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The Peter Miller House
422 South Loudoun Street

Godfrey Miller, a German stocking weaver, built his first home on the lot to the north of The Peter Miller House. This structure has since been destroyed. As his fortunes improved he built the house on the corner of his lot at 424 South Loudoun Street in 1774. This is constructed of Log Plank and Post and the material supposedly came from the removal of the buildings at Fort Loudoun in the City of Winchester.

In the early 1800's he added what was apparently a one and a half storey addition of "V" notch log construction of three sides, which is the building you are now in. Both houses were left to his son Peter Miller, who in the 1820's raised the height of this building to a full two storey; covered the exterior in the existing wide beeded weatherboards; installed the existing door and window frames, as well as the present sash and the six panel doors now in use. These doors, with their Carpenter Locks, replaced tongue and grooved beeded batten doors which were swung on drive pintels with strap hinges. The holes in the door frames for these drive pintels, which had been plugged up, were discovered during the current restoration work and some are still viseable.

At the time of our purchase of the house, Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc., had removed all the interior plaster and hand split laths but left the doors, sash, weatherboards, door and window frames, hardware, chairrailing, floors etc. The entire structure has since been furred out with two by four inch studding and insulation installed between them and the logs as well as between the studs. Thus enclosing the entire structure in seven inches of insulation, with eight inches of insulation in both the first and second floor celings; which were lowered slightly to do this, level the celings, strenghten the second floor joists and reduce the cubic footage to heat and cool.

Prior to the purchase of this building by Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc., it had been converted to three slum apartments in the early 1900's.

(Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission No. 138-43)

The front fenestration of the house was originally (starting from the north) a window, door and two windows. The original front to back dividing partition was towards the north thus making the larger room one which included the present entrance hall, and thus better centering the fireplace within it. During Peter Millers renovations (or updating to "the fashion") he changed the front fenestration and interior partitions to where they are now, except the one between the living room and dining room. This still has its original "V" notched studding with pointed hand split laths, which were installed from the top before the summer beam was put into place. This practice saved on the use of hand made nails for the securing of the laths. He also applied the hand split laths to the inside of the log walls in order to plaster these surfaces and created the existing entrance hall. This was done as a result of his combining both houses into a single residence and using the new hall as an entrance.

In addition he reduced the size of the opening of the kitchen cooking fireplace (leaving the wood lintel where it is) to a standard size and then opened a new fireplace in the dining room, with both fireplaces sharing the old kitchen fireplace flue. This flue was adequate enough, after some minor modification, to reopen the kitchen fireplace to its original size and retain the fireplace in the dining room.

The chairrailing in the living room was salvaged from throughout the first floor rooms and is all that remains of the original. The Carpenter Locks were removed and rebuilt by Ball and Ball of Whitford, Pennsylvania. The bookshelves along the north wall were installed by the present owner and will have a six panel door put on the center section. The design concept for these shelves was to carry the baseboard and chairrail across the wall with paneled doors below and open shelves above. However, a two and a half inch difference in the level of the floor prevented doing this.

