

MID-ATLANTIC HISTORIC BUILDINGS SURVEY

MCINTIRE HOUSE

2940 Pulaski Highway, Pencader Hundred
New Castle County, Delaware

By

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2000

Site Name: McIntire House

CRS Number: N/A

Location: 2940 Pulaski Highway
Glasgow Vicinity
Pencader Hundred
New Castle County, Delaware

Date of Fieldwork: August-September 2000

Type of Documentation: Partial-intensive
Scaled, annotated field notes
Cellar, first, and second floor plans (CAD)
35mm black and white photographs
Architectural description and history

Threat: Currently vacant and deteriorating, the house is slated for demolition in the near future.

Significance: The McIntire House is a typical example of the housing standard for farmers in southern New Castle County during the nineteenth century. The house began as a two-story side-passage plan dwelling in the 1840s, built to replace an earlier log dwelling, and was expanded to become a central-hall plan circa 1870.

Description: The McIntire House is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of U. S. Route 40 (Pulaski Highway) and Frazer Road. The unoccupied dwelling is the only building on the property and all of its openings are boarded up. At least three periods of construction are evident in the dwelling. The site is heavily overgrown.

Presently, the McIntire House is a five-bay, two-and-a-half story, gable-roofed, single-pile frame dwelling (Periods I and II) with a two-and-a-half story twentieth-century addition (Period III) to the rear. The front elevation of the main block faces north and has a center entrance covered by a brick portico with square brick piers. The surround at the entrance has fluted wood pilasters and a carved frieze in an ornate Colonial Revival motif. A pair of tall windows flanks each side of the entrance; five smaller window openings are located directly above the first-floor openings. All of the exterior walls have the original wood clapboard siding, now covered with aluminum

siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There are two gabled dormers centered on the north slope of the roof of the main block.

The west elevation forms the gable end of the main block and the side elevation of the addition. The main block has an exterior brick chimney centered on the gable roof flanked by two small square windows on the first floor. There is a second-floor window that matches those on the front elevation on the southwest side of this wall. Porches span the full length of the addition on both the first and second floors. The first-floor porch has brick pilasters and a solid brick half wall with a concrete cap piece. The second-floor porch has a shed roof with square wood pilasters and a wood handrail supported with a square wood balustrade. The porches are approximately six feet deep and the exterior wall of the first floor of the addition has two doors at either end of the porch with three large windows spaced evenly between. The second floor has a single door to the porch and three windows. There is a small gabled dormer in the roof of the addition centered on the porch.

The south (rear) elevation is composed primarily of the gable end of the addition. There is a door to the porch in the first floor of the main block and a single window on the second floor above. There are four window openings in the first floor of the addition, of varying sizes and uneven spacing. A small porch with a shed roof is located to the east of the center of the gable and covers the back door. A small gabled bulkhead encloses stairs to the cellar below the addition. There are three window openings on the second floor that are similar in proportion to those on the main block. A small square window is located in the center of the gable at the attic level.

The east elevation contains the other gable end of the main block and the side elevation of the addition. This elevation is heavily obscured by plant growth. There is one window centered on the gable on the first floor and two windows on the second floor. The addition has three window openings on the first level that are similar to those on the main block and one that is considerably smaller. There are three windows spaced evenly across the second floor of the addition and a center dormer on the roof.

Interior: The first floor is divided into three sections, defined by the construction periods. The three bays to the west form a single large room in the Period I section; the

two bays to the east contain a single room (Period II); the modern addition (Period III) contains one large room to the north and several smaller rooms at the rear.

The central entrance opens directly into the Period I front room with a straight run stair on the east wall of that space. The wood stair has square balusters and cut wood trim on the risers. Originally this space contained a side-hall plan, with the stair passage located to the east. All of the floorboards are narrow and have been replaced at some point. A modern brick fireplace, covering the earlier stack, is on the west wall with high windows to either side of the chimney. There are two doors on the south wall of the large room, one opening into the addition and one onto the porch. A single door opens into the east room (Period II) in the main block. The east room in the main block has two windows in the front wall and a single window centered in the gable end wall. The trim in these two rooms is very simple and likely dates to the twentieth century.

