

Virginia Slave Housing Project

Building Name: Flat Creek Farm Log Duplex

Evidence Type: Extant

Site ID: VDHR: 015-5181-0001, part of the Flat Creek Rural Historic District (VDHR: 015-5181)

Vicinity: Evington

County: Campbell

State: Virginia

Investigators: Douglas W. Sanford, Dennis J. Pogue

Institutions: Virginia Slave Housing Project

Project Start: 8/12/2021

Project End: 8/12/2021

Summary Description:

The log outbuilding at Flat Creek Farm is the largest and most intact structure among a relatively well preserved mid-19th century farm complex. The main house, which was erected by William Watts ca. 1797, does not survive, as it was destroyed by fire in 1981. The log building is located roughly 200' south and downslope from the house ruins. Descendants of the the Watts-Saunders family continue to own the property, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2020 as contributing resources for the Flat Creek Rural Historic District. The owners were in the process of making extensive repairs to the building during the site visit in August 2021.

The Flat Creek outbuilding is a 1½-story log structure, with a moderately-pitched, side-gabled roof covered with raised-seam metal pans, and a centered interior stone chimney serving two fireplaces. Two original doorways are located in the south façade. Other openings consist of a horizontal window with a fixed sash located just east of the western doorway, a 6/6 window centered on the east elevation, a window with a single fixed sash in the north wall lighting the eastern room, and a doorway centered on the west wall. Single 6/6 sash windows are located in each of the gables. None of the windows, as well as the west doorway, which likely was converted from a window, appear to be original.

The 40'3" by 17'3" log crib had been supported on all sides by stone piers, which have been temporarily removed during the renovations. Except for the bottom logs, which exhibit half-dovetail notches, the members are joined at the corners and at the interior partition with saddle notches. The spaces between the logs were chinked with stones and mud and daubed with lime-based mortar, and covered on the interior by riven boards nailed over the gaps. The exterior logs do not appear to have been ever covered with siding. The last two ceiling joists at the west end of the building extend roughly 20" beyond the wall on the north, for an undetermined purpose.

The layout of the structure consists of two rooms of roughly equal size on the first floor, divided by an interrupted log medial wall abutting the stone chimney, and mirrored in the garret. The two regularly placed doorways on the façade provide access to the two down-

stairs rooms. The first-floor rooms are heated by the fireplaces centered on their interior walls. The alcoves to the north and south of the chimney base -- bounded by the masonry stack, the side walls, and the log partition -- are enclosed with vertical plank walls, each fitted with a doorway facing west. The roughly 3'8"-wide spaces served as a closet on the north and an enclosed stair way on the south leading from Room 1 to the garret. The ladder staircase in the northwest corner of Room 2 ran along the north wall. Both ladders are composed of circular sawn boards fastened with either wire or mature cut nails, and likely are replacements for the originals.

The two-room layout with separate exterior doorways conforms to the standard duplex arrangement for slave quarters. Simple ladder stairs provided access from the downstairs rooms to the unheated chambers above. The physical evidence in the form of cut ceiling joists indicates that the staircase in Room 2 was either altered or added altogether, while the location of the staircase in Room 1 is more likely to be an original feature. The ceiling joists are exposed and the joists, the walls, and the underside of the floorboards are whitewashed.

The garret is divided by a vertical board partition, which completely separated the rooms at one time but which now has an unfinished opening enabling access. The rafters and the collars are exposed, and there is no evidence of whitewashed surfaces. The collars are set 6'9" above the floor, which provides ample head room. The gable windows are not original, but they may have replaced smaller earlier versions. While unheated and apparently unfinished, the access from the first floor rooms combined with the substantial windows and the generous head room indicates that the garret was likely occupied at least seasonally beginning sometime in the 19th century, if not originally.

Open shed-roofed porches were added on the south (4 bays) and west elevations (1 bay), and the doorway in the west wall provided access via the porch to Room 1. Records indicate that the east room was used as a doctor's office during the 1920s-40s. The porches have been removed as part of the current repairs, but the owners plan on replicating and reinstalling them.

Bibliography:

