

Slave Housing Data Base

Building Name: Ionia Farm Frame Duplex

Evidence Type: Extant

Site ID: 054-0043

City: Trevilians

County: Louisa

State: Virginia

Investigators: Douglas W. Sanford, J. Mark Wittkofski, Dennis J. Pogue

Institutions: Virginia Slave Housing Project

Project Start: 6/9/20

Project End: 6/19/20

Summary Description:

The former duplex outbuilding at Ionia is a four-bay, one-story frame structure, 16.5 by 33.5 feet in dimension, with a side-gable roof, resting on a stone foundation. The exterior is sided with weathboards, and the original wood roof shingles have been replaced with standing seam metal. Two exterior doorways in the south-facing façade originally provided separate access to the two first-floor rooms; windows consist only of single narrow openings near each of the doorways. As constructed, an interior chimney mass was roughly centered on the plan, providing heat to the first floor rooms but not to the garret spaces. As a duplex, or double quarter, intended to accommodate two enslaved households, the building had central partitions on the first floor and in the garret, prohibiting access between the rooms. A winder stair in the south corner of each room provided access to the unfinished, unheated rooms in the attic (only one survives). The walls of the downstairs rooms are covered with whitewashed horizontal planks; the exposed ceiling joists and floorboards exhibit remnants of whitewash.

The frame construction is of an unusual hybrid type. Traditional heavy timber frame materials and methods were combined with lighter, mill-sawn lumber assembled according to the ascendant balloon-framed concepts. While the sills and the plates, and the posts along the south wall, are oversized and fastened together with traditional mortise and tenon joints and inserted pegs, the studs are circular sawn, dimensional lumber, attached to the sills and plates with cut nails. The hybrid nature of the construction combined with the use of mature, machine-headed cut nails, suggests a construction date in the 1850s. Given this late date, it is likely that the original heat sources were stoves rather than fireplaces.

In the post-Civil War eras, the house was adapted for other uses, most recently as a chicken house. The interior chimney, the interior partition walls, and the southeast corner stairs were removed, and the flooring for the downstairs rooms was removed and replaced. The garret was converted for grain storage, resulting in the installation of kickboards near the feet of the rafters and battens beneath the floorboards in the eastern half of the space. Gable-end windows likely were added to the garret at this time, and the wood shingles were replaced with a covering of sheet metal. Downstairs, a series of

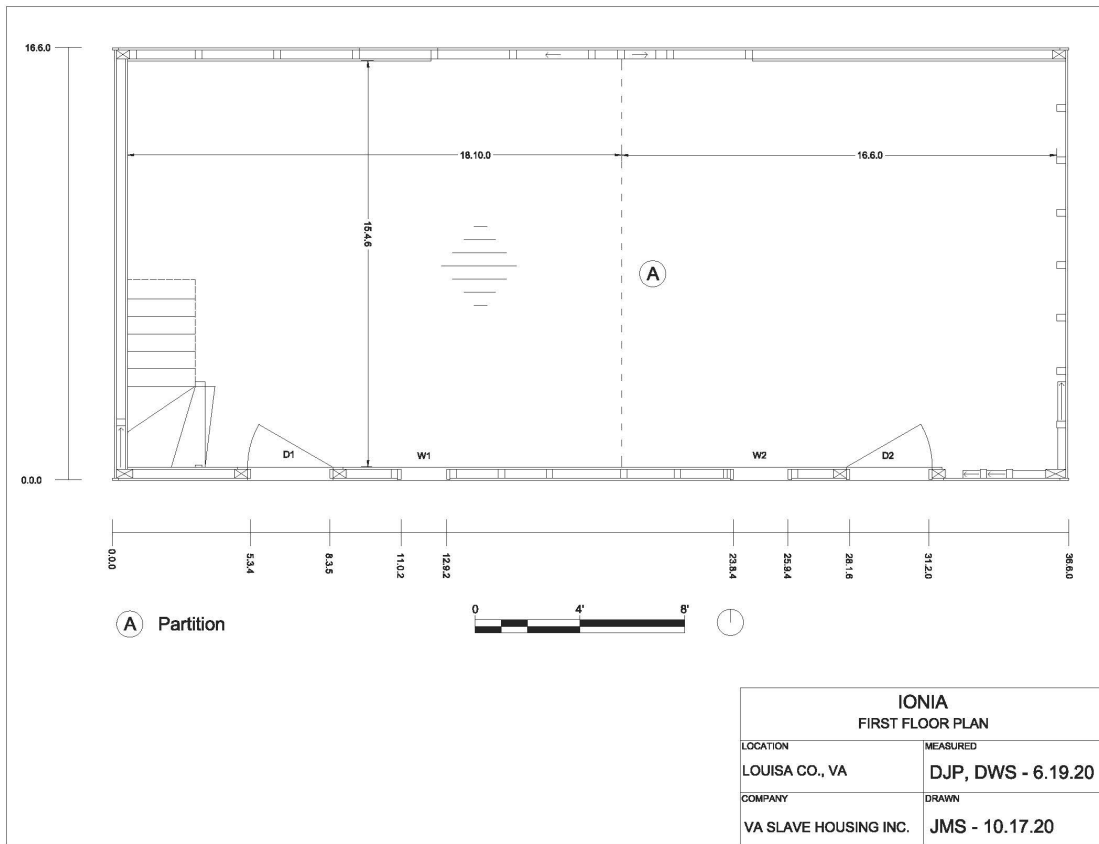
window-like openings were installed between the wall studs on the central portion of each façade.

