

SUSSEX COUNTY

Site Name: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter and Ice House
CRS Number: S-1116.26
HABS Number: DE-000

Location: Corner of Causey Avenue and Walnut Street
Milford
Sussex County, Delaware

Date of Field Work: November 1998

Type of Documentation: Level II: Partial Intensive
Annotated field notes (5 sheets)
Measured drawings (3 AutoCAD format)
4" X 5" black-and-white photos (7)
Architectural Data Sheet

Threat: The owners of the Causey Mansion operate a bed and breakfast in the house. The ice house and kitchen/slave quarter are seriously deteriorated and a renovation project is planned.

Significance: The kitchen/slave quarter stands as one of very few buildings in Sussex County that relates to the experience of African-American slaves in the area.

Description: Located in south Milford, the Causey Mansion was built in 1763. Along with its outbuildings it remains a major element in the historic landscape of the town. A gravel drive provides access to the property from Causey Avenue. The house is located to the south of this drive and there are two outbuildings to the north of the drive. Both outbuildings are brick with stucco finish and are of equal size; about 14 by 15 feet. The first building, a kitchen/slave quarter, is slightly taller than the other, but evidence indicates that the original roof on this building was raised at some point.

The kitchen/quarter is one-and-a-half stories high with a gable roof covered by asphalt shingles. The gable end faces west to the driveway; a centrally located door gives access to the one-room plan of the building. There is a small four-light casement window on the upper floor of this elevation and an S-shaped wall anchor located towards the southwest corner

approximately three feet above the ground. The north and south elevations each have one six-over-six-light single-sash window on the first floor and a six-light casement window on the upper floor. The roof is trimmed with a decorative rake board cut in a dentil pattern.

The first floor room has an open plan with a large cooking fireplace that spans most of the east wall. To the north of the fireplace there are two shelves and to the south there is a ladder leading up through a very narrow opening to the second floor. At some point the south wall behind the ladder was cut to provide additional clearance space for people going up the ladder. Local history claims that this was done for a large female slave who lived in the building. All of the interior walls have a plaster finish covered by white wash. The exposed, whitewashed ceiling joists, hewn on two sides and sawn on two sides, run north to south. Cross braces at the chimney openings are joined by mortise-and-tenons and pegged.

The knee walls on the second floor are finished with plaster over brick and there is a lath and plaster ceiling. There are sleepers nailed over the floorboards and it is evident from the chimneystack that the floor level was once at a different height. The hewn roof rafters are birds-mouthed over a plate on top of the brick wall and the ridge joint is mortise-and-tenoned and pegged.

The second outbuilding, the ice house, is much plainer than the first and far more deteriorated, but the roof has the same rake board trim. The only openings in this building are a door located in the west elevation and a decorative brick opening in the gable above the door. The floor is about ten inches below grade and paved with brick. The wood framing for the roof is hewn on two sides and vertical sawn on the other two. There are six exposed ceiling joists spanning between the north and south walls, extending nine inches beyond the bearing wall. The roof rafters bear on the ends of these joists. There are two levels of collar ties dovetailed into the rafters above the ceiling joists.

This building could have been either a smoke house or an ice house. A Kent Mutual Fire Insurance Policy for 1872 mentions the presence of an ice house on the Causey property.

History: The original dwelling on the Causey property was constructed during the second half of the eighteenth century, probably by Levin Crapper, an early owner. By the early nineteenth century the property came into the hands of the Rogers family; Colonel Daniel Rogers owned the farm at the time of his death in 1806. Rogers, a large landowner and merchant who served as governor of Delaware, requested in his will that most of his real estate be sold and the proceeds divided among his wife and children. Another merchant, by the name of Lowder Layton, purchased the property at the corner of Walnut Street from Rogers' estate.

Daniel Rogers owned at least 15 slaves at the time of his death, many of whom were young children, all to be freed when they reached the age of 21. Rogers' probate inventory also listed substantial numbers of bricks, suggesting that he had outbuildings under construction at the time of his death. It is possible that the kitchen/slave quarter was constructed at about this time. Typically, slave housing in this time period depended greatly on the number of slaves owned by the master. Sometimes they slept in the attic of the master's house, in the loft space above a kitchen, or even in a barn. Only if the master owned 15 or more slaves was he likely to construct a separate building to serve as a "slave quarter."

