

CALVIN T. CALL HOUSE  
49 Central Street  
Franklin  
Merrimack County  
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-224

HABS  
NH  
7-FRANK,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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LOCATION: 49 Central Street, Franklin, Merrimack County, New Hampshire.

USGS Franklin, New Hampshire Quadrangle,  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
19.285020.4813040.

PRESENT OWNER: Ralph Tilton, 49 Central Street, Franklin, Merrimack County, New Hampshire.

PRESENT USE: Dwelling.

SIGNIFICANCE Constructed between 1874 and 1876, the Call House is a contributing element in the West Franklin historic district. The house-to-carriage house connected plan was a distinctive feature of domestic building in New England towns during the 19th century.

## I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: The house was built between 1874 and 1876 during the ownership of Calvin T. Call.

2. Architect: Unknown.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: References are to deeds and other documents in the office of the Registry of Deeds and Registry of Probate, Merrimack County Administration Building, Concord, New Hampshire.

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|------|--|
| 1871 | Deed, 19 July 1871, Book 209, p. 149. James A. and Mary J. Clark to James A. Taylor.                 |
| 1874 | Deed, 17 November 1874, Book 222, p. 238. James Taylor to Calvin T. Call.                            |
| 1876 | Deed, 7 November 1876, Book 233, p. 70. Calvin T. Call to Dana and Nellie Call.                      |
| 1895 | Deed, 2 May 1895, Book 314, p. 302. Dana and Nellie Call to John Webster.                            |
| 1912 | Will, 25 June 1912, Probate Record #22790. John Webster to Clara Webster.                            |
| 1931 | Deed, 19 March 1931, Book 514, p. 614. Clara Webster to Harriet Atwood.                              |
| 1936 | Will, 9 March 1936, Probate Record #40104. Harriet Atwood to Village Congregational Church.          |
| 1936 | Deed, 16 November 1936, Book 550, p. 405. Village Congregational Church to Angela McDermott.         |
| 1953 | Deed, 31 August 1953, Book 737, p. 289. Angela McDermott Roy to Robert and Jean Beaudet.             |
| 1962 | Foreclosure, 25 April 1962, Book 896, p. 511. Robert and Jean Beaudet to New Hampshire Savings Bank. |

- 1962 Deed, 23 May 1962, Book 898, p. 429. New Hampshire Savings Bank to Veterans Affairs Administration.
- 1963 Deed, 4 September 1963, Book 925, p. 209. J.S. Gleason Jr., as Veterans Affairs Administrator, to Stewart and Marjorie Chandler.
- 1964 Deed, 26 May 1964, Book 941, p. 101. Stewart and Marjorie Chandler to Ralph Tilton.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: unknown.

5. Original plans and construction: No documentary information on the original appearance of the house has been located.

6. Alterations and Additions: A three-story, polygonal bay was added to the center of the east elevation, possibly during the ownership of Dana Call (1876-1895) or John Webster (1895-1912). The application of aluminum siding since 1964 has removed or obscured any original exterior stylistic details. The present owners have remodeled portions of the interior, particularly on the first floor.

## B. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The town of Franklin was incorporated in December 1828 from adjoining portions of four towns (Salisbury, Andover, Sanbornton and Northfield), largely at the behest of those wanting to exploit more fully the manufacturing potential present along the lower Pemigewasset and Winnepesaukee rivers and tributaries thereto (Hurd 1885:310-311).

At the time of incorporation, the principal village then in existence was located on the west bank of the Pemigewasset. This small community had risen around the activities of Ebenezer Eastman, who after coming to this area from Concord in 1797 established a dam and sawmill on Chance Pond Brook, opened a tavern, and commissioned construction of a toll bridge across the Pemigewasset on the road to Sanbornton and Northfield in 1802 (Hurd 1885:310; Nadeau 1978: 8). At the time, the village was part of the town of Salisbury, and was called variously Pemigewasset or "East Village", the latter due to its location within that town (Farmer & Moore 1823:232). In 1824, four years before the creation of the town of Franklin, the village of Pemigewasset boasted a meetinghouse, two stores, a tavern, post office, tannery, several cooper shops and a blacksmith shop. The village's industrial activity was concentrated primarily along Chance Pond brook, which flowed from the "great pond in Andover" (Webster Lake) southeast to the Pemigewasset a short distance above what is now Webster Street. Along the brook were, in 1824, three sawmills, a grist mill, and a blacksmith shop "with trip-hammers" as well as one unspecified "manufacturing establishment" (McClintock 1880:133).

