

Slave Housing Data Base

Building Name: Weston Log Duplex
Evidence Type: Extant
Historical Site Name: Fitzhugh Plantation
City or Vicinity: Casanova
County: Fauquier
State: Virginia

Investigators: Douglas W. Sanford, Dennis J. Pogue
Institutions: University of Mary Washington, University of Maryland

Project Start: 8/15/12 **Project End:** 8/11/14

[The structure was restored in 2014, to include replacing the existing porch and piers, making repairs to the exterior siding and eaves, repairing the windows, repointing the foundation, rebuilding the fireplace openings, and chinking and caulking the spaces between the logs, as needed.]

Summary Description:

The Weston duplex is a 1.5-story, two-bay, side-gable-roofed log building, measuring 14'3" (E-W) by 24'2" (N-S), supported on a stone foundation. The current roof covering is standing seam metal, presumably replacing earlier wood shingles. There are two rooms nearly equal in size, upstairs and down, with large fireplaces and stone hearths on the first floor; the central chimney that served them does not survive above the current metal roof, which covers the former opening. The exterior walls are clad with vertical board and batten siding, painted or stained red, and attached with a mixture of machine cut and wire nails. An open, three-bay, shed-roofed porch supported by stone piers and wood posts runs the length of the east (front) elevation. The porch covers two exterior doorways providing direct access to each of the rooms; a third exterior doorway that replaced an original window opening is centered on the south end wall. Two 6/6 double-hung sash windows align with the doorways on the rear wall; windows of similar character are also centered in the north end wall and in both gables.

The interior walls are exposed logs, covered with multiple layers of whitewash – as are the fireplaces and all other surfaces save for the stairs and the doors. The doorway in the south wall was inserted to provide access to a later kitchen wing, which does not survive. Other alterations include the enclosed winder staircase (the second of two iterations) in the SE corner of the south room along the end wall, rising to the garret above. Access to the garret originally was provided by a ladder stair in each first-floor room, tucked into the spaces to the east of the central fireplaces. Evidence for the ladders consists of identical rectangular patches in the garret floor on either side of the partition. An interior doorway was inserted through the vertical plank partition wall on the east side of the chimney to connect the two first-floor rooms. The two unheated rooms upstairs are separated by a frame partition with a doorway to the east of the stack, as on the floor

below. The partition has circular sawn lath and plaster, with the same treatment applied to the ceiling, all of which relate to a later remodeling. The roof rafters and collars have been replaced. The upstairs knee wall is four logs high, whitewashed along with the other surfaces.

As originally configured the cabin was a duplex, with two separate rooms on each level, and with access between the first floor and garret spaces provided by ladders on each side. The doorways in the partitions presumably were added at the same time that the ladders were removed and the winder stair was erected in the SE corner. The openings in the two fireplaces were reduced in size with an inner lining of brick; a stove was installed in the south room. Oral history indicates that the shed added to the south wall served as a kitchen. Thus, after the Civil War the Weston cabin was transformed from a standard duplex form to accommodate two separate enslaved families, to a five-room house for tenants or farm workers. The house is known to have been occupied up until the 1960s; electrical and telephone service were added but no indoor plumbing was ever installed.

The building was well constructed, with side-hewn pine logs joined with half-dovetails at the corners, and with pegged interior wall clamps at the center points of the long walls offering further support. The clamps consist of vertical boards that extend from the ground floor level to the top of the knee wall. The floor and ceiling joists are round pine logs with flattened tops, with their ends tenoned to the log walls. The garret was most likely unfinished before it was plastered. The first-floor partition consists of vertical boards; the partition in the garret is made of sawn lath attached to the studs with machine-headed cut nails.

Additional alterations to the building beginning after the Civil War include upgrading the flooring on the ground level with tongue and groove boards, installing a new (current) lower-pitched staircase in the SE corner, and appending the frame kitchen to the south end wall. When the south window was converted to a doorway a vertical plank was affixed to the west of the opening to clamp the logs in place; the plank is circular sawn and spiked to the wall with square-headed nails. The porch on the east wall likely is the latest in a series of similar structures that were erected over the years.

