

Merkel Farmstead, House
8570 Louella Lane
South Side of U. S. 64
Vicinity of Shiloh
Shiloh Valley Township
St. Clair County
Illinois

HABS No. IL-1191-A

HABS
ILL
82-SH1.V,
1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MERKEL FARMSTEAD, HOUSE

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character:

The Merkel House represents a substantial (two-story, double-pile structure with rear kitchen extension), brick dwelling constructed for a well-to-do German immigrant family during the late 1830s or 1840s. The five-bay facade is accentuated by the double-hung windows with their 6-over-6 sashes as well as the formal entranceways which is flanked by both side and overhead lights. The green shutters, once present on all the windows, have nearly all disappeared. Similarly, the once dominant chimneys, which were present in both the gable end walls, have been removed and replaced with a concrete block chimney attached to the front of the building. Although windows are present along the north gable end wall, they are conspicuously missing along the south gable wall. The plain brick structure, except for its decorative brick cornice, exhibits little decorative detail.

The rectangular kitchen wing pre-dates the large front portion of the building and originally was associated with an earlier (probably also brick) wing that was removed shortly after it was constructed. This kitchen wing is distinctive with its tall, northern brick wall, large work porch and shed roof. A single chimney stack exits the roof line.

2. Condition of Fabric:

The condition of the original house fabric is fair. All the brick walls are in good structural condition. Additionally, the metal roof is in fair condition. Unfortunately, the worst factor affecting this house is an active termite investation, which has done extensive damage. In areas, much of the wood floor and many of the interior studs have been completely eaten by the termites, which have infested even the second story walls and floor system. Besides the termite damage, the house has sat for many years without much maintenance.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions:

The front portion of the Merkel House measures 29'0" wide (east/west) and 42'-2" long (north/south). The rear kitchen extension measures 16'-2" wide (north/south; without the porch) and 26'-10" long (east/west). The total depth of the house is 55'-9" (east/west).

2. Foundations:

The perimeter foundations that support the Merkel House are of quarried limestone construction. Those supporting the earlier kitchen wing are 1'-9" in width while those supporting the later (front) portion of the building are approximately 1'-6" in width. The stone used in the construction of these foundations probably represents material acquired from a nearby, but unidentified, quarry.

It is within the foundation that the two episodes of construction associated with this building can most clearly be discerned. A utility hole cut into the basement wall within the coal room exposed the double foundation wall associated with this structure.

3. Walls:

The exterior walls of the Merkel House are of brick construction, laid in a common bond. Both the ground story and upstairs walls are approximately 1'-1" (three courses) in width. The common wall between the front portion of the building and the kitchen wing is 1'-5" (four courses) in width.

All openings within the kitchen wing are spanned by a tooled stone lintel and also have stone sills. In contrast, the openings in the front portion of building are spanned with wooden (oak) lintels and have wooden sills.

Although representing two separate episodes of construction, no clear joint in the brick work is present where the front and rear (kitchen wing) portions of building join. The brickwork associated with the construction of the newer front portion of the building was toothed into the existing brickwork to give the appearance of a single phase of construction.

The interior wall partitions, in both the kitchen wing and main block of the house, are of frame construction. The studs are either 3"x4" or 4"x4" circular sawn oak placed on approximate 24" centers. The space between the vertical studs has been infilled

with brick. Dividing the brick sections in thirds, two horizontal wood nailers have been laid into each of the brick sections. On the lower floor, this brick nogging has been laid with a lime mortar. Upstairs, the brick nogging has been laid without lime, using local silt loam soils. The exterior wall surfaces have been plastered directly onto the brick and stud surface without the aid of wooden laths. Plastering of the interior wall surfaces was conducted after the application of the window and door trim.

Plank wall partitions are also present within this house. The stairway leading to the basement was enclosed with variable width (3-1/2" to 6-1/2"), beaded, tongue-and-groove white pine boards (hand planed) placed vertically within the wall. This plank wall is an original feature of the house. In the upstairs, the west end of the hallway has been partitioned from the remainder of the hall to create a small room. This partition wall, which is not original to the house, was constructed using hand planed, beaded, tongue-and-groove boards approximately 12-16" wide. The pointed screws used to construct this wall suggest a construction date after the late 1840s. Similarly, the large upstairs room south of the stairhall was partitioned by a plank wall, now no longer present. Although not original to the house, this plank wall was constructed fairly early in the history of the house and removed probably during the early to middle twentieth century.

4. Structural System, Framing:

Within the front portion of the house, the first floor framing consists of circular sawn oak joists, 3"x9-1/2" in size and placed 2'-0" on center. In the kitchen wing, the floor joists are variable thickness (1-1/2" to 2-1/2") by 6-1/2" width circular sawn oak. In both cases, the end of each joist rests on an oak plank set into the stone foundation wall. The flooring consists of approximately 1" thick tongue-and-groove pine boards of variable width (3" to 5" in width).

The second story floor joists (2"x9-1/2" in size) are also circular sawn oak on approximate 22" centers. The upstairs flooring is 1"x4-1/2" tongue and groove pine. The second story floor joists are morticed into a large (8"x10"), hand hewn timber that spans each of the end bays and is part of the roof truss system.

The ceiling joists on the front portion of the house are 2"x10" circular sawn oak 24" on center. In contrast, the ceiling joists in the kitchen wing are 2"x7-1/2" circular sawn oak placed on variable 21" to 24" centers.

The rafters on the kitchen wing are variable (1-5/8" to 2") in

thickness by 5-1/2" width circular sawn oak placed on 21" to 24" centers. Nailers are 1"x11" non-edged, circular sawn oak planks. In contrast, the rafters in the front portion of the house are 1-3/4" to 2-1/4"x4-1/2" to 4-3/4" circular sawn oak placed on 24" centers. Each rafter is half lapped at the ridge and pegged with a wood pin. At the ridgeline, each of the rafter ends are supported by a 3-3/4"x4" circular sawn oak purlin. At the opposite end, each of the rafters rests on a 1"x6" circular sawn oak plank that rests on the top surface of each of the underlying ceiling joists. Every rafter has a 1-3/4" to 2"x5-1/2" circular sawn oak collar beam which is morticed and tenoned into the underside of each rafter. [The rafters appear to have been undersized. Heavy snow load and/or wind has caused the catastrophic failure of several of the rafters.] The original nailers on this portion of the roof consist of non-edged, 3/4" circular sawn oak planks approximately 12-18" in width. Later replacement nailers are 3/4" thick and edged. Although the house originally had wood shingles, it currently has a standing seam metal roof.

Two distinctive king post trusses support the roof within the front portion of the Merkel House. The bases of the king post truss consist of the large hand hewn beams (running north/south) through the longitudinal center of the building. A large round steel pin keeps the base of the king post from shifting. The upright kingpost consists of a 5"x7-3/4" hand hewn oak timber approximately 10'9" tall. The diagonal supports, which are morticed into the kingpost and straddle a ceiling joist in a distinctive lap joint, are similar 5"x7-3/4" hand hewn timbers.

5. Porches, Stoops, Balconies, Bulkheads:

No porch was associated with either the west (front) or north entrance. In both cases, large stone blocks functioned as a step into the house. A long (27'-3"), wide (8'-9") work porch was associated with the two entrance doors located along the south wall of the kitchen wing. This porch functioned as a covered work area for a wide range of activities (ie. laundry, food preparation).

6. Chimneys:

Two end chimneys were originally located in each of the gable end walls of the front portion of the house. These chimneys were associated with narrow flues built into the existing brick walls and serviced cast-iron heating stoves once located in each of the rooms. These chimneys have been removed to immediately below the roof line and covered over with new roofing. A twentieth century chimney, constructed of rock faced concrete block, is situated

along the west elevation and services a more modern, coal burning, gravity furnace located in the basement.

