

# ... A BIOGRAPHY

## GENERAL ALFRED CLEON MOORE

1st Colonel of the CSA 29th Virginia Infantry Regiment

---

THE HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF "LOCUST HILL":  
GENERAL MOORE'S HISTORIC 1850'S HOUSE IN WYTHE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

By Dwight "Clint" Moore, Joel Rudy, Jim Palmer, & Robert Perry (deceased)

This article is a synthesis of several articles written by the above authors between 1982 and 2005, and has been especially synthesized by Dwight "Clint" Moore for first publication in a Moore Family Journal in the Summer of 2006.

### ... Joel Rudy - An Opening

The "Locust Hill Farm" home is of interest to me not only because of its architectural design and historical significance, but also for personal reasons. The house is located on Route 619 between Porter's Crossroads and Ivanhoe, in Wythe County, Virginia. My "Aunt Callie" lived there until 1982, and left only because she had become too infirm to live there alone. On visits with her while she still lived in the house, I enjoyed wandering around the structure and exploring the different rooms. The home has since been sold to unrelated owners, outside both the Huddle and Moore families, and they have not yet responded to our efforts to communicate with them. My grandmother, Mrs. Lillian Groseclose, furnished me with much information and Mr. Tillman Huddle loaned me a brief of deeds that helped very much in piecing together the history of the "Locust Hill Farm." In addition, co-author Clint Moore commissioned Mary Kegley to perform deed and record research that has been most useful in clarifying the historical facts for this article.

### ... Land History

The land ownership can be traced back to the late eighteenth century. On September 7, 1790, James Dean, son of Adam Dean who had received the original land patents around 1774, deeded to James McGavock Sr., 1,347 acres located near Cripple Creek. At this time the farm was called "Dean's Place." When McGavock died in 1812, his will divided the land between his two daughters, Peggy, who married Joseph Kent, and Betsy, who married Gordon Cloyd. Betsy deeded her interest to Peggy, with an additional 1,000 acres of Cloyd lands in 1828. In 1832, Governor John Floyd issued a land patent to Peggy Kent for the entire 2,347 acres. Upon Joseph Kent's death in 1843, this 2,347-acre estate was divided between their two daughters, Eliza and Nancy. Alfred C. Moore had married Nancy Kent in 1830 and thereby, under the laws of the times, received her ownership in the land by the marriage. Alfred and Nancy appear to have re-named the farmland, "Locust Hill Farm." A date etched high on a brick near the top of the chimney gives a date of 1850, as a possible construction date for the large house. Nancy died in 1852, and her sister Eliza, who never married, moved into the house to help Alfred raise the young family. Ultimately, Eliza died in 1863 and also left her portion of the land to the children of Nancy and Alfred. However, it wasn't until 1866, until the 2,347 acres was divided amongst the 5 surviving children.

It was at that time that the seventh child, William Orville Moore, received the 700+ acres which contained the Locust Hill house. He quickly sold a half "interest" in the land to mineral speculator Harry Groome of Philadelphia, but lived in the house until at least 1886. At that time, a court ruling resolving what had become a dispute over the land between Moore and Groome, split the land roughly in half, thereby giving Groome the house and the 300+ acres north of the road. However, Moore and his growing family may have lived in it until 1890, when Groome sold the land with the house to John H. Huddle, and Moore purchased a house in the town of Wytheville. The Locust Hill house remained in the Huddle family for over 90 years, until its sale in the 1980's.

