



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 034-1092

1. General Property Information

Property name: David Clayton House / Merryhearth Manor

Property address: 724 Old Baltimore Road

City or Town: Winchester

Zip code: 22603

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Frederick County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site Structure Object

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 3.91 Acres

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban Suburban Town Village Hamlet Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

Merryhearth Manor is located in northwest Frederick County at the intersection of Old Baltimore Road, Route 677 and Catalpa Road (Sir Johns Road), Route 672, and is situated at the base of Babbs Mountain. The front of the home faces due south with vistas of what is historically known as Pleasant Valley, dipping between Apple Pie Ridge Road (Route 739) and Little North Mountain. The house was once part of a farm comprising approximately 300 acres. Today it is surrounded primarily by farmland to the south and east with the terrain climbing on the north side to the peak of Babbs Mountain. This area of Frederick County was first settled by Quakers and there are still remaining a number of eighteenth and nineteenth century farm houses in the near vicinity.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Greek Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _____

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): 3 years from 1842 - 1845

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

Unless otherwise indicated, the listed features are present and original to the house which has been used continuously as a private residence through five families (Clayton, Carson, Dye, Gouge, and Swogger).

- Five-bay, Greek Revival.
- Two-story, single bay, front portico with pedimented gable, supported by four sets of non-fluted, Tuscan order columns. (Reconstructed in 2010 with modern materials reflecting the original design.)
- Central hall, double bay plan spanning three stories over an English basement.
- Service wing on north-east back corner: Single bay spanning two stories over an English basement. The English basement is accessible internally via the service wing and externally via an outside entrance.
- Entirely of red brick, laid in five-course American bond. (Mortar replaced in stages on all but the east side of the main block where it is primarily the original lime-based mortar.)
- Low-pitched hipped roof. (Covered in standing-seam metal as of approximately 1960.)
- Decorative broad-band plaster frieze with wood fascia board and thirteen six-light, awning-style frieze windows under the eaves of the main block.
- Four unadorned chimneys. (A fifth original chimney is missing—since about 1960. Original chimney caps as seen in an historic photo are also missing.)
- Two-panel central front door with overhead transom window. Matching door and transom window in kitchen.
- Six-over-six double hung windows, six-light casement windows in English basement, and six-light frieze windows on third story. (Sashes are original and about 70% of the panes of glass are original. Most of the original external window wood trim is wrapped in protective aluminum. Two windows have exposed trim that mirrors that on the covered windows.)
- Central staircase with heart-pine treads, knoll post, walnut handrail, and balusters looping through the center hall from the first to third floor.
- Back staircase, handrail, and balusters leading from the kitchen to the second floor.
- Double-panel doors and hardware throughout the house with tiny brass knobs and several types of locking mechanisms.
- One pair of double-panel pocket doors with brass knobs, key holes, and key hole covers.

- Three-part, solid wood, folding walls between first floor formal rooms. One of the most unique original features of the house, separating the formal rooms on the main level, are three-part, floor-to-ceiling, folding wall panels. Each three-part unit contains a full-sized double-panel door with lock and brass knob in the center section of the three-part folding wall.
- Fireplaces, twelve in total, including two cooking fireplaces—one in the service wing kitchen and one in the English basement summer kitchen. Ten of the twelve fireplaces have their original mantels and surrounds of varying designs depending on the formality of the room. (English basement fireplaces are missing their mantels—if they ever had them.)
- Heart-pine flooring above the English basement level. (The and hall and kitchen only are missing their original flooring. Two rooms have original flooring but it is covered by oak flooring added around 1960.)
- Brick flooring in the English basement’s summer kitchen. (The remainder of the English basement does not contain the original bricks used for its flooring.)
- Baseboard trim of three distinct styles, depending on the room’s purpose. (English basement baseboard trim is missing.)
- Door trim, chair rail, and window casements of varying designs depending on the formality of the room. (Only in the English basement is most of the door trim missing.)
- Plaster over brick walls throughout most rooms. (Kitchen and English basement have had the plaster removed, exposing bare brick walls. Some of the third floor walls are sheet rock.)
- Plaster over lathe ceilings throughout many rooms. (All third level ceilings and ceilings in 5 of 12 rooms on the first and second floors are not original. The English basement ceiling was likely never plastered and is exposed structural joists and tenons.)
- Peg strips hanging on walls in rooms originally used for storage or servants’ rooms.
- Two closets with double-panel doors and locks. These are the only original closets in the house.
- Late nineteenth-century addition veranda including folk Victorian posts, balusters, and handrail. (The veranda may be original, but the folk Victorian-style features indicate it was either added later or updated when folk Victorian became popular. The porch understructure and floor boards were reconstructed in 2010. The rest of the veranda—including the ceiling—are original to its initial construction.)
- The internal floorplan and layout of the rooms is 100% unaltered. None of the original walls, doors, or windows have been moved or removed. Bathrooms and closets were created inside existing walls. The covered porch that was adjacent to the service wing kitchen was converted in 2010 to a sunroom. A circa 1985 lean to was removed from the back of the house in 2010. The original ice house and hand-dug well—seen in old photos and located in the kitchen work yard near the smoke house—were removed circa 1985.
- Pictures and descriptions (while not completely accurate) from two local history books which feature the house—*Frederick County, Virginia: History Through Architecture*, Maral S. Kalbian and *Some Old Homes in Frederick County, Virginia*, Garland R. Quarles—indicate the house has not changed from its original design.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- Outdoor red brick smoke house with original door and hardware, window, open rafters, iron hooks, and shelving.
- Kitchen work yard converted to formal Italianate garden (circa 2020). Note the repurposing of excavated sandstone from the original ice house, demolished circa 1985.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