An original flue was built into the north wall of each of the two rooms located within the kitchen wing. Within the attic, these two flues came together and exited the roof as a single chimney.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors:

The front door is a hand produced, through-tenon, four-panel door that measures 3'-2"x6'-8" in size (and 1 1/2" thick). The panels are beveled with applied mouldings on both the inside and outside surface. Both side and overhead lights are present. The trim on both the interior and exterior of the door is original. On the inside surface, the trim has been embellished solely with a simple bead. Hardware on this door, as well as on the majority of the other doors, is original and consists of hand manufactured steel rim locks with distinctive lever action handles --typical of German heritage.

The rear doorway, which exits from the east end of the central hall onto the working porch, measures 2'-10"x6'-7". Although the opening, door, as well as door hardware all appear to be original, the door opening has been trimmed with a distinctive pedimented hood on the inside of the opening. It is suspected that this represents a remodeling associated with potential termite repair once conducted in this end of the hallway.

The majority of the interior doors are four-panel doors similar in construction to the main entrance door and measure approximately 2'-10"x6'-7". Although the downstairs doors have applied moulding in each panel, the upstairs doors have the mouldings cut directly onto the door rails and stiles. Similar in size and construction, the panel doors within the earlier kitchen wing differ in regard to the applied moulding. Whereas the two doors located along the south wall of this wing have no applied moulding added to the door panels, the single door in the north wall has applied moulding attached which is slightly different in profile to that applied to the doors within the main portion of the house. The doorway leading between the two rooms within the kitchen wing is a late nineteenth or early twentieth century plank door (constructed with tongue-and-groove, v-notched bead board) that measures 2'-4"x6'-5" in size. This door has a cast iron rim lock.

Although a door was once present, the opening between the kitchen wing and the main block of the house presently has no door. The removal of the door casing at this location indicated that this door was added during the early twentieth century (and that, originally, no opening was present at this location). The opening associated with this door has beaded trim and appears to be original to the building.

The door leading into the basement is of tongue-and-groove, plank construction. A single narrow pine plank and two wide ones were used to make this door. All four edges of the narrow center board have been beaded. Two 1" thick plank cleats (beaded along the long edge and chamfered along the short edges) have been attached to the door with hand-forged nails. The door handle consists of a simple wire ring handle (1-1/4" in diameter) set into the door with a clinched hasp.

The door leading into the loft above the kitchen wing is a small (2'-0"x5'0") single panel frame door. Two exterior doors are located in the attic of the house. The south door, which measures 2'-6 1/2"x4'-1", is of plank construction and is raised approximately 2' above the attic floor. The north door, which measures 2'11"x5'-9 1/2", is a four-panel, frame door. The lower two panels are similar to the other doors in the house and have applied mouldings. The top two panels contain fixed shutter louvers.

b. Windows and Shutters:

The windows in the Merkel House are double hung sash with six-over-six lights. The window openings measure 3'2" wide by 5'10" in height. Whereas the kitchen wing has tooled stone lintels (10"x4'0" in size) and stone sills (5-1/4"x3'-7 1/2" in size), the main body of the house has wood lintels and stone sills.

The remnants of shutter hinges were associated with all the house's windows. The earlier shutter hinges (associated with the kitchen wing) consist of a two-piece cast hinge (with an applied steel pin; attached with blunt end screws). The latter shutter hinges (associated with the front wing) are one-piece cast iron (with a cast-in-place pin; attached with pointed screws). An L-shaped, hand forged pintel was located each side of the window and functioned as a hook for the open shutters.

Openings within the basement wall functioned as vents. These openings, which measure approximately 8"x3'2" in size, have an open, frame casing without any window or grill work. These vents are approximately 12" wide and the stone foundation wall tapers into the base of the recessed vent.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, Covering:

The main body of the house has a gable roof with a slope that approximates 9" rise over a 12" run. The roof is covered with a standing seam metal roof that has been applied over sawn wood shingles. The rear kitchen wing has a shed roof with a slope of approximately 7" rise in 12" run. This surface, although originally covered with wood shingles, is presently covered with a metal roof.

The metal roof on the kitchen wing appears to be earlier than that associated with the main portion of the house. On the kitchen wing, the metal roof was fabricated using metal sheets approximately 18'x24" in size. In contrast, the roof on the main body of the house was fabricated using long sheets of metal. A payment of \$13.30 to the Knoebel Brothers by the Merkel estate for "balance due for tin roof" in 1894 (Recorded in probate records by Executors of Henry Merkel's estate; dated Dec. 13, 1894) may suggest that the metal roof placed on the main portion of this house was installed at that date.

b. Cornice, Eaves:

A stepped brick cornice is located along the front and rear of the main body of the house. A simple beaded fascia board, without gutters, covers the exposed ends of the attic joist.

c. Dormers, Cupolas, Towers: None are present.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

a. First Floor Description:

Entry into the house is made through one of six doors. The most formal entrance is situated within the west elevation, which has only a stone stoop. Passing through this formal doorway, one enters into a central hallway (Room 103; See attached floor plans) which measures 7'-9" in width.

Dominating the hallway are the steps leading to the upstairs. This central hallway provides access to each of the flanking side rooms as well as the basement and rear work porch.

Immediately south of the central hallway are two rooms. The south wall of each of these rooms lacks windows. The southwest room (Room 104) measures 15'-7"x16'1". The southeast room (Room 105), which is slightly smaller, measures 10'-2"x15'-7". A door in the common wall connects the two rooms. Although the original function of these rooms is unknown, it seems likely that one or both of these two rooms may have functioned as downstairs bedrooms, particularly for the elderly of the household. The ceiling height of these rooms (as with all the rooms on the ground floor of this front portion of the house) is 9'-6". A chimney and flue hole is associated with each of these rooms.

Similarly, immediately north of the central hallway are two rooms (Rooms 101 and 102), nearly identical in size as those located south of the hallway. Each of these rooms also has a flue and associated chimney. Unlike the two south rooms, the two rooms on the north end of the building have windows in the gable end walls. It is believed that that these two rooms originally functioned as formal areas --potentially dining room and parlor. By the early to middle twentieth century, these two rooms functioned as living room and bedroom. The present door leading from the northeast room (Room 102) to the kitchen (Room 106) is not original to the building and represents an early twentieth century modification.

Originally, access to the kitchen was gained by exiting the house by passing through the door at the east end of the central hallway onto the working porch and then entering the kitchen through one of the two exterior doors. Although not formally a room, the large, covered work porch was an integral part of the working building. Access from the main block of the house was gained only by exiting the house onto the porch and then entering the kitchen --resulting in a formal separation between the activities conducted within the main body of the house and the kitchen wing. Most recently, the porch served many functions. Besides affording general storage, the porch has a work table (which has a wide variety of fishing tackle on it) as well as a place for the dog house. It also contains a nineteenth century wood-peg coat hook board. Adjacent to the main kitchen door, the letters "NAW" were carved into a brick.

Although in a deteriorated condition, the original chamfered posts are still present. Clues on the posts indicate that the original rail around the porch was of mortice and tenon construction with both a top and bottom rail set into the posts. The underside of the porch roof consists of 5-1/2" double beaded, tongue-and-groove boards.

The kitchen wing consists of two rooms, each with two exterior doors. The larger of the two rooms (Room 106) measures 14'-0"x15'-9" and functioned as the kitchen. The smaller of the two rooms (Room 107) measures 9'7"x14'-0" and probably functioned as a multi-purpose storage (i.e., pantry) and work room (i.e., laundry room). Most recently, two large chest freezers were located in this room. A narrow, but tall (4'-8" high), section of wainscot has been applied to the wall in the northwest corner of this room (Room 107). This wainscot suggests that a wet sink probably was situated at this location. Nineteenth century wood-peg coat hooks (some with turned hooks, others with sawn hooks) are present by each of the exterior doors within the kitchen wing. The ceiling height in the two kitchen rooms is 9'8".