The addition is modern, dating to post-1945. Entering the addition from the west front room, the first space is a large room that spans the full width of the addition and is about fifteen feet deep. A door and two large windows open out to the porch on the west and two windows look east. Access to the cellar is located below the main stairs on the north wall. Two doorways open through the south wall. The one located towards the west accesses the kitchen and the one to the east opens into a small hallway leading to a bathroom, utility room, and a rear exterior door.

A small straight stair leads down to the cellar from the large room in the addition. The cellar is divided into two spaces, one below the main block and the second below the modern addition. There are parged stone walls and a cement plaster ceiling in the main block section. Selective demolition in the ceiling of this section revealed both hewn and sawn timbers with remnants of a whitewash finish. The section below the Period III addition is very modern, with concrete block walls and a drywall ceiling.

The second floor contains eight rooms arranged around a center hall and stair, oriented north to south, and a shorter east-west hall located along the south wall of the main block. The Period I section includes the north end of the stair hall, a small room against the north wall containing a single window and the stair to the attic, and a single large chamber measuring fifteen by fifteen feet. Four windows light this room, two on the front or north elevation, one on the west elevation, and one on the south wall that

looks out onto the second floor porch. There is no interior chimneystack in the gable end of the room.

The Period II addition holds a single chamber, currently accessed by a door from the Period III hallway. This room has four windows as well, with two on the front, or north elevation, and two on the east gable end.

The east-west hall that separates the addition from the earlier sections of the house runs along the rear wall of the Period I/II block. In its east end the hall contains a closet that opens into the hall, and at the west end a door opens to the second floor porch. The rest of the Period III addition to the south is divided into four rooms, arranged on either side of the north-south hall, and a bathroom at the south end of the hall. The two northern rooms each have two windows on the exterior wall. The doorways to the four bedrooms are symmetrically placed across from one another in the hall. The southeast and southwest rooms have a jog-in to accommodate the bathroom that shares the rear of the addition. Like the northern rooms, each of these rooms has two windows, one on each of the two exterior walls.

Between these two rooms is the bathroom, which has one window, facing south, and a door that opens opposite the window into the center hall. The doorway to the bathroom has a marble sill distinctive from the wooden sills found in the rest of the floor. The bathroom has a tiled floor and, up to approximately shoulder-height, tiled walls as well. Wall tiles are much larger, glossier, and plainer than the floor tiles, which are in a repeating pattern of small, black-centered white squares. A very narrow, deep linen closet with four built-in shelves is located along the east wall of the bathroom.

Uniformly patterned, decorative machine-cut molding surrounds all windows and doors on the second floor. A similarly patterned, though larger, baseboard is found throughout the second floor. Doors throughout are two-paneled with a mixture of modern and original hardware. Floors in the Period I section have wall-to-wall carpet, as do the hallways. The other rooms on the second floor, with the exception of the tiled bathroom floor, are covered in narrow hardwood flooring.

A ladder stair accesses the attic from the small room over the main stair. The attic, like the rest of the house, is clearly divided into three sections. The front, or north, elevation contains two small gable-end spaces, one west (Period I) and one east (Period

II). Between these “rooms” is an open space containing the ladder stairs. Each of these rooms has a gable dormer window centered in its front or north elevation and exposed roof and wall timbers. The west room contains the brick chimney stack on its gable end, and larger floor boards than the newer east room. Each room has flooring laid all the way under the eaves. The east room shows evidence of plaster stains and lathwork on its walls and ceiling, although all timbers now are exposed. The original gable roof of the main block is intersected by the cross-gable roof of the addition, separating the front rooms from the large room to the south. This room runs the length of the Period III addition and is open all the way to the eaves on all sides. There is a gable-topped dormer window on both the east and west sides, as well as a small square window centered on the rear, or south, wall. A rough plank floor covers this section of the attic and all roof and wall wood is unfinished and exposed.