Bibliography:

Brown, T. Robins, "Documentation and Description of Ionia, Home of Major James Watson, Louisa County, Virginia." University of Virginia, 1969. (88 pages)

Ionia National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, Louisa County, Virginia, 1972.

Principal Construction Type: Frame
One Story – With Garret
Footprint:



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

- Dimensions:** (1) Downstairs, west: 15.4.3 (N-S) x 18.10.0 (E-W); Height: 7.7.1
(2) Downstairs, east: 15.4.3 (N-S) x 16.7.0 (E-W); Height: 7.7.1
(3) Upstairs, west: 15.4.3 (N-S) x 16.10.0 (E-W)
(4) Upstairs, east: 15.4.3 (N-S) x 18.7.0 (E-W)

Doors: 3

	Rm. 1, S (1)	Rm. 2, S (2)	Rm. 1, stairs (3)
Type:	Board & batten (3 battens, w/beaded edges)	Board & batten (battens in Z pattern)	Board & batten (battens w/beaded edges)
Dimensions:	3.0.0 (W) x 6.5.0 (H)	2.11.2 (W) x 6.5.2 (H)	2.7.3 (W) x 6.7.0 (H), 1 inch thick
Hardware:	Replacement, 5-knuckle butt hinges	Replacement, butterfly hinges	Replacement, 5-knuckle butt hinges
Swing:	Out	Out	Out (into Room 1)
Replacement:	Yes (see field notes for original door evidence, swinging in)	Yes, with wire nails (see field notes for original door evidence)	Reworked for altered stairs when 1 st floor raised in modern era

Windows: 4

	Rm. 1, S (1)	Rm. 2, S (2)	Rm. 3, W (3)
Type:	Unknown, removed	Unknown, removed	Unknown, no evidence for sash
Dimensions:	1.8.3 (W) x 3.11.0 (H)	1.8.3 (W) x 3.11.0 (H)	2.1.2 (W) x 2.5.3 (H)
Hardware:	Unknown	Unknown	None
Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing:	Presumed fixed sash	Presumed fixed sash	Possibly fixed sash or shutter

Windows: *continued*

Rm. 4, E (4)

Type:	Unknown, no evidence for sash
Dimensions:	2.1.2 (W) x 2.5.3 (H)
Hardware:	None
Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing:	Possibly fixed sash or shutter

EXTERIOR

Foundation:

Continuous Masonry: Stone (field stones); brick replacement on north wall
Thickness: ~1.2.0
Height: SW corner: at ground level; SE corner: 1.7.0; NE corner: 2.10.0
Bond: Random
Mortar Type: Sand; some dry laid
Joint: NA
Repaired: Yes, with Portland cement; north wall foundation replaced with handmade bricks and Portland mortar

Shed/Porch: No

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable
Roof Covering: Standing seam sheet metal
Roof Framing:
Exposed: Yes
Form: Common Rafters
Rafter Number: 18 pairs
Rafter Dimensions: 2.75 - 3 in. x 4 in.
Collar Ties: No, but with recent insertions using scabbed materials.

Height from Roof Peak to Floor: 9.0.0

Building Height:

@ SW corner

Ground to Soffit: 9.2.2

Ground to Top of Eave: 9.11.1

Ground to Apex: 19.6.0, 19.7.3 (top of roof) @ West gable end

@ SE corner

Ground to Soffit: 10.11.2

Ground to Top of Eave: 11.7.3

Walls:

Frame:

Material: Wood

Cladding: Horizontal – Weatherboard/lapped

Beaded: No

Chimney(s):

Chimney (1): Removed in modern era

Material: Stone base, stack unknown

Location: Interior – Center

Height: Unknown

INTERIOR

Wall Framing: Exposed (partially at present)

Wall Finish: Horizontal planks – butted, tongue-and-groove, and shiplapped; with whitewash

Fireplace (1): End – Center – removed (Room 1, to west); or stove

Fireplace (2): End – Center – removed (Room 2, to east); or stove

Stairs: Yes (SW corner, Room 1); Stairs in SE corner of Room 2 removed

Type: Enclosed – Winder

Stairwell Dimensions: 7.1.0 long (N-S) x 2.7.0 wide (E-W)

Number of Treads: 3 winders, 6 treads to garret floor

Stair Tread Dimensions: 0.8.5 – 10 in. (W) x 2.7.0 (L) x 0.10.0 (H)

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor: Wood – modern era replacement, raised floor

Floorboards Dimension: NA

Date: Ca. 1850s

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Circular Sawn

Nails: Mature machine Cut

Comments: Hybrid framing materials and methods.