Bronaugh-Bibb-Libbey House
1408 35th Street, N.W.
(Georgetown)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-209

HABS,
DC,
GEO,
145-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. DC-209

BRONAUGH-BIBB-LIBBEY HOUSE

HABS, DC, GEO, 145-

Location: 1408 35th Street, NW (Georgetown), Washington, D.C. (formerly known as 59 Fayette Street).

Present Owner and Occupant: Nan Tucker McEvoy (1969)

Present Use: Private residence (1969)

Significance: The home of a colorful nineteenth-century political figure, this house demonstrates the successful integration of an earlier structure with a later, more imposing addition. The facade is a good example of frame construction of its period.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1817, rear two-story portion; front two-and-a-half story portion built third quarter of the nineteenth century.

2. Architect: None known.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1247, Lot 830 (formerly Square 77, Lot 110 in Threlkeld's Addition to Georgetown). Its original address was 59 Fayette Street. The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1816

| | |
|---|---|
| John Threlkeld<br>to<br>John W. Bronaugh | Deed September 19, 1816<br>Recorded October 18, 1816<br>Liber AM-37, folio 20 |

All of Lot 110 (60 ft. by 120 ft. deep)

1819

| | |
|---|---|
| John W. Bronaugh<br>to<br>John Mountz | Deed of Trust April 3, 1819<br>Recorded September 25, 1819<br>Liber AW-47, folio 82 |

1820

| | |
|---|---|
| Tench Ringgold<br>(Marshal)<br>to | Deed July 18, 1820<br>Recorded August 17, 1820<br>Liber AZ-50, folio 77 |

Jeremiah Bronaugh

Sale of all of Lot 110 under writ of "fiere facias", which requires that a sheriff levy and make the amount of a judgment from the goods and chattels of the judgment debtor.

1825

| | |
|---|---|
| Jeremiah Bronaugh<br>to<br>Richard Smith | Deed of Trust December 24, 1825<br>Recorded May 13, 1826<br>Liber W.B. 17, folio 46 |

All of Lot 110 used a collateral to secure loan of $720 from Bank of U.S.

1833

| | |
|---|---|
| Jeremiah Bronaugh<br>Richard Smith, Tr.<br>Tench Ringgold<br>(Marshal)<br>William W. Corcoran<br>to<br>Bank of the United States | Deed August 17, 1833<br>Recorded September 20, 1833<br>Liber W.B. 43, folio 487 |

(Corcoran bond bought when he was agent of Bank of the United States, at public sale. Involved was Lot 110 and adjoining Lot 100.)

1836

| | |
|---|---|
| Bank of the United States<br>to<br>Rebecca Ford | Deed September 10, 1836<br>Recorded October 13, 1836<br>Liber W.B. 60, folio 183 |

1854

| | |
|---|---|
| Rebecca Ford<br>to<br>Rebecca Bibb<br>(Later known as Mary R. Bibb and Mary Rebecca Bibb) | Deed December 28, 1854<br>Recorded July 24, 1855<br>Liber JAS 101, folio 156 |

All of Lot 110 and adjoining Lot 109, also part of adjoining Lot 100

Note: Later, Rebecca Bibb's title to property was proved defective and new deed had to be procured from Rebecca Ford's heirs-at-law to clear title. (See Liber 705, folio 216, Deed Jan. 3, 1873, Recorded Feb. 1, 1873.)

1869

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary Rebecca Bibb<br>to<br>Joseph Libbey<br>and<br>John E. Libbey | Deed November 12, 1869<br>Recorded November 15, 1869<br>Liber 601, folio 307 |

North part of Lot 110. Includes sewer privileges. Arrangements include prohibition of any building fronting on 35th St. from 22 ft. west of the building line; also prohibits obstruction of lights.

