

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 12 1979
DATE ENTERED JUN 9 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC "Sacred Home" (Robinson-Breckinridge House)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

W of Paris
Hume-Bedford Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Paris

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Kentucky

VICINITY OF

CODE
021

COUNTY

06

CODE

Bourbon

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Evelyn Thomas (Mrs. Lindsay C.) Stewart

STREET & NUMBER

Lexington-Paris Pike

CITY, TOWN

Paris

STATE

Kentucky 40361

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Bourbon County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Paris

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Kentucky Heritage Commission, 104 Bridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky 40601

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	very slightly	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

"Sacred Home" is set in a shallow bowl amid gently rolling farmland, southwest of Paris near the Fayette County border. (See maps.) The house faces east toward the Lexington-Paris Pike (U.S. 68), which is some distance away. It would appear that access since at least the mid-19th century must have commonly been from the west, the Hume-Bedford Road. This rural road was originally a zig-zag track around and between farms, most of which belonged to members of the related Ardery, Bedford, Breckenridge, Ferguson, Hume, and Wright families dating back to the original white settlement of the land in the 1780s. The house is presently surrounded by a cleared rectangular yard, with the old family graveyard to the west and a source-stream of Houston Creek on the southeast, flowing northeast toward Paris. Although located off the nearest road parallel to the important Paris-Lexington Pike, which is undergoing expansion and development in spite of efforts to control them, the house is currently on a fairly large and prosperous farm that is not likely to be developed in the foreseeable future; yet the area immediately surrounding and visible from the house is not over-cultivated and retains a very natural feeling, with woods and hedge-rows protecting the fields and yard (see photos 1 and 3).

The house is L-shaped, with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story front block of two rooms and hall below and two under the roof above, and a rear ell on the north side consisting of one large room plus three smaller ones in the $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story rearmost section (see sketch-plan, photo 1). A large open porch extended across the remainder of the rear of the main block and along the south side of the main room of the ell, lining up with the wider rearmost section of the ell; it is now partially enclosed (see photo 5). The roof of the main block starts high on the walls and is of somewhat low slope (see photo 2). The roof of the ell is asymmetrical, coming down quite close to the ground on the south side (see photo 4). There is evidence of an early "shake" roof under the fairly old standing-seam metal roof. The chimneys are large, plain, set inside the wall. They are located at the ends of the main block, at the west end of the main ell room, and off-center toward the south on the end of the ell. The last, which probably served the original kitchen and may antedate the main house, has a curious stone base set into the wall (see photo 4).

The foundations of the main block are rather roughly laid and surfaced stone (photo 5). The front wall is laid in Flemish bond with queen closers at the ends and flanking some of the openings. The brickwork is of high quality (see photo 3) and retains original or early lined mortar. The ends and the ell are in common bond (1/6). The front windows have quite widely splayed $1\frac{1}{2}$ -stretcher jack arches.

(continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1810-20

BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"Sacred Home," as it was called on an 1861 map of Bourbon County when the property belonged to the widow of a member of the distinguished Breckinridge family of Virginia and Central Kentucky, is a fairly typical brick 1½-story farmhouse in the Federal style, dating from the first quarter of the 19th century. Its exterior is restrained and of dignified proportions, but is distinguished by three rare surviving dormers and a finely-conceived arched entrance. The interior is also restrained, except for the truly spectacular parlor, in which an ensemble of mantel, cupboards, chair-railing, and door- and window-frames displays multiple Adamesque sunbursts, reeding of two types, and square concentric corner blocks echoing those of the exterior. The plan of the rear ell is also somewhat unusual, with two smaller rooms below (one probably an attached kitchen, perhaps of earlier date) and an attic room above. Yet these variations from the norm only individualize a house whose basic form can be found throughout the Bluegrass region in the early 19th century. Although the date of construction and the original owner are uncertain, this was the homeplace of an apparently prosperous but not especially prominent branch of the Breckinridge family, others of whose members include some of the most conspicuous and contributive figures in Kentucky history, such as John Cabell Breckinridge, vice-president under James Buchanan, and Mary Desha Breckinridge, founder of the Frontier Nursing Service in Eastern Kentucky.

The founder of the Breckinridge line in Bourbon County was Alexander, a Revolutionary soldier who came from Virginia "at quite an early time." (He occupied land and was buried at what is now Claiborne Farm, east of Paris.) (J.) John Breckinridge, who acquired "Sacred Home" in 1828 and whose widow lived there until at least 1879 and was buried on the property in 1888, was one of the sons of Alexander. He was one of the executors of his father's estate in 1813, and a local historian has suggested that the house was built by John shortly after his father's death. From a recent search of the deeds, however, it appears that the Breckinridges did not acquire the property until some time after the erection of the house.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bourbon County deeds and wills researched by Mrs. Stewart with the assistance of Betty Jo Miller, County Clerk. Survey form and information supplied by Mrs. Wade Hampton (Edna Talbott) Whitley.
 William Henry Perrin, ed. History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky. Chicago: O.L. Baskin & Co., 1882.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 16	7 3 12 8 18 10	4 12 12 19 8 7 10	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nomination includes a rectangle 10 yards from the south side of the house, extending 50 yards to the west of the house, 100 yards to the north of the house to include the cemetery, and 30 yards to the east of the house to include the old access road.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Walter E. Langsam, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION _____ DATE January 1979

STREET & NUMBER 420 West Second Street TELEPHONE (606) 252-1865

CITY OR TOWN Lexington STATE Kentucky 40508

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Jonna C. Hopkins

TITLE Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 6-8-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol Skell DATE 8-9-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: Deputy DATE Aug 9 79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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A well-proportioned but not elaborate cornice extends across the front, over the porch roof across the rear of the main block, and along the north side of the ell. It is returned on the wall at the ends. There are flat eave-boards on the gable ends, which are solid except for small "lookout" attic windows flanking the chimneys and a full window at the end of the ell.