... Alfred Cleon Moore

Alfred Cleon Moore was a relatively wealthy man for his time, and apparently well respected by the southwest Virginia community in which he lived. He was born in Patrick Co. Va. in 1805 to William Moore (1771-1819) and Jane Hanby (1783-1817), and was the fourth of nine children. Both of his parents had died by the time he was only fourteen, and so he was raised by his uncle and guardian, Gallahue Moore, just over the N.C. state line in Surry Co.. Gallahue became a North Carolina state legislator from 1825-6, while young Alfred attended Madison Academy, and eventually Univ. of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Alfred (?)  
in his 20-30's



Alfred (?)  
in his 50-60's



Alfred  
in his 80's



Alfred  
in his 40's



"Alfred Cleon Moore I - 1805-1890"  
(bottom two photo/portrait confirmed to be ACM)  
(upper two photos are presumed ACM by some Moore family)

According to his 1890 obituary, he studied law under Powell Hughes, and received his N.C. law license from the North Carolina State Supreme Court in 1829. In 1828, he was also elected to the N.C. State House, as one of its youngest legislators ever at age 23, and was elected from Surry Co., a total of three times between 1828-1830.

In March 1830, Alfred married Ann Frances "Nancy" Kent, daughter of pioneer landowner Joseph Kent of Wythe County, Virginia, and co-heir of the Kent lands, upon which Alfred and Nancy later built this "Locust Hill" home. Built in 1850, in the rolling hills of the New River Valley, it was one of Wythe County's larger farms, and the Kent's holdings included several large tracts of land too. The main Kent home-stead, "Kenton," was located on Reed Creek and included some of the finest farmland in the county.

Technically, Alfred owned Nancy's portion of the farm, since Nancy and Eliza had each inherited half from their father, but it was all passed on to his children in 1866, following Eliza's death in 1863, and the end of the Civil War in 1865. Alfred & Nancy's first child, Margaret was born December 1st, 1830, during the middle of the three month long late 1830 session of the State House. He did not stand for re-election in March of 1831, having moved to Wythe Co., Virginia. It is not known if he was in Wythe Co. or in Raleigh, on the day of his first child's birth.

Between 1830 and 1843, Alfred and Nancy had 8 children, only 6 of whom lived to adulthood, with mother Nancy herself, dying in 1852 at only 47 years of age. The 5 male and 3 female children were (in birth order): Margaret Lucinda Emily Moore (1830-1845), Sarah Jane Moore Finnie (1832-1917) - who had 2 children, Joseph Kent Moore (1834-1841), Algernon Sidney Moore (1836-1862), Robert Emmett Moore (1838-1924), Jacob Melvin Moore (1838-1893) - who had 4 children, William Orville Moore (1841-1913) - who had 10 children, and Ann Elizabeth Moore (1843-1871).

The census of 1850 valued Alfred's estate at \$20,000. Ten years later, in the 1860 census near the start of the civil War, his real (land) estate property was valued at \$15,000 and his personal estate property (slaves, etc.) was up to \$8,000, for a total of \$23,000. His fifteen slaves, ranging in age from five to sixty made up the bulk of his personal estate property.

Also in the 1860 census, was Eliza Kent, Nancy's sister, who owned real estate valued at \$12,000, and a personal estate of \$16,000, most of which was valued in thirty-five slaves. Slaves were costly, and the possession of thirty-five slaves put Eliza in the mid-upper echelons of Virginia's wealthy. It is probable that Alfred made use of Eliza's slaves on his own farm, considering the family ties, and the fact that by 1860, she had moved into the house with him and five of his six living children, as recorded in this same 1860 census. One must presume that Nancy's death in 1852 had left a void in the family, that she and her sister thought she could fill, since she never married at any point in her own lifetime.

### ... Civil War Years

Alfred was very active in the local militia during these early family years, and in 1839 was appointed Colonel of the 35th Virginia Militia Infantry, 19th Brigade, 5th Division. In 1851, just prior to the death of wife Nancy, he was promoted to Brigadier General of the 25th Brigade, 5th Division. During those years, Alfred earned the respect and admiration of his men, and so at the start of the Civil War, on May 25, 1861, Virginia Governor John Letcher offered Moore a Colonel's commission and appointed him to command the 29th Virginia Infantry, a regiment composed of over 500 men. Moore postponed formally accepting the commission until CSA Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall came to Wytheville on November, 23, 1861, although he was actively recruiting and training companies throughout the summer and fall of 1861. Gen. Marshall was the commander for eastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia and his army mainly fought battles in that area.

