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POSTMAN HOUSE
CH-131

The "Postman House" is a Federal-style, two and one-half story frame dwelling, three bays wide on its principal, south, facade. The ground and second floor room configuration consist of an end stair hall with adjacent double parlors on the west side. On the west end of the house stand two brick chimneys. A door at this end once led to a one-story, frame, kitchen wing that was removed several decades ago.

The eave cornices are plain and boxed. Most exterior moldings are gone or have been replaced. On the rear and east end the original (?) random width beaded clapboard remain. There is a circa 1900 one-story farm porch across the front. The roof is covered with wood shingles.

The Postman House is in rather poor physical condition although it is presently being renovated by its owners.

JRR:sh

11 April 1975

"BURDETTE'S REST"

On June 24, 1970, we visited "Burdette's Rest," or "Burdette's Nest," as it is variously known, with Mr. Orlando Ridout IV, near Nanjemoy, Charles County, Maryland. We understand it is offered for sale, with two acres, for \$7,000.

The house is about 200 feet back from the road on a pleasant, shaded lawn, just beginning to be overgrown. Young trees of desirable species are apparent - Poplars, Walnut, Kentucky Coffee, to name a few - as well as mature trees - a great Ash is especially attractive. A number of fruit trees are on the lawn to the southeast. The terrain is level.

We believe the road-front of the house faces south. An old brick walk leads from the drive up to a one storey, south front porch. It is screened, but the columns, of some modified Tuscan order, are just different enough to suggest more age than might at first be guessed.

The house is frame, two and one-half storeys high without a cellar, three bays long, with a pair of exterior brick chimneys on the west end. Siding is beaded, and secured with cut nails. Low brick piers support the structure a foot or less above the grade. Both sills intersecting at the southeast

corner, and the bottom of the southeast corner post, have rotted away. (This is the only serious visible structural problem, although interior floors are not level.) Wide plain trim around windows does not appear original nor does a large overhang on the gable ends.

The brick chimneys are laid in common bond. Patches and broken bricks protruding out, or west, at the two inside corners, the ghost of a roofline, and evidence of a closed door converted to a window all indicate the former existence of a pent chamber between, and of a depth greater than, the chimneys. Chimneys were apparently built after the weatherboarding was applied, as the latter appears to extend behind the former.

A one storey lean-to was across the north side, and, we were told, was recently torn down. It may once have been a porch, later enclosed for a kitchen.

No evidence is apparent of a kitchen house, although the west window in the north room was also once a door; possibly the existing exterior north door opening in this room was a window, with the door in the west wall giving access toward a detached kitchen house.

Exterior doors are six paneled with flush beaded panels outside and flat unmolded panels inside. The south door is

a four paneled late replacement. First storey interior doors are six paneled, raised on one side, flat on the reverse. Door locks are various types of small rim locks, typical of the late 19th century, with brown glazed clay knobs. Second storey doors are of beaded vertical boards. All door and window trim appears original, applied in a very traditional manner, without corner blocks.

A very simple chairrail surrounds all rooms at the window sill line, except in the south bedroom; there, the chairrail appears under each window, but ends at the outside edges of the architrave. It appears as though it once existed but was removed; no evidence is apparent in the plaster, so one may conjecture that this room was replastered.

Mantles are simply designed, using the typical architrave with a simple frieze and shelf. Hearths are, for the most part, missing.

Newell posts are square and perfectly plain. The rail joins them with a pegged mortise and tenon joint. Ballusters are likewise square and perfectly plain. The third storey newells, unlike the lower ones, have arched tops - a very effective simple design.

The interior is all plastered, save one bit noted on the second storey plan, on handsplit lath fastened to structural

members with cut nails.

Sawn, unbeaded, and unpainted joists are about 2' - 0" o.c. and a flat 1" x is between and parallel to each to carry lathing. Corner posts, the top plates, and diagonal bracing, all visible along the stair to the third storey, are hewn and joined with mortise and tenon with wood pins.

Some 6/6 sash appear original, with 8" x 10" lights and full 3/4" wide muntins.

Third storey partitions are vertical shiplapped beaded boards, extending clear to the roof ridge, unpainted, and covered with sawn lath and plaster. Hinges of the one existing door are HL, fastened to plain beaded trim with nails and leather washers. Ghosts of similar hinges are apparent at other openings.

There is neither plumbing nor central heat and the minimal electrical system consists of exposed BX cable to a few outlets and ceiling lights in the first storey only.

All superficial evidence on the building points to a construction date of c. 1825, give or take fifteen years or so. Details are all very simple and basically very traditional, characteristic of a house in this very rural location far from the cultural centers of Annapolis, Baltimore, and Alexandria.

Although basically structurally sound, in spite of a few

obvious problems mentioned above, it has not been well maintained in recent years, and does not present a "tight" appearance. Many weatherboards are loose; many have tin patches. The wood roof shingles are deteriorating and leaking; plaster is falling. Some first floor boards are deteriorating due to their closeness to grade, and, we think, bugs. There is no continuous foundation, which allows entry under the house to both weather and beasts.