Peter F. Causey, Sr., acquired the property in the 1860s. Causey, a wealthy businessman in Milford, owned extensive real estate in the town, including a mill, a tannery, and the Milford Hotel. In the late 1860s, Causey undertook an extensive renovation of the dwelling at the corner of Walnut Street, adding the two-story service wing on the north end, altering the main roofline, and updating the appearance of the house by adding a variety of Italianate details. An insurance policy for the property, dated November 1869, described the building:

...a three story cottage built house 32 x 32 feet with 2 story attachment 32 x 16 feet under construction. Walls and plastering are up. Tin roof on the porches. No fire in the house except heater and range. House stands aloof from all other buildings situated at the corner of Walnut Street and the street running to the depot.

The decorative details carried over to the renovation of the kitchen/quarter as well. The roof was raised to create a larger second floor space and the decorative bargeboards were added to unify the building with the dwelling. These renovations, carried out in 1868-70, occurred after the end of the Civil War. If Causey owned slaves during the war, it is likely that they were freed by the

time of the renovations. However, it is very likely that the kitchen became the living quarters for the Causey family's cook, which may explain the oral history about the "Negro mammy" who needed to climb the ladder to the second floor.

The property remained in the Causey family until the late 1890s, when debts incurred by William F. Causey resulted in the sale of some of his real estate, including the mansion and farm at the corner of Walnut and Causey streets. The property changed hands twice between 1902 and 1931, when it was acquired by Wilson M. Vinyard. Vinyard's heirs sold the lot with the dwelling and kitchen/quarter to the present owners, Kenneth and Frances Novak, in 1986. The Novaks operate a bed and breakfast in the house.

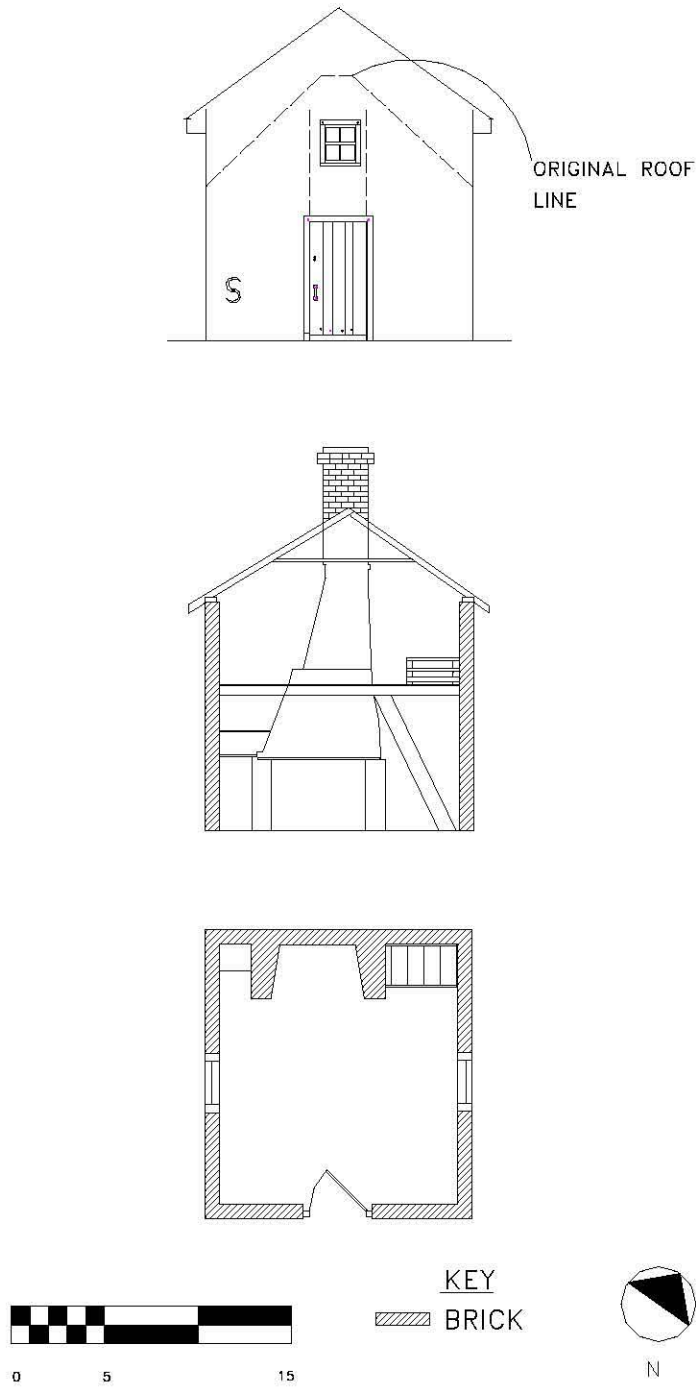


Figure 75: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter, floor plan, section, and front elevation.

