken steps to implement modern preservation techniques. In cooperation with the Center for Historic Preservation, the Tennessee Historical Commission commissioned the compilation of a Historic Structures Report. This report was used in the development of a viable preservation plan. Rather than remove alterations made after 1806, the State has opted for a less invasive conservation approach, allowing the preservation of the home as it stands today, substantially broadening the scope of historical significance and interpretation.

Through its construction methods, layout, and design, Hawthorn Hill stands as a significant example of early backcountry vernacular architecture. Built circa 1806, by settler John Bearden, this two-story Federal-style dwelling offers insight to the early frontier community of Castalian Springs. The significance of the home stretches beyond the Tennessee frontier era. In 1817, John Bearden sold the home and property to the Bate family, who maintained possession of the farm until 1949. Under the Bate family's ownership the house underwent several changes. These alterations not only reflect the shift in the family's needs, but also displays the evolution of the surrounding community, providing further context and new perspectives on Tennessee's backcountry life.

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