Col. Moore's career in the CSA Army almost ended early, a month later in December, 1861. Letters show Gen. Marshall had been pleading for Col. Moore to bring up his reinforcements from Wytheville, Virginia, to Pound Gap for the defense of Abingdon. Col. Moore would not bring his troops up, due to lack of adequate supplies but this was unknown to Gen. Marshall who on December 22 sent orders that Col. Moore be arrested in Abingdon. Fortunately, several days later Col. Moore arrived at Pound Gap with his regiment, having somehow passed the courier without receiving the message.

Since Col. Moore had arrived so soon and his help was badly needed, Gen. Marshall decided not to proceed with the court-martial and dropped the charges. Col. Moore was commanding an estimated 450 men at the time, out of Gen. Marshall's force of 3,000. However, after this incident, Gen. Marshall's correspondence rarely depicts Col. Moore favorably.

The oldest officer in Marshall's army and one of Virginia's oldest colonels at the start of the war, Alfred Cleon Moore's strong heartfelt loyalty to his home state of Virginia and its Southern Cause can be measured by the fact that he and his four adult sons served dutifully in the Confederate Army.

His tombstone, erected upon his death in 1890 in the McGavock-Kent Ft. Chiswell Cemetery, reads "Gen. Alfred C. Moore." in respect of his pre-war militia command, although he did not attain that rank in the CSA Army.

The Battle of Middle Creek (in Floyd County, eastern Kentucky) took place on January 10, 1862. Col. Moore and his regiment had a major role in this battle. The 29th Virginia Infantry Regiment was positioned along a ridge with Col. Williams' regiment of the 5th Kentuckians. The Confederates were poorly supplied, and suffered terribly from exposure and the lack of ammunition. Despite this adversity, the heavily outnumbered Confederates held back the Union troops under future President, then Col. James Garfield. In his report, Col. Moore stated that his regiment was in the "forefront" of the battle and lost "five killed, twelve wounded." After this battle, the Confederate troops retreated back into Virginia to the southeast, and the Union troops back down the west fork of the Sandy River, north to Paintsville. During February, Col. Moore lost two of his men from exposure to the cold. In early May, after reenlistment efforts were completed to a compliment of almost the desired 1,000 men, the regiment re-elected Alfred as their Colonel, demonstrating their continuing trust in his leadership.

The 29th was stationed in southwestern Virginia until December 1862, when it was one of four regiments ordered to eastern Virginia, near Petersburg.

His resignation, dated March 30, 1863, just months before the war-deciding battles of Gettysburg & Vicksburg, was sent from his headquarters in Southhampton County, in eastern Virginia. Col. Moore submitted his resignation for reasons of "advanced age" and "failing health." He was fifty-seven years old and his health had been deteriorated by the rough life of active duty, although he lived another 27 years.

His resignation became effective in early April 1863, and was probably influenced by the following factors: 1) the regiment's recent deployment near Richmond, so far from home, 2) the death of his oldest son, Algernon due to "camp disease" in late April 1862, and 3) the early 1863 illness and subsequent death in June of sister-in-law Eliza Kent.

During Alfred's absence, Eliza and Alfred's youngest son, Jacob Melvin Moore, operated his Locust Hill farm, with youngest daughter, Ann. With her reported illness upon him, and tiring of the distance from home, he must have decided at 58, he'd had enough. Returning home to Wythe County in time for the May marriage of his child Robert, and June death of his sister-in-law, he was still ready to be a Captain in the local militia. In addition, between May 1863 and October 1867, all 5 living children married, but with only three ever bearing families of their own.

Despite his conflict with Gen. Marshall, Col. Moore was well thought of by other Virginia officials, as well as his men, having been re-elected Colonel in May 1862. In addition, there were several recommendations for his promotion to brigadier general. One of the earliest was written by his fellow officers on September 16, 1862, to CSA President Jefferson Davis. Their sector was supposedly needing another general, and they declared that Col. Moore had the greatest claim because he was the senior colonel. They mentioned his "gallant" conduct at Middle Creek and praised him in other ways, but in the end, he did not receive the promotion. Another undated letter written to President Davis, by a member of the Preston family, also called for Col. Moore's promotion, and cited basically the same reasons the other letter did.