1871

| | |
|---|---|
| John G. Ford<br>Sarah E. Ford<br>Susan E. Ford<br>Anna M. Ford<br>Mary R. Moser<br>Philip S. Moser<br>Elinor Ford and husband, Athanasius<br>(all heirs of Mary Ann Ford under the Will of Rebecca Ford)<br>to<br>Mary R. Bibb (alias Rebecca) | Deed December 14, 1871<br>Recorded September 10, 1872<br>Liber 696, folio 287 |

To correct Deed in Liber Jas 101, folio 156. Involves all of Lot 110 and part of Lot 109, adjoining. Rebecca Bibb devised to Mary Ann Ford and Stephen Ford. Mary Ann died, leaving as heirs-at-law: John G. Ford, Sarah E. Ford, Anna M. Ford, Mary R. Moser, Susan E. Ford, and Athanasius Ford.

1873

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary Rebecca Bibb<br>to<br>Joseph Libbey<br>John Edward Libbey<br>tenants in common | Deed January 3, 1873<br>Recorded February 1, 1873<br>Liber 705, folio 216 |

North 30 feet of Lot 110. Conveys all interest in same terms as in Liber 601, folio 307. Corrects error.

| | |
|---|---|
| Joseph Libbey and<br>wife, Mary R.<br>John E. Libbey and<br>wife, Emily F.<br>to | Deed March 26, 1873<br>Recorded March 28, 1873<br>Liber 715, folio 15 |

Mary Jane McGill,
wife of John D.

North 30 feet of Lot 110 and part of adjoining Lot 100. Consideration - $4500. With the right of water course or sewer in and through north part of Lot 100 into the arch near said lot. McGill to build sewer, keep in good order and permit the owner of the other part of Lot 110 to connect with sewer, paying reasonable share for repairs, provided: No house or building shall be erected nearer than 22 feet from Fayette St. until after November 12, 1899, and that "No obstruction, stoppage or darking of the lights of the house on the premises next north of the above premises within that distance of 22 feet from Fayette St."

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary Jane McGill and husband, John D. to Frederick W. Jones, Tr. Frank Libbey, Tr. | Deed of Trust March 27, 1873 Recorded March 28, 1873 Liber 715, folio 24 |

North 30 ft. of Lot 110. Trust of $3600, with four notes of $900 each for one to four years. To Joseph Libbey and John E. Libbey.

1877

| | |
|---|---|
| Frederick W. Jones, Tr. Frank Libbey, Tr. to Joseph Libbey John Edward Libbey tenants in common | Deed May 28, 1877 Recorded May 31, 1877 Liber 857, folio 157 |

North 30 ft. of Lot 110. Sale for default under trust. Sale held May 14, 1877 for $3350.

1886

| | |
|---|---|
| Joseph Libbey died July 20, 1886, without leaving a Will. His heirs-at-law were his children: | Register of Wills Administration 12-2406 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Robert Libbey<br>Mary Libbey<br>Eleanor Libbey | adults |
| Marcia Libbey<br>Louisa Libbey | minors |

| | |
|---|---|
| Request for distribution of all of Joseph Libbey's property (including the north 30 feet of Lot 110) to be divided among the children. | November 13, 1886<br>Equity Cause 10282 |

1887

| | |
|---|---|
| Partition of Joseph Libbey estate occurred. Vested as tenants in common with free title to several pieces of property, including north 30 ft. of Lot 110, were:<br><br>Robert Libbey<br>Eleanor Libbey<br>Mary Libbey | January 14, 1887<br>Equity Cause 10368<br>Docket 26 |

Division of property by the Commissioners gave the north 30 ft. of Lot 110 to Mary R. Libbey Chapin. (The share of the property that Robert M. Libbey received was worth $1100 more than that of any other of the children, so he was ordered to pay $220 to each of his four sisters.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Robert M. Libbey<br>to<br>John Edward Libbey | Deed of Trust October 28, 1887<br>Recorded October 28, 1887<br>Liber 1280, folio 351 |

Assigns power to his uncle for two years to care for his estate--personal, real and mixed--to sell, rent, invest, etc.

1888

| | |
|---|---|
| John Edward Libbey<br>to<br>Robert M. Libbey | Deed February 15, 1888<br>Recorded February 21, 1888<br>Liber 1306, folio 206 |

Uncle releases and conveys all of Robert's estate --real and mixed--back to him.