Another room, today represented only by a concrete pad and associated foundations, was constructed onto the east end of the kitchen wing sometime during the early twentieth century. The function of this room, which measures 9'-2"x14'11", is unknown. When this room was added onto the house, a doorway was cut through the east end wall of the kitchen wing and connected the storage room (Room 107) with the newly constructed addition (Room 108).

At some point in the early twentieth century, a single room addition was constructed onto the east end of the kitchen wing. This room had concrete foundations, a poured concrete floor, and a gable roof. By the 1990s this room had been dismantled and only the concrete floor and foundation remained. The function of this room is unknown.

b. Second Floor Description:

The second story floor plan of the front portion of the house is very similar to that of the lower story with a wide central hallway (Room 203) flanked by rooms on both the north and south. The central hallway has a set of unenclosed steps leading into the attic. The ceiling height upstairs is 9'-4-1/2".

Originally, the west end of the upstairs hallway was open. Sometime during the middle nineteenth century, the end of

the hallway was enclosed with a plank wall. Although the planks forming this wall are hand planed, they were joined with pointed screws (and suggest a post late-1840s construction date). This small room (Room 204), with its plank door, was used as a meat (presumably salted or previously smoked meats) storage area. Overhead racks with metal hooks are still present along the south side of the small room. A work table for cutting meat was located in the northwest corner of the room. At the east end of the central hallway is an exterior door that opens onto the porch roof. No evidence is present to suggest that an outside landing was ever associated with this door.

Flanking the north side of the central hallway are two rooms of nearly identical size. Room 201 measures 13'-11"x15'-6", while Room 202 measures 12'-3"x15'-6". Like the two downstairs rooms, a flue (and associated chimney) is present in each room and a doorway joins each room. No lock is present on the door separating these two rooms. A small doorway within the northeast room (Room 202) allows access to the unimproved attic above the kitchen wing. These two rooms functioned as bedrooms.

Flanking the south side of the central hallway is a single room which measures 15'-7" wide by 26'-7" long. Unlike the two rooms directly below this room, the windows in the opposite walls are aligned --suggesting that this room originally had been undivided. At some later date (post circa 1850), the room was divided into two nearly equal size rooms by a plank wall. Only the ghost of this plank wall has survived. The original function of this large room is problematic. Originally, this large room may have functioned as a communal room --potentially to service guests that might have been staying at this location. Sometime during the middle nineteenth century, the large room was divided into two separate rooms, which probably functioned as bedrooms. By the early to middle twentieth century, the partition wall had been removed and this large room was being used for storage.

c. Attic:

The attic (Room 301) is a large, open, unfinished room located above the second story. Although the attic has a wood floor, neither the walls nor the ceiling have been finished. Nails driven into the overhead collar beams and posts suggest that the attic space was used to hang various items. Incorporated into the truss system in the north end of the roof (and associated with both the north gable end

attic door and the basement bulkhead entranceway) was a beam which was used with a block and tackle to raise things from the cellar below as well as into the attic above. Along the longitudinal center of the attic, there is 6'5" clearance between the floor and the collar beams associated with each of the rafters.

c. Basement/Cellar Description:

Beneath the front portion of the house is a large, two-roomed basement. The wall separating the two basement rooms is of brick construction resting on a shallow stone foundation. A plank door separates the two rooms.

The basement can be entered from an interior stairway located within the central hallway (towards the back or east end of the hallway) or through an exterior entrance located along the north end of the basement. The exterior entrance consists of a stone-walled bulkhead (approximately 5'x6' in size) with removable frame steps. A brick arch spans the bulkhead opening. With the aid of the overhead lift, large and heavy objects could be placed into (and removed from) the basement with relative ease. The ceiling height in the basement is 8'0".

Although no windows are present in the basement, several vents (now blocked) would have supplied fresh air. These vents had no window sash nor wood grills (See discussion, II.B.7.b.; Windows and Shutters).

The larger of the two basement rooms (Room 001) is approximately 22'x23' in size. Both the bulkhead entrance (leading outside) and the stairs leading to the upstairs hallway are located in this room. Within the past 50-60 years, a gravity-fed coal burning furnace (with its associated coal room) has been placed in this room. Presently, this room has a concrete floor. Also in this room are two of the three wall niches which are present in the basement. The smaller of the wall niches (Niche 3) is located in the west wall of the bulkhead entranceway. This recess is only 1'-1" tall, 1'-2" wide and 11" deep. The small opening is spanned with a brick arch. The base of the niche is 3'-0" above the floor. The function of this niche is unclear. It may have held a light (although no evidence of smudging is present on the roof of the wall niche) or a water (or other liquid refreshment) jug. The larger of the two niches in this room is located in the brick partition wall separating Rooms 001 and 002. This niche (Niche 1) is 2'-9" tall, 2'-1" wide and 8" deep. It is spanned with a

hand hewn oak lintel. Although no doors were associated with this niche, it originally had a wood shelf. It is suspected that this niche functioned as a storage compartment, potentially for non-perishable foods (such as canned goods).

The smaller south room (Room 002) measures approximately 15'x26'. This room is dirt floored and has a single wall niche. Several small recesses in the south foundation wall suggest that wood storage racks may have been an original feature of this room. The rotted remains of what may have been a barrel rack and vegetable bin are presently located in this room. The wall niche, which is located along the eastern stone foundation wall, is the largest of the three niches in the basement. This niche (Niche 1) is 3'-3" tall, 4'-0" wide, and 1'-5 1/2" deep. The base of this wall niche is 2'-1" above the dirt floor. It is spanned by a brick arch and originally had a single shelf and two doors. It is suspected that this wall niche functioned as a food cellar for the storage of perishable foods.

2. Stairways:

Access to the second story of the house is provided by an open stairway located in the central hallway (Room 103). The stairway is approximately 3'-4" wide. The stair wall located beneath the stairs is of plank construction. A small door in this wall accesses a small storage compartment located beneath the steps. The steps have 8" treads (which are oak) with 8-1/2" risers (which are pine). A similar set of open steps, located in the second floor central hallway (Room 203), leads to the attic. A trap door is located at the top of the steps leading into the attic. Additionally, a set of enclosed steps leads into the basement from the east end of the main floor central hallway (Room 103).

3. Flooring:

Flooring in the front portion of the Merkel House is 1"x4-1/2" tongue-and-groove white pine. The rear kitchen wing has 7/8"x5-1/2" tongue and groove white pine flooring, which does not appear to be original and represents a replacement floor.

4. Wall and Ceiling Finishes:

Except for an occasional plank wall, all wall and ceiling surfaces within the Merkel House consist of a finished plaster surface. All plastered wall surfaces have the plaster applied directly to the brick and stud surfaces, without the aid of lath.

The ceilings in the Merkel House are the only surfaces that have been covered with lath and plaster. All lath in the Merkel House has been fabricated with the aid of a circular saw (not hand riven).

The original interior wall finish within the front portion of the Merkel House consists of wall papered surfaces. Unfortunately, none of the original wall paper remains intact. Most wood trim surfaces appears to have been finished with a combination reddish brown stain and green paint. In the downstairs hallway (Room 103), the newel posts and spindles are stained red and the plank wall associated with the staircase was originally painted green. Later many of the doors were painted light blue and later white. The two rooms within the kitchen extension were finished with green calcimine paint.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and Doors: See II.B.7.a
- b. Windows: See II.B.7.b

6. Decorative Features and Trim:

Except for the basic door and window trim, very few decorative details are present in this house. Both the doors and windows within the kitchen wing were trimmed using 5/8" thick, beaded pine boards with applied moulding. In contrast, the windows in the main block of the house were trimmed with a moulded, unbeaded, pine board.

The door trim in the front portion of the house, although similar in profile to the window trim in this portion of the building, was beaded. The upstairs and downstairs door trim differ slightly in profile --with the upstairs door trim containing an additional detail absent from the downstairs trim. Additionally, whereas the kitchen wing doors as well as those in the downstairs of the front portion of the house are straight panels with applied moulding, the upstairs doors have beveled panels with the moulding cut directly onto the door rails and stiles. These differences in door trim and panel construction suggest that the upstairs and downstairs of the front block of the house probably were trimmed at slightly different times.