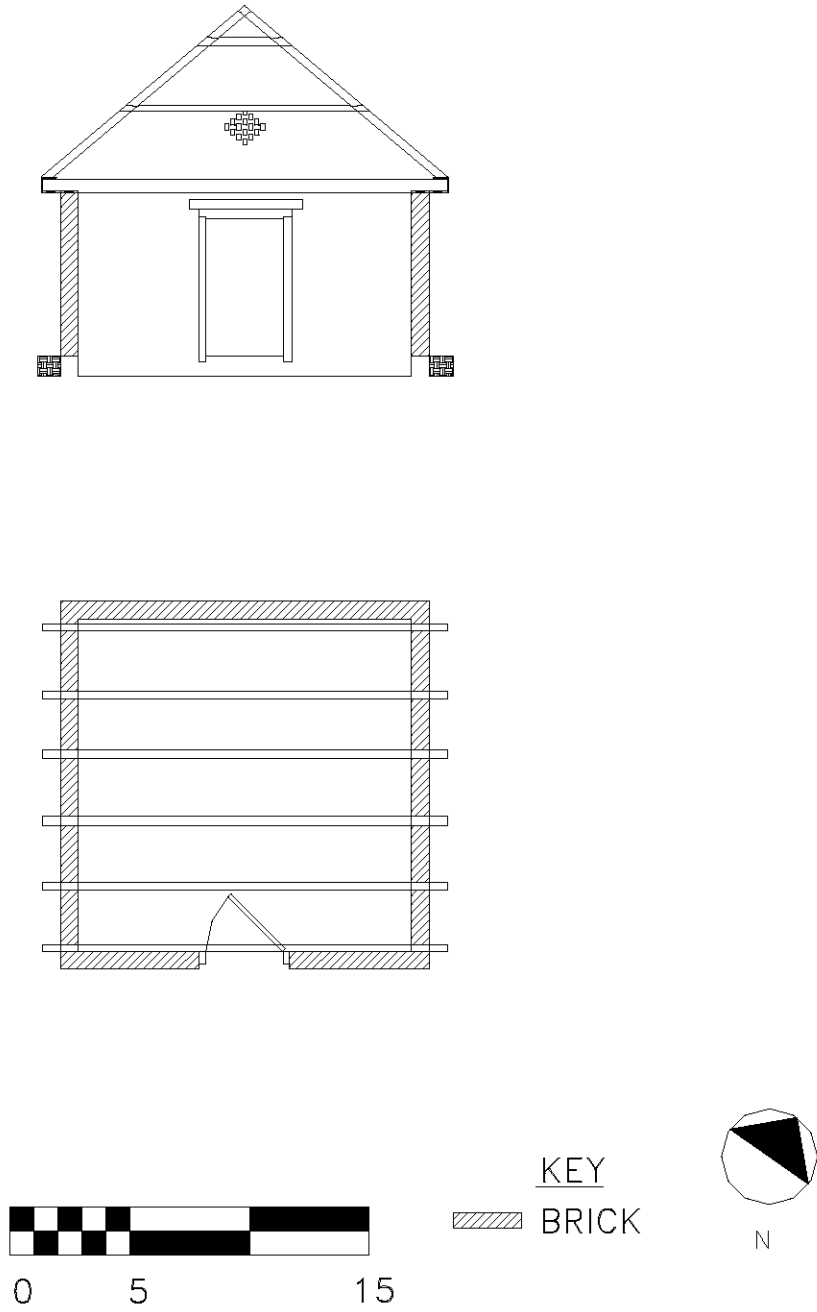


Figure 76: Causey Mansion Ice House, floor plan and elevation.

