

FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOME Cedar Hill

Historic Structures Report Part II

(HISTORICAL DATA)

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Office Of Archeology And Historic Preservation

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ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

a. Name and number of structure:

The Frederick Douglass Home, Reservation 715, stands at 1411 W Street, S.E., Washington, D.C.

b. Proposed use of structure:

The Frederick Douglass Home will be a historic house museum interpreting the life of its famous owner and his place in American history.

c. Justification for such use:

This site was added to the National Park System by Public Law 87633, approved September 5, 1963 (76 Stat. 435), to memorialize Frederick Douglass, probably the most important American Negro of the nineteenth century. This historic site will deepen and balance the representation within the National Park System of the contributions of our country's Negro citizens to the history and culture of the nation. The National Park System also includes sites commemorating Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, both of whom achieved national importance during the twentieth century.

d. Provisions for operating the structure:

The Frederick Douglass Home, as "a part of the park system in the National Capital," will be restored, preserved, and interpreted by the National Park Service, National Capital Region.

e. Cooperative agreements:

Although there are no cooperative agreements, a covenant in the deed, transferred to the United States on June 25, 1964, stipulates that any proceeds derived from the lease of part of the original property to an apartment developer will be given to the United States for the restoration of the property.

f. Brief description of proposed construction activity:

The building is in poor condition and will require extensive restoration if it is to be preserved and made safe for public

exhibition. Its present critical structural condition requires immediate corrective measures. The house and its related features will be restored and reconstructed to their appearance in 1895. This task will involve the replacement or repair of much of the roof, the strengthening of the walls and floors, the eventual reconstruction or preservation of the remains of the outbuildings, and the accurate refurnishing of the interior of the main building.

HISTORICAL DATA
THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOME,
CEDAR HILL

The Frederick Douglass Home on Cedar Hill, Anacostia, was the famed abolitionist and human rights fighter's second residence in the Washington, D.C. area. Douglass purchased his suburban seat in 1877 and maintained his residence there until his death early in 1895. Here he lived the life of a gentleman surrounded by his family and friends and waited upon by three servants. Douglass was absent from his Anacostia home part of the time while he served as Minister to Haiti (1889-1891), during his European trip (1886-1887), and while campaigning for the Republican Party (1880, 1888) or lecturing before various groups.^{1/}

He enjoyed music and reading, and he sometimes played the violin during evenings with family and friends. He was a warm host. After his death his widow undertook to preserve the house just as it was during his lifetime. The story of the house where Douglass lived so many years began even before Douglass bought it.

In 1854, John Welsh Van Hook, John Fox and John Dobler formed the Union Land Association. The Association subdivided "a farm on the south

^{1/} Philip S. Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass (New York: 1952), 4, 568-569.

side of the Eastern Branch, where a settlement called Anacostia was located.^{2/} In 1865, the area was renamed Uniontown, and some years passed before the original name was restored.

The land on which the Frederick Douglass house now stands was a part of this tract, which was owned by Enock Tucker and John Marbury before him, and was named Chichester. The Associates paid \$19,000 for the tract of 237 acres, 1 rod, 31 perches, on June 5, 1854, and afterwards offered lots for sale on easy terms. The buyer was to pay \$39 a month for 25 months in exchange for a lot 130 feet long by 24 feet wide.^{3/} However, such properties were to be reserved ". . . for the use, benefit and enjoyment of white persons only . . ." Furthermore, no land could ". . . be sold leased or devised to any negro, mulata [sic] or person of African blood [sic]." Another clause forbade the use of the property by establishments for soap boiling, piggeries, slaughter houses or "any other nuisance."^{4/}

^{2/} W. Bogart Bryan, A History of the National Capital, From its Foundation Through the Period of the Organic Act (New York, 1916), 2, 370. In 1857, Van Hook and Fox bought out Dobler's interest for \$10,000. Office of Recorder of Deeds, District of Columbia, Liber J.A.S. 129, folio 283; Liber J.A.S. 173, folio 237.

^{3/} Bryan, A History of The National Capital, 2, 370.

^{4/} Office of Recorder of Deeds, District of Columbia, Liber J.A.S. 90, folio 77.

The Association prospered. Within two months, it had sold 350 lots and placed the remainder on the market, despite the fact that fire had destroyed the office and papers of the developers in June 1854.^{5/}

Sometime during the period from 1855 to 1859, the associates built a rectangular brick house that would form the nucleus of the Frederick Douglass Home. It may have originally served as a temporary construction office. In any case, the original building and four smaller outbuildings (could they have been construction sheds?), are shown on a Boschke's map of 1861, and are labeled Fox and Van Hook.^{6/}

During or before 1863, Van Hook evidently moved into the building on what became known as Van Hook Hill and continued to reside there until 1876-7 when ownership was transferred to the Freedman's Trust Company.^{7/}

Van Hook was born in Philadelphia in 1825. At an early age he moved to Baltimore, where in later years he worked with Johns Hopkins

5/ Charles R. Burr, "A Brief History of Anacostia, Its Name, Origin and Progress," Records of The Columbia Historical Society, 23 (1919), 172.

6/ A. Boschke, Topographical Map of The District of Columbia, Surveyed In The Years 1856, '57, '58, and '59, (Washington, D. C. 1861). The house resembles several of those in Andrew Jackson Downing's popular books, and it is possible that the builders designed it themselves.

7/ Andrew Boyd (Ed), Boyd's Directory of The District of Columbia, 1876 Ed., p. 537.

on suburban development. In 1852, Van Hook moved to Washington and soon began his career in real estate operations here. Later, however, in 1863, he became a commission merchant dealing in produce. During the war years, he was commended by President Lincoln and General Grant for carrying dispatches between Philadelphia and Baltimore. After 1877, he lived at 1738 F Street, Northwest. Van Hook died on April 9, 1905, at his sister's home on 19th Street, and was buried in Congressional Cemetery.^{8/}

On September 1, 1877, Frederick Douglass purchased the former Van Hook residence, including 9 3/4 acres of land, from the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company for \$6,700.^{9/} Soon afterwards, he moved from 316 A Street, Northeast, to his new house.^{10/} On September 24, 1878, Douglass bought 5 3/4 acres south of his Cedar Hill property from Ella R. Talburtt.^{11/} During the years between 1879 and 1881, Douglass began

^{8/} Burr, "A Brief History of Anacostia," Records of The Columbia Historical Society, 23, 174.

^{9/} Office of the Recorder of Deeds, District of Columbia, Liber 869, folios 102-4.

^{10/} Boyd (Ed), Boyd's Directory of The District of Columbia, 1877 Ed., 246, Ibid, 1878 Ed., 258. In 1877, Douglass is listed as a "lecturer"; in 1878 as U.S. Marshal for the District.

^{11/} Court Records, District of Columbia, Equity Cause No. 3297, Talburtt v. Talburtt, et al.

work on improving his suburban home. He purchased numerous cedar fence posts, and considerable lumber and building supplies.^{12/}

A map of 1878 does not show any outbuilding on Cedar Hill.^{13/} On August 11, 1881, Douglass paid \$106.66 to Martin and Bro. for "13,333 Hard Brick in Uniontown."^{14/} These may have been used in the construction of the stable or carriage house.

In any case, "Gath" a reporter for the Cincinnati Enquirer, has left us a fair picture of the house as it was in 1886:

The house itself is rather of the Southern character, built I think of brick or stone with a door in the middle and a porch in front, and a pediment over the middle of the edifice The house consists perhaps, of four rooms on this lower or main floor, with no less number of rooms above. To the left of the hall is the parlor proper, and behind that is Mr. Douglass' library. To the right is the sitting room; I suppose the dining room to be behind it. ^{15/}

The same article mentions the stable and implies the existence of other outbuildings. In any case, by 1887, both the brick carriage

^{12/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Building and Repair Accounts, Purchases from J.T. Campbell, Sept. 2, 1879 - April 23, 1881.

^{13/} G.M. Hopkins, Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including The County of Prince Georges, Maryland (Philadelphia, 1878), 81.

^{14/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Building, Repairs, etc. Account, 1876-1894. The map of 1878 shows the house to be L-shaped.

^{15/} Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1886, p. 1.

house and a frame outbuilding, near the rear of the lot had been constructed. However, the house then was evidently of all brick construction.^{16/}

Douglass applied for a building permit to construct a second story frame addition above the "south wing" of the house in 1892. The estimated cost was \$235.^{17/} In 1893, Douglass paid one Theo. Leland \$16.50 for "painting, graining and varnishing room at residence of Frederick Douglass," and extensive purchases of building supplies were made as late as 1894.^{18/} However, the addition in the rear seems to have been completed in 1894 or before. Outbuildings included the

16/ G.M. Hopkins, A Complete Set of Surveys and Plates of Properties In the City of Washington, District of Columbia, Compiled and Drawn from Official Records and Actual Surveys (Philadelphia, 1887), Plate 41. The house itself is shown as a rectangular brick building, but this is evidently an error since the library was already in existence.

If the date on an old photograph found among the Frederick Douglass papers is correct, the two story wooden frame addition on the rear of the house was built before February 27, 1887.

17/ Licensing and Inspection, District of Columbia Government, Access No. 65A490, National Archives Record Center, Building permit No. 239, July 29, 1892.

18/ Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Building, Repair, etc. Account 1876-1894. Purchases from J.T. Campbell in June - July, 1894, and from Thos. W. Smith, August 9-24, 1894.

carriage house, a stable, den, corn house and three smaller structures.
19/

In September 1892, Catherine Impey, the editor of Anti-Caste, an English magazine devoted to equal rights "for the dark races of mankind", visited Frederick Douglass at Cedar Hill and set down her impressions of the house in her diary:

I was met at the door by Miss Pitts [Mrs. Douglass' sister], who showed me into a reception-room on the left of the entrance, a pleasant room with two deep bay windows to the south, shaded by great magnolia and other trees and two long windows opening on the verandah. The study opened from its back. [The dining room] opens back from the right hand parlour.
20/

Fortunately, interviews, legal records and some old photographs greatly aid us in picturing the home of the famous equal rights advocate as it was during the years 1894-5, at the close of his career.