David L. Clayton and his wife Jane C. Peebles Clayton began construction on the house about 1841, and historic records reflect they (David, Jane, and their first five of eight children) occupied the house in 1845.¹ Apart from the house's architectural significance, the Clayton's were an influential family in the area before and after the Civil War, holding important civic positions, establishing churches, and educating the community. Two generations of the family worked the farm and lived at Merryhearth Manor from 1845 until 1916.

David Little Clayton was born in 1801 in what is now Marion County, WV, and moved to Winchester in 1817. He gained moderate fame as a musician and teacher of vocal music,² although he classified himself as a farmer by profession.³ Before establishing his farm and building Merryhearth Manor, he co-authored a book—a collection of shape-note music, *The Virginia Harmony*⁴—which was published in Winchester and released nationwide in two slightly different editions over the span of six years, 1831 and again in 1836.⁵ From this hymnal David is credited with being the first to develop the written shape-note music for the well-loved hymn *Amazing Grace*. The book appears to have been very successful. The business of teaching music and selling music books was thriving in the Shenandoah Valley starting in the early nineteenth century. It was shortly after the release of his book's second edition that David and Jane added 101 acres to land they had already acquired near Cedar Grove. This land is the site of Merryhearth Manor and resulted in a farmstead totaling 330 acres.⁶

Merryhearth Manor was featured during the Shape Note Festival in October 2017 by Doctor Steven Lee Cooksey, Dean Emeritus, Shenandoah University for its connection to David Clayton and because of a highly unique architectural feature of the house—namely the removable walls between the formal rooms on the first floor. These three-part panel walls have a fully operational central door in the center panel. When closed, the rooms are completely separated and accessible to each other through the panel door. When open, the rooms transform into one very large room (17 feet by 35 feet). Traditional pocket doors would not allow for the nearly full merging of the two rooms into one. The purpose of these walls is best described in an article in *NewMusic USA*, “the shape-note practice itself has its own oral culture that creates a unique sonic space. Participants sit in a square, facing each other, and belt the hymns at the top of their lungs. It's loud and entirely participatory—

¹ Frederick County 1845 Agricultural Census.

² T. K. Cartmell, *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants*, (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2002), 483, and J. E. Norris, ed., *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley*, (Chicago, Illinois: A. Warner & Co., Publishers, 1890), 781.

³ 1850 U. S. Census.

⁴ Library of Congress Control Number 2012562429, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012562429/>.

⁵ Harry Eskew, *Shape Note Hymnody in the Shenandoah Valley 1816-1860*, (Tulane University, 1966), 106 -111.

⁶ Frederick County Deed Book 70, Page 36, and Virginia 1850 Agricultural Census, Volume 2.

there's no audience to speak of.”⁷ The large rooms would have been able to accommodate singers sitting in the shape of a square or rectangle as needed for shape-note-music singing and instruction. This design feature would have also been revolutionary for temperature control in the rooms during the cold Shenandoah Valley winters, and the hot, terribly humid summers.

