

BLACKWELL HOUSE
c.1825-1835 with additions
Washington Crossing State Park
Washington Crossing, New Jersey

Additions have produced a large stone dwelling, 81 feet long. The center is the oldest portion. Originally, it was a three bay farmhouse two stories high. Its exterior dimensions were approximately 31'-6" by 18'-6". It has a full cellar and a roomy attic formed by carrying the stone walls 10" above the floor. The thick stone walls reduce the disposable interior space to 28'-8" by 15'-9". The dwelling faces ESE towards route 546.

The interior arrangements were traditional. The centered entrance door opened into a kitchen/living room (rm. 102). A large cooking fireplace occupies the back half of the north gable wall. A stair, now removed, occupied the opposite corner against the partition. The other downstairs room was a parlor or parlor/bed room (rm. 103). It was heated by a fireplace centered in the south gable (now removed). The plan of the second floor has been much altered, but there were at least three bedrooms, each with its own entrance from a central passage.

The house was conservatively finished in the late Federal Style. All the doors have six raised panels mounted in ogee molded rails and stiles. The ground floor retains considerable chair rail as well as a cupboard built into the thickness of the stone wall. Complete consistency in the interior and exterior millwork throughout the house proves that both floors were constructed at the same time.

A terminous post quem for the construction of the house is provided by the machine-cut, machine-headed nails used to lay the attic floor. These are of a type dated by Lee Nelson to c.1815-1840 (early machine-headed nails cut from common sides), but the symmetry of the nail head suggests a date toward the end of this period.

Shortly after construction, a stone-walled service room was added to the north gable. This visibly is an addition. Peering behind the east jamb of the north between the kitchen/living room (rm. 102) and the service room (rm. 101) reveals that the service room was built up against the stuccoed exterior of room 102. A visible break in the west wall of the addition between the second and third floors suggests that the addition originally was only 1 1/2 stories high. However, it soon was raised to three stories as the door between its third floor (rm. 301) and the attic of the central portion (rm. 302) is constructed of boards and battens assembled with mid 19th-century hand-wrought clinch nails. Presumably, the hand-hewn ceiling joists in room 101 are reused from an earlier structure.

Shortly after the middle of the century, the south gable of the farmhouse was demolished and a large stone duplex constructed.

Thirty-five feet, seven inches wide and 50'-4" deep, the duplex has two identical apartments. On the ground floor each has a living room, dining room with stair, and kitchen. On the second floor, each has a small passage and three bedrooms. Moldings and hardware suggest that this addition dates approximately 1855-1870. The ground floor doors swing on "Baldwin" cast hinges, while the bedroom doors have lift-off hinges. Three door locks were disassembled in search of patent dates. None was found. Two surface mounted rim locks contained no manufacturing information, while a mortise lock on door 1081 was marked

"Sargent New Haven Conn U.S.A.
5164 4-8-12".

The farm's owners are listed on three Mercer County atlases or maps. These owners are:

1849: W. Blackwell
1875: B. Blackwell & Sons
1905: J. J. Blackwell

Garry Wheeler Stone
State Park Service
Division of Parks & Forestry, NJDEPE
1 March 1993

SOURCES:

Map Collection, NJ State Library:

1849: J. W. Otley & J. Keily, Surveyors, Map of Mercer County, New Jersey, Entirely from Original Surveys. Camden, Lleye Van Der Veer.

1875: Everts & Steward, Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County, New Jersey. Philadelphia.

1905: A. H. Mueller & Co., Automobile Driving and Trolley Map of Mercer County, New Jersey.