19/ G.M. Hopkins, Comprising West Washington and Balance of The County Outside Florida Avenue, 3, Real Estate Plat Book of Washington, District of Columbia, Based Upon the Triangulation of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey Topographical Map of the District of Columbia (Philadelphia: 1894,) plate 36. Frederick Douglass Home Master Plan Drawings, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, District of Columbia Series, Sheet 31-49; Court Records District of Columbia, Equity Cause 18288, Mrs. Helen Douglass v. Lewis H. Douglass, et al. Plat of Proposed subdivision.

20/ Anti-Caste, 7 (April-May 1895), 14.

At the time of Frederick Douglass' death in 1895, his widow described the house as "a substantial brick house of twenty rooms."^{21/} Our information is much more complete for the downstairs rooms than for the rest.

The hall evidently had a hat rack and the front door an old fashioned brass knocker.^{22/} The west parlor was the room in which an engraving of Dumas in a general's uniform hung. Here too, a large colored print of Othello relating his adventures to Desdmona hung over the sofa.^{23/} Over the fireplace mantle was "a fine, life-sized crayon sketch of Frederick Douglass . . . bearing out the comparison

^{21/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 21, Portfolio 45, Mrs. Helen Douglass to the Editor, The Evening Star. Letter draft, February 1895.

^{22/} L.A. Woods, Interview with Mrs. Douglass, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, 17 and "Gath," Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1886, 1. "Gath" said he rang a door-bell and Woods described a knocker. "Gath" mentioned the hat rack. Also see District of Columbia, Register of Wills, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of the Goods, Chattles and Personal Estate of Frederick Douglass deceased, taken and made by us in conformity with the foregoing deposition, July 1, 1895."

^{23/} Woods, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, 17. Also see "Gath", Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1886, 1. "Gath" also mentions "a picture of 'Othello' relating his experiences to 'Barbantio' and 'Desdmona.'" In addition, he noted, there was a picture of Douglass as a young man and a portrait of Wendell Phillips on an easel. "In different parts of the house were other pictures of Mr. Douglass, one of them a crayon, taken in recent years," he wrote.

of him to a Castillian grandee."^{24/} Under the portrait stood "the empty chair" which was "tied across the front with a broad ribbon of white watered silk -- sacred to his memory."^{25/}

Other things in the room included a mirror with a shelf of books under it, a little table on which was a "lovely photo of Lady [Isabel] Sommerset"^{26/} and a large bowl of roses. There was also an autographed portrait of Haitian President Louis Modestin Florvil Hyppolitte wearing his ribbons and orders.^{27/} In addition, the 1895 inventory mentioned portieres, a leather-covered chair, two captain's chairs, two chromolithographs, a fireplace set, a carved wooden Swiss clock, a goat rug, a piano, piano stool and cover and a metal table.^{28/}

^{24/} Woods, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 17.

^{25/} Ibid. A typical example of nineteenth century sentimentality.

^{26/} Ibid.

^{27/} Ibid.

^{28/} Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, Frederick Douglass, July 1, 1895." On March 31, 1894, Douglass paid William Bates \$5.00 for cleaning and repairing a Swiss clock. Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Furnishings account.

This was probably also the "spacious living room, with its massive furniture, rich rugs and draperies," which Dr. Brown recalled from her 1894 visit. Hallie Q. Brown, "Reminiscences and Personal Recollections of Frederick Douglass," National Notes, Vol. 16, No. 5 (Spring, Summer 1961), p. 6.

The east parlor contained a two-thirds oil portrait of Frederick Douglass as well as a number of portraits of distinguished suffragists displayed on side tables. Other items included a medallion of Mrs. Caroline H. Dall and a "small oil painting of the 'temple of Vesta' by Mrs. Sargent, presented to Mrs. Douglass when . . . [Mr. and Mrs. Douglass] visited Rome [Jan., 1887]^{29/}." Woods also noted: "In the center of the room was a small, round, inlaid table formerly owned by Charles Sumner - a most interesting relic, having as a center piece a vignette representing a hunting scene."^{30/}

The 1895 inventory mentions a mahogany table, five straight back chairs, two window loungers, an oak rocking chair, a mantle mirror, a bronze statue of a deer, a statuette [of Venus?], four oil paintings and one engraving, one lot of ornaments, two pair of lace curtains, a leather-covered chair and portieres.^{31/}

In the library an engraving of Lincoln was over the mantle, and "in a narrow nitch hung a charming pencil sketch of Wendell Phillips

^{29/} Woods, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 17.

^{30/} Ibid.

^{31/} Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, Frederick Douglass, July 1, 1895."

as a young man."^{32/} Other portraits were those of Gerrit Smith, Lloyd Garrison, Elijah P. Lovejoy, Susan B. Anthony and Mrs.^{Elizabeth} Cady Stanton,^{33/} "whose portrait graced a place of honor on the walls." Standing on the mantle shelf was "a beautiful large photograph of Ole Bull [a famous violinist]^{34/}, with busts of noted composers Strauss and L. Feurback"

The library also contained a large and a small bookcase with about a thousand books and a "revolving top desk"^{35/} on which stood "a lovely ivory-type of his white wife."^{36/}

Furthermore, "a crayon sketch of Mr. Douglass, over which is arranged a group of faded palms, hangs near the window, and on a chair beneath it hangs his soft brown felt hat, just where he left it [] probably."^{37/}

^{32/} Woods, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 17.

^{33/} Ibid.

^{34/} Ibid.

^{35/} Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, Frederick Douglass, July 1, 1895."

^{36/} Woods, The Washington Post, 1897, p. 17.

^{37/} Ibid., See Appendix for additional information on this chair.

Other items in the library included a portrait of Mrs. Helen Douglass, an engraving of John Brown being led to his execution, two violins, a piano stool and a carpet. ^{38/} The details of Wood's description are partly confirmed by a photograph taken while Douglass was still living. ^{39/}

The dining room is not so well documented as are the library and parlors. It did, however, contain an extension table, four Bentwood chairs, an oak dining room chair, a carpet, a rug, a butler's table, sets of silver and china. There is also an old photograph which shows the table, fireplace and mantle. The table is set and there is a fire in the fireplace. Over the mantle is a photograph of the Benjamin Harrison Inaugural Committee and beside the kitchen door hangs what is probably a print of the steamboat Planter. ^{41/}

^{38/} Ibid and Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, Frederick Douglass, July 1, 1895."

^{39/} The photograph shows the portrait of Douglass under its "group of faded palms," the roll top desk, a violin and a piano stool, among other things.

^{40/} Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, Frederick Douglass, July 1, 1895." See appendix for silver and china.

^{41/} Identification for the photograph and print was made by comparing the old photograph with a more recent one and consulting the Accession Book for the Frederick Douglass Home.

The kitchen had an ice chest and a "refrigerator" as well as kitchen furnishings, laundry fixtures and kitchen utensils. Naturally, there was also a stove.^{42/}

The stairway was carpeted in 1895 and two years later Woods observed a photograph there of Frederick Douglass and Madame Hyppolite dressed for horseback riding and standing "on a piazza surrounded with palms and exotics."^{43/}

The house was evidently heated by a furnace, at least in the later years of Douglass' residence there. Numerous bills for furnace and stove coal fill Douglass' accounts and it is unlikely that he was furnishing it to his A Street tenants. Furthermore, in 1893, he paid Daniel Shanahan \$7.00 for nine joints of galvanized iron pipe as well as "time cleaning Furnace."^{44/} In addition, there were seven fireplaces on the two main floors.

^{42/} Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, Frederick Douglass, July, 1895." Stoves or their fixtures are mentioned several times in the accounts. Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Building, Repair, etc. Accounts, 1876-1894.

^{43/} The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 17; Mention is also of stair carpeting. Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, Frederick Douglass, July 1, 1895."

^{44/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Building, Repair, etc. Account, 1876-1894. Part I of the Historic Structures Report is in error in regard to the heating system.

In the upstairs hall, there was a large desk "formerly owned by Charles Sumner" and above it were "book-shelves filled with choice volumes of poetry." On the opposite wall was a map of Haiti.^{45/}

Two old glass plate photographs preserve the appearance of the master bedroom for us. In the middle of the west wall is a fireplace with two logs supported by its andirons. On either side are windows. On the left is a cane seat chair, a rocker, a chest of drawers and mirror while on the right there is a wardrobe and an upholstered chair. On the fireplace mantle a candlestick and some small photographs are visible. Two framed pictures hang over the fireplace and to the left of the mirror, above the rocker, an oval portrait hangs in a square frame. A dark cloth is draped over the mantle, perhaps in token of mourning.^{46/} There is a rug on the floor.

It is much more difficult to describe the furnishings of the other "commodious, comfortable bed chambers," as Dr. Brown called them,^{47/} in any detail. The 1895 inventory, which is our chief source for the bedrooms, does not list every individual piece of furniture.

^{45/} Woods, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 1.

^{46/} See appendices.

^{47/} "Reminiscences," National Notes, Vol. 16, No. 5, p. 16.

Then too, it is difficult to place the individual pieces in their respective rooms.

Little exact evidence on the sanitary arrangements is available. There seems to have been a water closet attached to the main building in Douglass' day, but this was evidently pulled down in 1908.^{48/} At various times, Douglass ordered sewer pipes, apparently for use in connection with sanitary arrangements, either at the A Street house or at Cedar Hill.^{49/} Although city water lines were laid in 1899, the well was in use until much later.^{50/}

Photographs and descriptions of the grounds during the period from 1886 to 1897 provide information in some detail. In 1886, "Gath" observed that the house was "a moderate sized mansion on an elevation surrounded by full-grown trees, cedars and forest trees."