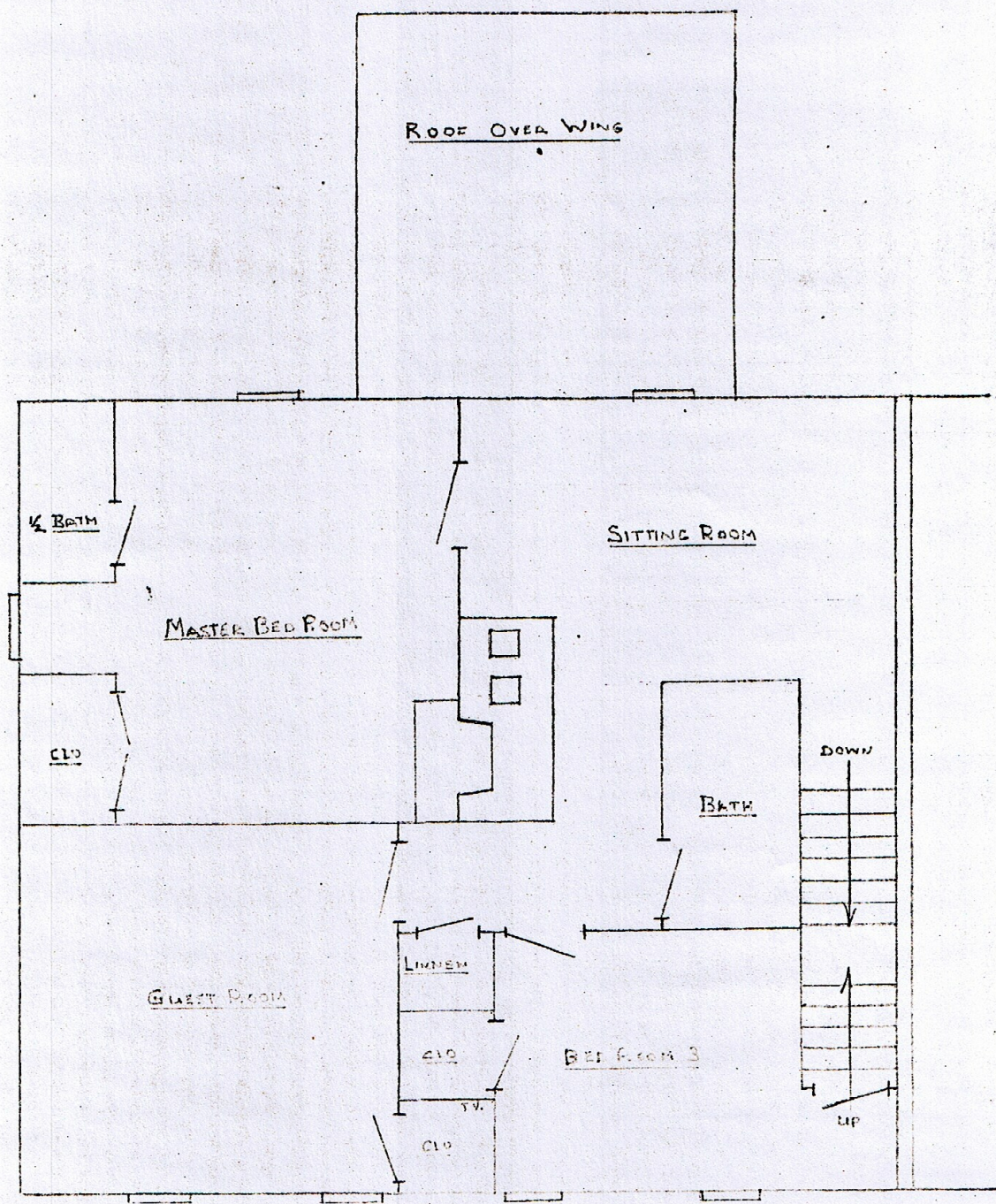
The front walls of the storage closet in the dining room (next to the corner cupboard) and the Bar closet will have paneled walls installed on them with their respective doors worked into the panneling detail. The mantel for the dining room fireplace came from a house in Leesburg, Virginia as well as the one for the fireplace in the master bed room above.

The original twister stair to the second floor went up out of the kitchen where the pantry closet is now, and out over the refrigerator. The top two thirds of these had been destroyed during the early 1900's conversion of the building into three apartments. After our installation of a block firewall from the cellar to the ridge of the roof, we rebuilt the present stairway, moving it slightly forward, duplicating the original nozing on the face of the stair treads, and re-used the original stair door and its handmade hardware for the stairs down to the cellar.

The purist soul wanted to remove the lean-to-addition, but the Welsh soul won out, for as we'd paid for it why not use it as a part of the transitional fabric? Ommitting it would have necessitated the labor to take it down and haul it away as well as the construction costs for a porch to cover (a new) exterior basement entrance for access to the furnace, hot water heater, washer-drier and freezer, with a half bath where the cellar stairs are now. As it is this wing provides the desk space; that for a washer-drier and freezer (after the logs have been cleaned and re-chinked) and for the existing half bath and furnace room, using the old cook stove flue for the furnace and hot water heater.