David Clayton died in 1854 and his widow, Jane, continued to run the farm. When she passed away in 1871, Frederick County was recovering from the devastation caused by the civil war. There is no recorded evidence (found to date), or physical evidence within the house, that indicates it was damaged or used as a military base or hospital during the war (despite persistent rumors in the local community). Merryhearth Manor did, however, play a significant role in establishing the public education system in Frederick County. John Henry Clay Clayton (David and Jane's son) served in many public office roles after the war. One of the most beneficial was his involvement in establishing the county's free public school system. He supported his good friend and neighbor (and his daughter's father-in-law), William Henry Gold, the 2nd superintendent of Frederick County public schools from 1871 to 1878, and the individual who is awarded the major credit for establishing the school system over the span of seven years.⁸ John Henry opened his home for free public school instruction and taught some of the courses himself. The day school was called Clayton School and is listed on the map of public schools in the county.⁹ John Henry and his wife Mary Rebecca George Clayton converted the third story of their home into three classrooms. John Henry taught classes, likely along with other volunteer (or paid) teachers, and Mary Rebecca ensured the students were supplied with lunch and comfortable accommodations. Today, writing left by students is visible on the walls in the rooms on the third floor. John Henry served also in many other public roles, including as the Commissioner of Roads, and Justice of the Peace. Some histories of the family and house erroneously describe the house as having been a private school; this is inaccurate, it was a public field school—commonly in use until broader-serving public school buildings and transportation were instituted.

David and Jane's daughter, Mary Francis Clayton married Captain, George W. Kurtz on April 20, 1870. She and her husband, George, remained very close with her family (the Clayton's). Upon the death of Jane Clayton in 1871 and the settlement of her estate, George W. Kurtz became co-owner of the farm and house with John Henry.¹⁰ The two families shared management and financial responsibility for the farm, and the sisters-in-law—John Henry's wife Mary Rebecca and Mary Francis—were close friends throughout their lives. Their children spent much time playing together at the house. Evidence of their writing on the walls is also visible in bedrooms throughout the house. Captain George W. Kurtz is a local legend in Winchester and Frederick County with too many accolades to list here at this time (one resource for quick reference is *Some Worthy Lives*, Garland R. Quarles).

Merryhearth Manor with 178 acres of farmland was deeded to George Moffett Carson on October 12, 1916, for the sum of \$11,000.¹¹ George and his wife, Daisy E. Brackett Carson, lived at the house and farmed the land with their two children for twenty years. On June 26, 1936, Caney Davis Dye and his wife, Grace Thompson Smith Dye, purchased the house with 178 acres for \$10,000. They raised three sons while farming the land over the span of nearly fifty years. In 1984, John Oscar Gouge and his wife, Susan Cornelia Jones Gouge, bought the house and 175 acres for \$350,000.¹² They retired to Frederick County after living and working in Washington, D.C. They were the first family who did not farm the land and they sold some of the farmable acreage to

⁷ NewMusic USA, <https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/shape-notes-billings-and-american-modernisms/>.

⁸ *Some Worthy Lives*, Garland R. Quarles (Stephens City, Virginia: Commercial Press, Inc., 1999), 69

⁹ Map of 150 Schools of Frederick County which accepted pupils on a public basis (without limit by religion or ancestry), Frederick County, Virginia, School System Collection, 199 THL, Stewart Bell Jr. Archives, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, VA, USA.

¹⁰ Frederick County Deed Book 95, Page 400, dated April 9, 1880.

¹¹ Frederick County Deed Book 139, Page 402, dated October 12, 1916.