The major industrial development of Franklin ultimately centered on an area to the east, known as Franklin Falls, on the Winnepesaukee, bringing with it a concentration of commercial and residential activity. However, the village on the Pemigewasset, also known as "West Village" and Franklin, remained a distinct and viable community through the 19th century. Not only did it have its own, nearby mill privileges, but also the Boston & Maine railroad, which extended its line north to the village in 1846; in addition, due to its location at a major river crossing, it was able to reap economic benefits from passing travelers. In 1855, the community called Franklin still remained the town's "principal village", with two hotels, seven stores, two meetinghouses (Congregationalist and Christian Baptist), a fire house, and an academy (McClintock 1880:133). Its industrial base, as of 1858, included a tannery, forge, foundry, grist mill and wool carding mill (Walling 1858).

By 1880, fourteen firms were listed with premises along Chance Pond Brook, including a sawmill, grist mill, iron foundry, brickmaker, carriage manufacturer, knitting machine factory, needle factory, and wool dyer (McClintock 1880: 137-138). Although the village never boasted the rows of attached brick commercial buildings which were built along Central Street in Franklin Falls, it did have several detached "blocks" from which local merchants purveyed goods and services, such as the brick Pike's Block, Messer's Block, and the Sturtevant Block (Sanborn 1884; Hurd 1892). From such premises, as well as from small buildings containing both shop areas and residences, the merchants of Franklin village offered such items as boots and shoes, harness and wagon robes, groceries and "India goods", hardware, furniture, and the all-encompassing "general merchandise" (McClintock 1880:140).

As Franklin Falls became more heavily industrialized, and urbanized in the later 19th century, Franklin retained its village character and informal, linear plan along Main Street. Manufacturing tended to cluster in its traditional location along Chance Pond Brook toward the north end of the village, and the south end was primarily residential; between and within these areas, however, the mingling of function (housing, religion, commerce, public services) persisted, although most of the commercial activity was oriented around the west end of the bridge and north to Webster Street (Sanborn 1884, 1892).

Franklin was incorporated as a city in 1894; this change in municipal status was reflected in the village primarily by its designation as "West Franklin". In the 20th century, with the rest of the city, West Franklin experienced industrial and population decline as manufacturers closed or relocated their operations elsewhere. In April 1931, the old covered bridge across the Pemigewasset, known as the Republican bridge and built in 1839 by Boston John Clark to replace the earlier structure, was dismantled, its timber removed by the city for other uses, and the stone of its piers laid along the riverbanks as riprap. The new bridge, erected by the Eastern States Bridge Company of York, PA

and Concord, was named the Daniel Webster bridge by vote of the city council (Franklin Journal Transcript, 16 April 1931, 30 April 1931; City of Franklin, 1930).

The Call house lot was one of three subdivided from the original James Clark Homestead parcel by James Taylor after his acquisition of the Clark property in 1871. The house was erected by Calvin T. Call, supervisor of the town "Poor Farm," who purchased the property from Taylor in 1874. Call sold the house lot with "the buildings there now" to his brother, Dana Call in 1876. The 1897 Biographical Review described Dana Call as a prominent farmer, cultivating farm land elsewhere on River Road. He was also a merchant and owned a meat market in Tilton and a grain business in Franklin Falls and shipped eggs to the markets in Boston (Biographical Review 1897:[n.p.]).

Dana and Nellie Call sold the house lot to another farmer, John Webster, in 1895. Webster retired from farming by 1902, at which time he was employed as a clerk with the local firm of L.G. Atwoods (Goss 1902). The house came in to the possession of Clara Webster in 1912 upon the death of her husband John. The property was occupied by four subsequent owners before it was purchased by the present owner, Ralph Tilton, in 1964.