History: In 1804 John Crawford owned 77 acres in Pencader Hundred, with a log house and a kitchen.¹ John died the next year, leaving his land to his son, Joseph. In 1814, Joseph Crawford and his wife, Lydia, sold the part of the property, 36 acres, to Samuel Guthrie for the sum of \$504.²

Samuel Guthrie owned several properties, including two farms and one house and lot in Glasgow. The tax assessments describe the McIntire property as 135 acres with a log dwelling.³ Guthrie died in 1826 and the New Castle County Orphans Court took jurisdiction over his estate, eventually ordering the sale of several parcels of real estate. Eldad Lore purchase a 170-acre parcel designated as Tract No. 2, which contained a log dwelling, for \$1485.⁴ The survey of the property indicates that the log dwelling was located close to the location of the present McIntire House. Two years later, in 1836, Eldad and Priscilla Lore sold the land to Frederick Racine for \$1050, excepting a piece which the Lores had given to “a certain society of colored people for the special purpose of erecting a house for religious worship.”⁵

¹ New Castle County Tax Assessments, Pencader Hundred, 1804, listing for John Crawford.

² New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book T3, Page 243

³ New Castle County Tax Assessments, Pencader Hundred, 1816, listing for Samuel Guthrie.

⁴ New Castle County Orphan’s Court, Samuel Guthrie Case File

⁵ New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book X4, Page 107

Racine's ownership of the property was also short-lived; he sold the land to James S. Purnell for \$3100 in 1843.⁶ Six years later Andrew McIntire, Sr., purchased the farm for \$5500.⁷ The property then remained in the McIntire family from 1849 until 1944. Andrew McIntire is most likely responsible for construction of the Period I section of the dwelling, a side-passage plan with one room and a stair hall on the first floor. This house may have been built on the foundation of the earlier log dwelling. Samuel McIntire inherited the farm from his father, and it is Samuel's name that appears on the Beers (1868) and Hopkins (1881) atlases. Samuel likely built the Period II addition, converting the dwelling into a central-hall plan house. After Samuel McIntire's death in 1883, the property passed to his wife, Matilda, and later to their three sons (Samuel, Thomas, and John) and their children. In 1944 sixteen McIntire heirs sold the house and land to Mary C. Nicholson for \$9000.⁸

The Nicholsons owned the farm until 1998, when Nicholson's executor, James C. Nicholson, sold 85 acres, including the house, to the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington.⁹ The Nicholsons undertook a substantial expansion of the house after 1945, adding the two-story Period III wing and porch to the rear of the building. This may have required the removal of an earlier service wing. Part of the renovation process included removing the partition wall in the Period I section and replacing the stair. They constructed a new stair in approximately the same location that ran straight up to access the expanded second floor hallway.