Even more than a year after Col. Moore had resigned, CSA Gen. Breckinridge and other officers wrote a letter dated June 7, 1864, recommending Col. Moore's appointment to the position of brigadier general.

Again, it seems nothing came of this letter. In retrospect, again these recommendations illustrate the fact that Col. A. C. Moore was respected and held in high esteem by many ranking Virginia personages, as well as the troops that served under his command. Apparently, he was a good leader, and a good father, as the character of his children showed, as well.

### **, , , More on the Moore Children**

One indication of Moore's Virginia and southern patriotism is the fact that he and all four of his sons saw action in the Confederate Army.

Capt. W.O. Moore was an officer in the 22nd Virginia Cavalry (also called Bowen's Mounted Riflemen). William Orville Moore originally enlisted in 1861 as a Lt. in the 45th Va. Infantry but quickly moved to his father's 29th Va. Infantry where he enlisted in Company A in May 1862 as a 3rd Lt. He was promoted to an Adjutant in September 1862, succeeding his dead brother, Algernon, who died in late April 1862.

After his father had resigned in March, 1863, he left the 29th in September 1863 to form and become Captain of Company "G" in the 22nd Va. Cavalry. When the ranking regimental officers were either dead or injured from late 1864 through Appomatox in spring of 1865, he appears to have shared the role as "Colonel" of the 22nd with two other Company Captains in these last months of the war. Their commissions were never conferred, although he was belatedly referred as "Colonel" for the remainder of his life. He was in at least 37 battles and engagements during the war. He survived the war, but his oldest brother, Algernon did not.

Algernon Sidney Moore enlisted with the Wythe Grays 4th Virginia Infantry in 1861, and then transferred to serve as Adjutant of his father's 29th Virginia Infantry until April, 1862, when he died of camp disease. There is a sad but brief reference to the impending death of Algernon in a letter dated April 25, 1862, written to Gen. Robert E. Lee by Brig. Gen. Marshall.

It stated that Col. A. C. Moore was absent and unable to give his report because he was at home "by the dying bedside of his son, Adjutant Moore." The letter does not report anything further about the matter. Algernon had died two days earlier, on the 23rd of April.

Both Algernon and William enlisted early, and were probably motivated by John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. "Wythe Grays" were noted for this, and at the start of the war they were numbered among the Confederacy's best-trained infantry.

Col. Moore's middle two sons were twins, Robert Emmett and Jacob Melvin. Dr. Robert Emmett Moore graduated from Emory & Henry Medical College in 1861 and enlisted as assistant surgeon with his father's 29th Va. Regiment in November 1861.

He was transferred to the staff hospital at Montgomery White Sulphur Springs in January 1863 when the 29th deployed to Richmond, and transferred to Wytheville Camp as post surgeon in October 1864, where he finished the war, although his pay vouchers show him assigned to brother William's 22nd Cavalry.

Twin brother Jacob Melvin Moore apparently stayed home at Locust Hill with his Aunt Eliza, and his two sisters, Sarah & Ann Elizabeth, and worked the farm in his family's absence until Alfred returned in April 1863. Shortly afterwards, Jacob joined with brother William Orville and enlisted as a 2nd Lt. in August 1863 in William Orville's new Company "G" 22nd Cav., and was then promoted to 1st Lt. in June 1864. He shared many of the same engagements with his younger, William.

### **. . . After The Civil War**

The Civil War took its toll upon the Alfred Cleon Moore family, causing the death of his eldest son and severe disruption to his family. His slaves were freed, and the way of life as he knew it, ended. When the war ended, like so many other Virginians, Colonel Moore and his family began a new war, a war to survive the economic and political difficulties the war had brought in its wake.