## II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: A rear, two-story ell joins the 2 1/2-story main block of the Call house to a carriage house, creating a connected plan common in nineteenth century New England towns. The house and carriage house display vernacular elements of both Greek Revival and Italianate architecture, such as the cornice returns, the bay window in the facade and the flat-roofed hood over the front entrance. The house was altered to further develop its Victorian character later in the century with the addition of a three story projecting bay added on the east elevation.

2. Condition of fabric: The house is in very good condition.

### B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The house is massed with a 2 1/2-story main block, three bays wide and three bays deep, 21 feet by 30 feet. A two story ell, measuring 16 feet by 25 feet, is attached to the rear of the house. The rear elevation of the ell is attached to the west half of the facade of the two-story carriage house. The carriage house measures 25 feet by 36 feet.

2. Foundations: The house is built on a foundation of brick, incorporating a full basement below the main block. The carriage house, built in to the side of the river bank, rests on a foundation of large rubble stone and concrete block.

3. Walls: The exterior walls of the house and the north wall of the carriage house, are aluminum sided. The remaining walls of the carriage house are sheathed with very narrow clapboard.

4. Structural system: The house is framed with circular-sawn, dimensional lumber.

5. Porches, stoops, etc.: The front entrance has a modern stone and concrete stoop sheltered by a flat hood supported on plank braces. A second story porch is located along the east side of the ell. It is accessed via an exterior stair with turned newel post and plank treads. Both the floor and ceiling are finished with tongue-in-groove boards. The other original porch features have been replaced by modern square posts and an iron balustrade.

6. Chimneys: A single, large, brick chimney is centered in the roof of the house just east of the ridge. Visual evidence during the recordation showed that three chimneys had been removed from the building, one from the ell and two from the main block (see floor plans for locations). Conversation with the owners confirmed that three chimneys had been removed and the existing chimney constructed after 1964.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Only the side entrance to the house retains an original four-panel wooden door. A modern metal door has replaced the original in the front entrance. Aluminum siding has obscured any original decorative elements of the door surrounds.

b. Windows: All of the windows in the house and ell are regularly spaced 2/2 and 2/1 double-hung sash. The original surrounds have been obscured by the application of aluminum siding. In the facade, a semi-hexagonal, projecting bay window illuminates the first story parlor. This window retains intact its original surround with recessed panels below the sills.

8. Roof:

a. Shape: The main block, ell and carriage house have asphalt-shingled gable roofs. On the main block, near cross-gable pattern is created by the roof of the three-story bay in the east slope and a slightly offset dormer in the west slope.

b. Cornice, eaves: Although the ornamental details of the cornice and eaves have been obscured by the application of aluminum siding, boxed eaves and cornice returns remain in the gable ends of the both the house and the carriage house.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: A three-story, semi-hexagonal bay projects from the center of the east elevation. A gable dormer is set slightly to the south of this bay in the west roof slope.

### C. Description of the Interior

1. Floor plans: See floor plans for existing room arrangement. The main block of the house appears originally to have been arranged in a side-hall plan. On the first floor, the hall partition was removed, at least in part, after 1964, so that the main entrance opens directly into the living room. Behind the living room, the hall extends to the modern kitchen, which occupying most of the rear ell. The hall is flanked by a dining room to the east and a bath room and cellar entry (reoriented from its original opening into the kitchen) on the west. The upper floors appear less modified in terms of plan.

2. Stairways: See sketch floor plans for the position of stairs. The stairwell balustrade is supported on plain, dowel balusters although the newels are stocky, turned posts. Two of every three balusters have been removed between the first and second floors.

3. Flooring: Variable width, board floors are intact on the third-floor. In the remainder of the house, however, the floors have been covered with wall-to-wall carpeting, linoleum, or artificial "parquet."