1892

| | |
|---|---|
| The petition for partial "vacation" of decree dated August 21, 1887 shows that trustees have not yet sold | May 21, 1892 |

property and that Louisa
Libbey (daughter of Josiah
and one of his heirs-at-law)
died without leaving a Will.

Louisa's heir-at-law were:

Mary R.L. Chapin
Eleanor H. Griffin, nee Libbey
Robert N. Libbey
Marcia M. Libbey

Heirs requested that real estate be released from decree.

1895

| | |
|---|---|
| Order to dismiss cause of 1892 petition was issued. | July 15, 1895 |

1923

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary R.L. Chapin<br>to<br>Francesco Lo Bianco and wife, Pauline Adams<br>joint tenants | Deed March 10, 1923<br>Recorded March 12, 1923<br>Liber 4915, folio 194 |

North 30 ft. of Lot 110, now Lot 830. Pauline Adams Lo Bianco died. Francesco married again. His second wife's name was Ruth K. They became tenants by entirety.

1954

| | |
|---|---|
| Francesco Lo Bianco and wife, Ruth K.<br>to<br>Nan Tucker McEvoy | Deed November 30, 1954<br>Recorded December 6, 1954<br>Liber 10325, folio 265 |

Lot 830, with water and sewer rights, which were granted on March 26, 1873, still in force.

4. Original plans and construction:

According to tax records, there was a two-story house valued at $500 on the lot during 1818-1819. It is probable that this was what is now the rear portion of the present dwelling, constructed by John Bronaugh shortly after he purchased the property in 1816.

5. Alteration and additions:

Between 1865 and 1870, Lot 110 was assessed with "Improvements--3-story brick and frame dwelling--$1000". This refers to the front portion of the dwelling, presumably added to the earlier two-story structure by the Bibbs after they became owners of the house in 1854.

Subsequent remodellings have included the addition of entrance steps, replacement of windows in rear ell, replacement of mantels, installation of modern lighting, heating and plumbing fixtures.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The land on which this house stands was part of John Threlkeld's extensive holdings. He sold it in 1816 to John Bronaugh, another large landowner.

The existence of a two-story frame house on the lot in 1818-19 indicates that Bronaugh built here soon after his purchase. In 1819 Bronaugh, because of financial difficulties, had to dispose of his property. Lot 110 was assigned to the Clerk of the Georgetown Corporation. For the next few years Bronaugh and his family tried, through a number of trusts and loans, to hold on to their property.

Bronaugh's efforts, however, were unsuccessful. By the 1830s Georgetown's trade had declined and many property owners were feeling the economic pinch. In August of 1833 Lot 110, along with some adjoining property of Bronaugh's, was conveyed at public sale to the Bank of the United States.

Rebecca Ford, the next owner of the house, is reputed to have been a schoolmistress. It is not clear whether she occupied the house. In 1854 she deeded the property to her daughter, Mary Rebecca Bibb, wife of Judge George M. Bibb. In the following year's City Directory Bibb is listed at 55 Fayette Street, a house just south of 59 Fayette Street which the Bibbs also owned (City Directory, 1855, p.2). Presumably the two neighboring dwellings were required to house the Bibb's seventeen children. Between 1865 and 1870, Mrs. Bibb owned a considerable amount of property of Fayette (35th) Street and Second (O) Street (Record Group 351, National Archives, "Records of the City of Georgetown (D.C.), 1800-1879", Roll 11).

Judge Bibb was a well-known, colorful figure. He served in the Kentucky legislature and twice represented Kentucky in the United States Senate. He became Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals in Kentucky and later was Chancellor of the Court of Chancery in Louisville. In 1822-23 he pleaded before the Virginia Legislature and the United States Supreme Court in land claim cases with Henry Clay. In 1844 President Tyler appointed Bibb Secretary of the Treasury. Although he went out of office with

Tyler on March 4, 1845, Bibb remained in Washington for the rest of his life, practicing before District courts and serving as chief clerk in the Attorney General's Office. Judge Bibb was also an accomplished gardener and enjoyed good salads. He died at the age of 81 (Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 2, p. 235).