^{48/} Minutes of the Frederick Douglass Historical and Memorial Association, p. 15, Year ending May 17, 1909, May 22, 1909.

^{49/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Building, Repair, etc. Account, 1876-1894. On April 6, 1894, Douglass paid \$10.50 for 150 feet of five inch sewer pipe at 5¢ a foot. Two years earlier he had purchased 12 feet of ten inch pipe.

^{50/} Special Assessment Office, District of Columbia, Book 15, Folio 285; also Minutes of The Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association, p. 10, year ending May 18, 1908. That year, the Association paid \$7 for the repair of the pump and cleaning of the well and voted to put in city water.

These trees provided both shade and protection from the winds. "The house," the reporter observed, "is perhaps fifty to seventy feet above the road, and a high flight of steps leads up to it."^{51/} These steps were evidently brick, at least by 1895.^{52/}

Catherine Impey described the setting of the house as it was in 1892 in considerable detail:

I [went] . . . out onto the lawn in front [of the house and], seated myself under a cedar Trees grow all around - a fir grove, with a few oaks and chestnuts, and grass under foot. You approach the house when walking, by two steep flights of steps with a light handrail, under the shade of tall tulip trees. The scene from the veranda, where hammocks and rockers and garden seats tempt one to rest, is magnificent, away over the city with its dazzling white dome and obelisk, and its masses of red-brick buildings, the broad, sluggish Potomac, spanned by bridges, spreading on its lazy way between us and it, and woods and rolling land everywhere as far as the eye can reach into Maryland. ^{53/}

There was also a "carriage drive [that] goes around on the left [Gath" was standing facing the house] and ascends the hill and is trailed around the house "^{54/} Impey describes the drive in

^{51/} Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1886, p. 1.

^{52/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 41, Building, Repair, etc. Account, 1876-1894. Douglass paid James Anderson \$10 for "brick work on the steps of premise on Jefferson St. [] Anacostia," in 1894.

^{53/} Anti-Caste, 7, 14-15.

^{54/} Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1886, p. 1.

similar terms. "The drive," she recorded, "has been cut in spiral fashion round the knoll."^{55/} This drive is shown on contemporary maps of 1887, 1892, and 1894, already cited, as a road leading in from Jefferson Street, now W Street. In the 1890's changes made in the grade of Jefferson Street forced Douglass to experiment with rerouting his drive and caused damage from erosion.^{56/}

The English editor has left us a good description of the out-buildings and grounds in the rear of the house:

There is a glen or valley on each side of the house down the sides of which slope the vegetable gardens, where later on F. Douglass took me to see the sweet potato plants, growing like cucumber vines in a tangle over the ground, among an orchard of young pear trees, &c.

Rising behind the garden to the west is a cornfield - "Indian corn" as we call it in England - where the huge sheaves stand 8 feet high baking in the sun. Near it are a carriage house, stables and a small barn. ^{57/}

"Gath" also mentions a good, large stable, and there are two old photographs, in rather poor condition, which show two sides of the brick

^{55/} Anti-Caste, 7, 15.

^{56/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 25, Portfolio 91, Letters 1894, Part V, F. Douglass to The Commissioners of the District of Columbia, July 21, 1894.

^{57/} Anti-Caste, 7, 15.

^{58/} carriage house. There were several other outbuildings as well, including a brick den, or growlery.^{59/} Dr. Brown recalled that "Mr. Douglass conducted me to his 'Den', on the sloping hill in the rear of the house where he sought quiet and repose to write . . ."^{60/} This structure had been so used since 1887 or before. On September 1, 1887, Douglass wrote Mr. and Mrs. Francis J. Grimke, noting "I am in the Growlery writing to you."^{61/} A small windowless, masonry outbuilding visible in photographs, but not marked on early maps, seems to have been the growlery.^{62/} A brick chimney and foundations may still be seen at the same place.

Information is still wanting on the corn house and two outbuildings. Archeological investigation might clarify the relationship of the outbuildings to the main house. As early as 1886, "Gath" could declare

^{58/} Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1888, p. 1.

^{59/} Impey, "Extracts From the Editor's Diary of a Visit to 'Cedar Hill', Anti-Caste, 7, 15. The growlery was "a small brick room out in the sunshine, where he sometimes hides . . . to write."

^{60/} "Reminiscences," National Notes, Vol. 16, No. 5, p. 16. Dr. Brown also mentioned the carriage house where she "tested" several equipages.

^{61/} Philip S. Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass (New York, 1950), 4, 448.

^{62/} Frederick Douglass Master Plan Drawings (1966), reproducing U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey, District of Columbia Series (1892), Sheets No. 31-49. Photographs show the carriage house as a two story structure with a large door in front. Furniture for the upstairs rooms is listed. Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, "Inventory of Personal Estate, July 1, 1895."

that the outbuildings gave evidence of "attention to comfort and even luxury."^{63/}

Some additional information on the orchard may be gathered from F. Douglass' papers. On November 10, 1889, Lydia Shackleton wrote to Douglass, "I was out-at-Cedar Hill to stay a day and night and got persimmons off your tree which I have painted - ."^{64/} In 1893, Douglass paid \$6.00 for 12 peach trees.^{65/}

Frederick Douglass led a patriarchal life at Cedar Hill, surrounded by his relatives and grandchildren. There were also many visitors. Douglass, his first and second wife, and his mother-in-law all lived and died there.^{66/} "Gath" noted that when he visited, he found "The old man . . . [had] four living generations about him."^{67/} Impey mentioned several people living at Cedar Hill at the time of her 1892 visit: Miss Pitts (Helen Douglass' sister), Miss Foy, and two of Douglass' granddaughters (probably Estelle and Annie Sprague mentioned elsewhere in

^{63/} Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1886, p. 1.

^{64/} Box 22, Letters, 1889, Part V, Portfolio V.

^{65/} Ibid., Box 41, Building, Repair, etc. Account 1876-1894.

^{66/} Ibid., Box 21, Portfolio 45, Letters, Helen Pitts Douglass, 1887-1900, Letter Draft, Mrs. Douglass to Mrs. Mills, Oct. 23, 1899. Mrs. Douglass refers to "my dear mother who finally passed away beneath this roof in the spring of 1891."

^{67/} Cincinnati Enquirer, April 26, 1886, p. 1.

^{68/} the article. The Reverend Dr. Francis Grimke, who married Frederick Douglass and Helen Pitts, and after Douglass' death became a charter member of the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association, ^{69/} was a close friend and visitor.

Frederick Douglass employed three servants at the time of his ^{70/} death. Doubtless there were changes in his household staff over the years. However, Impey mentions York, the Negro driver, and an aged colored maid, who "wore very short skirts and a turban." ^{71/} Woods mentioned a colored butler as well. ^{72/}

Hallie Q. Brown, who visited Douglass in the course of a fund raising drive for Wilberforce College, remembered her stay at Cedar Hill. Many years later, she recalled the scorn many heaped upon "the sage of Anacostia," either because of his race or because of his marriage

^{68/} Anti-Caste, 7, 14.

^{69/} Ibid, 16; Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, 4, 447-8, F. Douglass to F. Grimke, September 1887; Frederick Douglass Papers, Minute Book of the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association, p. 1, F. Grimke, "The Second Marriage of Frederick Douglass," Journal of Negro History, 19 (July 1934), 325.

^{70/} Frederick Douglass Papers, Box 21, Portfolio 45, Mrs. Douglass to the Editor, The Evening Star, February 1895.

^{71/} Anti-Caste, 7, 14.

^{72/} The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 17.

73/

to Helen Pitts, a white woman. Dr. Brown evidently enjoyed her visit:

How quickly time sped. The few evenings spent at home, found us gathered in the cheerful living room before a crackling wood fire, engaged in pleasant conversation or in rapt attention listening to Mr. Douglass as he retold tales of hardship, grief, love and happiness in his eventful life. And then, reaching for his violin, in a melancholy mood, he would draw from its plaintive, tremulous strains of sorrow and despair, until we were brought to tears. Then, suddenly he would strike a joyous note - fantastic, rollicking - a Negro dance, a war-like Scottish song, an Irish jig, which put us all in a joyous mood. 74/

After Frederick Douglass' death in 1895, the house was to have passed to his widow. Unfortunately, Douglass' will was declared invalid as to real estate since there were only two witnesses' signatures instead of the required three. Ultimately, the house was sold to Mrs. Douglass for \$12,000 in 1898. 75/ Even before that time, however,

73/ "Reminiscences," National Notes, Vol. 16, No. 5, p. 16. People averted their eyes when Douglass and Dr. Brown drove out "in one of these fine carriages." Also see Woods, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 17.

74/ "Reminiscences," National Notes, Vol. 16, No. 5, p. 16.

75/ Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 6617, Will of August 30, 1886; Court Records, District of Columbia, Equity Cause No. 18288, Helen Douglass v. Lewis et al., May 5, 1898, Record Group 2, National Archives. The property was ordered divided and sold for the benefit of the heirs. Mrs. Douglass bought out their interests.

Mrs. Douglass had expressed a desire to turn the house into a shrine. "The house is to be kept just as it is," she stated, "for a 'memorial hall' of the earliest efforts in the cause of human freedom."^{76/}

In 1903, when Mrs. Douglass died, she left the house to the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association, "to be held by said association, its successors and assigns, as a memorial of my said late husband, Frederick Douglass." Codicils to the will authorized the association to construct a fire-proof structure to house the Douglass papers, and forbade the sale of the property.^{77/}

The Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association struggled along until 1916. It was unable to raise enough money to pay off the debt on the home and so turned to the National Association of Colored Women.^{78/} The Association raised \$4,000 to pay off a loan,^{79/} and other funds for the restoration of the home.

^{76/} Woods, The Washington Post, May 30, 1897, p. 1.