4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: The walls and ceilings are finished with smooth plaster. A few rooms have been wallpapered, and a small "laundry room" in the ell has been finished with black and white tiles, possibly in the first half of the twentieth century. Also a "den" behind the kitchen has been finished with plywood panelling. Some of the ceilings have been covered with acoustical tile.

#### 5. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors: The original doorways are framed by plain plank surrounds. However, modern moldings have been applied to doorways leading into the halls on both the first and second floors. The original, four-panel wooden doors have lacquered, wood knobs with brass escutcheon plates, standard stock items in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A number of modern, hollow-core doors are found throughout the house.

b. Windows: Plain plank surrounds frame the window openings. The windows lock with standard, late-19th century, cast brass latches.

6. Decorative Features and Trim: The simple treatment of extant original door and window surrounds suggest that the house never contained many highly decorative details. Cast iron and brass hardware found on doors and windows comprise the only remaining decorative features.

7. Mechanical Equipment:

a. Heating: The house is heated by a modern, baseboard system.

b. Lighting: While a few ceiling sockets and push-button switches are extant (primarily on the second story), no original lighting fixtures remain.

c. Plumbing: All plumbing fixtures are modern.

D. Site

1. General Setting and Orientation: The Call House is located on the south side of Central Street a few hundred feet east of the Pemigewasset River in West Franklin. This section of Central Street, from the Call house to the river, is lined with similar, frame dwellings constructed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, immediately east of the Call House is the Federal period dwelling of the Clark homestead, and to the east of that is the early twentieth century, Shingle Style Sulloway House.

2. Landscape design: No designed landscape is associated with the Call House. A concrete driveway immediately east of the house leads from the street to the garage door in the facade of the carriage house. A grassy lawn fills the small front yard, and the ground slopes down to the Pemigawasset River immediately behind the carriage-house.

3. Outbuildings: The carriage-house connected to the house remains intact. It is a two-story, gable roofed structure, framed with sawn lumber. It rests on a foundation of large rubble stone and concrete block and has a concrete floor. Originally clapboarded, the facade has been aluminum sided and a rolling garage door installed. Clapboards remain extant on the other elevations.