⁶ New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book M5, Page 323

⁷ New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book E6, Page 96

⁸ New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Book G44, Page 154

⁹ New Castle County Recorder of Deeds, Deed 25640045

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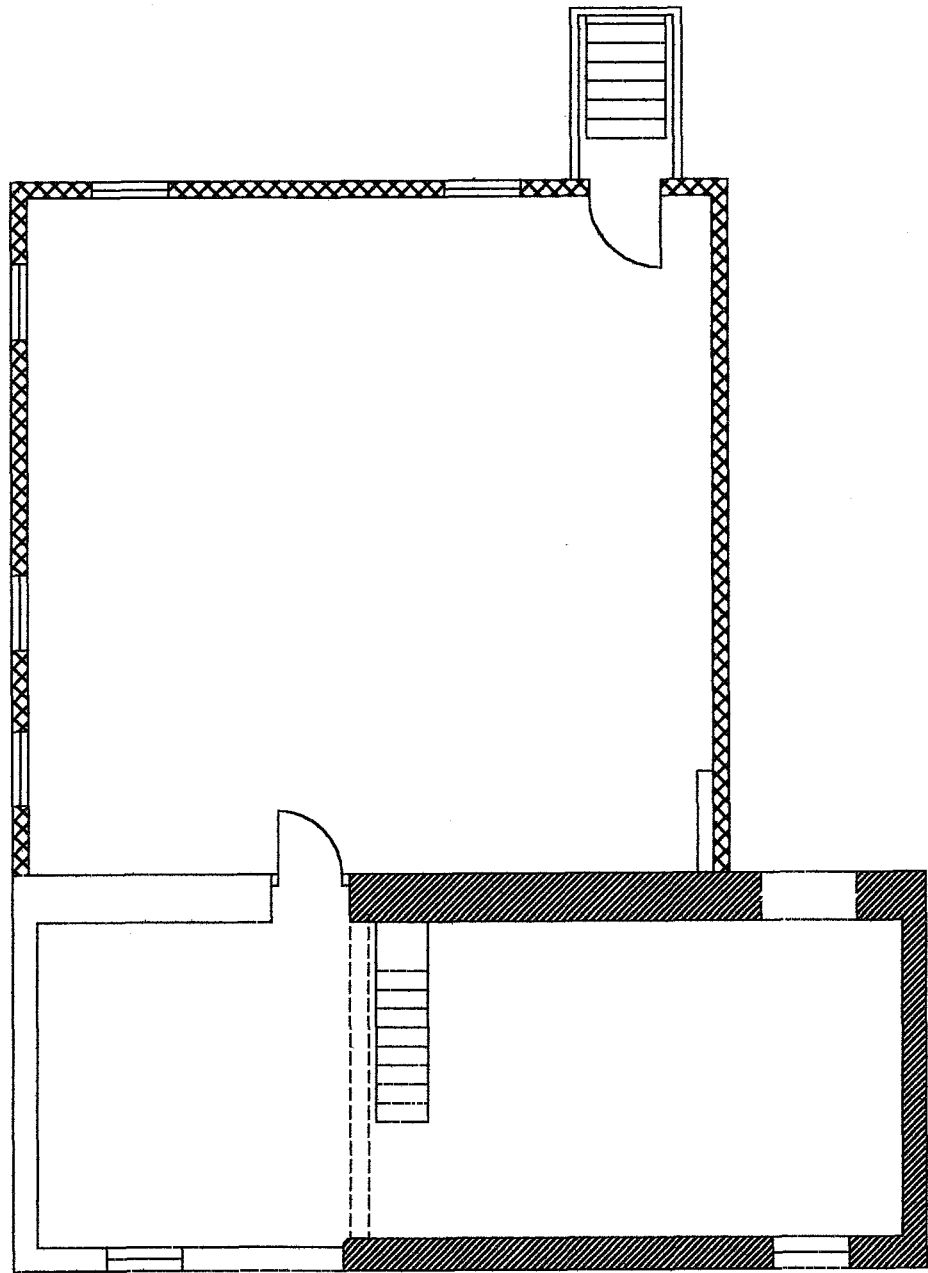
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2940 Pulaski Highway
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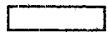

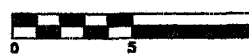
Photographer: Rebecca J. Sheppard

September 2000

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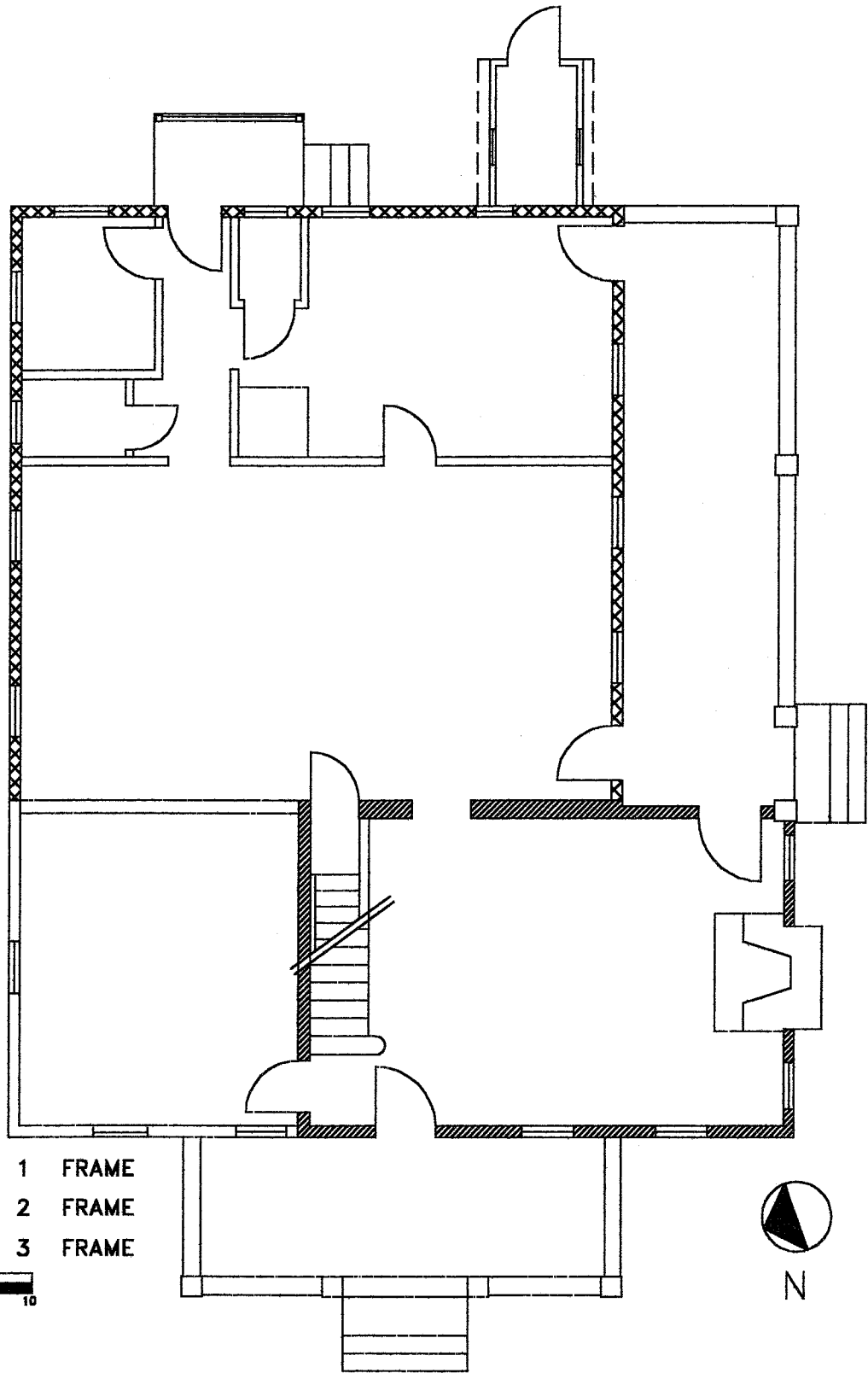