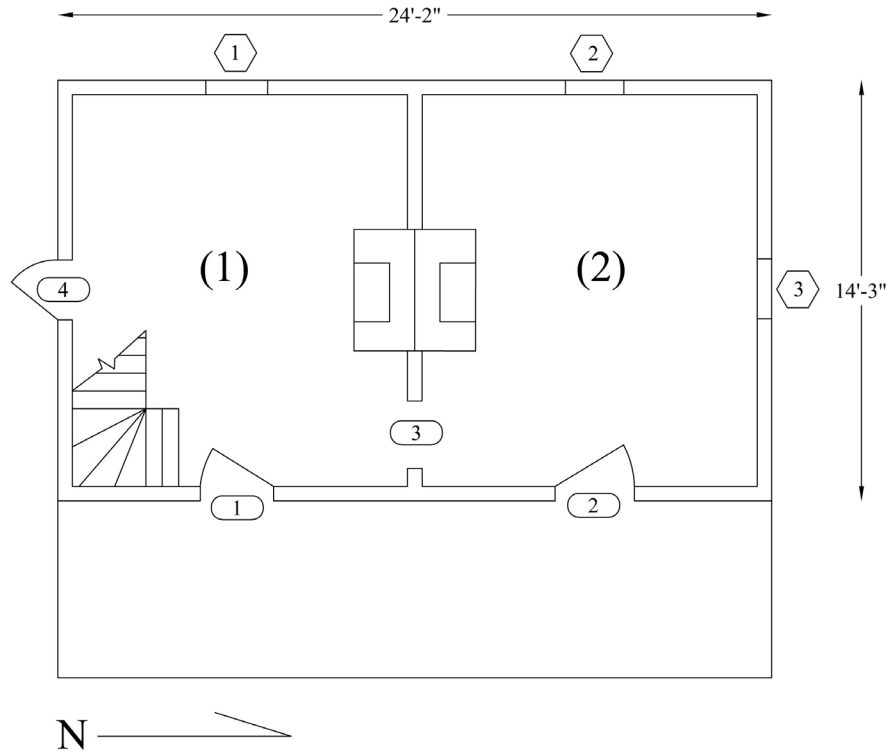
Bibliography:

Cheryl Shepherd, "Weston's 'Overseer's Cabin' Documentation and Surface Condition Report," March 2007.

Principal Construction Type: Log

One and One-Half Story (4 logs above the garret floor level comprise the knee wall, 3'4" high)

Footprint:



Number of Rooms: 4 total (2 down, 2 up)

Dimensions:

(1) 11'5 1/2" (N-S) by 13'3 1/2" (E-W), by 7'6" to bottom of ceiling joists; 7'11" to bottom of floor above

(2) 11'8" (N-S) by 13'4" (E-W), by 7'5" to bottom of ceiling joists; 7'11" to bottom of floor above

(3) 11'4 1/2" (N-S) by 13'3" (E-W), by 6'10" (to plastered ceiling)

(4) 11'4" (N-S) by 13'3" (E-W), by 6'10" (to plastered ceiling)

Doors: 6

	(1) Rm. 1	(2) Rm. 2	(3) East Part'n
Type:	2 panel below, 4 lights above (wood)	Board & batten (wire nails)	None present, unknown type
Dimensions:	5 ft. 11.5 in. (H) x 2 ft. 4.75 in. (W)	5 ft. 9.5 in. (H) x 2 ft. 8.5 in. (W)	Opening: 6 ft. 2.25 in. (H) x 2 ft. 4.5 in. (W)
Hardware:	Late 19th-C. butt hinges	Butterfly (cross garnet), w/modern screws	Removed, but note evidence of butt hinges & later butterfly hinges
Swing:	In	In	Into Rm. 1
Replacement:	Yes (note survival of door framing similar to windows)	Yes (looks to have been lowered, compared to Rm. 1 door)	N/A

	(4) Rm. 1	(5) Upper partition	(6) Stair closet
Type:	4 panel	Board & batten; with modern screws	Board & batten (tongue and groove)
Dimensions:	5 ft. 10 in. (H) x 2 ft. 5 in. (W); former window location; extends 10.25 in. above former window	6 ft. 2.5 in. (H) x 2 ft. 3 in. (W)	4 ft. 1.25 in. (H) x 2 ft. 0.5 in. (W)
Hardware:	Formerly, butt hinges; later butterfly hinges	Modern butt hinges; with key hole & locks	Butt hinges
Swing:	Out (into later kitchen addition)	In (into Room 3)	Out (into Room 1)
Replacement:	Later insertion for kitchen addition	Yes	No