¹² Gouge Residential Loan Application

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

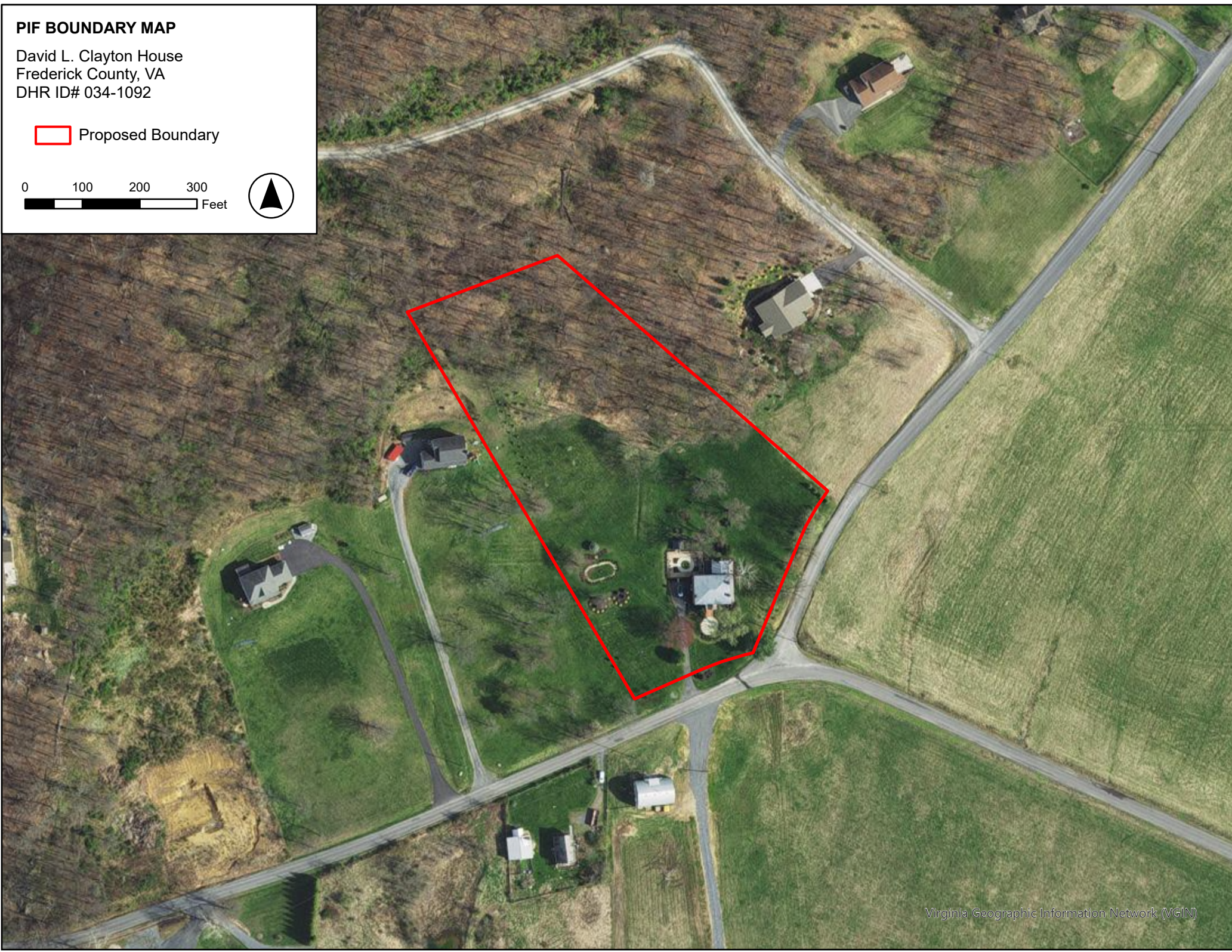
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PIF BOUNDARY MAP