The baseboard in the Merkel House consists of 1"x6-1/2", circular sawn, beaded white pine boards.

7. Hardware:

The architectural hardware in the Merkel House is original to the

building and consists of distinctive, hand manufactured, lever-action, rim locks. These are constructed of sheet metal with both cast iron and cast brass components. These locks, although possibly representing an imported European product, more likely represent a locally manufactured item. These locks are typical of continental European locks of the early nineteenth century and are in contrast to the more popular knobbed rim locks, which were common by this period in the United States.

Hinges on the doors are cast iron butt hinges. All the hardware associated with the original house has been attached with blunt or flat-ended screws (suggesting a construction date predating the late 1840s).

8. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation:

During much of the life of this building, the Merkel House was heated by wood-burning stoves located in each of the individual rooms. Flue holes were accessible from every room in the house. At some point during the early twentieth century, the woodburning stoves were replaced with a large, coal-burning, gravity-fed furnace located within the basement.

b. Lighting:

Presumably, during the much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this house was illuminated using kerosene lamps. Prior to the 1860s, occupants of the house probably used oil lamps and/or candles during the evening hours. During the early to middle twentieth century, the house was electrified. At that time, overhead lighting fixtures and wall outlets were added to each of the rooms.

c. Plumbing:

At the time of the investigations, this house had no internal plumbing. An outhouse is located towards the rear of the house, adjacent to the corn crib. Similarly, a well (and cistern?) is located near the east end of the kitchen wing of the house.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation:

The Merkel House is situated centrally within the original

landholding. As such, the house is not located adjacent to the nearby township roads; a long lane leads to the farmstead from the north/northwest. The farmstead is organized around the large brick house. The house, the long axis of which is oriented approximately 5 degrees west of north, faces west into the nearby creek bed. The outbuildings are scattered around the north and east sides of the house. Whereas the barn and corncrib are located approximately 75-100' east of the house, two smaller outbuildings (a male oriented workshop and female oriented wash house) are located approximately 25' from the kitchen wing of the Merkel House. Although originally in timber, the land surrounding the farmstead today is in cultivation.

2. Historic Landscape Design:

No information is available.

3. Outbuildings:

a. Barn:

See photographic documentation and descriptive text for HABS No. IL 1191-D.

b. Wine Press Building:

See photographic documentation and descriptive text for HABS No. IL 1191-B.

d. Corncribs:

Two corncribs are associated with the Merkel House. The earlier of the two is a timber frame structure dating from the middle nineteenth century and discussed in detail (See photographic documentation and descriptive text for HABS IL 1191-C). The second corncrib is a small, single crib structure with covered aisle constructed during the early to middle twentieth century. This second corncrib is well illustrated in photographic documentation HABS No. IL 1191-D-1.

c. Privy:

The frame privy, constructed during the early to middle twentieth century, is located southeast of the Merkel House. This building was constructed using nominal-dimensioned, non-local (fir and yellow pine) lumber and wire nails. It has a shed roof and concrete walled vault (See photographic documentation HABS No. IL 1191-A-6).

d. Work Shop:

Located approximately 25' east/northeast of the kitchen wing of the Merkel House is the male oriented workshop. This is a small (10'-5"x20'-4"), gable roofed, frame structure most recently used as a workshop. With its concrete foundation, drawn wire nails, and nominal-dimensioned, non-local (fir and yellow pine) lumber, this structure was constructed during the early to middle twentieth century. The original function of this building, with its multiple doors, is unknown (See photographic documentation HABS No. IL 1191-4).

e. Laundry Shed/Wash House:

Located approximately 25' east/southeast of the kitchen wing of the Merkel House is the female oriented laundry shed. This is a small (8'-3"x14'-6"), shed-roofed, frame structure used as a laundry room by the female members of the Merkel household. Like the adjacent work shop building, this structure has a concrete foundation and both wire drawn nails and nominal-dimensioned, non-local (fir and yellow pine) lumber typical of the early to middle twentieth century. The contents of the building included a cast-iron cook stove, work table, pie safe and three washers (a tub washer, a Dexter wringer washer, and a Maytag wringer washer).

d. Machine Sheds:

Two machine sheds, both of pole construction, were present at the Merkel Farmstead. The larger of the two is located northwest of the house and had metal siding. This structure probably post-dates 1965. The smaller of the two machine sheds is located immediately east of the barn and has vertical plank siding. This small structure also functioned as an animal pen and probably dates from the middle twentieth century (circa 1950s or 1960s).

d. Well and Cistern:

Both a well and cistern are located adjacent to the east end of the kitchen wing of the Merkel House. A second well is located adjacent to the northeast corner of the wine press building.

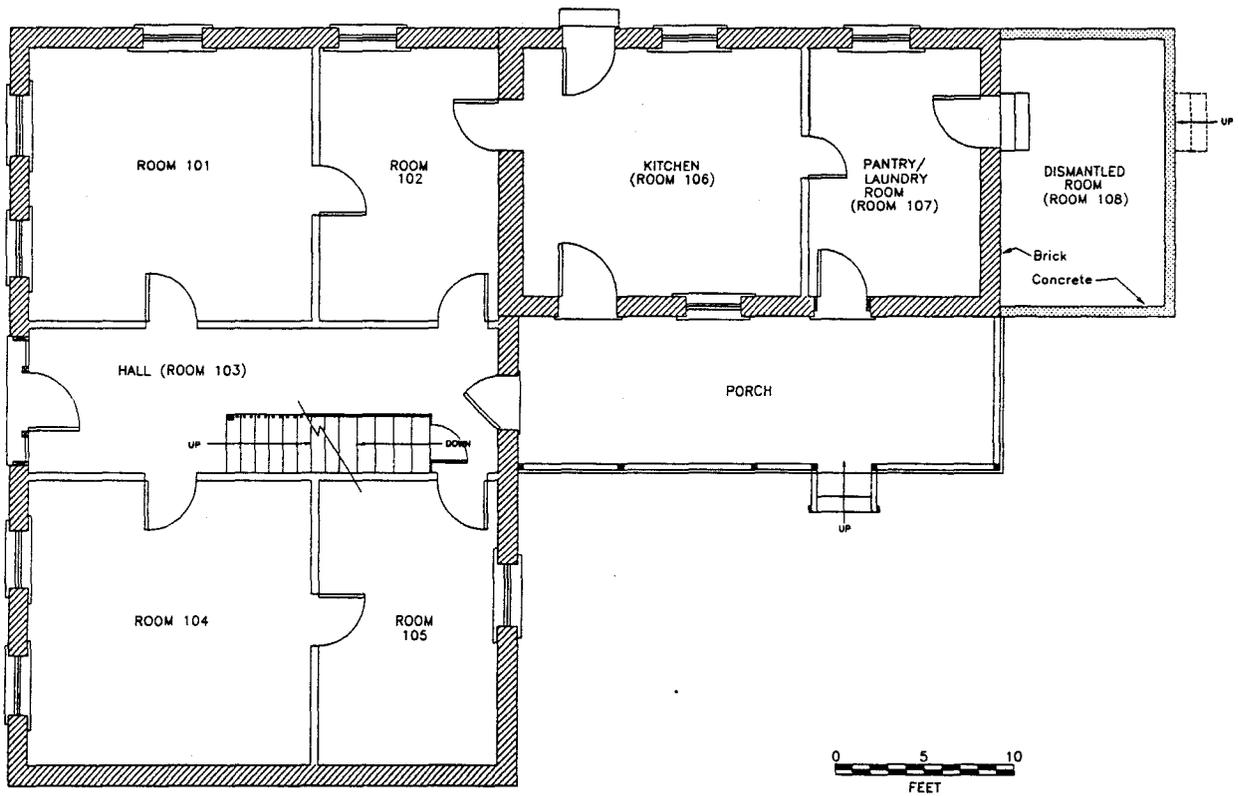


Figure 1. Ground floor plan of Merkel House.
Drawn by F. Mansberger.