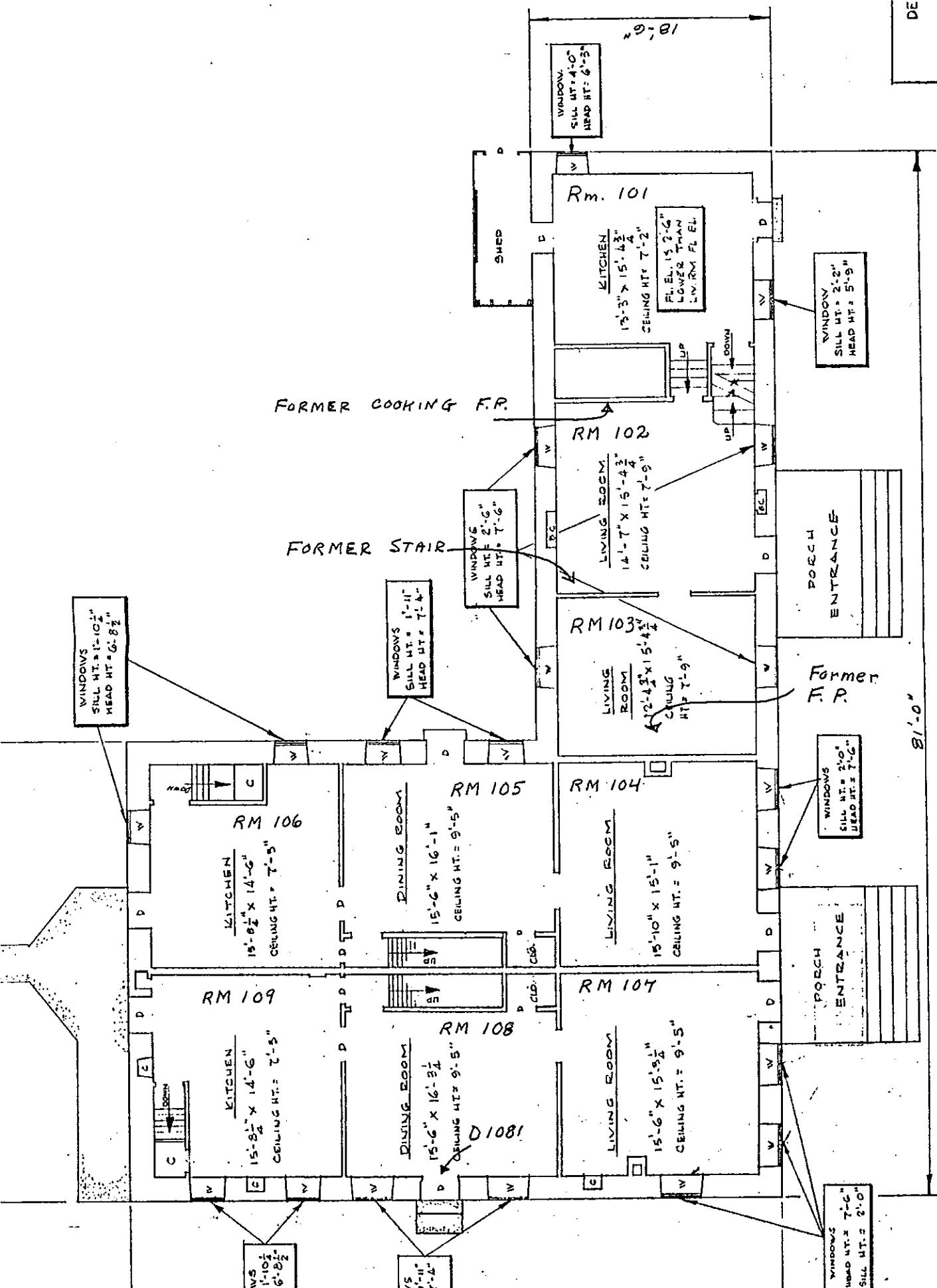
Nelson, Lee H. Nail Chronology as an Aid to Dating Old Buildings. Technical Leaflet 48, American Association for State and Local History. Nashville, 1968.

Stone, Garry and Clifford Zink, Field Notes, 19 May 1988.

Stone, Garry and Philip Hayden, Field Notes, 10 February 1993.

Tichy, Charles R. "Evaluation of 18th-century Buildings at Washington Crossing State Park." Memorandum, 1 June 1972. Files, Division of Parks & Forestry.

GROUND FLOOD PLAN



DEPARTMENT C
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