MID-ATLANTIC HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY
INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter and Ice House
Corner of Causey Avenue and Walnut Street
Milford
Sussex County, Delaware

CRS # S-1116.26

Photographer: David L. Ames

November 1998

Kitchen/Slave Quarter

- S-1116.26-1 Perspective of the southeast and northeast elevations looking west
- S-1116.26-2 View of the southeast elevation looking northwest
- S-1116.26-3 Perspective of the southwest and southeast elevations looking north
- S-1116.26-4 Environmental view of the northwest elevation looking southeast
- S-1116.26-5 Interior, first floor: view of northwest wall looking northwest
- S-1116.26-6 Interior, second floor: view of northwest wall looking northwest

Ice House

- S-1116.26-7 Environmental view of southeast and northwest elevations looking north
- S-1116.26-8 Interior, first floor: view of northwest and southeast walls looking north



Figure 77: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter, perspective of the southeast and northeast elevations looking west.



Figure 78: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter, view of the southeast elevation looking northwest.



Figure 79: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter, perspective of the southwest and southeast elevations looking north.



Figure 80: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter, environmental view of the northwest elevation looking southeast.



Figure 81: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter, interior, first floor: view of northwest wall looking northwest.



Figure 82: Causey Mansion Kitchen/Slave Quarter, interior, second floor: view of northwest wall looking northwest.



Figure 83: Causey Mansion Ice House, environmental view of southeast and northwest elevations looking north.



Figure 84: Causey Mansion Ice House, first floor, view of northwest and southeast walls looking north.

Site Name: R. D. Stevenson House
CRS Number: S-2947
HABS Number: DE-000

Location: West side of Road 303A between Road 302 and Route 5
Indian River Hundred
Sussex County, Delaware

Date of Field Work: August 1998

Type of Documentation: Level II: Partial Intensive
Annotated field notes (5 sheets)
Measured drawings (3 AutoCAD format)
35 mm color slides (9)
Architectural Data Sheet

Threat: The vacant and deteriorating house was purchased so that the frame portion could be moved to Ship Carpenter's Square in Lewes, Delaware. Demolition occurred in summer and fall 1998.

Significance: The Stevenson House is an excellent example of the evolution of braced-frame construction in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Examination of the building during preparation for moving the frame to Lewes permitted close examination of the framing system and layers of wall finish.

Description: Located on the west side of an unpaved road, the Stevenson House consists of three periods of construction comprising a main block (Period II), a kitchen wing (Period I), and a modern addition at the rear (Period III). The Period I and II sections date to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and are both of braced frame construction on a brick foundation with wood shingles and a gable roof.

The kitchen wing, or Period II section, is four bays wide and stands one-and-a-half stories in height with a chimney piercing the center of the roofline. Exterior wall coverings originally consisted of horizontal weatherboard with a beaded edge. The east elevation contains doors in the two outer bays and two-over-two light sash windows in the two inner ones. The

four bays are almost, but not quite, spaced evenly across the elevation. The Period I section is divided into two rooms, the northern one slightly larger than the southern, most likely reflecting a hall-parlor plan in its earliest configuration.

A partition wall and the central chimneystack divide the two rooms. The exterior walls of this section are of braced-frame construction using hewn timbers and brick nogging. The ceiling joists in both rooms display beaded edges and were originally exposed and covered with whitewash. Renovations to this block included reworking the central chimney and removing the large cooking fireplace from the northern room. On the north wall of the southern room a newer set of paneling and a cupboard replaced the original finish. An additional renovation moved the original winder stair to the northwest corner of the northern room. The spaces below the floors of both rooms appear to have contained brick-lined root-pits. In the southern room doors lead through all four walls, two accessing the exterior, one leading to the Period II block, and one entering the northern room. Windows in the east and west walls light the room. In the northern room, windows pierce the north, east, and west walls, while a door on the west wall leads to the Period III addition.

The attic of the Period I section is open to the rafters, which are bridled and marked with Roman numerals. There is no access from the Period I loft to the second floor of the Period II block. A single window in the center of the north gable lights the attic.

The main block (Period II) is a three-bay, two-and-a-half story block with a gable roof, originally covered with cypress shingles. The roof rafter ends are plainly boxed in at the cornice. The east (or front) elevation of the main block has two two-over-two light windows and a door evenly spaced in the elevation on the first floor, with the door in the northernmost bay. On the second floor, three two-over-two windows align over the first floor openings. These openings are all repeated on the west (or rear) elevation. The south gable elevation of the main block currently has two small windows at the attic level, but there is evidence that there were also windows on either side of the chimneystack on the second floor. It is unclear if this pattern was also repeated on the first floor.