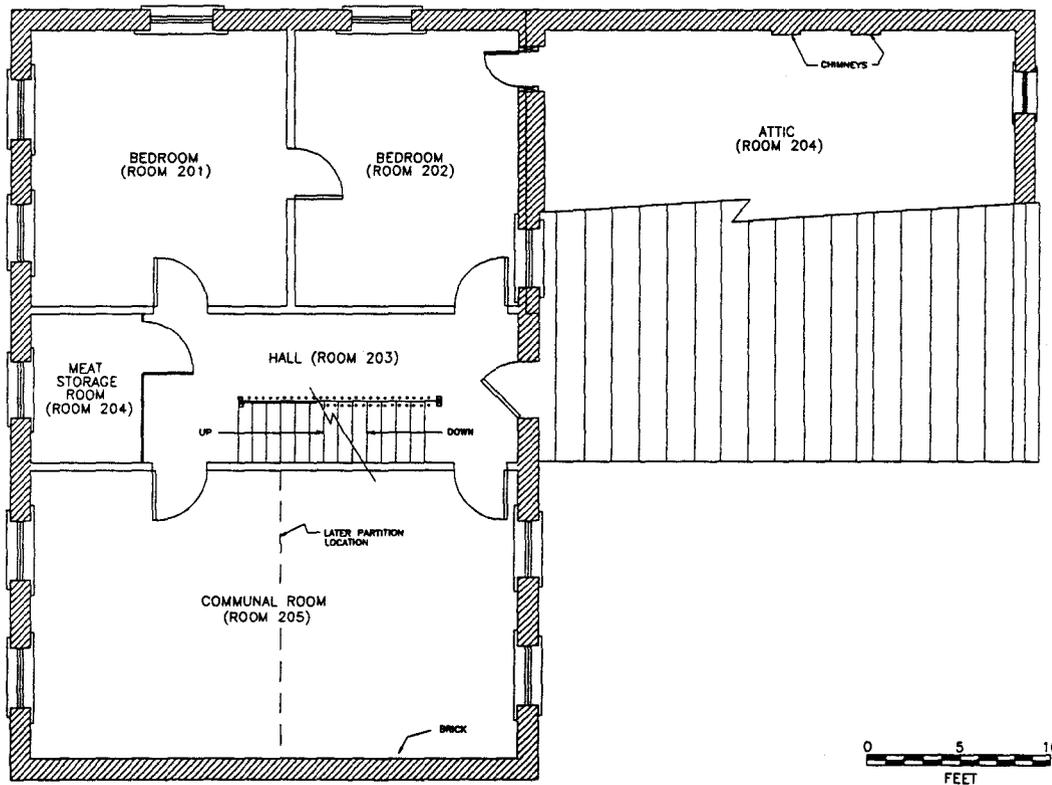


Figure 2. Second story floor plan of the Merkel House.
Drawn by F. Mansberger.

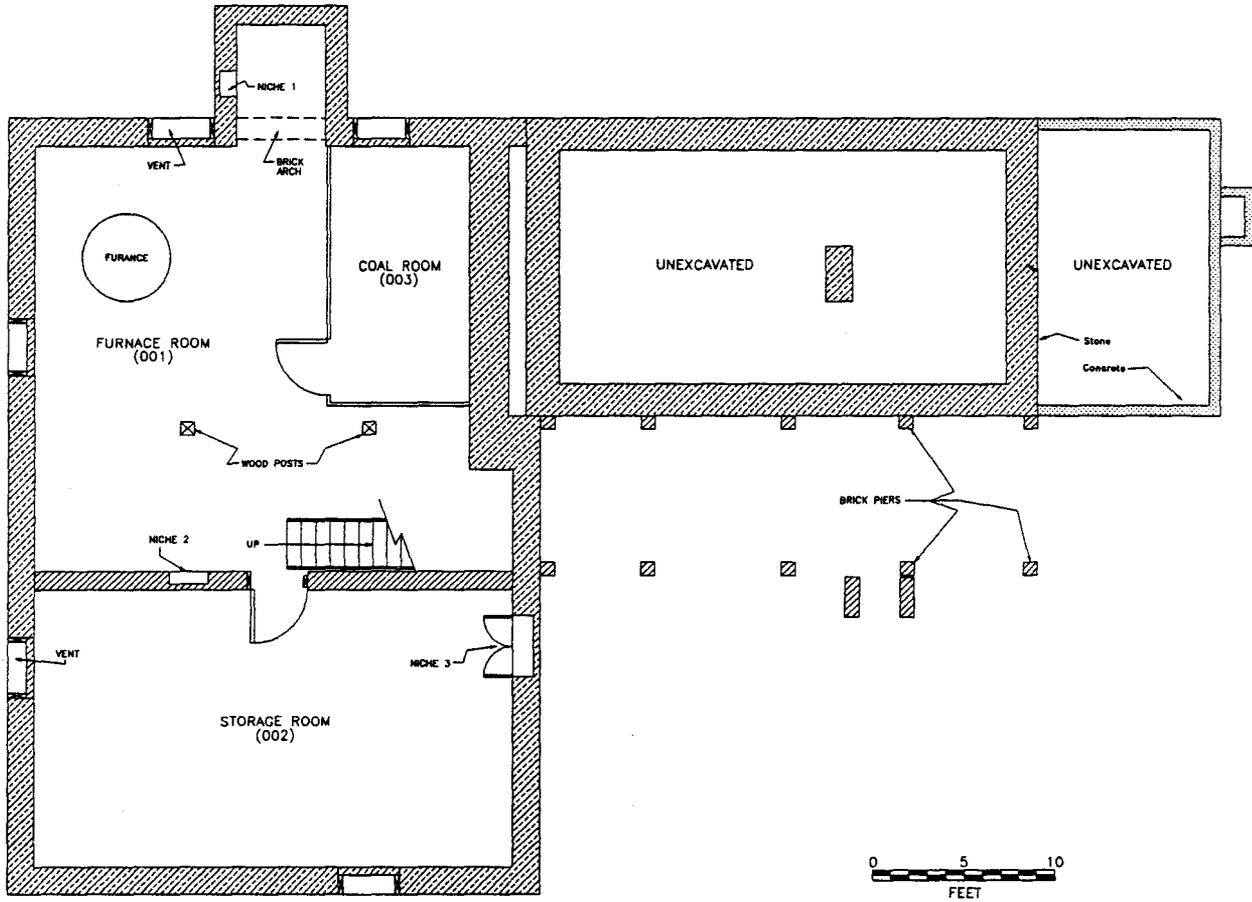


Figure 3. Basement floor plan of the Merkel House.
Drawn by F. Mansberger.

