

Virginia Slave Housing Project

Building Name: Oak Grove Farm Log Duplex

Evidence Type: Extant

Site ID: NA

City or Vicinity: Gordonsville

County: Orange

State: Virginia

Investigators: Douglas W. Sanford, Dennis J. Pogue

Institutions: Virginia Slave Housing Project

Project Start: 1/24/22; 3/3/22

Project End: 3/3/22

Summary Description:

The outbuilding at the Oak Grove property is a one-story, two-cell, log structure, with a moderately pitched side-gable roof, supported on a rubble stone foundation. The footprint measures 32'3" x 16'11", and the plan consists of two equal-sized rooms flanking a center chimney. The chimney has a stone base and brick stack, and serves a substantial fireplace with a raised stone hearth in each room. The south-facing façade has a symmetrical fenestration, with a doorway near each corner flanking two regularly spaced single-sash, six-light windows. Two similar windows are located in the rear wall and another is centered on the east wall; a four-light sash window is located off-center in each gable. The attic is unheated and unfinished and was originally accessed via a steep ladder stair rising near the front corner in each room. The original wood shingle roof has been replaced with standing seam metal.

The structure underwent a major campaign of repairs in recent years, which entailed replacing many of the lower wall logs, rebuilding the fireplaces and hearths, installing new joists and a plywood deck for the floor, removing the first-floor partition, and likely replacing all of the windows and rehangng the doors. The stair in the west room has been removed and the one on the east has been rebuilt and enlarged. The building was surveyed by Ann Miller in 1988, when she recorded that both stairs leading to the attic were in place and a frame partition wall divided the rooms on the first floor at the chimney. In addition to replacing a number of logs, especially prevalent in the north wall, the foundation was likely altered in relation to the grade and larger dimension logs were installed to accommodate the change.

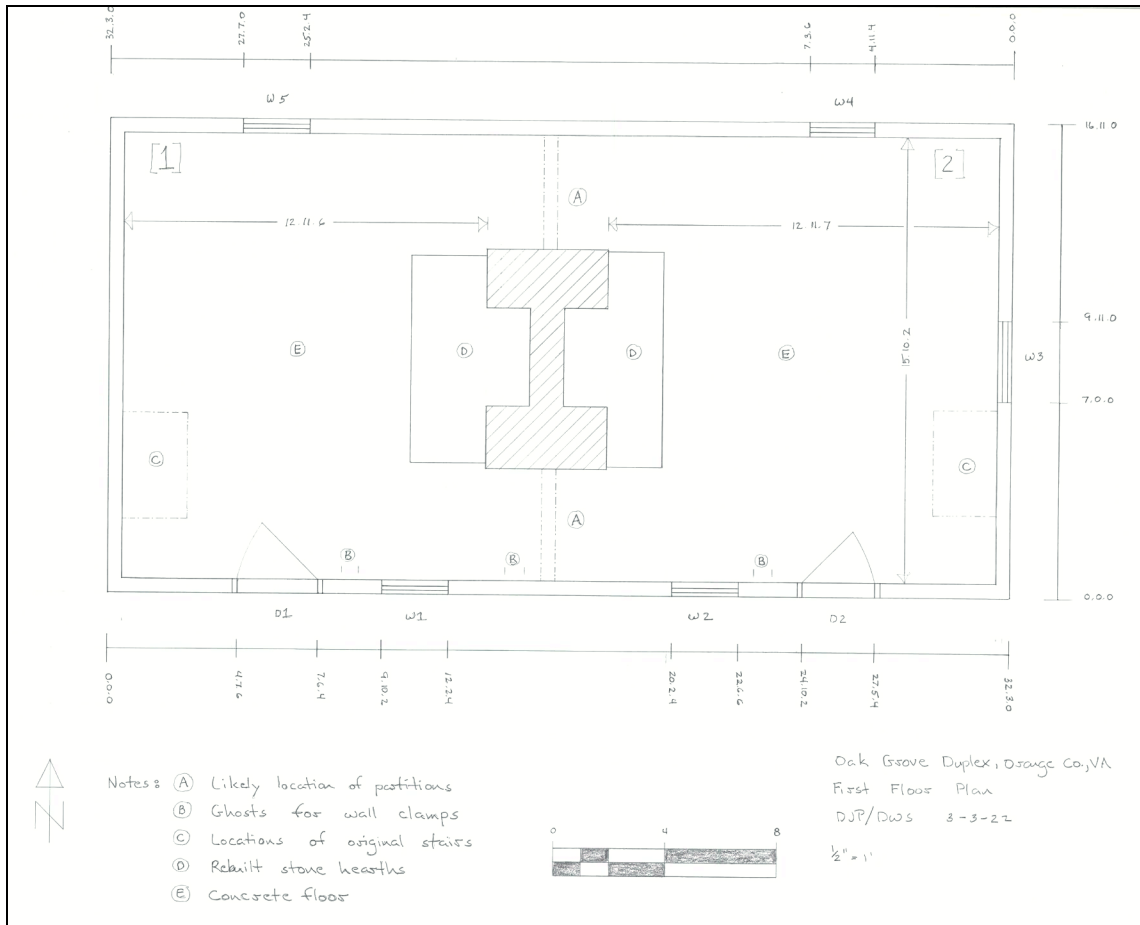
There is no clear evidence for a central partition in the garret, other than some suggestive nail holes which are not aligned in a consistent pattern. The fact that each room had a set of stairs to reach the garret, along with whitewash on the surfaces in the west room and none in the east room, indicates that the space was likely divided. The whitewash in the west room reaches the height of the rafter collars, but there is no indication of any type of ceiling. Neither of the garret rooms were heated, and the single windows at each end appear to be later insertions, suggesting that the garret had no arrangements for natural lighting and ventilation until later in the building's history, likely after the Civil War.