John D. McGill, who owned the house from 1873 to 1877 and used it as security for a trust was proprietor of The Georgetown Courier (City Directory 1873, p. 605). The Libbeys, the next owners of the house, were a prominent Georgetown family. Joseph Libbey, the father of Joseph, John E. and Frank who were owners of the house, started his career as a carpenter. In 1829, he established his own lumber firm, Joseph Libbey and Son, on Water (K) Street near Congress (31st) Street (Libbey, p. 390). The Libbey family owned a great deal of property in Georgetown. Joseph built two house on the northeast corner of West (P) Street and Congress (31st) Street which were owned by the family for many years. He also built two houses on Congress Street for two of his many daughters (Ecker, p. 218).

Libbey's sons took over the management of the family lumber yard. John E. Libbey started the Congress Street Methodist Church in Georgetown. He built many homes, including three for his children. He also constructed the house at 3053 P Street which President Kennedy's parents rented at the time of their son's Inauguration (Interview with Miss Eleanor Cropley).

In 1923 Mary R. Libbey Chapin, Joseph's daughter, sold 1408 35th Street to Francesco Lo Bianco, a contractor, who lived at 3034 O Street. He rented the house a few years, first to a painter, and then to a laborer (City Directory, 1924, pp. 942, 1789, 1893; 1925, p. 810; 1928, pp. 1499, 2248). In 1930 the house was vacant, but the following year, Lo Bianco and his wife moved into the house and operated a real estate business at the same address. They shared the house for some time with George F. Hanowell, a decorator, who lived there and operated his business in the building (City Directory, 1930, p. 2107; 1931, pp. 2247, 751; 1932, p. 2200). By 1948 the Lo Bianco's were the sole inhabitants of the house, continuing to maintain their real estate business in their home until 1954 (City Directory, 1948, p. 698; 1954, pp. 83, 752). At that time the building was purchased by Nan Tucker McEvoy who continues to reside there.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Interview with Miss Eleanor Cropley (whose mother was a Libbey), 1968

Record Group 351, National Archives, "Records of the City of Georgetown (D.C.) 1800-1879: Assessment of Real and Personal Property". Microcopy 605, Roll 11 (1818-1819), Roll 12 (1865-1870)

b. Secondary and published sources

City Directories:

Ten Eyck's Washington and Georgetown Directory, 1855, p. 2

Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1878, p. 605

Boyd's Directory of Columbia Directory, 1924, pp. 942, 1789, 1893; 1925, pp. 810, 1956; 1928, pp. 1499, 2248; 1930, p. 2107; 1931, pp. 751, 2247; 1932, p. 2200.

Polk's Washington City Directory, 1948, p. 698; 1954, pp. 83, 752

Dictionary of American Biography. New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, Vol. 2, p. 235.

Ecker, Grace Dunlop, A Portrait of Old George Town. Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1951, p. 218.

Libbey, Charles T., The Libbey Family in America, 1602-1881. Portland, Maine: Privately printed by B. Thurston and Company, 1882, p. 390 (Microfilm Reading Room, Library of Congress).

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Set back from the street more than the other houses on this side of the street, this is a pleasant two-and-one-half-story frame house with mansard roof of the mid-nineteenth century. The rear ell appears to be the original part of the structure dating from 1817. Subsequent remodelings have kept the house livable while retaining its mid-nineteenth century appearance.

2. Condition of fabric: Good. Exterior in need of paint (1969).

B. Description of exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately 24'-0" by 26'-0" with a 30'-0" by 23'-0" ell on the rear. The front portion is two-and-one-half stories; the rear portion is two stories; there is a full basement. The facade is three bays wide.

2. Foundations: Brick.

3. Wall construction: Frame and clapboard construction. The 35th Street facade has shiplap siding, while the south side and rear have standard clapboards.

4. Porches: Front entrance has six brick risers with limestone treads leading up to a limestone landing, all of recent construction. There are two wood screened porches, one above the other, in the center of the south side.