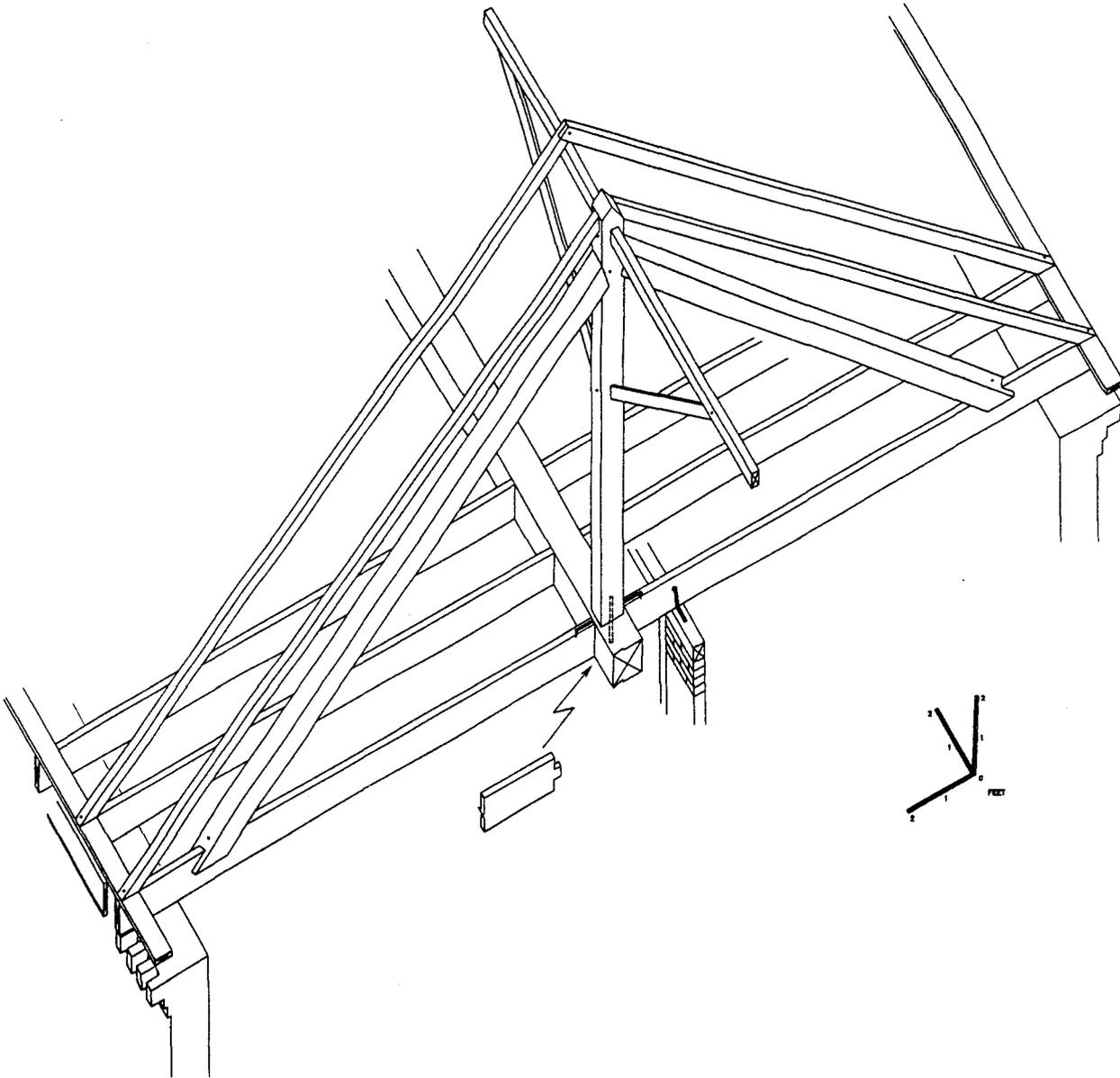


Figure 4. Detail of roof truss system at the Merkel House. The collar beams have been left out for clarity. Drawn by F. Mansberger.

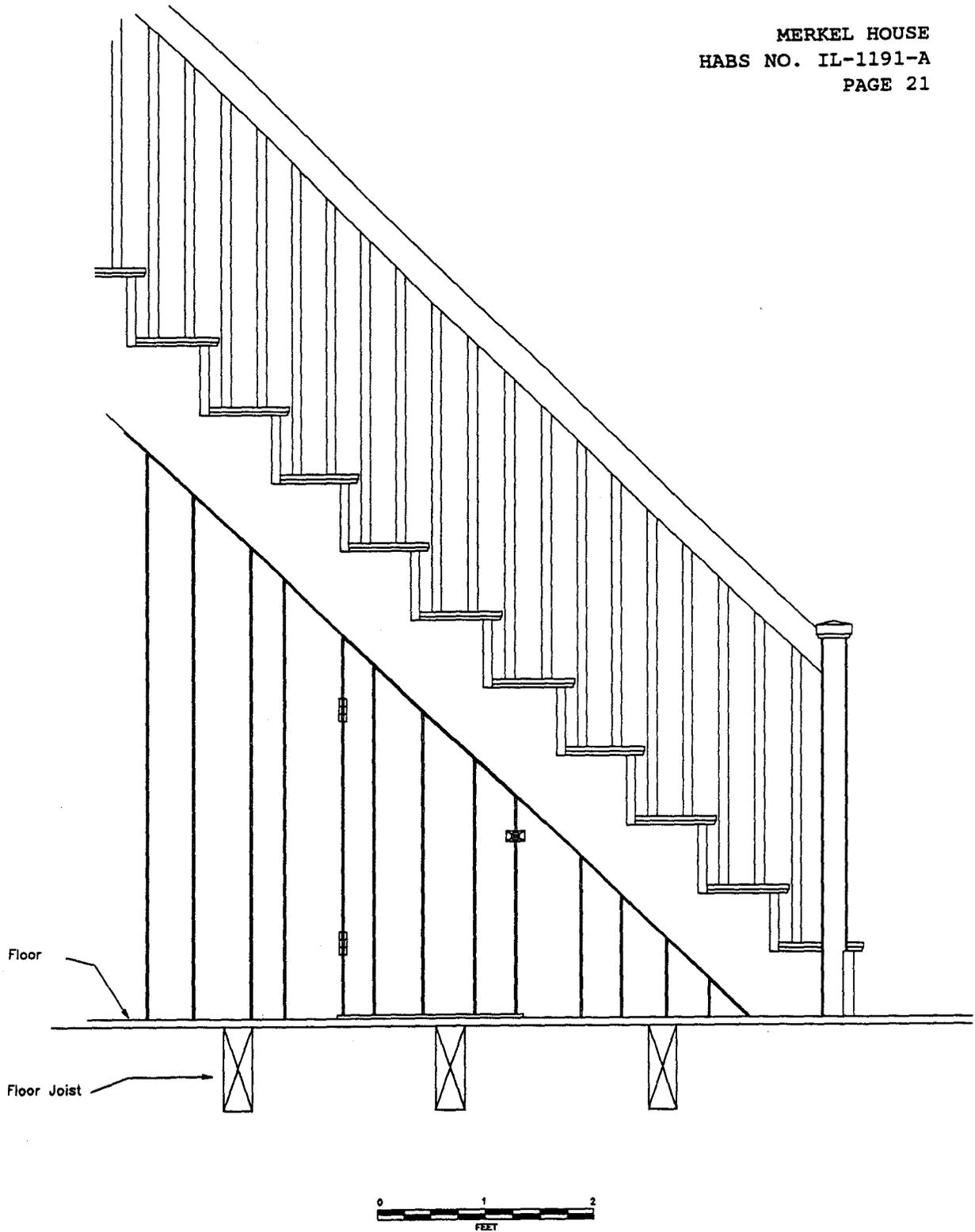


Figure 5. Stairway detail of the Merkel House.
Drawn by F. Mansberger.