^{77/} Register of Wills, District of Columbia, Administration No. 11857, Will of September 12, 1903. The Association, consisting of Helen Douglass, William H. Hart, Francis Grimke, May W. Sewall and Edward A. Clarke, had been incorporated by act of Congress, June 6, 1900.

^{78/} National Association of Colored Women, 1896-1952 (1952), pp. 35-37, Mortimer M. Harris to Mrs. Mary Talbert, Letter, July 27, 1916; Robert H. Terrell to Mrs. Talbert, Letter, Nov. 1, 1916; Douglass Home Committee to "Dear Co-Worker," Letter, Dec. 9, 1916.

^{79/} "The Frederick Douglass Home," National Notes, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter-Spring, 1963), p. 11. Total debt was \$5,500 at the time but the Frederick Douglass Memorial and Historical Association raised \$1,500. The mortgage was burned in February 1917. Total restoration cost was estimated at \$15,000, including mortgage.

The present caretaker's quarters and breezeway from the rear of the house were constructed in 1922. About the same time, the house was partially renovated. It was repainted, the interiors were replastered or repapered and new cement walks were laid down. Electrical wiring and fixtures were installed. The grounds also seem to have received attention.^{80/} These were the last major changes made in the house, so far as is known.

In 1961, an unsuccessful effort was made to raise additional funds for the home. The goal was \$50,000, but only about \$6,000 was realized. One year later, Dr. Rosa L. Gragg, President of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs offered the home to the United States.^{81/}

^{80/} Souvenir Program: Dedicatory Exercises of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Home, August 12, 1922. Restoration was begun in September. Despite Emmett J. Scott's recommendation for structural repairs, his letter of April 26, 1921, contracts were not let for work of this sort.

^{81/} "The Frederick Douglass Home", National Notes, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 11.

APPENDIX
1895 Inventory

Item	Description	Estimated value
1	bedstead	\$.75
7	pillows	4.00
1	bolster	.50
1	feather bed	1.50
1	mattress	.25
1	mt washstand	1.50
1	HC Sofa	1.50
1	set and irons	1.50
2	upho chairs	1.00
1	bedstead and bedding	1.50
2	chairs	.50
1	table	.25
1	washstand and ware	.75
1	lot matting	.75
1	carpet	4.00
1	rug	4.00
2	shades	1.00

Item	Description	Estimated value
1	lot toilet ware	\$ 1.50
1	piano stool	.75
1	pair poles	.25
1	oak set three pieces bedding	35.00
2	chairs	1.00
1	desk	2.00
2	cane seat chairs	1.00
2	upho chairs	1.50
1	office chair	1.00
1	bust and pedestal	20.00
1	carpet	.75
9	pieces bedroom furniture bedding	40.00
2	shades	1.00
1	carpet	.75
1	lot toilet ware	1.00
1	rug	10.00
5	pieces bedroom furniture bedding	35.00
1	invalid chair	5.00
1	typewriter	40.00
1	rug	10.00

Item	Description	Estimated value
7	pieces bedroom furniture bedding	\$ 35.00
1	desk and stool	1.50
1	cloth top table	1.50
1	chair	.50
1	wardrobe	2.00
1	washboard	1.00
1	bureau	4.00
1	cupboard	.75
1	carpet	.75
1	desk	1.00
6	pieces furniture, bedding	10.00
1	carpet	.50
1	bureau	1.50
1	carpet	.75
1	chair	.25
1	carpet	.50
1	lot stair carpet	5.00
1	revolving top desk	20.00
1	stool	2.00
1	carpet	.50

Item	Description	Estimated value
1	small bookcase	\$ 30.00
3	chairs	4.00
1	large bookcase	50.00
1	violin	50.00
1	violin	50.00
1,000 (Approx.)	books	200.00
1	center table	20.00
1	carpet	20.00
5	straight back chairs	7.50
1	leather-covered chair	5.00
1	upho chair	5.00
1	mantle mirror	.50
1	mahogany table	10.00
2	window loungers	2.50
1	statuette	10.00
1	table	1.50
4	oil paintings	15.00
1	engraving	3.00
1	lot ornaments	2.50
1	mt table	1.50

Item	Description	Estimated value
1	hat rack	\$ 5.00
1	carpet	15.00
1	piano, stool and cover	250.00
1	upho chair	5.00
1	oak rocker	5.00
3	HC chairs	5.00
1	mirror and slab	4.00
1	goat rug	1.00
1	pair portieres	3.00
1	small table	1.00
1	Swiss clock and stand	25.00
1	oil painting	25.00
2	chromos	1.00
1	water color	.50
1	chrome	10.00
1	bronze deer	10.00
1	extension table	10.00
4	Bentwood chairs	4.00
1	oak dining room chair	4.00
1	carpet	10.00

Item	Description	Estimated value
1	rug	\$ 5.00
1	butler's table	4.00
1	silver fork	.50
10	silver teaspoons	2.75
12	silver tablespoons	12.00
1	lot cutlery	1.50
2	silver goblets	4.00
1	lot china and glassware	10.00
?	plated pitcher and tray	1.00
1	paintings (oil)	3.00
5	pictures	4.00
1	desk	3.00
1	student lamp	1.00
1	lot lamps	2.50
10	pieces kitchen furniture	3.00
1	ice chest	7.50
1	refrigerator	2.50
1	lot bed and table linen	50.00
1	stove	4.00
1	lot farm implements	2.00

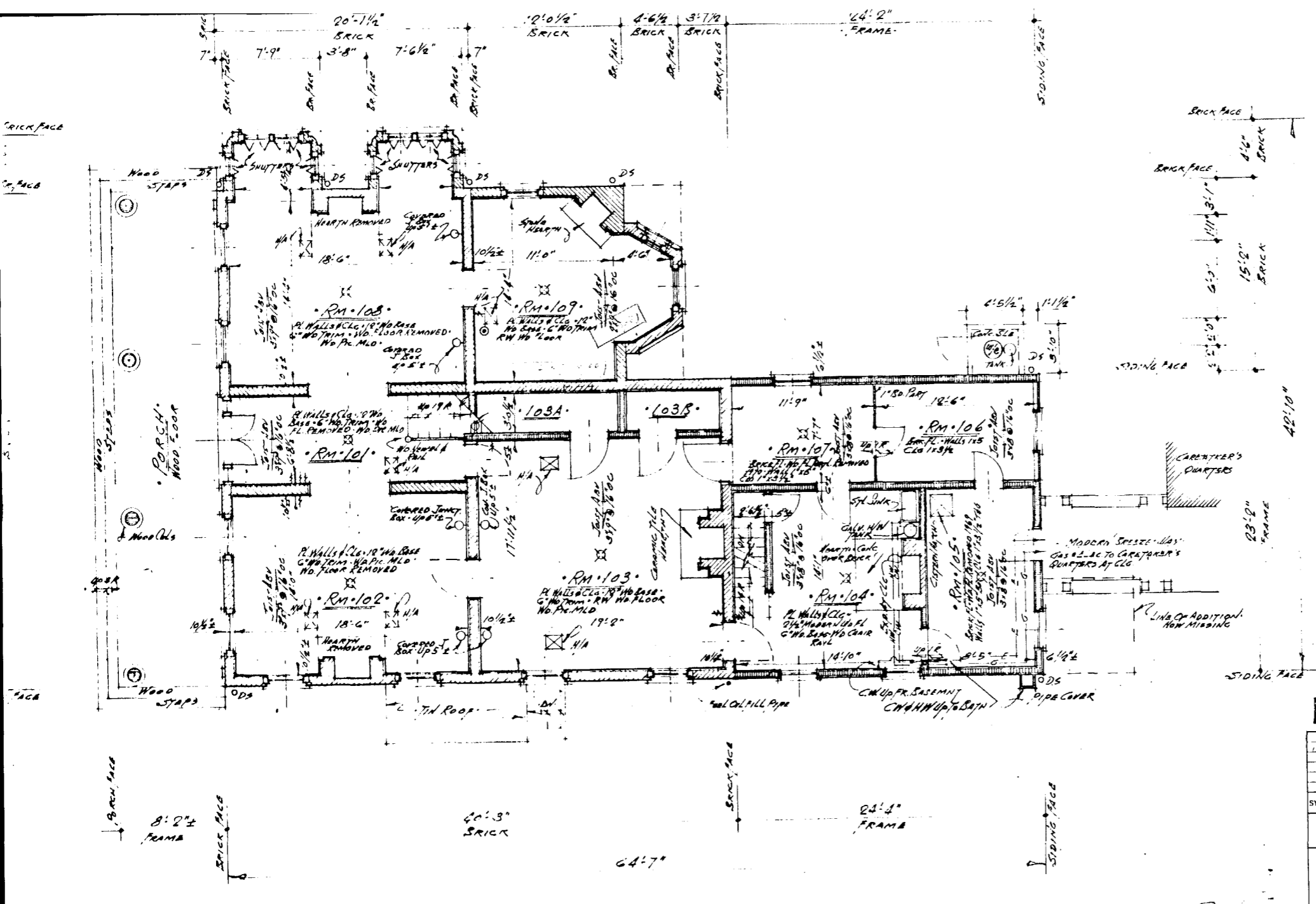
Item	Description	Estimated value
1	cutting board	\$ 2.00
1	wagon	7.50
1	push cart	.75
1	bay mare	100.00
1	family carriage	100.00
1	phaeton buggy	35.00
1	single set harness	10.00
1	wagon	3.00
1	lawn mower	1.50
1	milch cow	25.00
1	heifer	15.00
1	couch	1.00
1	table	.25
1	stool	.25
1	portable grate	.50
1	lot manuscripts	100.00
1	gold watch	75.00
1	gold ring	2.00
3	small diamond studs	4.00
3	plain studs	1.00
1	pair locksleeve buttons	<u>1.00</u>
		\$ 569.75

Some of these items were difficult to read.