5. Chimneys: One on the south wall of front portion, one centered in the rear addition.

6. Openings:

   a. Doors and doorways: Main entry is heavily molded. It has chamfered posts, carved scroll consoles, molded cornice with carved modillions, heavy bead around door and transom. There is a two-light transom over double doors which have two flat panels each, simple cyma moldings inside, and heavy projecting moldings outside.

   b. Windows and shutters: Windows in front portion are two-over-two-light double hung sash. In the rear, they are six-over-six-light double hung sash; however, these are twentieth-century replacements. First floor front shutters have three flat panels; second floor front shutters have wood louvers. All front windows have flat board surrounds with shaped heads and a flat backband; flat wood sills have shallow molded brackets at each side.

7. Roof:

   a. Shape and covering: The front portion has a mansard roof with hexagonal slates on the steep pitch and metal on the low pitch; the rear portion has a metal shed roof pitched toward the south.

   b. Framing: Wood, with ridge running north-south.

   c. Cornices: Wood with heavy brackets and modillions, and a very broad overhang.

   d. Dormers: Dormer windows are two-over-two-light double hung sash with arched tops. Dormers have wood eared architraves, segmental-arched metal roofs, and wood sides. There are three dormers across the front (east) side and three across the rear of the main block of the house.

C. Description of interior:

1. Floor plans:

   a. First floor: Entry hall at northeast corner, living room at southeast, dining room west of both, small porch to south of dining room, kitchen across west end.

   b. Second floor: Bath at northeast corner, bedroom at southeast, bedroom west of first bedroom with small porch to the south, another bedroom at west end with a bath at the southwest corner. The stair hall runs along the north wall from the front bath to the rear of the house.

   c. Third floor: Two bedrooms across the south, bath at the northeast corner, stair at northwest.

   d. Basement: Two large areas separated by 8" brick wall.

2. Stairways: Main stair ascends east to west along north wall to landing off which rear addition opens, then from west to east to second floor of main blcok. Stair to third floor repeats this pattern. Rear stair ascends from kitchen to second floor in west to east direction with winders at bottom. Basement stair is open wood utility stair under rear stair.

3. Flooring: Random width pine, wider in dining room; same painted black in middle upstairs bedroom; tile in baths; vinyl in basement rear; concrete in front basement.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster, pastel colors generally except middle bedroom which is dark blue.

5. Doors and doorways: Doors in general have four flat panels with quirked cyma moldings, except on third floor where they have shallow raised panels. There are a few modern six-panel doors, and glazed doors to porches.

6. Decorative features and trim: Living and dining room mantels have been replaced with simple wood moldings, black slate hearth and surround. Second floor front bedroom has an old mantel, possibly original, of simple design, un-molded except for a cyma reversa bed molding under the shelf. It has a hearth, surround, lining and jack arch of old molded brick. Doors and windows generally have a heavy molded mid-nineteenth century casing, a slightly narrower one of the same period occurs on the third floor, and some newer doors and windows have twentieth-century trim.

7. Hardware: Twentieth-century brass, some lever handles of French design in principal rooms.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating: Radiators; boiler in basement.

b. Lighting: Electrified crystal chandeliers in living room dining room, not original to house; no other notable fixtures.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Situated on the west side of 35th Street, just north of O Street, this house has a very deep front yard which sets it apart from most of the other houses on the street.

2. Enclosures: A variety of wood fences enclose the rear yard, while the front yard is enclosed by shrubbery and other planting.

3. Walks: Front walk is random flagstone; side covered terrace has basket-weave brick paving.

4. Landscaping: The front yard is treated as a gravelled parking court with shrubbery enclosure, while the entire rear yard is covered with tanbark except for brick-edged planting areas. A variety of flowering shrubs and fruit trees surround this informal terrace area.

Prepared by The Office of
Walter G. Peter, Jr., AIA
Architect
November 20, 1968

## PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of a project to record structures in the western part of the Georgetown Historic District in Washington, D.C. The project was conducted by the Commission of Fine Arts with the cooperation of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting documentation was donated to HABS by the Commission and published in 1970 in HABS Selection Number 6, "Georgetown Architecture - Northwest: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia". Research for the project was conducted by volunteers under the supervision of Ms. Nancy Black, staff member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Architectural information was prepared by the Office of Walter G. Peter.

The photographs were taken by J. Alexander. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS architectural historian Emily J. Harris in 1979.

ADDENDUM TO
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(Bibb House)
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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