Bibliography: Ann Miller, *Antebellum Orange* (1988:66).

Principal Construction Type: Log

One Story – With Garret

Footprint:



Number of Rooms: 4: 2 down, 2 up

Dimensions:

(1) Downstairs, west: 15.9.2 (N-S) x 12.11.6 (E-W, to face of fireplace), 6.4.0 (H, to bottom of ceiling joist);

(2) Downstairs, east: 15.10.0 (N-S) x 12.11.7 (E-W, to face of fireplace), 6.2.3 (H, to bottom of ceiling joist);

(3) Upstairs west, estimate: 15.9 (N-S) x 12.11 (E-W), 6.1.0 (H, bottom of collar);

(4) Upstairs east, estimate: 15.10.0 (N-S) x 12.11 (E-W), 6.1.0 (H, bottom of collar).

Doors: 2

| | Rm. 1, S (1) | Rm. 2, S (2) |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Type: | Board and batten; 4 vertical tongue-and-groove boards, 3 battens | Board and batten; 4 vertical tongue-and-groove boards, 3 battens |
| Dimensions: | 2.10.2 (W) x 5.8.0 (H), 0.0.3 thick | 2.6.2 (W) x 5.7.3 (H), 0.0.3 thick |
| Hardware: | 3 knuckle butt hinges; battens with clinched machine-cut nails | None (removed); door nailed & screwed into place |
| Swing: | In | In (formerly) |
| Replacement: | Yes, but earlier door, trimmed to fit modern framing | Yes, but earlier door, trimmed to fit modern framing |

Windows: 7

| | Rm. 1, S (1) | Rm. 2, S (2) | Rm. 1, N (3) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Type: | Fixed single sash, 3/3 | Fixed single sash, 3/3 | Fixed single sash, 3/3 |
| Dimensions: | 2.4.0 (W) x 1.11.0 (H) | 2.4.0 (W) x 1.11.0 (H) | 2.4.0 (W) x 1.11.0 (H) |
| Hardware: | None | None | None |
| Shuttered/Slide/Swing: | Fixed; modern replacement | Fixed; modern replacement | Fixed; modern replacement |

| | Rm. 2, N (4) | Rm. 2, E (5) | Rm. 3, W (6) |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Type: | Fixed single sash, 3/3 | Fixed single sash, 3/3 | Fixed single sash, 2/2 |
| Dimensions: | 2.4.0 (W) x 1.11.0 (H) | 2.10.3 (W) x 2.3.3 (H) | 2.0.2 (W) x 2.4.0 (H) |

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Hardware: | None | None | None |
| Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing: | Fixed; modern replacement | Fixed; modern replacement | Replacement sash for a window later inserted into the gable end wall |