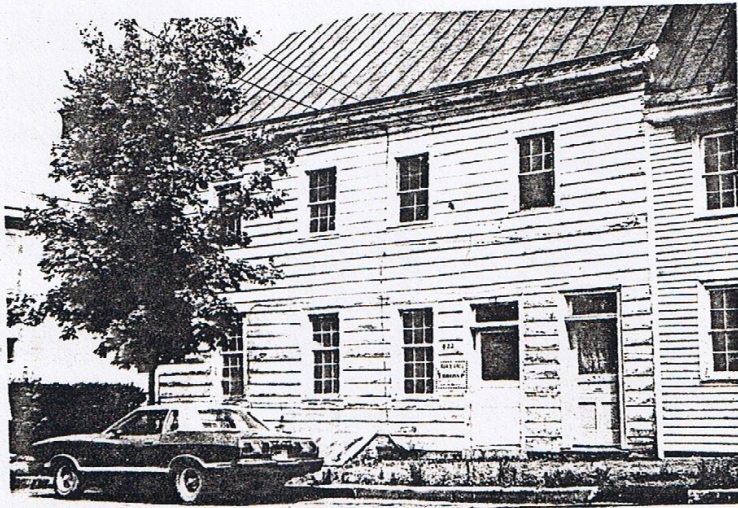
The exterior stone retaining wall was originally built against the side of the wing, and after the removal of some dirt and the installation of drain pipes to carry off the surface water, the wall was moved to its present location. The brick for the terrace came from under the wing and from some other older houses in the area.

We had planned to paint the exterior of both houses the original weatherboard color with different colors on the trim and shutters. However, the owner of 424 South Loudoun Street was not interested in doing this. So after scraping the weatherboards and trim we choose one color for the sash, another for the weatherboards and the third for the shutters. Shutters will be installed on all the second floor windows as well as the one for the kitchen, as soon as we can get "dutchmen" put into the frames.