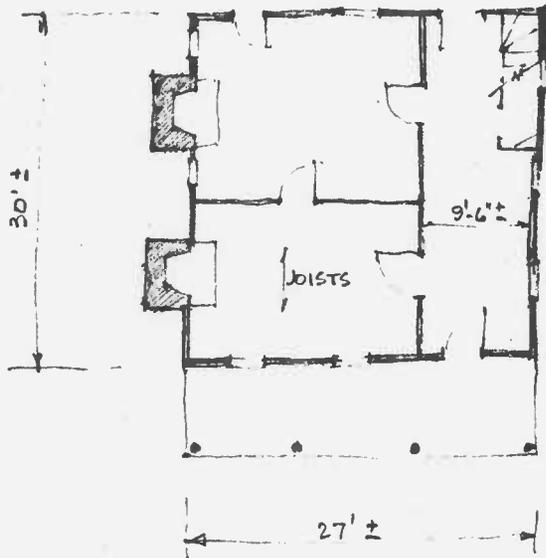
The great simplicity of this house is its most important characteristic. It has seen a minimum of alteration and is nearly complete. This simplicity and long continuance of a style in a very traditional form and detailing is often forgotten in our interest in our architectural heritage and our hasty quest for lost ages of grandure.

Orin M. Bullock, Jr., architect

by James T. Wollon, Jr.

June 29, 1970

CH-131
 FIELD SKETCHES 24 JUNE 1970
 BURDETTE'S REST
 CHARLES COUNTY, MD.



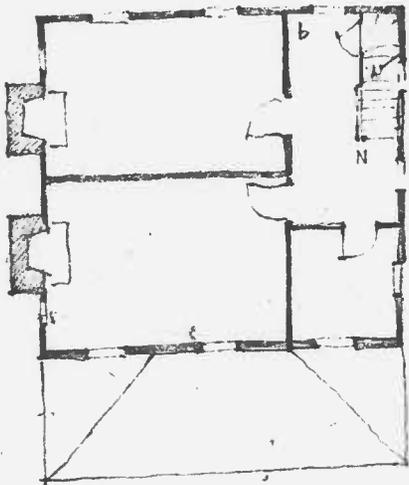
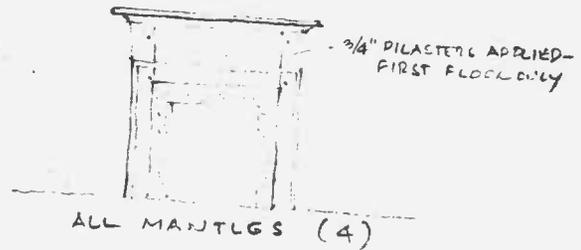
FIRST FLOOR

UP 15 R

VERT. BOARD PARTITION REMOVED. 6P DOOR IN HALL, STILL

JOISTS NOT CONTINUOUS N TO S. LAPPED 2' ± OVER PARTITION. NO EVIDENCE OF DIFFERENT AGE

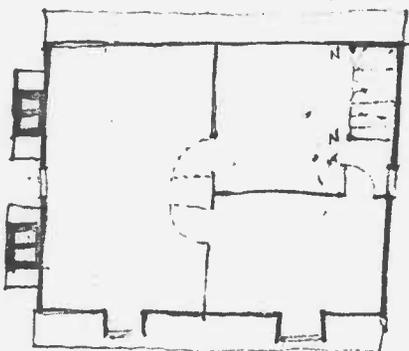
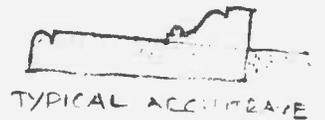
↑
 CALLED NORTH



SECOND FLOOR

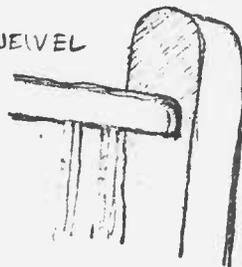
b BEADED HORIZONTAL WAINSCOT

N PAIR SQUARE NEWELS



THIRD FLOOR

N ARCHED NEWEL



Drawn by: JAMES T. WILSON

Cap bud Jen

CH-131

Mrs Watson Perrygo,
"Elmwood", said that "Burdette"
Real Est (CH 131 - Postman House) is,
Helm Springs (Grayton) in
Chas Co. which was for sale
with a piece for \$7,000 was
sold Sat. July 25. to a
Real Estate Man (speculator?).

JEF.

7/27, 70



from South

CH-131

Burdette's Rest
Charles County, Maryland
24 June, 1970

photos by James T. Wollon, Jr.



from Southwest



from Southwest



from Northwest

CH-131
Burdette's Rest
Charles County, Maryland
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from East



Base of Chimneys - West End