Rm. 4, E (7)

| | |
|---|--|
| Type: | Fixed single sash, 2/2 |
| Dimensions: | 2.0.0 (W) x 2.4.1 (H) |
| Hardware: | None |
| Shuttered/ Slide/ Swing: | Replacement sash for a window later inserted into the gable end wall |

EXTERIOR

Foundation: Mixture of intermittent field stone (on north, west, and east sides) and stone corner piers. This feature was not measured since it has been rebuilt and raised in the modern/recent era. The foundation increases in height (above ground) from west (~ 0.6.0) to east (~ 3.0.0) to accommodate the sloping terrain.

Shed/Porch: No

Roof:

Roof Form: Gable

Roof Covering: Standing seam sheet metal

Roof Framing:

Exposed: Yes

Form: Common rafters; sashsawn, connected with mortise and tenon joints and fastened with pegs at the peak.

Rafter Number: 17 rafter pairs – 8 in each garret room, 1 split pair at the chimney stack; empty lap joints for collars in the central pair related to reworking the chimney.

Rafter Dimensions: 0.2.3 - 0.3.0 (W) x 0.3.3 - 0.4.0 (H)

Rafter feet nailed to flat false plate (2" x 8"); false plate pegged to ceiling joists and end wall logs.

Collar Ties: Yes

Collar Dimensions: 0.2.3 - 0.3.0 (W) x 0.3.3 - 0.4.0 (H)

Method of Joining: Half-lapped and spiked with 2 machine-cut nails at each end.

Height from Roof Peak: 2.11.0 (to bottom of collar)

Height to Floor: 6.1.0 (from bottom of collar)

The roofing boards are sash sawn and vary in width from 0.8.2 to 1.1.0, but most are wider, with gaps of about 3 inches between boards. Some boards have beveled edges, other edges are straight. Small, machine-cut nails protruding through the boards indicate the earlier wood shingle roof.

Building Height:

@ SW corner

Ground to Bottom of Top Log: 6.1.2

Ground to Top of Eave: 7.1.1

Ground to Apex: 16.1.0 (at west gable end)

@ SE corner

Ground to Bottom of Top Log: 9.1.2

Ground to Top of Eave: 9.11.3

Ground to Apex: 18.11.2 (at east gable end)

Walls:

Log:

Dimensions: For remaining, upper original logs, 0.5.0 – 0.6.2 (W) x 0.10.0 – 1.0.0 (H).

Finish: Hewn flat sides, debarked (rounded tops and bottoms)

Notching: V

Chinking: Unknown, removed; red clay daub noted on interior of building's SE corner.

Lapped, beaded weatherboards attached with cut nails on west gable; beaded rake board.

Chimney(s):

Chimney (1): N.B. Chimney base repaired/replaced, with original fireplaces and hearths removed and rebuilt.

Material: Stone, with brick stack

Location: Interior – Center

Height: inaccessible

Within the garret the brick chimney stack rises above the stone chimney base, and measures 2.10.0 (E-W) x 2.10.0 (N-S).

INTERIOR

Wall Framing: Exposed - log

Wall Finish: Whitewash (Rooms 1, 2)

The log crib was assembled in an unusual manner, using an alternate method of binding together the wall logs. The builders did not adopt the practice of drilling holes and inserting vertical pegs to pin together the log courses. In three locations spaced along the interior of the south wall, ghost marks with associated holes for pegs are visible. This suggests that in lieu of the vertical pegs, boards were attached spanning the height of the wall, with pegs inserted at intervals to connect each row of logs. Most of the logs on the north wall have been replaced, so similar evidence that presumably existed there does not survive.

Pegs were used to attach the false plate to the joists and unusually large pegs were used to connect the upper logs at the corners, which likely relates to the unusual approach to securing the walls. The corners are joined with V notches up to the top wall logs, which are oversized and hewn square to receive the lapped, squared end girt and the ceiling joists. The joists project roughly 6½" past the wall line and support a 2" x 8" flat false plate. In all but two instances the plate is attached to the joists using wood pegs, which project in most places well beyond the lower edge of the joist. At the corners, pegs penetrate through the top end logs into the log below; at the SE corner a second peg is visible penetrating into the next log as well. The joists are spaced so that they do not align with the rafter pairs, which are each attached to the plate with two substantial mature cut nails. The open eave is the original feature, and a wide board is attached to the top wall logs on the interior to close off the opening.