David L. Clayton House
Frederick County, VA
DHR ID# 034-1092

 Proposed Boundary

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 Feet

















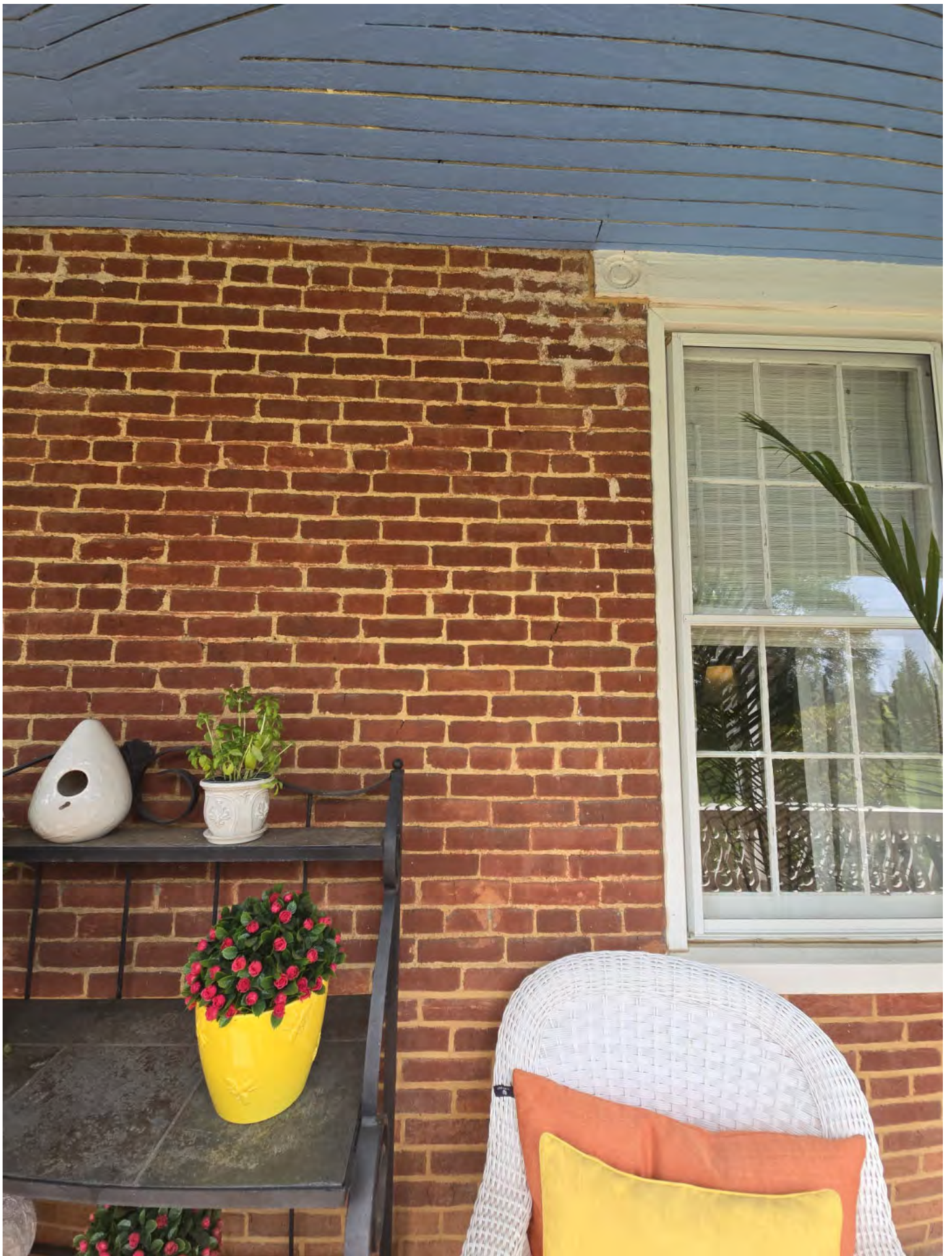