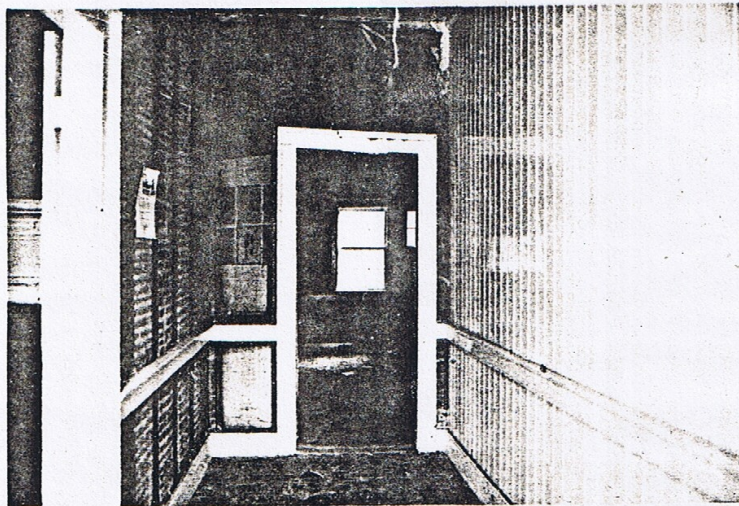
SECOND FLOOR

SOUTH LONDON STREET

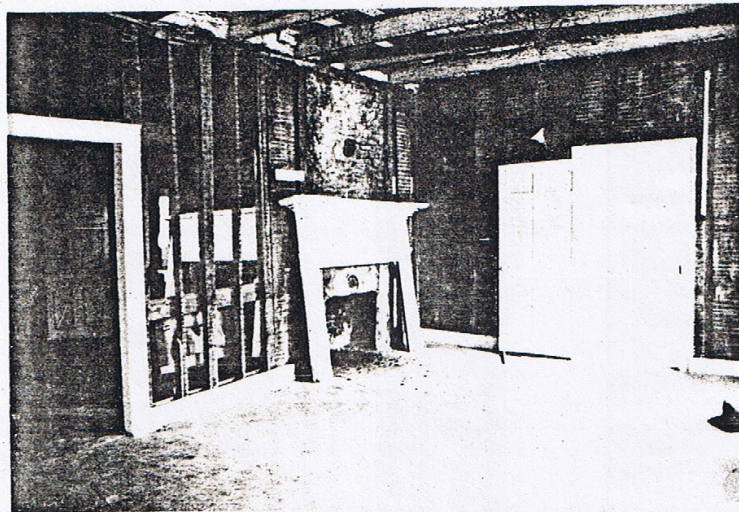


The Peter Miller
House

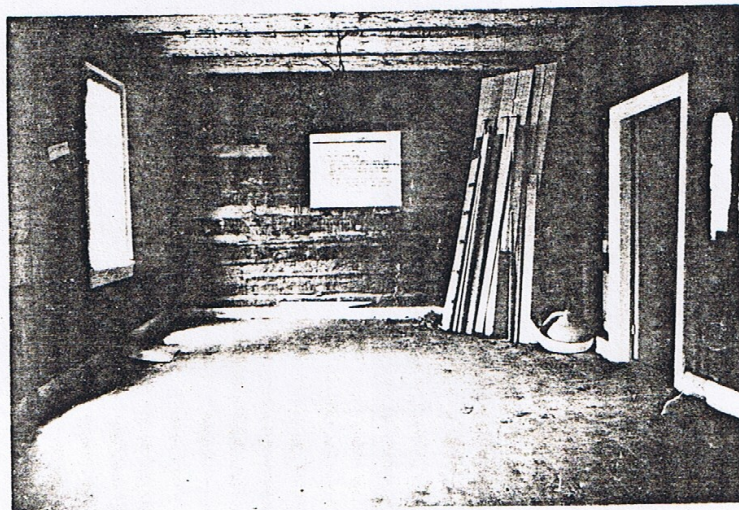
Front and Rear
August
1980



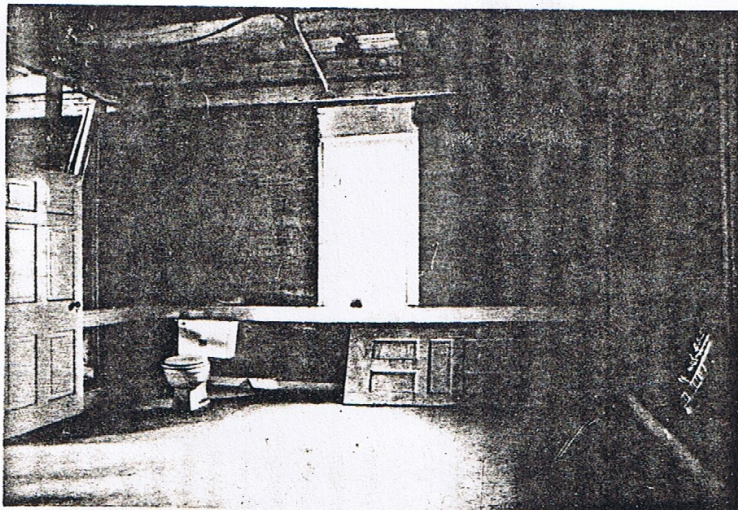
Entrance Hall
looking into
the kitchen.



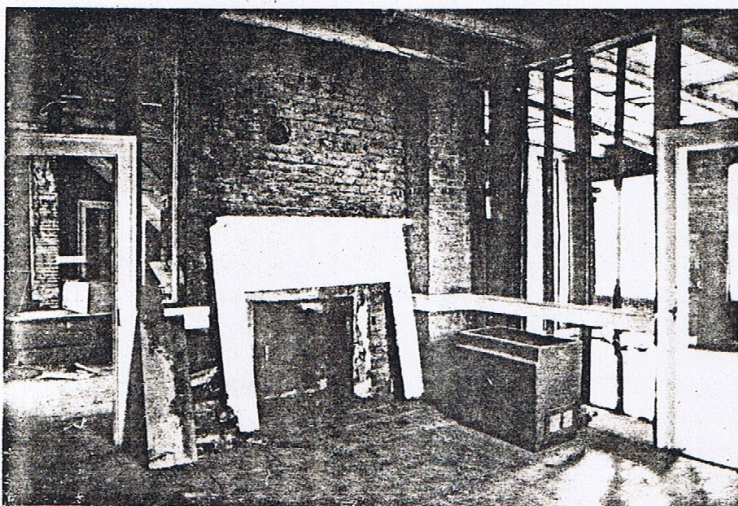
Living room
fireplace wall
and entrance
hall door.