The frame of this section is also braced-frame construction with up braces at the corners,

but the corner posts are guttered to allow a smooth wall finish. Brick nogging appears throughout the Period II block, but is used in a variety of ways. In some places it is not used at all, in others it is covered only by whitewash, and on several walls it extended only up to the windowsill level.

The entrance to the Period II section opens into a stair passage that extends the full depth of the house. Located in the northwest corner of this passage are the stairs to the second floor and below these is a small storage space. In the north gable wall a door opens into the kitchen wing. In its earliest configuration, the frame of this gable wall was open to the siding of the kitchen wing, which was white-washed. The northwest corner of the passage, behind the stair is filled with white-washed brick nogging. On the south side of the passage is a partition wall constructed of beaded boards on the north side and studs covered by lath and plaster on the south side. The partition wall originally contained two doors, one leading into each of the two rooms in the southern end of the block.

The southern section of the Period II block is divided into two unequally-sized spaces. The eastern room is larger and originally contained the fireplace positioned in the center of the gable wall. Lath and plaster covered the ceiling and walls of this room. The smaller room at the rear of the house remained unfinished, with brick nogging below the windowsills.

The second floor of the Period II block was originally a single room that was later divided into separate rooms including a bathroom, two bedrooms, and a closet at the end of a passage. The gable chimney contained a small fireplace. Ceiling joists and girts were beaded, indicating that they were originally left exposed. Later renovations covered them with lath and plaster.

At the attic level there were no partitions of the space. The roof rafters are bridled and pegged at the ridge with half-dove-tailed collar beams.

History: Robert Stevenson purchased this property from the Prettyman family in 1774. When he died in 1790 he left the farm to his son, Kendal Stevenson. At this point, it is likely that only the Period I section of the house was standing—two rooms on the first floor and in the loft on either side of a large chimneystack. Fireplaces heated the first floor rooms but not the loft. Wall

finish in the braced-frame dwelling consisted of brick nogging covered with whitewash and exposed joists and rafters in the ceiling.

Kendal Stevenson occupied the property through his early marriage and up until his death in 1815. He is most likely responsible for the construction of the Period II dwelling. The Orphans Court plot of his estate features a drawing of a house that fits the present configuration. The Period II addition consisted of a side-passage between the Period I block and a new parlor and small back room. A stair in the passage led to the second floor and then to the attic. Finish in the new section differed from the Period I wing, now relegated to service space. A vertical board partition wall separated the hall from the new parlor and the parlor from the back room. Brick nogging covered with whitewash or plaster filled the spaces below the windows, while lath and plaster covered the walls above the chair rail. On the first floor the ceiling joists were covered with lath and plaster, but on the second floor the beaded joists were left exposed.

Stevenson's inventory, probated in 1815, suggests extensive home manufacturing of items such as textiles and cider. He left all of his real estate to his son, Robert Dale Stevenson, but under the provisions of the Orphans Court his widow, Elizabeth, received a dower of 126 acres, including the dwelling. Elizabeth remarried, to a man named Stockley, and took her children to live with her new husband in another section of Sussex County. During this period the farm was probably rented to tenants. Robert D. Stevenson returned to Indian River Hundred circa 1836, about the time he married. He remained on the farm until his death in 1879, when the property passed to his sons, Kendal and Robert.

Probate inventories and population census data for the Stevenson family document a long history of slave ownership associated with the farm through 1860. It is likely that the two loft rooms in the Period I wing served as slave and servant spaces after the construction of the Period II dwelling. The Period I lofts were accessible only from the first floor of that section and therefore had no direct access to the family space on the Period II second floor, a common configuration for families who used slave or servant labor to work their farms.