Like many other Confederate families, they lost much of their property during the conflict, and they were ultimately forced to sell a part of their farm with its lovely Locust Hill residence, in order to survive. His son, W. O. Moore, presumably saw no other choice but to sell a half interest in the "Locust Hill Farm" to Harry Groome of Philadelphia, a Pennsylvania Yankee. All 2,347 acres of the original Kent land had been heired and dispensed to Alfred's five remaining living children by 1866. When William Orville received his share, he sold half interest to Groome.

In 1868, at 63 years of age, with his five surviving children all grown and married, and his first wife and mother of his 8 children having died 16 years earlier, he was remarried to a widow, Susan E. Nuckolls Wellington from eastern Virginia, and they lived in Wytheville until he died in 1890. His son, William Orville, worked and occupied the Locust Hill farm from 1865 until about 1890. When he died in 1890, Alfred had lived 85 years, and like most people, had been less a shaper of events than one who was shaped by them.

Still, he repeatedly answered his community's call to leadership, and served in many distinguished capacities during his long life. He was an early member of St. John's Episcopal Church in Wytheville. Much of his family was baptized, married, and memorialized in that church well into the mid-1950's. He and his first wife, Ann Frances "Nancy" Kent, are buried side by side in the McGavock-Kent Cemetery near Ft. Chiswell, Virginia, next to their children Algernon and Ann "Izy" Elizabeth, who lived to adulthood, and children Margaret and Joseph that died in childhood.

His second wife, Susan, is buried adjacent to the Moore/Taylor plot in Wytheville's East End Cemetery, where sons William Orville Moore, Robert Emmett Moore, and grandson Alfred Cleon Moore II, are all buried. Son Jacob Melvin Moore is buried in Denver, Colorado, and daughter Sarah Jane Moore Finnie, is buried in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, Texas, as a CSA widow pensioner.

### ... The "Locust Hill" House

As indicated by a date inscribed at the top of one of the chimneys, Alfred probably built the "Locust Hill" house in 1850. Almost certainly there was not an architect employed, and there is no known information about a building contractor. It is fairly obvious that the prototype for "Locust Hill Farm" house was the McGavock House at Ft. Chiswell. Not only was this mansion nearby, but it was owned by wife Nancy's relatives. However, Moore's home was not nearly as grand as McGavock's. A local builder probably supervised slave labor used to build the Moore house.

The bricks came from the redclay found near the house, and the lumber from the surrounding woodland. The pattern of brick is an American bond of four courses of stretchers between courses of headers (Fig. 1). As far as can be told, only hardwoods were used in the house. The interior flooring is oak, while the door frames, window frames, and shouldered lintels are of yellow locust.

The entrance portal, is designed to give a warm welcome into the house (Fig. 10 & 12). Each side of the bottom front portico is equipped with a built-in bench. Side and corner lights around the door frames add beauty and grace as well as allowing light into the halls. The front door frames have a fluted design with circular sculpture in the corners. The bottom door frame has four panes in the side lights, single pane corner lights, and three panes in the transom. The second tier door frame is slightly different in design from the first floor frame. The side lights have twelve larger panes with six smaller ones along the top and bottom. Nine rectangular panes compose each corner light, and the transom has six large and six small panes.

The house is built on a slight incline, so the bottom floor starts above ground and eventually recedes partially below ground. Limestone blocks fitted together with mortar make up the foundation. The roof is joined together in the fashion shown in the aerial sketch and is of medium pitch

Although the present back porch may not be original, there has always been such a structure. Exposed, hand-hewn beams are mortised into the brick walls of the house for support of the porch (Fig. 11 & 14).



Locust Hill (1982)

Adjacent to the back porch is a turn-of-the-century cistern which replaced a nearby spring as the source of water. The shed added onto the back of the house is not original, as is a small concrete structure that provided gas for lighting (Fig. 13). Although there were three structures that served as slave quarters, these are no longer in existence. The kitchen was located inside the house, so there were not many dependencies.