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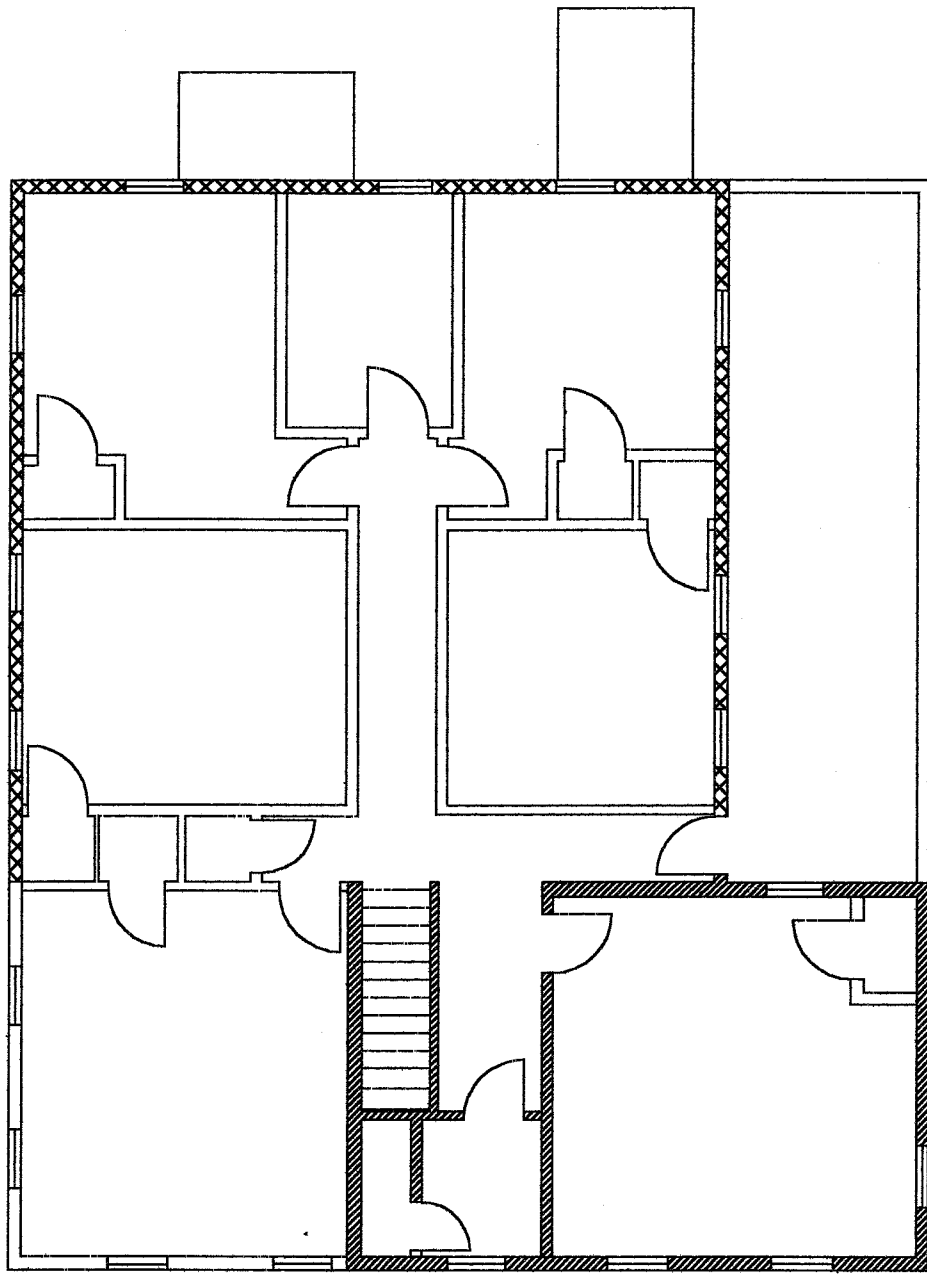
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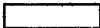