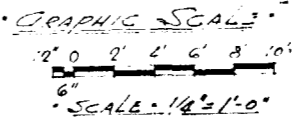
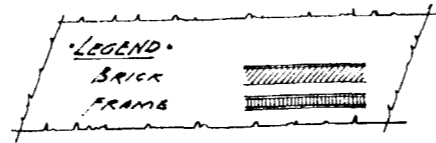
To The Honorable Commissioners Of The District Of Columbia:

Gentlemen:

The undersigned petitioner would respectfully represent that he is a citizen of the United States; that he is a property holder and a resident on Jefferson St., Anacostia, D.C.; that he has there resided and paid taxes during the last seventeen years' that the frontage of his property extends on Jefferson St. from Pierce St. to Adams St.; the same constituting a square; that when he purchased this property, and twelve years thereafter, he had easy access to it and exit from it by a well made gravelled road entering his premises from the frontage on Jefferson St.; that five years ago, or thereabout, while the undersigned was in Haiti as minister resident, the Honorable Commissioners of the District of Columbia caused the grade of Jefferson St. to be changed and the earth in front of his premises to be cut down to a depth of nearly twenty feet below the original grade and thereby destroyed his front entrance entirely and otherwise damaged his property; that, in order to obtain entrance and exit to and from his house, the undersigned was compelled to quit his Jefferson St. front and to construct a circuitous road at considerable expense to a back St., which road proved to be wholly unsuited to the purpose, and was necessarily abandoned; that he has since, at the expense of five hundred dollars, constructed another road on his own property on the line of Jefferson St. up to the front of his house, there being no entrance from the St. directly to his



• FIRST FLOOR PLAN •
 • SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0" •



MEASURED DRAWINGS

SYMBOL	REVISIONS - DESCRIPTION	DATE	SURNAME
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WASHINGTON PLANNING AND SERVICE CENTER			PREPARED DATE SURNAME 5/70 T.R.J. DESIGNED 1/70 T.R.J. DRAWN
• OFFICE OF HISTORY AND HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE • • RESTORATION OF THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOME • • ANACOSTIA • WASHINGTON D.C. • • NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS •			CHECKED REGION • N.C.P. • DRAWING NO. B33 94000
• FIRST FLOOR • • EXISTING CONDITIONS •			DATE 6-25-70 SHEET 2 OF 9

ASIC DATA
 MARCH 1980 - MAR '70

house; that, owing to the depth of the grade already referred to, the frontage of his property has remained in a wretched condition until now; that he has repeatedly called the attention of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to the damage thus inflicted upon him by the change of grade on Jefferson St. and that they have several times promised to give the subject their consideration, but that, thus far, nothing has been done to remedy the evil complained of. On the contrary, even the sidewalk, for which he was taxed, instead of being protected, has been torn up and the bricks used elsewhere in front of other property not belonging to the undersigned.

Now, therefore, the undersigned respectfully petitions the present Commissioners of the District of Columbia to examine the said premises and to consider the expediency of constructing a sustaining wall of about fifty feet in length on Jefferson St. and protect the sidewalk and make it possible for the undersigned to have a front entrance from the said St. to his residence.

And so your petitioner will continue to pray.

(sgd) Frederick Douglass

Cedar Hill, Anacostia, D.C.

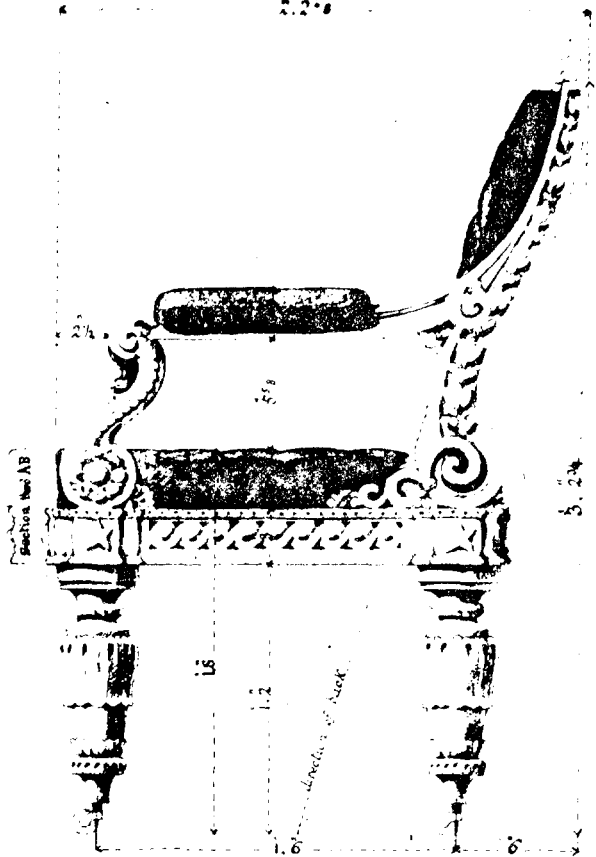
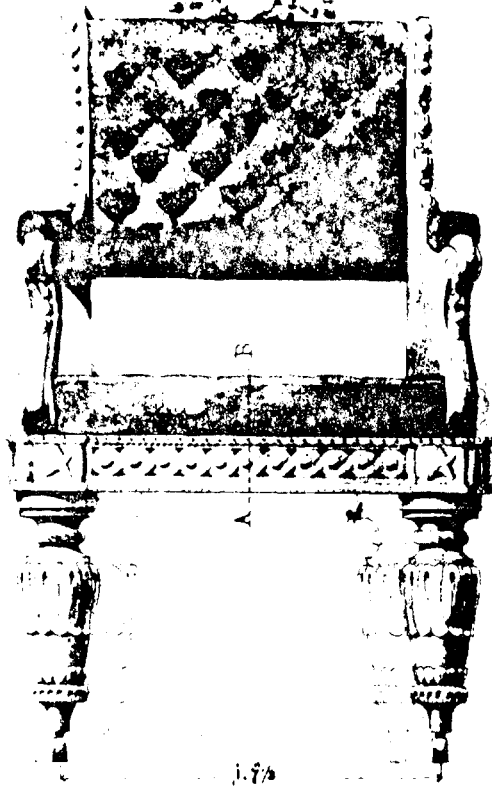
July 21, 1894

The Douglass Desk Chair

The Douglass' desk chair (access. 1:88) is a carved oak arm chair with tufted upholstery and was made by A. Bembe and A. Kimble for the House of Representatives in 1857. These chairs were removed from the House in 1859, reinstalled in 1860. They seem to have continued in use until 1902. Douglass' chair may have been sold in 1859, or else found its way from the House at a later date. ^{82/}

Douglass is shown seated in this chair in an historic photograph of the library. The chair is probably one of those listed in the 1895 "Inventory." See accompanying illustrations for details.

82/ Historic Objects File, East National Capital Parks, Acting Architect, Capitol to Steven Lewis, September 23, 1964, enclosing "Hall of Representatives, U.S. Capitol, Desks - Benches."

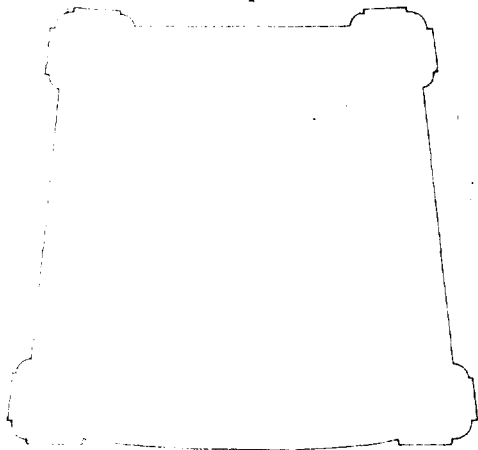
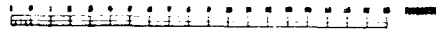