III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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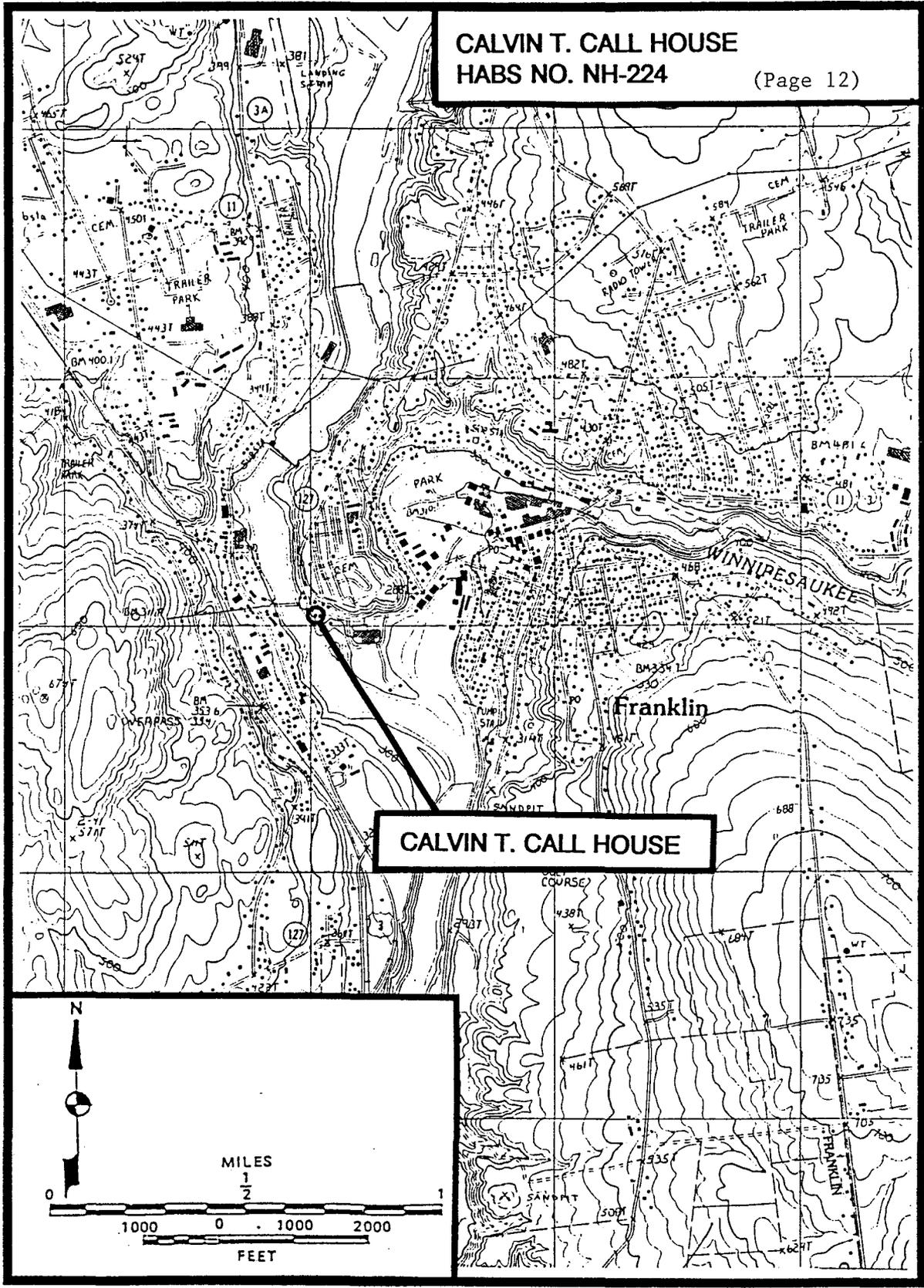
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#### IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Calvin Call House was recorded October, 1991, by the Cultural Resource Group of Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., East Orange, New Jersey, for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, Concord, New Jersey. The documentation was undertaken pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The project for which the MOA has been prepared is the replacement of the Daniel Webster Bridge over the Pemigewasset River and redesign at the intersection of Central Street with Main Street (U.S. Route 3). The project team included Martha H. Bowers, Project Coordinator; Elizabeth Rosin, Architectural Historian; and Rob Tucher, Photographer.