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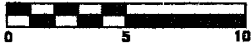
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SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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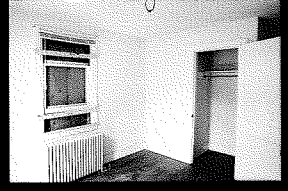
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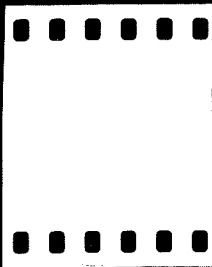


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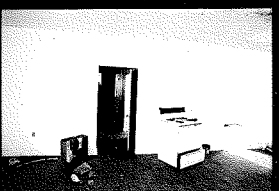
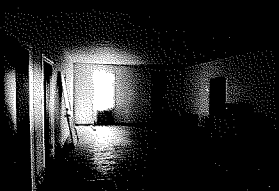
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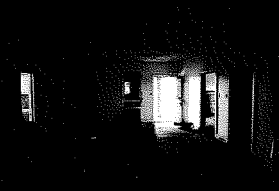
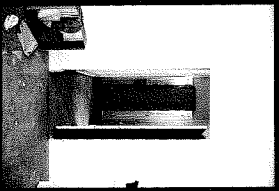
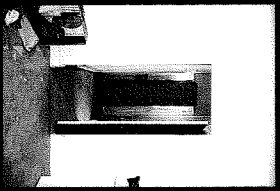
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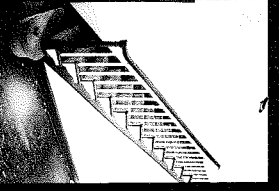
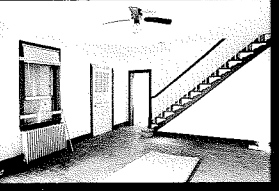
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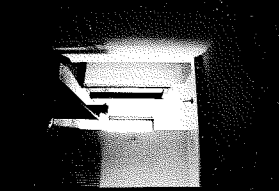
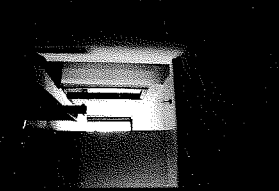
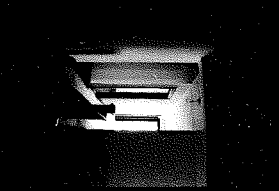
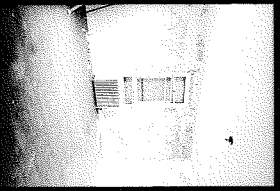
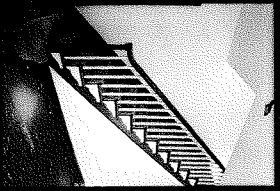
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