No 1420

DESIGN FOR CHAIRS OF
HALLS OF CONGRESS

SCALE 1/4" OF FULL SIZE

Wm. H. Miller
Architect
U.S. Capitol
Washington
May 25 1857



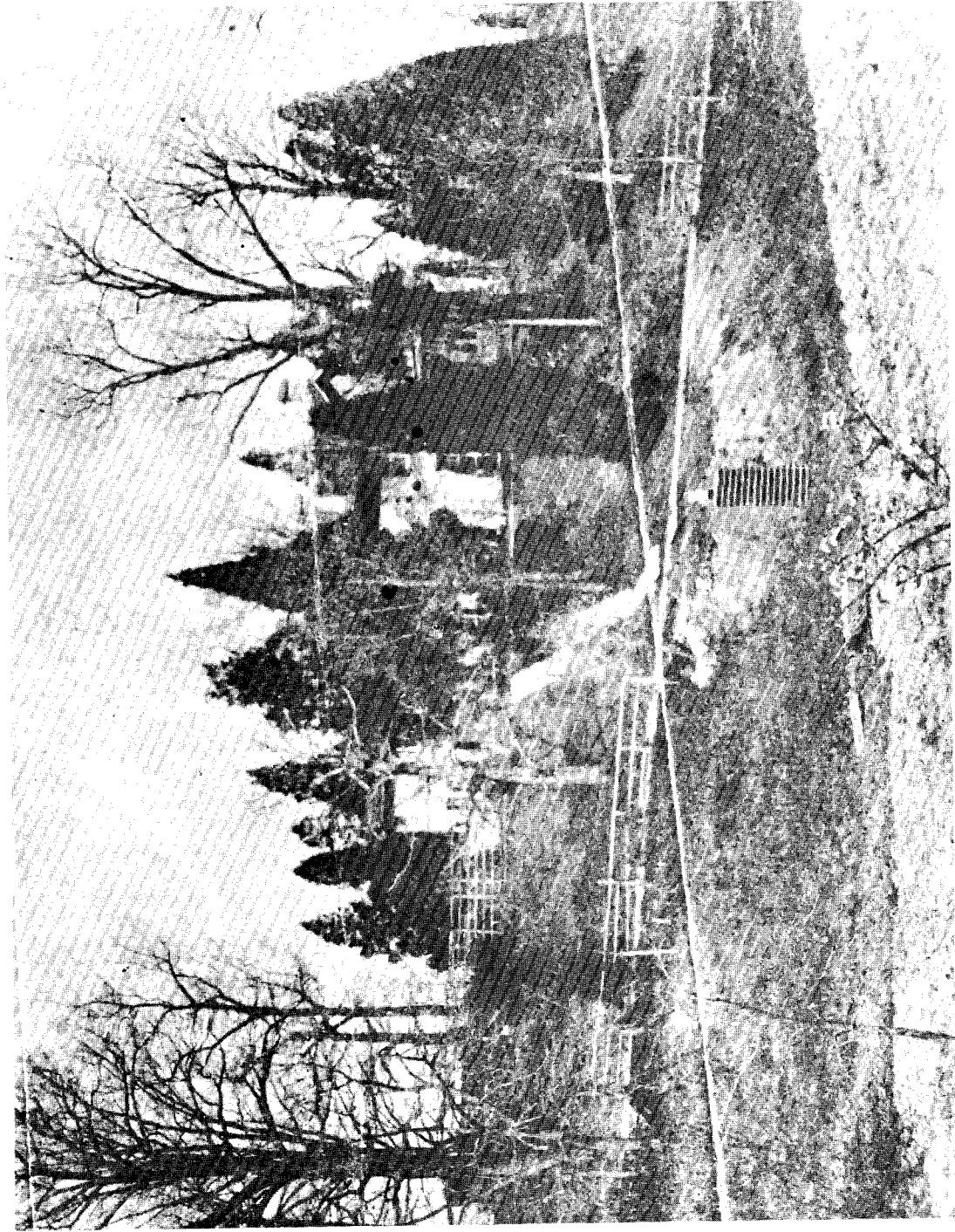
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At the time this paper was written, it was not possible to examine the furnishings of the Home, since they were packed in storage.

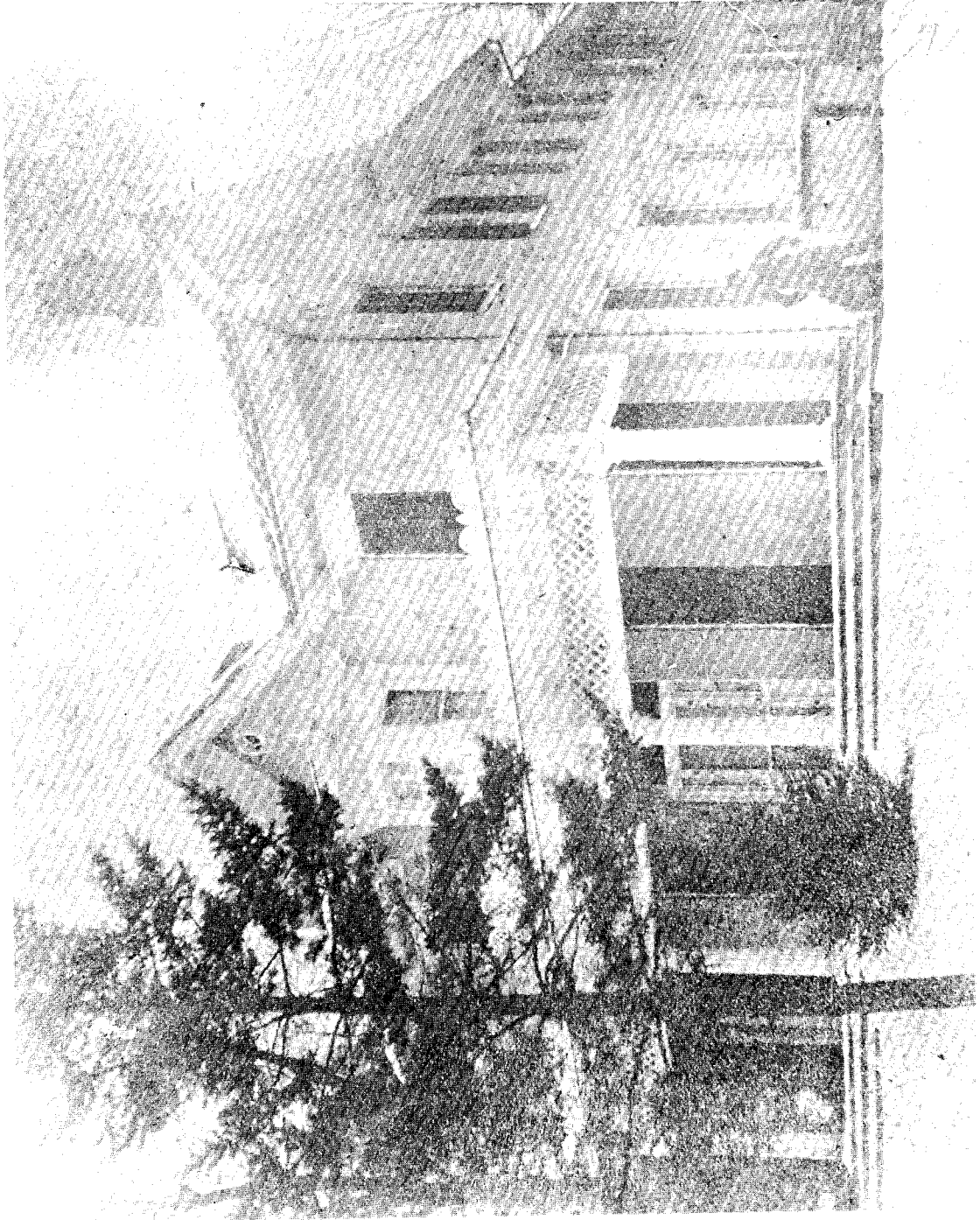
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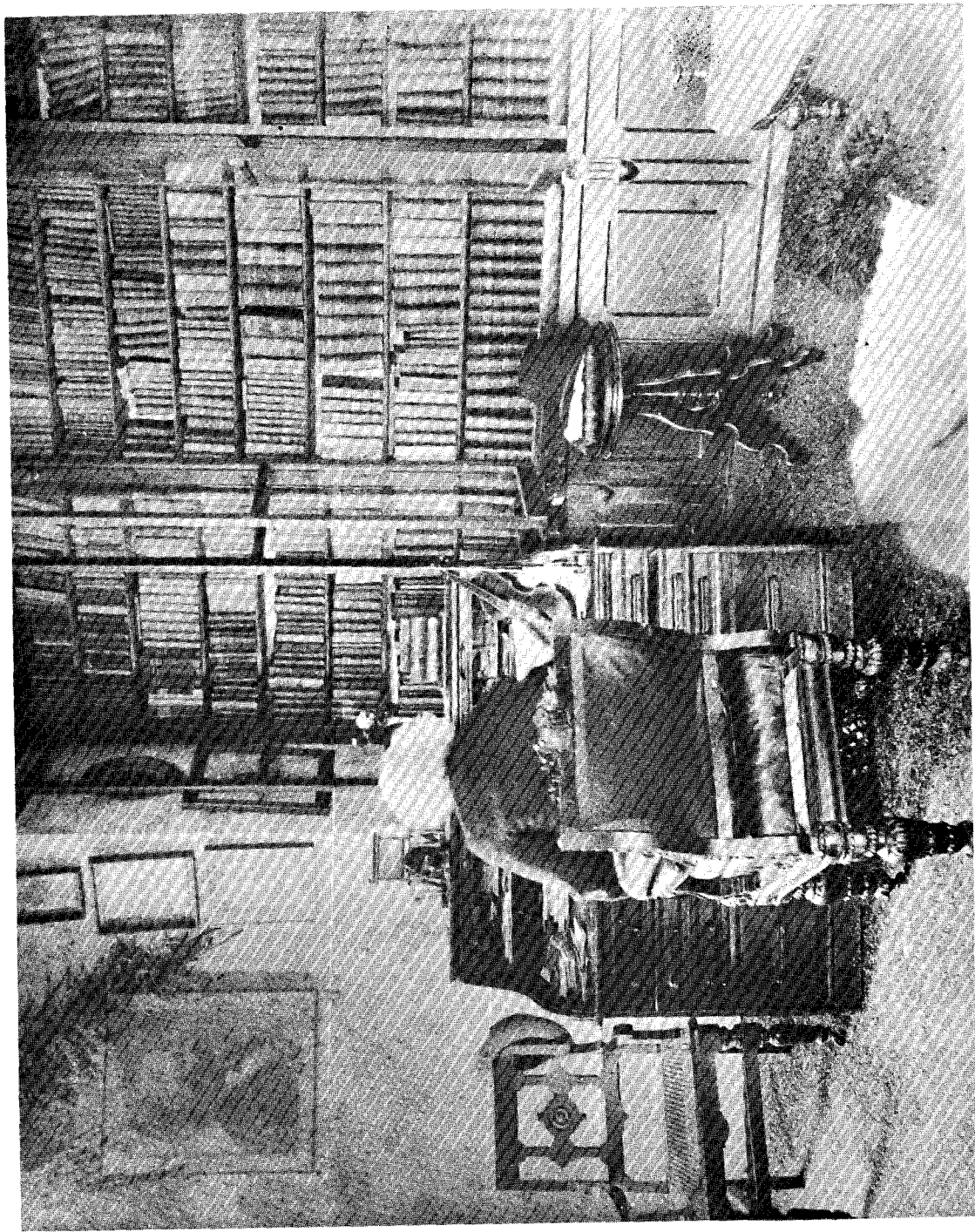
Douglass Home & Grounds from the southeast, undated,
but presumably in the historic period.
NCR-NPS collection