Joists: The spacing between ceiling joists increases from west to east, starting at 2.4.0 between the west gable end wall and the 1st joist, then 2.6.0, 2.9.0, and 2.10.0 at the joist near the chimney.

Fireplace (1): Room 1, Center – east end wall.

Fireplace Material: Stone

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: 5.1.0 (E-W) x 7.8.0 (N-S), unclear as to extent within room, given removal of central partition

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 3.6.0 (W) x 3.1.2 (H) x 1.8.2 (D)

Hearth Material: Stone (*rebuilt in modern era*)

Hearth Dimensions: 7.4.0 x 2.8.4

Fireplace (2): Room 2, Center – west end wall

Fireplace Material: Stone

Fireplace Overall Dimensions: 5.1.0 (E-W) x 7.8.0 (N-S), unclear as to extent within room, given removal of central partition

Fireplace Opening Dimensions: 3.6.0 (W) x 3.0.0 (H) x 1.7.0 (D)

Hearth Material: Stone (*rebuilt in modern era*)

Hearth Dimensions: 7.7.2 x 2.0.0

Stairs: Yes (in Room 1, SW corner), a modern/recent replacement. Stairs in Room 2, SE corner have been removed.

Type: Ladder

Stairwell Dimensions: 1.11.0 x 9.1.0

Number of Treads: NA

Stair Tread Dimensions: NA

Patches in garret flooring indicate original dimensions of stairways: Room 1, 3.9.4; Room 2, 3.8.4 x approx.. 2.4.

Subfloor Pit: No

Floor: Wood – 1st story floor joists and boards removed as part of recent renovation, with replacement flooring of plywood.

Floorboards Dimension: Garret – range from 0.9.0 to 1.2.0

Dating:

Dendrochronology Date: NA

Other Date: Ca. 1830-50

Dating Evidence:

Saw Marks: Hewn logs, sash sawn rafters and collars

Nails: Mature machine cut

Notes

Exterior

Compass measurement taken at the SW corner, 345⁰ NW.

Replacement of wall logs during the recent renovation: North wall with 4 replacement logs at the lower level, with earlier logs surviving above and between two windows and the NW and NE corners. East gable end wall has 3 lower replacement logs, with 3 earlier logs surviving above. South wall has 3 lower replacement logs, with 3 earlier logs surviving above. All the earlier logs survive between Door 1 and the building's SW corner. West gable end wall has all of its earlier logs surviving, with some repair work.

The recent replacement work for the log walls resulted in the complete reframing of the door and window openings on the first story. In general, the current openings appear to approximate the locations and dimensions of the earlier doors and windows. On the south (front) façade, there are ghost marks for earlier trim boards above each window. The boards preserved the log's earlier surface, which was whitewashed. The board above Window 1 (Room 1 to the west) measures 3.4.1 (W) x 0.7.2 (H); while the board above Window 2 (Room 2 to the east) measures 3.7.2 (W) x 0.8.0 (H).

Interior

Central partition walls: Given the removal of the 1st-floor partition walls at the chimney and the subsequent rebuilding of the fireplaces, hearths, and the framing around the chimney at the ceiling level, there is limited evidence of the partitions. There are some suggestive nail holes on the west side of the partial ceiling joist on the north side of the chimney. On the south wall there is a small ghost mark (0.2.0 wide) and square nail holes for a framing member at the partial joist that is about even with the chimney's west face (Room 1). On the north wall, there is a ghost mark (1.1.2 wide) for a board, situated near and to the east of the partial joist that is about even with the chimney's west face (Room 1). Further support for these ghost marks indicating a room division comes from Room 1's later wall covering of cloth affixed with flat head wire nails, which stops at the western side of the ghost marks.

Evidence for stairs in Room 2, near the SE corner, between the east gable end wall and first ceiling joist out to the west, consists of a patch in the garret floor. On the east side of the ceiling joist is a circular-sawn board attached with wire nails, likely used to support the boards for the patch. This board likely covers evidence for the earlier stairs' header, at the northern end of the opening.