Windows: 5

	(1) Rm. 1	(2) Rm. 2	(3) Rm. 2
Type:	Removed (presumed double hung sash like others)	Removed (presumed double hung sash, 6/6 lights)	6/6 lights, double hung sash
Dimensions:	Finished opening: 2 ft. 4.5 in. (W) x 3 ft. 9.5 in. (H)	Opening: 2 ft. 4 in. (W) x 3 ft. 9 in. (H)	2 ft. 4.25 in. (W) x 3 ft. 8.5 in. (H)
Hardware:	N/A	N/A	None
Shuttered/Slide/Swing:	N/A	N/A	N/A

	(4) Rm. 3	(5) Rm. 4
Type:	Removed, presumed double hung sash	Double hung sash, 6/6 lights
Dimensions:	2 ft. 4 in. (W) x 3 ft. 9.5 in. (H)	2 ft. 4.5 in. (W) x 3 ft. 9 in. (H)
Hardware:	N/A	None
Shuttered/Slide/Swing:	N/A	N/A

Evidence of the original south gable end window (replaced by door) consists of surviving elements of framing and notches in the log (2'8³/₄" from the floor). The later door extends 10¹/₄" above the top of the former window. The evidence of the vertical framing marks an opening 3'½" wide. Vertical framing members (7/8" wide) are let into notched logs above and below.

EXTERIOR

Foundation:

Continuous Masonry: Stone (irons stone) – squared, cut

Thickness: approx. 18"

Height: 11" (rear wall, NW corner); 1'3" at SW corner

Bond: Irregular coursing

Mortar Type: Shell – clay
Joint: No regular pattern observed due to erosion
Repaired: Yes (in portions, with Portland cement)

Shed/Porch: Yes – front (south wall), as later addition
[Replaced in 2014]

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable

The eaves are enclosed by a simple box cornice composed of vertical fascia and slanted soffit, and the rake boards extend to meet the fascia and cover the end of the soffits.

Roof Covering: Standing seam sheet metal

Roof Framing: No whitewash on rafters

Exposed: Partially (due to plaster ceiling)

Form: Common rafters – not tapered, sash sawn, half-lapped and spiked (cut nails)

Floor to roof peak: 9'3½";

Rise over Run: 10" over 12"

Rafters:

The current rafters, except for one pair at the center of the building, derive from a post-Civil War replacement of the frame and covering. The roofing boards look similar to the rafters as to color and saw (sash) marks. One rafter, at the building's center near the chimney, has a wane edge. Roofing boards with a limited number of nails (machine cut), suggest only one generation of wood shingles, prior to the current sheet metal covering.

Number: 13 pairs

Rafter Dimensions: 3¾" by 4"

Collar Ties: Yes – sawn boards

Collar Dimensions: 6"-9" (H) by 1" (W)

Method of Joining: nailed to side of rafter; 2-4 nails at each end

Height from Roof Peak: 2'5" (to top of collar)

Height from Floor: 6'10½" (from bottom of collar)

Roofing boards: sash sawn; 1" by 8½"; attached with cut nails

Building Height: (center of north gable end)

Ground to Soffit: 18'5"

Ground to Peak: 19'3¾"

Ground to Top of Eave: 12'9" (NW corner)

Ground to siding: from 1'1" (center) to 1'4" (NW corner)

Walls: Log

Dimensions: Range from 6" to 10" high; most 8"-9"

Finish: Round (on top and bottom) – sides hewn flat – debarked

Notching: Half dovetail

Chinking: Composite (stones and mud)

Clamps are installed on the east, west, and south walls:

Vertical clamp (west wall): 6¾ by 2½" secured with a 1¼" diameter round peg;

vertical clamp (south wall): 5¾" by 5'11" attached with square-headed nails.

Exterior siding: Vertical boards and battens, painted or stained red. Original battens measure 2¼" to 2½" wide; attached with machine cut nails; original boards are sash sawn, attached with machine cut nails; battens overlapping butted boards at 8" to 12" apart.. Replacement battens measure 1¾" to 2" wide, attached with wire nails.

Chimney: 7'1" (E-W) by 4'¾" (N-S)

Material: Stone

Location: Interior – center

Height: (not determined; upper portion removed during roof replacement); stack shifts from stone to brick at the upper floor. The brick stack has been whitewashed and has corner boards.

INTERIOR

Wall Framing: Log

Wall Finish: Whitewash; ceiling portion of upper story with lath (machined) and plaster

Ceiling joists: 11 total, pine, round logs with flat tops; 6"-7" diameter; with tenons lapped onto wall logs. Center to center distances (south to north): 28", 26", 26", 25", 28", 25", 30" (to chimney), 32", 27", 24", 6" (to north wall).