The attic windows are smaller versions of those lighting the main floors. Stepped brick designs on the ends of the wings are unusual in construction and appearance. A striking silhouette is given by the massive chimney and the stepped formations. These stepped structures render a definite vertical orientation to the house and an almost gothic impression is given by the end gables. The front of the house possesses the most ornamentation of the exterior and is approximately 51' across. The double-tiered portico is located centrally and therefore is the most prominent feature of the exterior. Two square brickposts support the second level of the portico and the small pedimented roof. The capitals are plain, but the transom, the typanum, and the entablature are decorated with dentils and biglyphs.

The first floor windows are slightly larger than the second floor windows - however, all six windows on the front have basically the same design (Fig. 15). Each of the main windows has rectangular panes, in a six over six pattern. They all have a plain frame and sill with a shouldered

top. Just like the inside windows, they have the circular design on the shoulders. Full length shutters originally adorned the main windows. But they were removed a number of years ago, because of wind blowing the shutters.

The walls and ceiling of the interior are plastered. A mud-daubing technique combined with one to three inch wood strips was used to form the outer layer of the wall. Over this was applied a layer of plaster one-half to one inch thick.

The plan of the house is laid out in a L shape with a central staircase and hall that provides access to the various rooms. It is essentially three stories, for it has two half floors (an attic and cellar/kitchen area) plus two main floors (see sketches of floor plans and sections). The staircase runs all the way from the attic to the basement (Fig. 2), with central halls on the first and second floors. Both halls contain built-in bookcases which bespeak the culture of the builders (Fig.'s 3-6).

The two main floors have six rooms all appearing to be nearly square (18'11"x 19'4"). The height of the ceilings are 10'1", and can be compared to the first floor windows, which are 7'11" tall (Fig. 7). Each of the six mainrooms has a fireplace and hearth.

While some of the millwork differs in details, most of the mantelpieces consist of a simple shelf above broadpanels supported by half-columns. The woodwork has been finished with varnish. Each fireplace has a conventional brick hearth.



In the rooms located in the corner of the L are a pair of closets, one on either side of the chimney. These rooms would be appropriate to use as master and guest bedrooms. Like all the interior woodwork, the closet doors and frames are varnished (Fig.'s 8a & 8b). The door frames are 7' tall, and have the same standard fluting and rosettes originally used throughout most of the house (Fig. 9).

Despite the fact that the stepped ends of the wings give a vertical and some what gothic perception, the "Locust Hill Farm" home is a vernacular example of Greek Revival architecture popular between 1820 and 1860. Inside, the mantelpieces, the fluting and circular designs on the window, door, and closet frames mark it as Greek Revival in ornamentation.

On the exterior, the pedimented portico with the ascending steps to the entrance are definitely Greek in origin. Ornamentation such as the biglyphs and

dentrils are characteristics for this design. The shouldered tops found on all the exterior windows are telling points.

More features found in Greek Revival are the side and corner lights, the small end windows in the attic, and the larger lower and smaller upper main windows. The "L" layout, stepped gables, and back porch are important regional characteristics.

In short "Locust Hill" has an interesting and unique history and is an excellent example of how in the mid-nineteenth century, the Greek Revival vernacular was employed in southwestern Virginia.

(Authors Note: This architectural description was prepared based on its condition in 1982, while still owned by the Huddle Family. Perhaps someday, its early beauty can be restored and preserved for generations to come.)







Figure #1  
Exterior Brick Work Pattern



Figure #2  
Stairwell from Attic Floor



Figure #3  
First Floor Entrance Hall



Figure #4  
First Floor Entrance



Figure #5  
Second Floor Hall



Figure #6  
Second Floor Hall



Figure #7  
Bottom Window



Figure #8a  
Master of Guest Bedroom w/Closets



Figure #8b

Alfred Cleon Moore's presumed master bedroom in "Locust Hill"