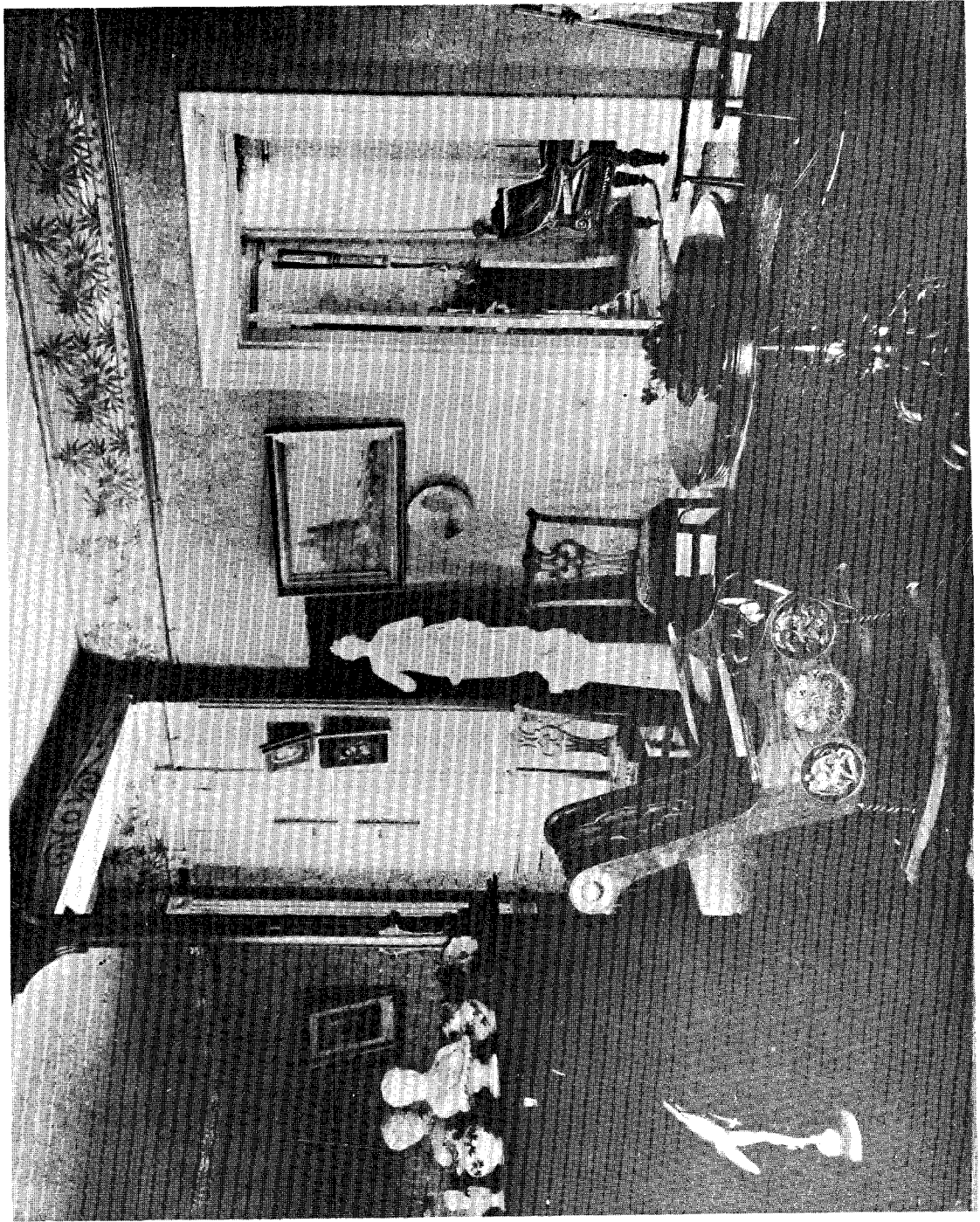
Douglass Home with Charles Douglass, February 27, 1887.
Note Architectural detail above porch.
NCR-NPS collections



Pre-1895 view of east bays of Douglass Home. Helen Pitts Douglass (?) in foreground, Frederick Douglass (?) in background. NCR-NPS Collections.