Fireplace (1): End – center (north side of Room 1)

Fireplace Material: Stone (later partially infilled with brick); hole above fireplace observed for later woodstove

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: 7'1" (E-W) by 2'¾" (N-S)

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 4'2" (W) by 3'7" (H) by 1'6" (D); with later infill: 2'10" (W) by 3'7" (H) by 1'6" (D)

Hearth Material: Stone

Hearth Dimensions: 7'1" (L) by 2'10" (W)

Fireplace (2): End – center – (south side of Room 2)

Fireplace Material: Stone (later partially infilled with brick)

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: 7'1" (E-W) by 2'3³/₄" (N-S)

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 4'1" (W) by 3'6" (H) by 1'6" (D);
with later infill: 2'7" (W) by 2'9¹/₂" (H) by 1'6" (D)

Hearth Material: Stone

Hearth Dimensions: 7'1" (L) by 2'10" (W)

Stairs: SE corner, Room 1

Two generations of stairs have existed at this location. The earlier arrangement only survives in terms of three steps and the landing at the bottom of the current staircase. It had a steeper angle of rise; the majority of the current stairs represents a later alteration with a shallower rise. This latter stage includes tongue and groove boards that enclose the area under the stringer, late machine-cut and wire nails, framing that was not whitewashed, and a small closet beneath. Note older, whitewashed surviving framing members beneath this construction and supporting part of the landing. Parts of log walls beneath these stairs also show whitewash, marking a formerly exposed surface, when no stairs existed in this location.

Type: Semi-Enclosed, with landing (closet space below); L-shaped winder
Stairwell Dimensions: 2'4" (W) by 3'11" (L -- to end of landing); 2'6" (W) by 7'7" (L – from start of landing to end of opening upstairs); actual opening to upstairs is 2'4¹/₂" wide due to presence of ceiling joist log.

Number of Treads: 3 from floor to landing; 7 from landing to upper floor

Stair Tread Dimensions: 2'4" (L) by 8¹/₂" (W) by 6¹/₂" to 9" (H); some steps have double treads as part of alteration.

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor: Wood (on 1st floor, tongue and groove flooring a later replacement – extends beneath the replaced partition on the east side, but stops short of west side partition that looks to be original)

Floorboards Dimension: from 3¹/₂" to 4³/₄"

Flooring on upper story is composed of wider planks (ranging from 8¹/₂" to 1'2").
Planks are randomly laid, face nailed, butted boards about 7/8" thick

Dating:

Dendrochronology Date: NA

Other Date: ca. 1840s-50s

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Sash-sawn original material; circular-sawn additions and repairs

Nails: Machine cut

Comments:

The building underwent significant repairs in 2014, entailing a variety of interventions to the exterior, restoring the doors and windows, and repointing or rebuilding the fireplaces and hearths. The approach taken to the work was to follow a preservation standard; as much original material was retained as possible, and when replacements were required they were done in-kind. The most significant change to the exterior was to replace the porch, to include building new support piers of local stone. A number of the vertical siding boards and battens were replaced and fascias and soffits were patched or replaced as needed. The fireplace in Room 1 was restored to its original condition (the brick infill was almost entirely absent and the remainder was removed) but the fireplace in Room 2 was restored to its altered, smaller opening. The front door in Room 1 was returned to operating condition; all of the windows were repaired and re-glazed, using as much of the original material as possible. The siding boards were treated with Bora-Care and sealed with a slightly pigmented stain to make the replacement boards blend as much as possible with the existing. The structure is intended to be incorporated into the ongoing educational and interpretive programs carried out by the Virginia Antiquarian Society.

Information from an interview with Melvin and Lillian Cephas conducted by Anne Ryzin (November 30, 2012):

Melvin Cephas (6 months old) and his parents moved into the cabin in 1942, where they continued to live until about 1961. Lillian Cephas was born there. No one lived in the cabin after the Cephas family left and it was used for storage.

The Cephas's installed a wood stove in the fireplace in the south room; the fireplace in the north room was not used, and was covered over with a metal plate. The south room was used as their dining and living room. The north room was Melvin Cephas's bedroom.

The stairway to the garret and kitchen wing pre-dated the Cephas occupation. The closet under the stairs was used to store canned food.

The south garret room was shared by Mr. and Mrs. Cephas and their youngest child. The north room was used as a bedroom for older children. The garret was never heated.