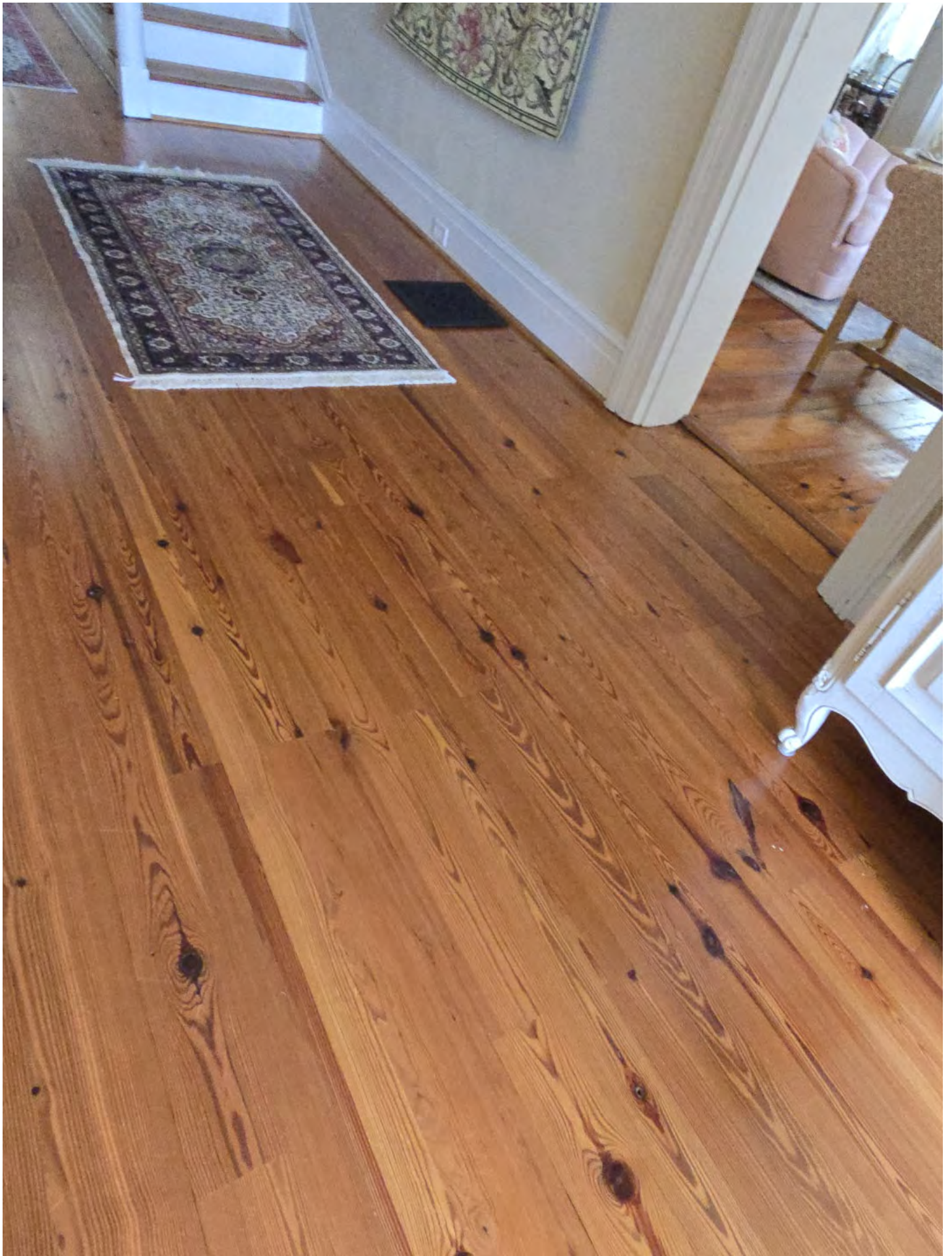




































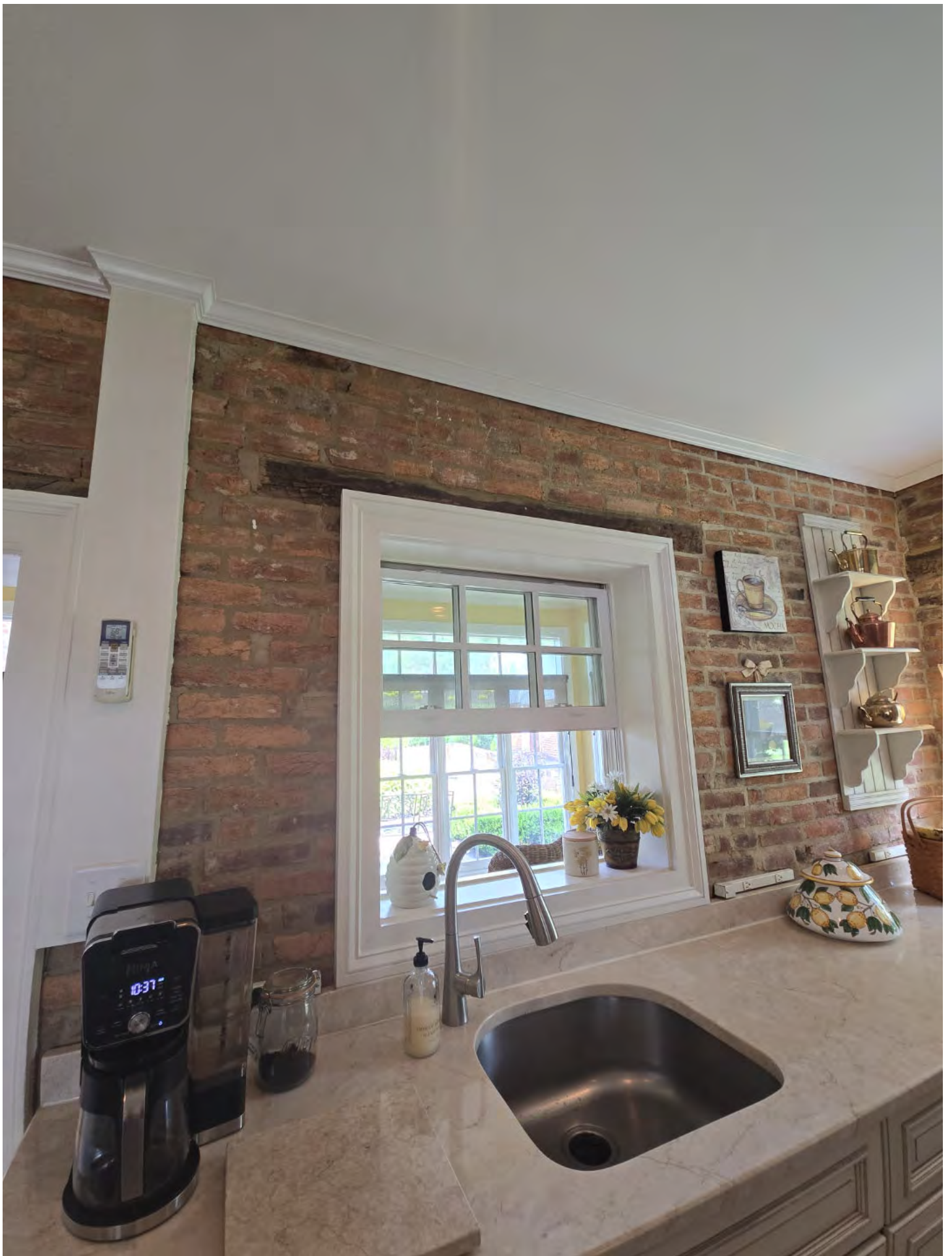










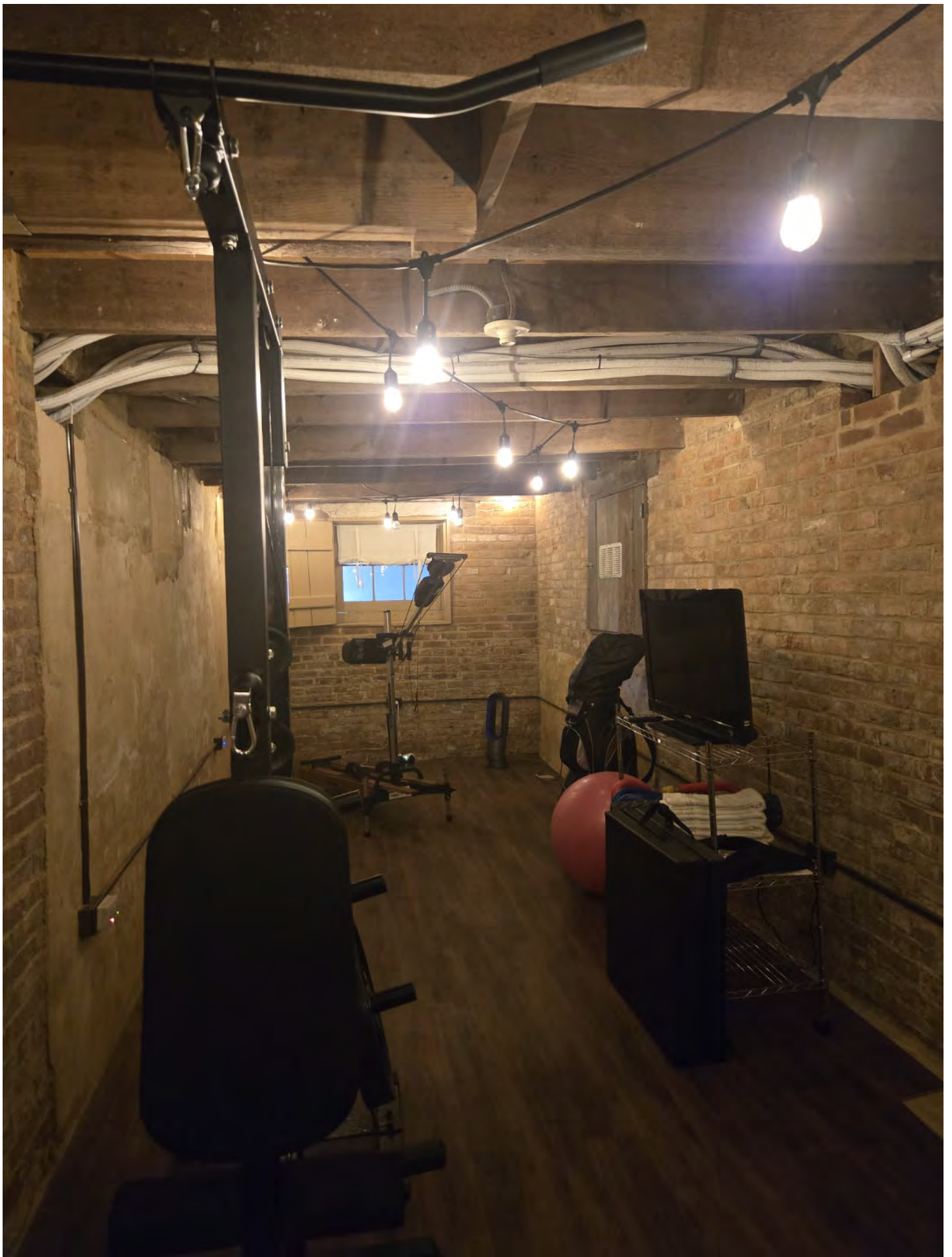


