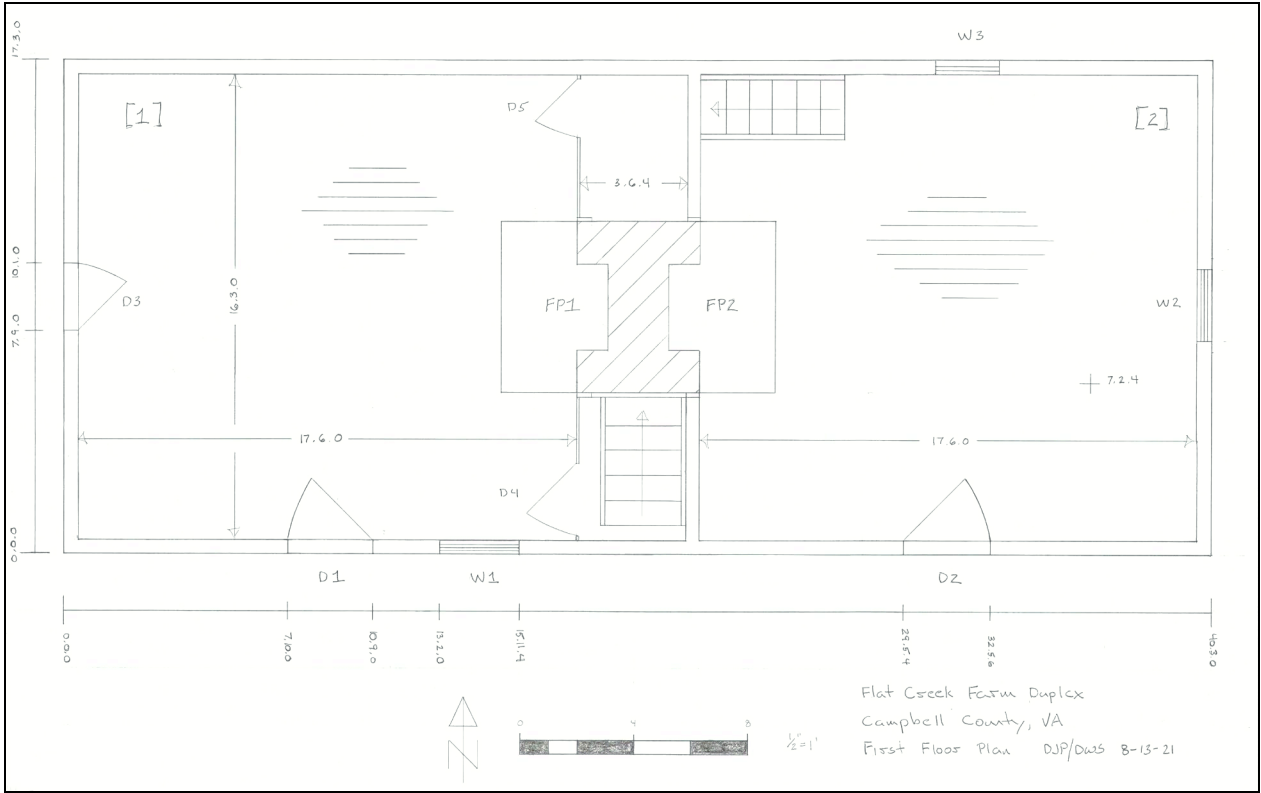
Flat Creek Rural Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (2020).

Steven Wood and Renee Andrews, *Flat Creek Slave Quarter Plans*, Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest (1994).

Principal Construction Type: Log

One and One-Half Story

Footprint:



Number of Rooms: 4

- Dimensions:** (1) West: 17.5.3 (E-W, to chimney face) x 16.3.1 (N-S), 7.2.1 (H, bottom of ceiling joist)
 (2) East: 17.7.0 (E-W) x 16.3.1 (N-S), 7.2.2 (H, bottom of ceiling joist)
 (3) West: 17.5.3 (E-W) x 16.3.1 (N-S), 6.9.0 (H, bottom of rafter collar)
 (4) East: 17.7.0 (E-W) x 16.3.1 (N-S), 6.9.0 (H, bottom of rafter collar)

Doors: 5

	Rm. 1, S (1)	Rm. 2, S (2)	Rm. 1, W (3)
Type:	3 boards and 2 chamfered battens	3 boards and 2 chamfered battens	Board and batten
Dimensions:	3.1.0 (W) x 6.0.0 (H), 0.1.1 thick	3.0.2 (W) x 5.10.2 (H), 0.1.1 thick	2.4.2 (W) x 4.11.0 (H)
Hardware:	Wrought strap hinges w/wrought dog nails; on pintles	Wrought strap hinges w/wrought dog nails; on pintles	Note mixture of wire & machine-cut nails
Swing:	In	In	In
Replacement:	Original	Original	Later doorway insertion

	Rm. 1, Closet (4)	Rm. 1, Stairs (5)
Type:	Unknown, removed	Board and batten (3 vertical boards, note overlapping battens)
Dimensions:	2.2.2 (W) x 6.4.2 (H)	2.6.0 (W) x 6.0.2 (H)
Hardware:	Unknown, largely removed (note hasp on south side)	Wrought strap hinges; on pintles
Swing:	In (into Room 1)	In (into Room 1)
Replacement:	Unknown; closet located on north side of chimney, in room's NE corner	Later construction, stairs located on south side of chimney, in room's SE corner

Door 2 is composed of hand-planed boards. Pintle holes exist on both sides of the doorway, indicating that the door has been moved over time. The door frame on the east side is pegged to the wall logs, while the frame on the opposite side is secured with large iron spikes.