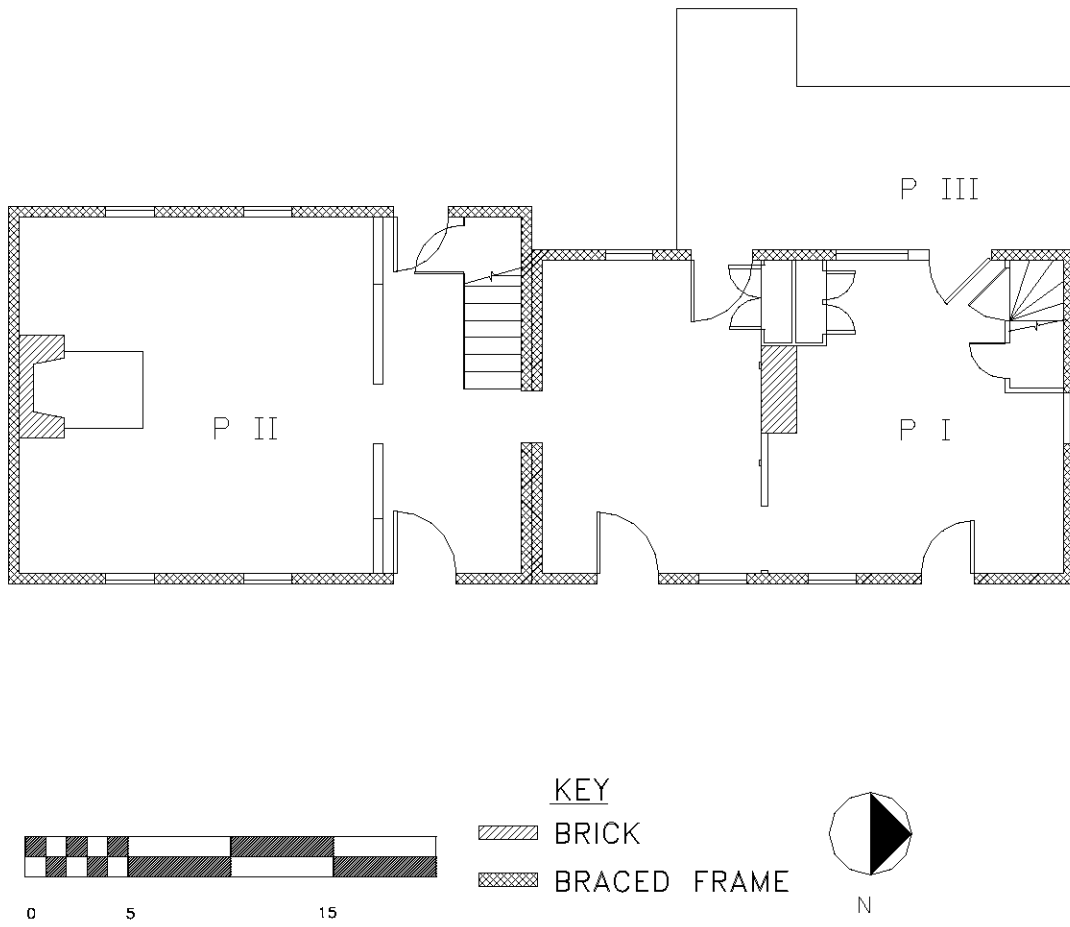


Figure 85: Stevenson House, first floor plan.

MID-ATLANTIC HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY
INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

R. D. Stevenson House West side of Road 303A between Road 302 and Route 5 Indian River Hundred Sussex County, Delaware	CRS # S-2947
Photographer: Rebecca J. Sheppard	August 1998
S-2947-1	View of east elevation looking west
S-2947-2	View of north elevation looking south
S-2947-3	Perspective of south and west elevations looking northeast
S-2947-4	Interior, first floor, Period I section: view of cabinet on north wall of south room, looking northwest
S-2947-5	Interior, first floor, Period I section: view of frame and nogging in southwest corner of south room, looking southwest
S-2947-6	Interior, first floor, Period I section: view of partition wall in north room, looking southwest
S-2947-7	Interior, first floor, Period I section: view of north wall in south room looking north
S-2947-8	Interior, first floor, Period II section: view of south wall looking south
S-2947-9	Interior, first floor, Period II section: view of framing and exposed siding in northeast corner of entry hall, looking northeast



Figure 86: Stevenson House, view of east elevation looking west.



Figure 87: Stevenson House, view of north elevation looking south.



Figure 88: Stevenson House, perspective of south and west elevations looking northeast.



Figure 89: Stevenson House, interior, first floor, Period I section: view of cabinet on north wall of south room, looking northwest.



Figure 90: Stevenson House, interior, first floor, Period I section: view of frame and nogging in southwest corner of south room, looking southwest.



Figure 91: Stevenson House, interior, first floor, Period I section: view of partition wall in north room, looking southwest.



Figure 92: Stevenson House, interior, first floor, Period I section: view of north wall in south room, looking north.



Figure 93: Stevenson House, interior, first floor, Period II section: view of south wall looking south.



Figure 94: Stevenson House, interior, first floor, Period II section: view of framing and exposed siding in northeast corner of entry hall, looking northeast.