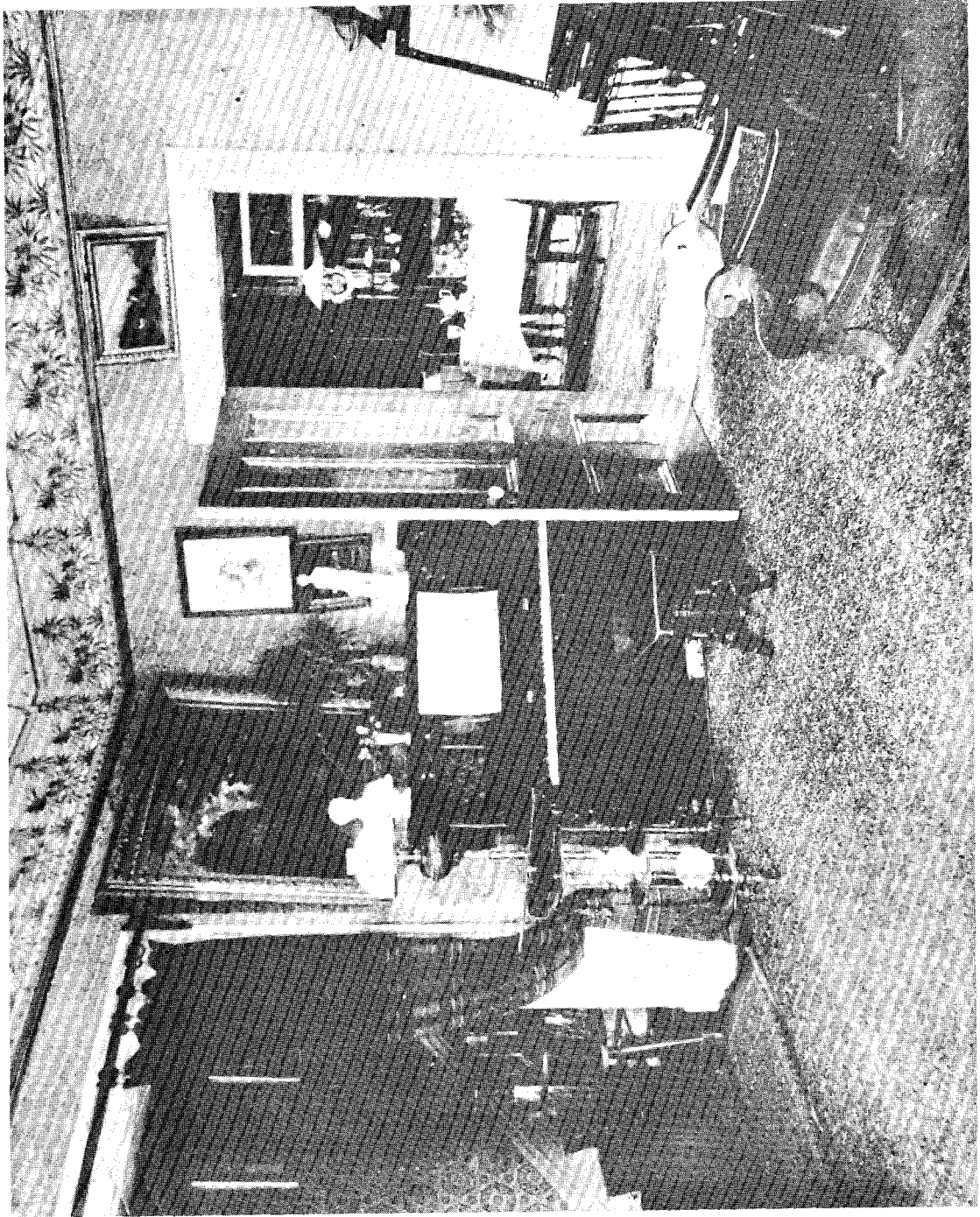


Frederick Douglass (?) in his library.
NCR-NPS Collections

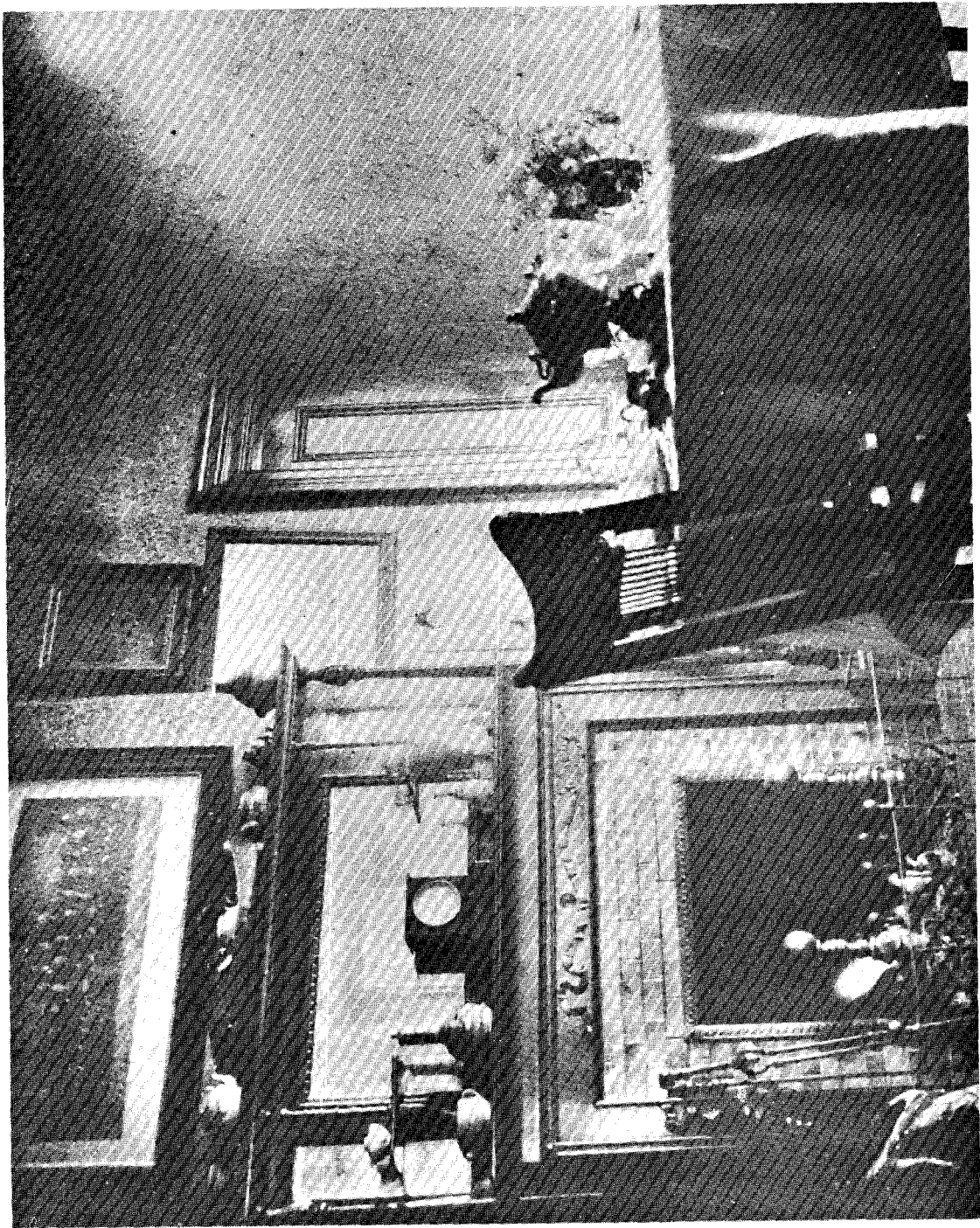


Northeast parlor, south wall of Douglass Home,
undated.

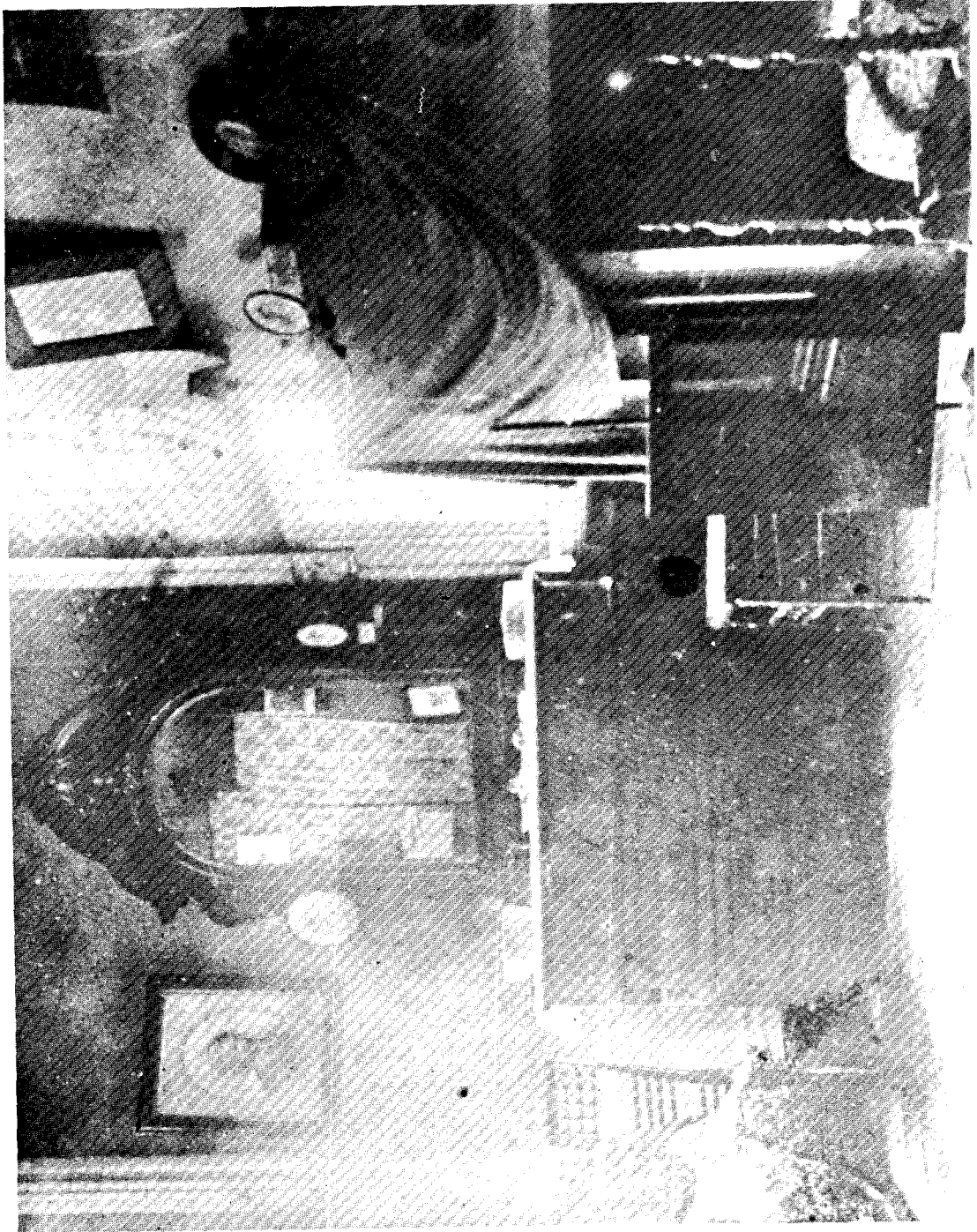
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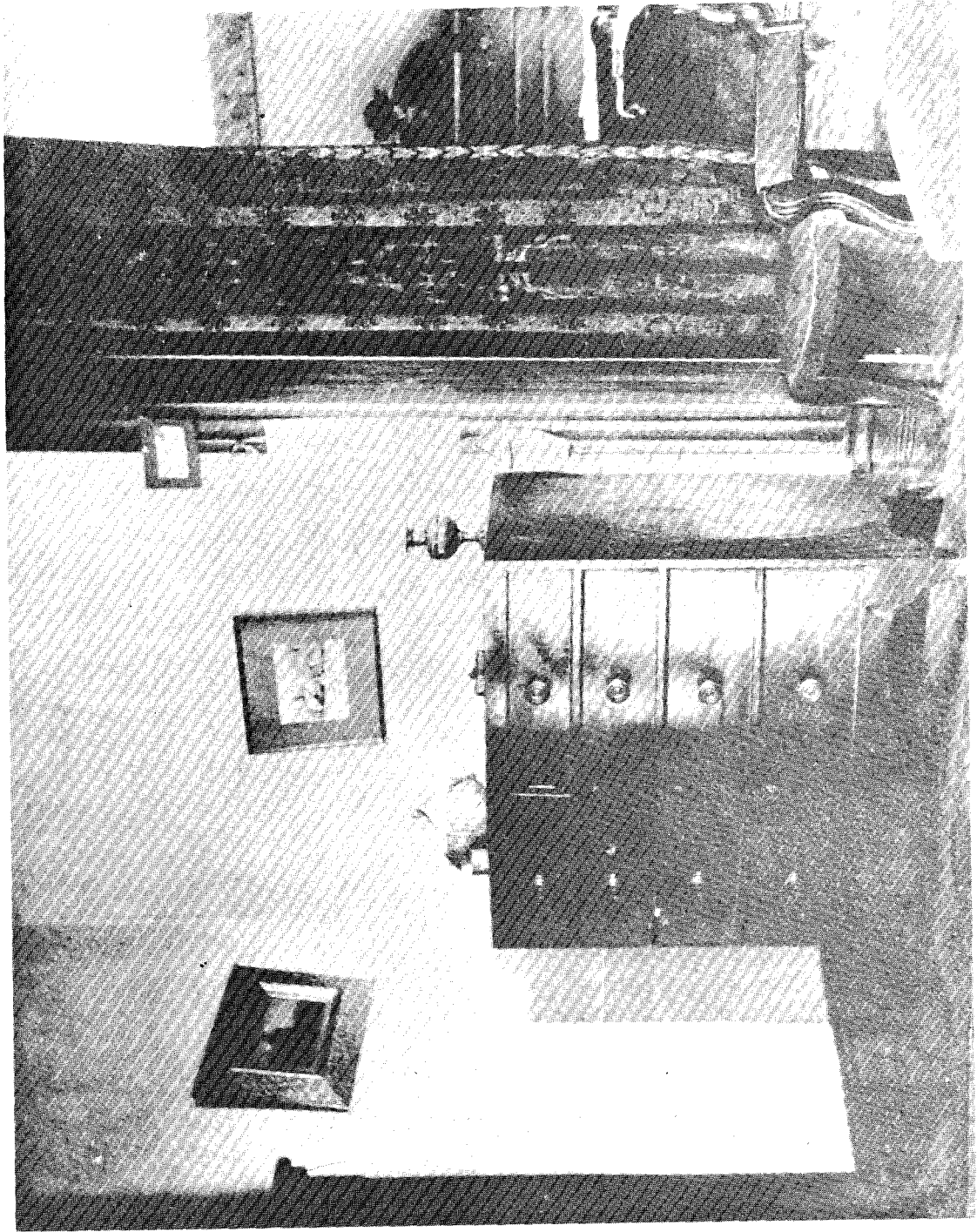
West parlor (living room) east wall & south wall,
with view of stairway and dining room.
NCR-NPS Collections



Detail of dining room.
NCR-NPS Collections



Bedroom "A," Douglass Home north & east walls,
undated, NCR-NPS Collections.



Believed to be bedroom "B," north and west walls.
NCR-NPS Collections