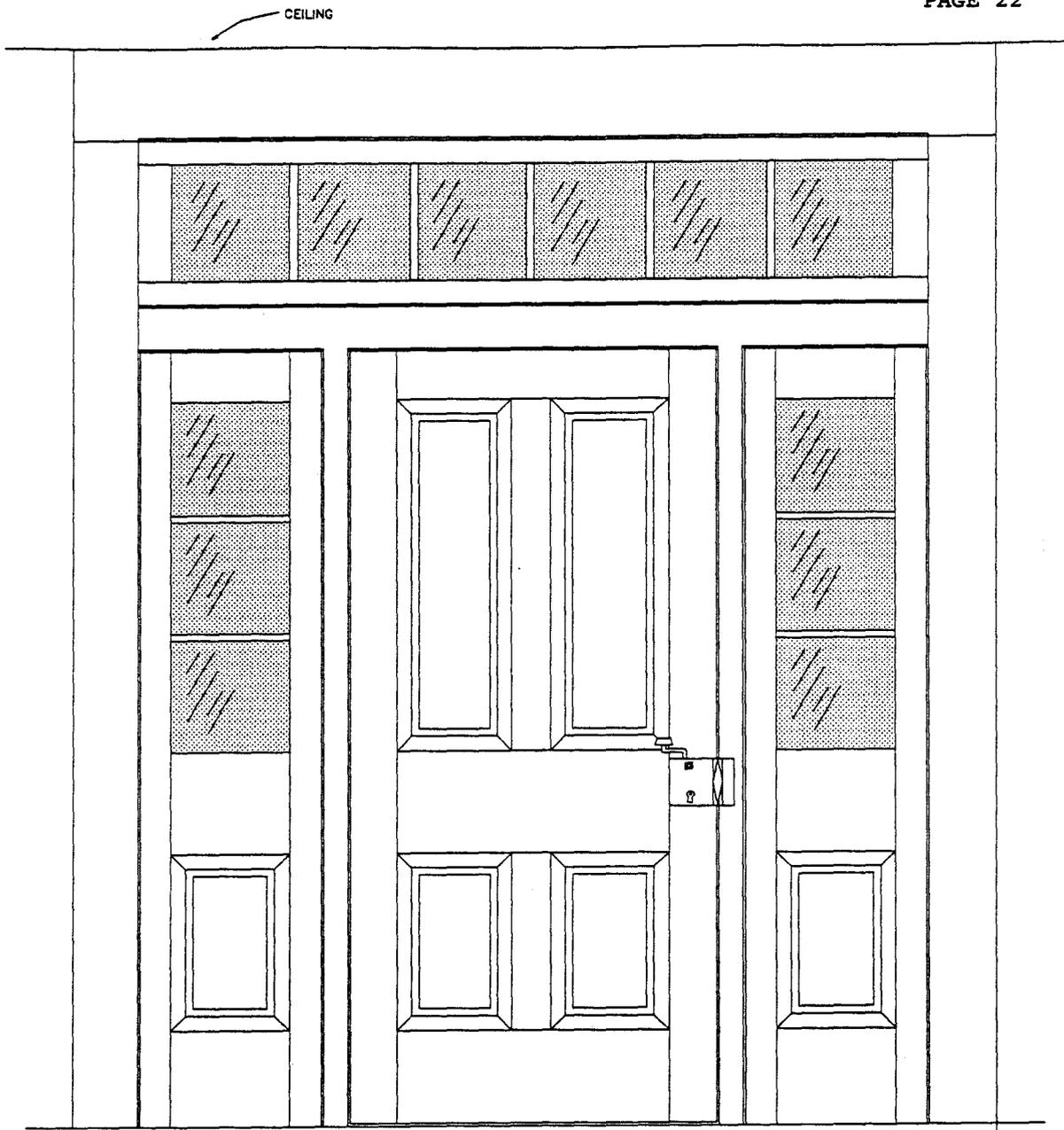


Figure 6. Detail of the Merkel House main entrance (interior view). Drawn by F. Mansberger.

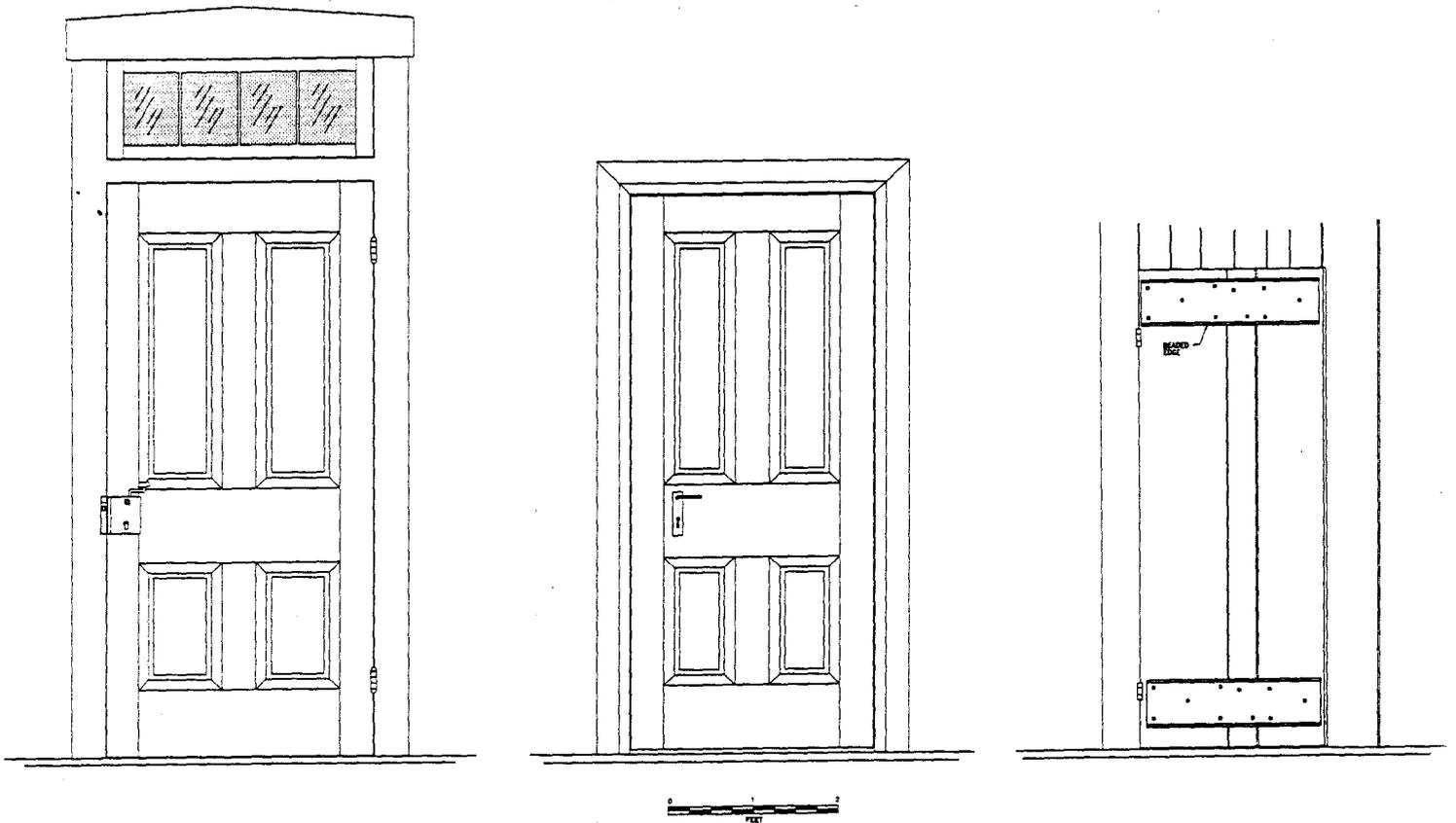


Figure 7. Miscellaneous door details at the Merkel House.
Left detail is the rear central hallway door looking
from the inside; middle detail of interior door; right
detail is plank door leading to the basement (as viewed
from the basement). Drawn by F. Mansberger.