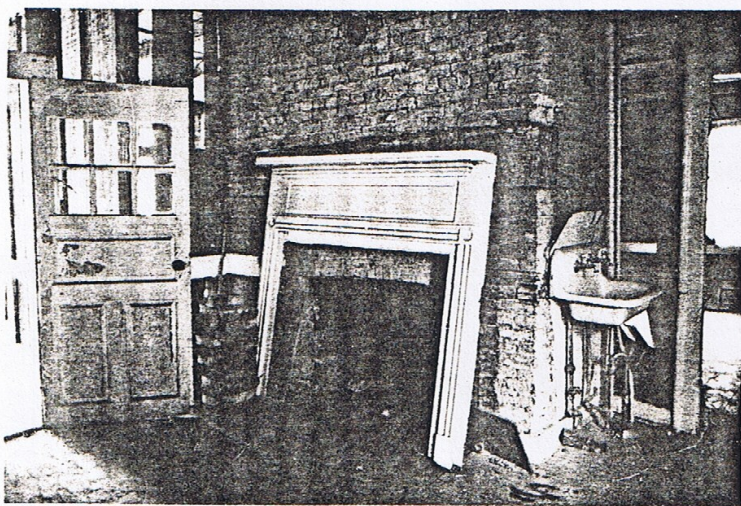
North wall of
the living
room.



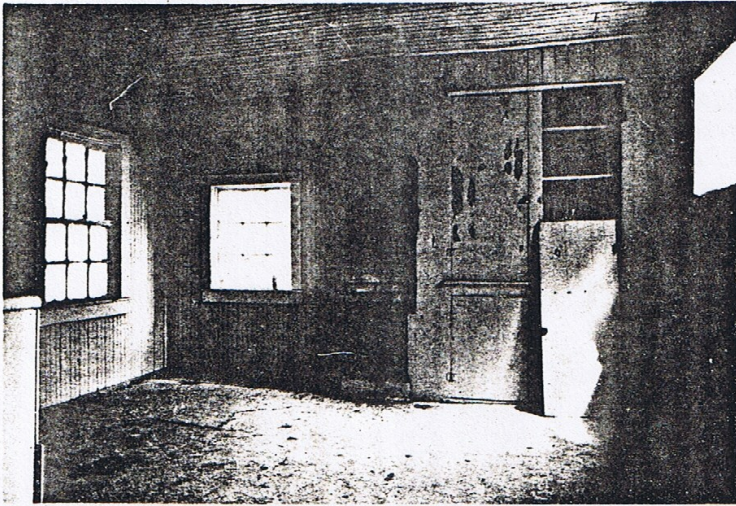
North wall of the dining room, where the storage and Bar closets are.



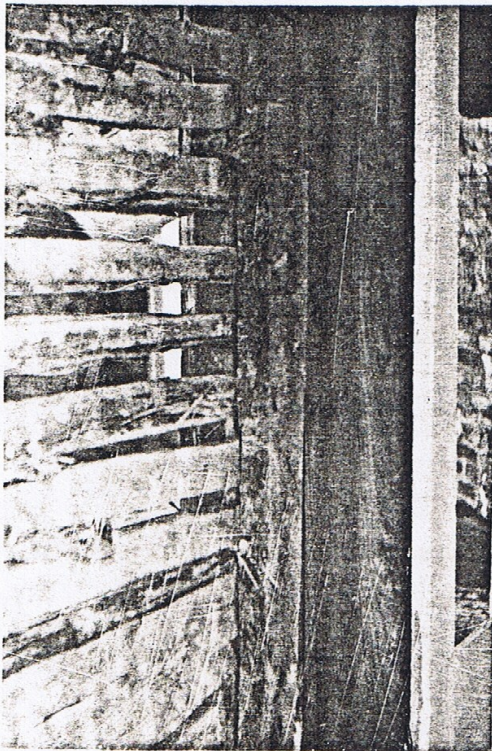
Fireplace wall of the dining room.



Kitchen fireplace before reopening.



Looking into the
lean-to addition
from the kitchen.



Detail of the hand split
pointed laths, placed
into the "V" notched
studding of the living
room-dining room parti-
tion.