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John Bell

March 24th 1860
aged 57 years 1 month 7 days

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15 1/2



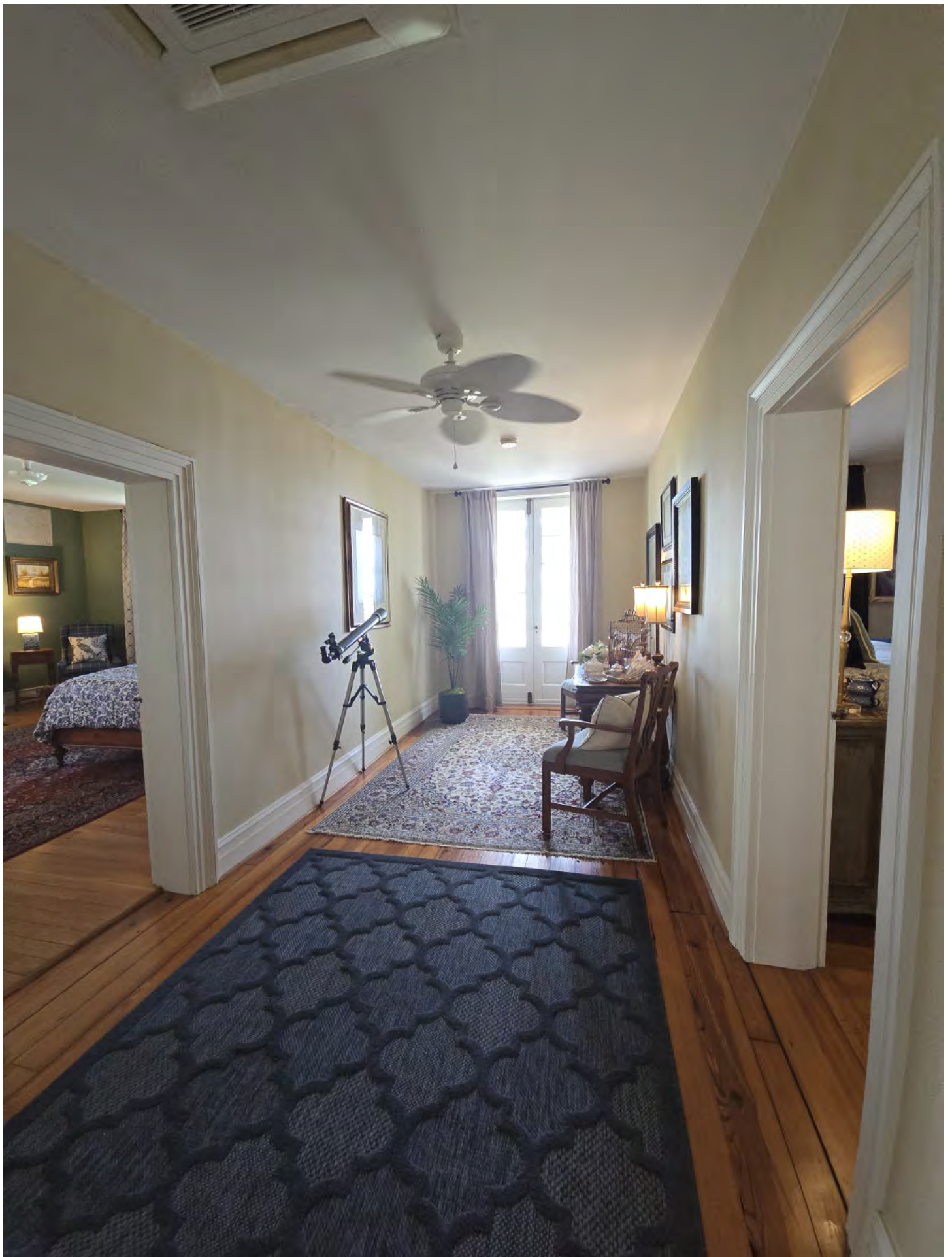


















D. L. G.
May 8, 1901.





















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best lead pencils



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Anne Kist is a mean girl.