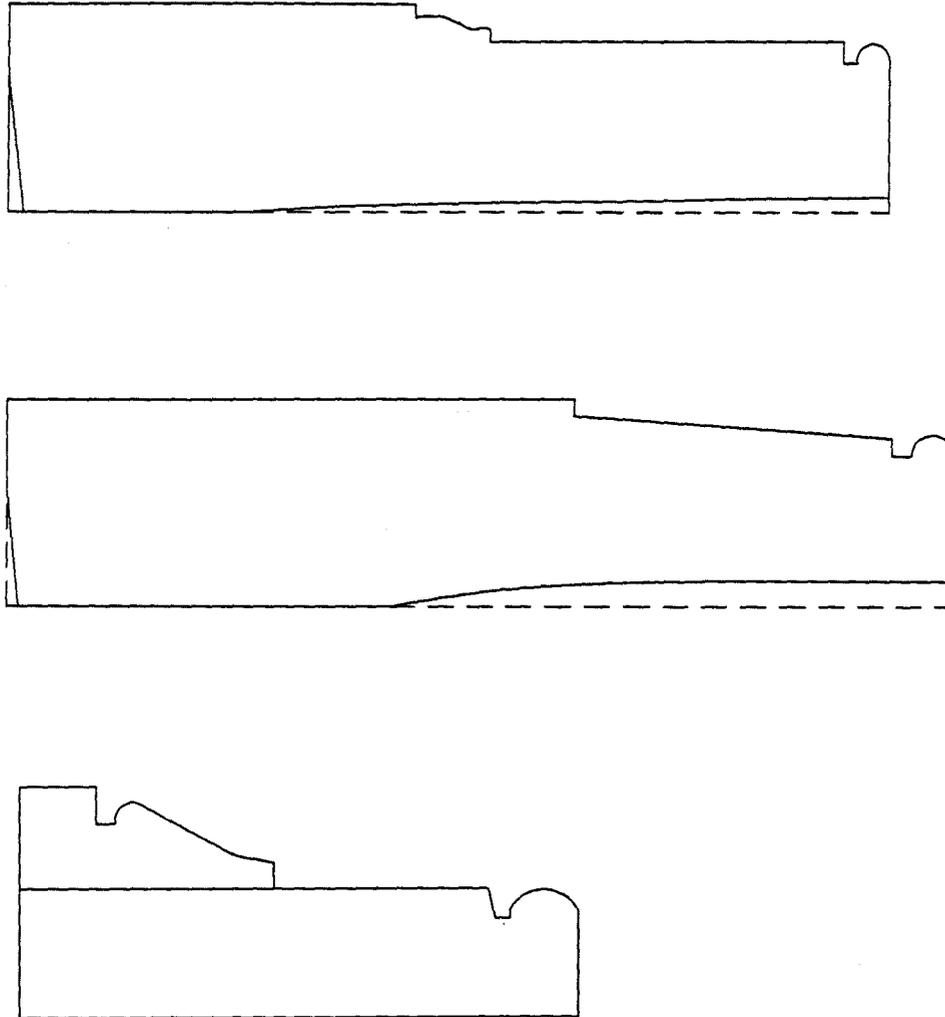


Figure 9. Door trim details at the Merkel House.
Top trim is the upstairs in the main body of the house; middle trim is the downstairs of the main body of the house; bottom trim is kitchen wing.
Drawn by F. Mansberger.

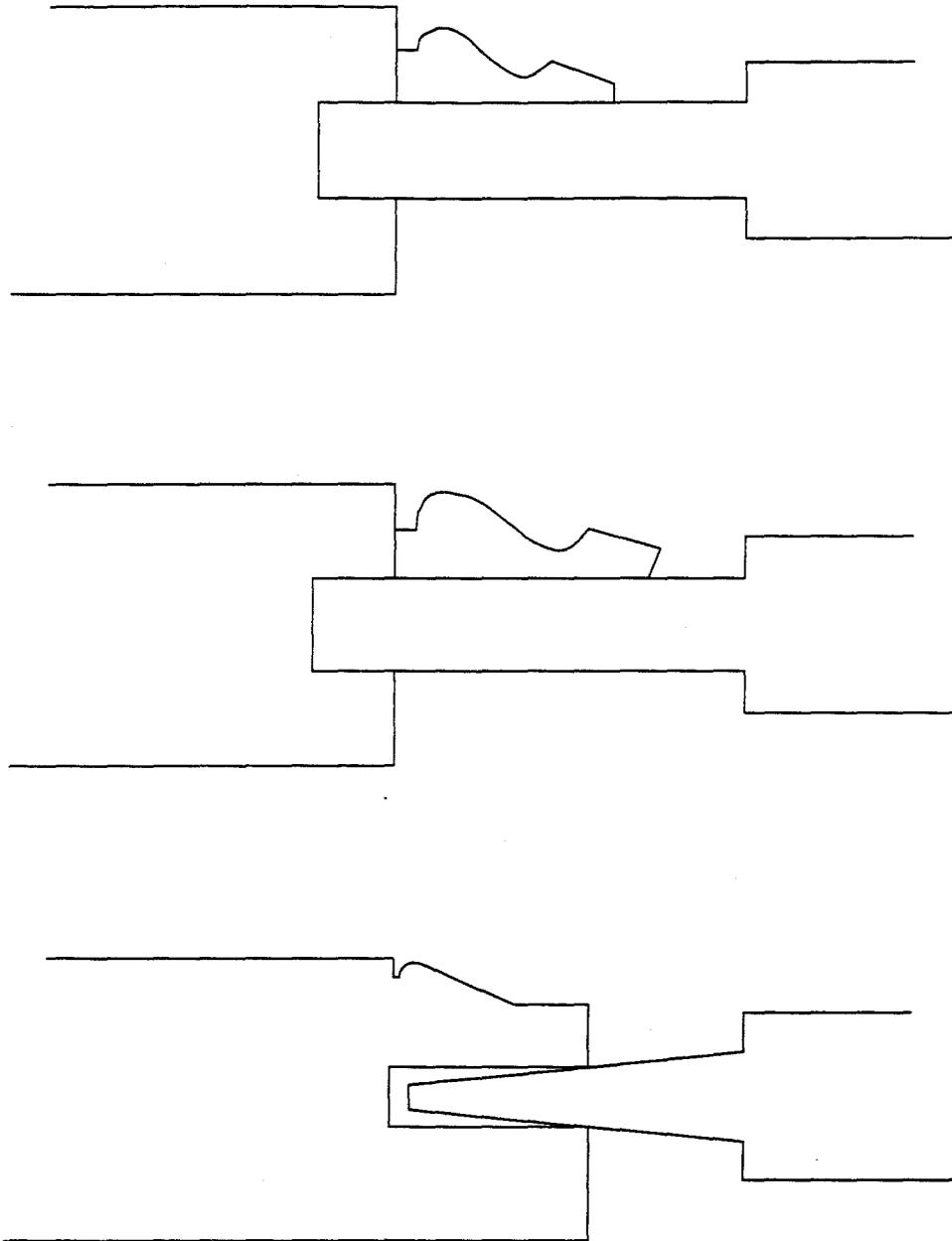
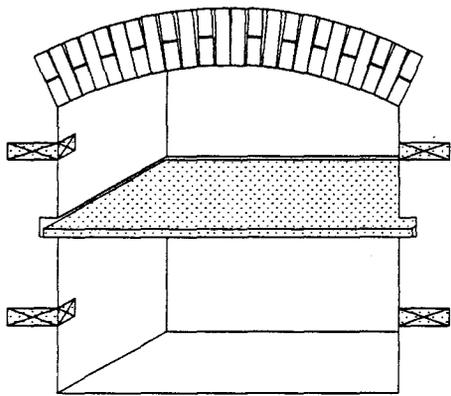
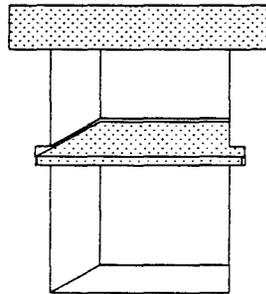


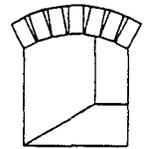
Figure 10. Details of door construction at the Merkel House. Top trim is the original kitchen wing of the house; middle detail is downstairs of the main body of the house; bottom is the upstairs of the main body of the house. Drawn by F. Mansberger.



NICHE 1



NICHE 2



NICHE 3

Floor

 = WOOD

0 1 2 3
FEET

Figure 11. Niche details from the basement of the Merkel House.
Drawn by C. Stratton.