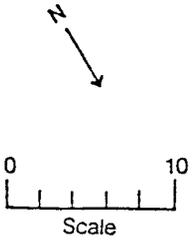
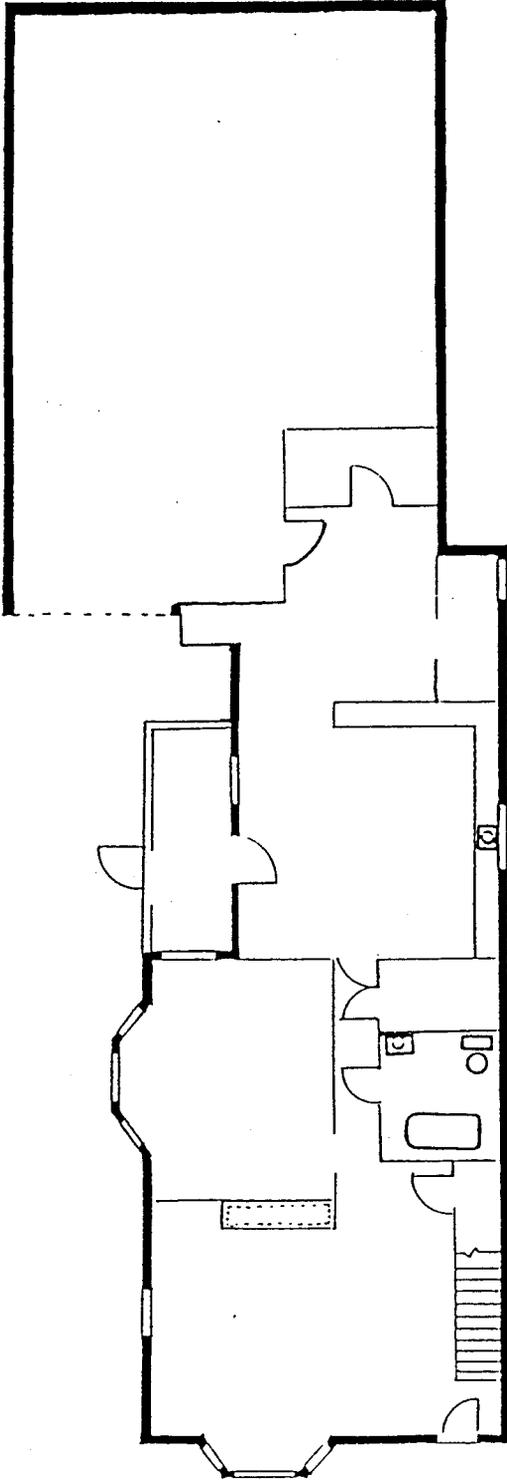
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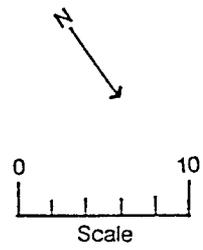
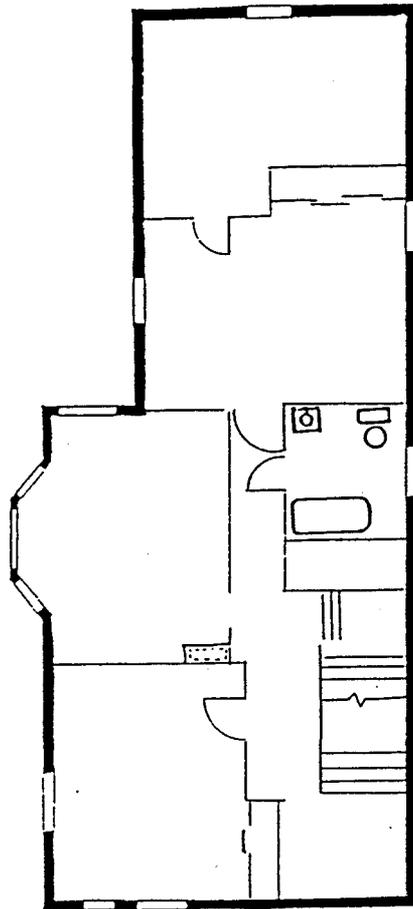


**CALVIN T. CALL HOUSE**

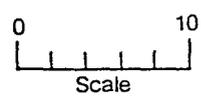
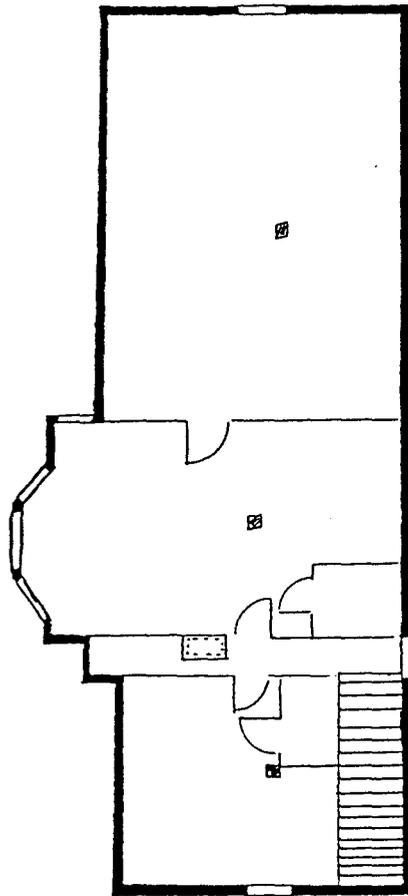
SOURCE: USGS 7.5 Minute Series Franklin, N.H. Quadrangle  
(Preliminary Edition 1987)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



THIRD FLOOR PLAN