Figure #9

Interior Bedroom Door



Figure #10

Southwest Front View



Figure #11

Northeast Back Rear View



Figure #12

Southeast Corner Front/Side View



Figure #13

Northeast Corner Rear/Side View



Figure #14

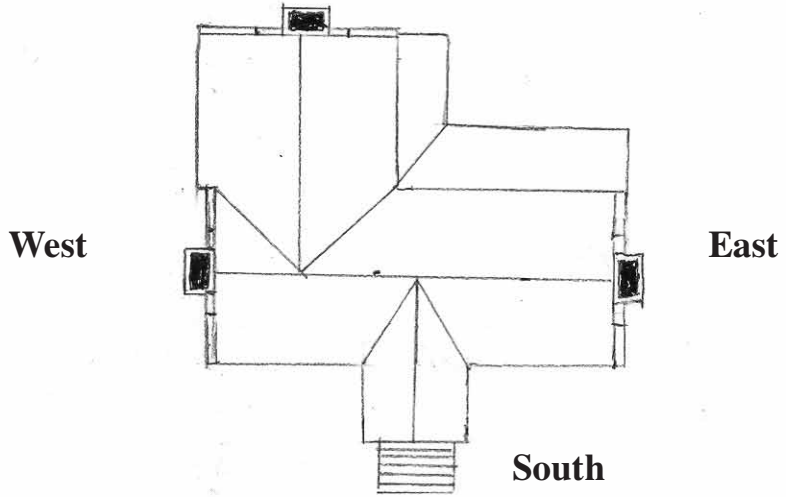
Eastside View



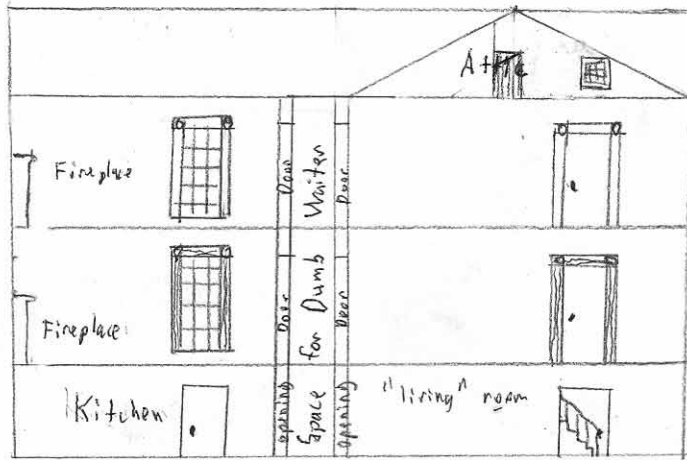
Figure #15

Front Window Exterior View

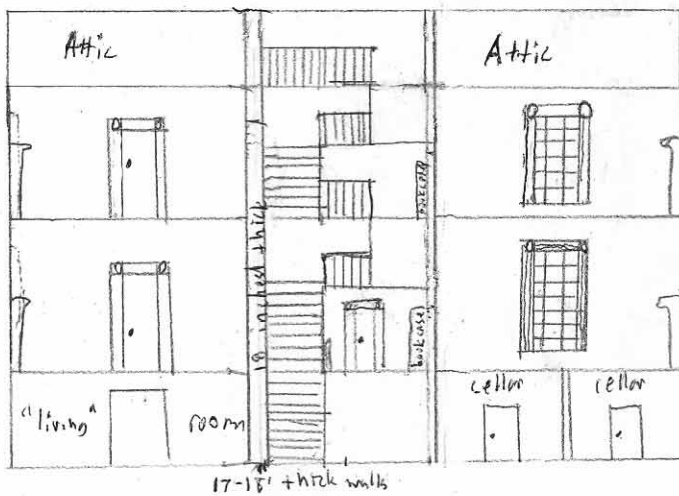
North



Basic plan of Main House as viewed from above (simplified)