Windows: 5

	Rm. 1, S (1)	Rm. 2, N (2)	Rm. 2, E (3)
Type:	Unknown, removed	Single, fixed sash (removed)	6/6, double-hung sash
Dimensions:	2.8.3 (W) x 2.7.2 (H)	1.8.0 (W) x 1.4.0 (H)	2.5.0 (W) x 3.8.0 (E)
Hardware:	None	None	None
Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing:	Later changed to an exterior slide window	Later insertion, framed with wire nails	Modern replacement

EXTERIOR

Foundation:

Masonry Piers: Stone

Number: Original number and details unknown, removed prior to this recording.

Porch: (2) The porches had been removed at the time of the recording. An earlier, larger porch ran along the south façade, measuring 4.2.0 wide (N-S) and 30.6.0 long (E-

W). A later, smaller porch was centered on the west wall, measuring 7.5.0 wide (E-W) by 12.2.0 long (N-S), and which may be associated with the doorway that likely was inserted to replace a window at this end of the building.

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable

Roof Covering: Standing seam sheet metal (originally, wood shingles)

Roof Framing:

Exposed: Yes

Form: Common Rafters

Rafter Number: 12 – spaced roughly on 2.0.0 centers

Rafter Dimensions: 0.3.0 x 0.4.0

Collar Ties: Yes

Collar Dimensions: 0.2.0 x 0.3.0

Method of Joining: Face nailed, with 2 machine-cut nails at each end

Height from Roof Peak: 2.6.2 (to collar bottom)

Height to Floor: 6.9.0 (from collar bottom)

Most of the rafter pairs are butted at the peak, except for the 3 pairs near the chimney in Room 3, which are half-lapped and pegged.

The roofing boards measure 1.0.0 to 1.4.0 wide and are sash sawn. Small cut nails protude through these boards, indicating the former wooden shingles.

Building Height: (center of east wall)

Ground to Peak: 19.10.0

Bottom of bottom log to Peak: 17.3.0

Walls:

Log:

Dimensions: 0.5.0 – 0.6.0 (W) x 0.10.0 – 1.3.0 (H, mostly ~ 1.0.0)

Finish: Hewn – debarked (round tops and bottoms)

Notching: V – for most logs; Half dovetail for bottom logs

Chinking: Composite (stones & mud), with some wood. Gaps between logs covered on the interior with riven wood clapboards.

The log knee wall in the garret measures about 1.10.0 high.

Joists: (14) – spaced at roughly 2.7.0 centers -- 0.4.0 wide x 0.7.0 high -- sashsawn

Chimney(s):

Chimney (1):

Material: Stone (note cap molding)

Location: Interior – Center

Height: Not accessible

The upper portion of the chimney is confined to Room 3, with the central partition located directly behind it, to the east. At the floor level, the chimneystack measures 3.8.2 (E-W) x 6.2.0 (N-S). At a height of 3.5.0 above the floor, the chimneystack steps back and measures 3.0.0 (E-W) x 3.10.0 (N-S).

INTERIOR

Wall Framing: Log

Wall Finish: Whitewash

The garret partition consists of vertical, circular-sawn boards attached to the rafters and the top log of the medial wall with machine-cut nails.

The closet in Room 1 is constructed with sashsawn boards measuring 1.0.0 wide (0.0.3 thick), which have been whitewashed. The studs used to frame the west wall also are sashsawn and were affixed to the ceiling joist with machine-cut nails.

Fireplace (1): Center, on east wall (Room 1)

Fireplace Material: Stone

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: 3.8.0 (E-W) x 6.2.3 (N-S)

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 3.8.0 (W) x 3.2.2 (H) x 2.0.0 (D)

Hearth Material: Stone, with concrete covering

Hearth Dimensions: 3.0.0 (E-W) x 6.9.2 (N-S)

Fireplace (2): Center, on west wall (Room 2)

Fireplace Material: Stone

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: Flush with wall, 6.2.3 wide (N-S)

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 3.0.0 (E-W) x 2.10.2 (H) x 1.1.0 (D)

Hearth Material: Stone

Hearth Dimensions: 2.7.3 (E-W) x 6.0.0 (N-S)

Stairs: Yes, later insertions in Rooms 1 and 2 but possibly original locations.

Type: Enclosed Ladder (Room 1) -- Ladder (Room 2)

Stairwell Dimensions: Room 1 (3.0.0 x 4.8.0); Room 2 (3.2.0 x 5.0)

Number of Treads: Room 1 (4); Room 2 (6)

The open ladder stair in Room 2 had been removed at the time of the recording, but rested against the north wall. Circular-sawn blocks were used to support the treads, with wire nails used to affix the blocks. When constructed, the builders cut off the first ceiling joist out from the medial wall to accommodate these stairs. They also inserted a header (running east-west) on the south side of the stair

opening, with the header attached at the medial wall and held in place from by a large iron hasp affixed to the second ceiling joist out from the medial wall.

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor: Wood

Floorboards Dimension: 0.10.0 – 0.11.0 wide (Room 3).

Dating:

Dendrochronology Date: NA

Other Date: ca. 1840-60

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Sash Sawn – riven clapboard

Nails: Mature machine cut