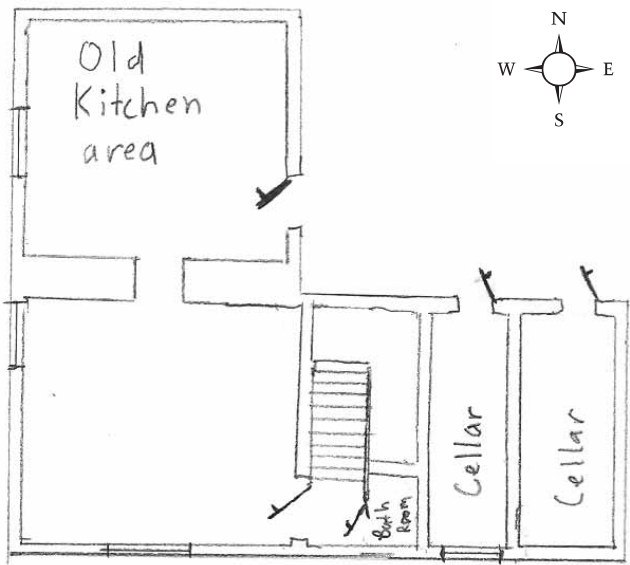
Cut-open view of West Side of Main House (simplified)



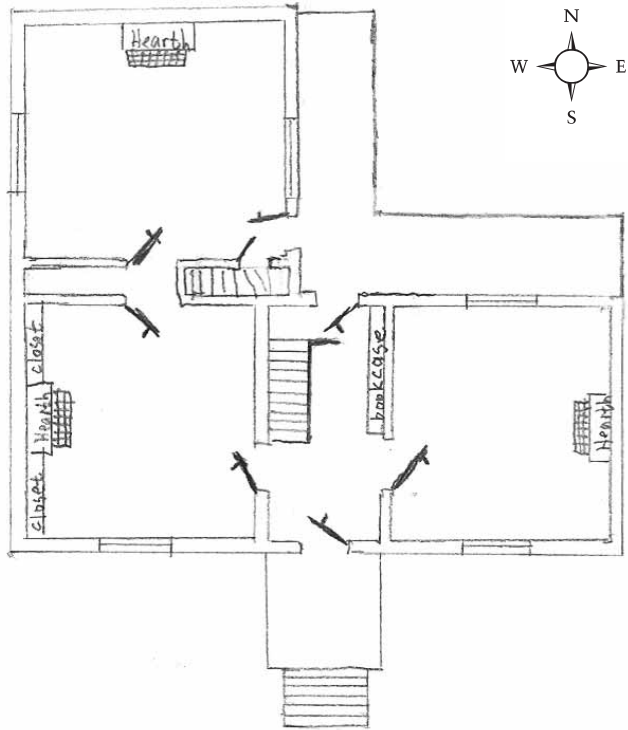
Cut-open view of South (front) Side of Main House (simplified)



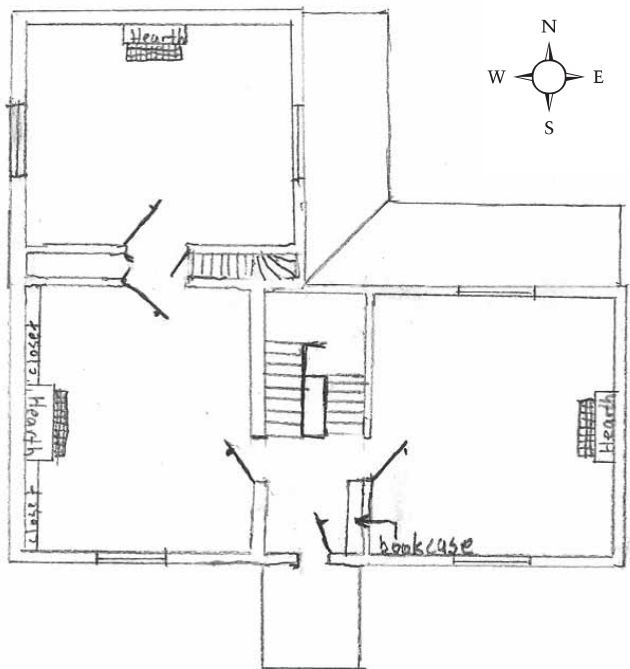
# Basement Floor



# First Floor



# Second Floor



# Attic Floor