The facade, although simple, is impressive, with a few distinctive details (photos 2 and 3). The proportion of brick surface to opening is considerable, although the four windows are of ample size (but not long). The central entrance has a self-contained look, with a semi-circular fanlight recessed into a reeded frame. There is a wooden "keystone" at the top of the arch, but only square concentric corner blocks indicate the meeting of the jambs and the arch. An outstanding feature of the house is the three widely-spaced dormers across the front, with probably original reeded window-frames, diminutive pediments, and concentric corner blocks. The 1st-floor windows have very slender muntins dividing 9-over-6-pane sash; the dormers, 6-over-6. There are many early panes. The rounded moldings of the pegged window-frames of the main block are rather plain and large-scaled compared to the more delicately molded, more typically "Federal" (and therefore perhaps earlier) frames on the rear of the ell. There was a single-bay Victorian porch around the front door, recently removed, although its outline may still be seen on the wall; a modest stoop replaces it.

The early porch across the rear of the main block rises from ground level and is supported by stripped tree-trunks (photo 5). Its roof descends from below the cornice line. The basement entrance is under the porch roof near the south end. It opens into a cellar room under the parlor; the remainder is unexcavated. There are also two beaded-edge openings on the main facade with holes for diagonally-set wooden bars. Log floor joists are visible in the cellar. The porch on the south side of the ell has recently been rebuilt (photo 5). The southwest corner room of the ell has a tamped-earth floor, possibly remains of log construction, signs of a chair-rail (or even wainscot), a wide brick-and-stone fireplace-opening with wooden bar inset above, a squarish board-and-batten beaded exterior door on the south side, and a typical Federal molded door frame on the east opening onto the porch.

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The center entrance hall into the main block is lit only by the small (now covered) semi-circular fanlight. The jambs and narrow inner facing of the entrance are also fully reeded. The single large front entrance door has six panels, flat on the inside; there is a lower door to the porch at the rear under the stair-landing. The hall is rather plain, but feels high and deep. The staircase and the relation of the sloped rear wall of the landing are impressive, although the unpainted hand-rail, plain square spindles, stringers completely lacking in ornamentation, vertical panels below the ascent, and simply but handsomely shaped newel, top-knobs, and pendants have minimal detail (photos 6 and 7). The hall, like the two main rooms on the right, has rather simple beaded chair-railing, beaded baseboards, and slightly molded frames with reeded jambs. The parlor on the left (south end of the main block), however, has spectacular woodwork.

The parlor is spacious and well-proportioned, with a 12½-foot high ceiling; it is 18 feet wide and two feet longer front to back. The large mantel on the south wall is flanked at some distance by tall cupboards whose shelves have beaded edges (photo 8). The mantel is probably unique (photo 9). It is very shallow, remaining part of the composition of the wall and room as a whole, rather than an isolated feature in itself. The large center panel features a double spray of widening grooves, suggesting a fountain or fireworks; the lower ends are closed by more delicate half-sunbursts, like basins. There are large, exquisitely chiseled horizontal oval sunburst motifs on the recessed frieze, with smaller vertical oval sunbursts on the fairly narrow end-panels. Still smaller bursts take the place of capitals, bases, and pedestals for the superb and rare reeded and banded half-oval pilasters set behind raised edges. The inner frame (the original opening has been filled in for a stove) has diagonal reeding forming a chevron in the center. All the moldings are clear-cut and restrained, although those under the frieze have an unusual symmetrical profile. The shelf projects slightly over the center and end-panels. Although somewhat eccentric, this mantel is impressive and harmonious as a whole, particularly in the context of the overall ensemble.

The extraordinary array and gradation of Adamesque sunburst motifs is continued in the varied ovals on the "pedestals" and

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bases flanking the lower portion of the cupboards and smaller ones at the base of the window-frames. The frames are reeded and have square concentric corner blocks like those on the exterior facade. The chair-rail is fully shaped in the parlor, and the window-frames are raked at the top and sides. The ensemble represents a display of somewhat primitive but virtuoso craftsmanship.

The other two main rooms are considerably plainer, with square reeded pilasters and plain friezes on the mantels, although the symmetrically-profiled moldings are repeated. There is a single cupboard to the right of the right front chamber mantel (with its original chair-rail band oddly replaced at the top!), and an interesting tall narrow cupboard or "gun cabinet" to the left of the mantel in the main room of the ell. (This room serves now as the kitchen, but surely was originally the dining room.) Between the cupboard and the south wall are squeezed the few bottom steps of the stair to the attic room at the rear of the ell (see photo 10). The room at the northwest corner of the ell had a narrow shelf-and-frame mantel behind the main chimney, chair-railing, and a still narrower "gun closet." These have been removed. The upstairs room of the ell may or may not have been finished, and was probably quarters for house-servants or possibly a "vagrants' room."

The second story of the main block is quite finished, with wide ash floors. The chair-rail that follows the staircase continues into the dormer over the entrance, and there is chair-rail around the south room over the parlor. This chamber has a narrow off-center shelf-and-frame mantel with reeding on the edge of the shelf and on the molding under it. Both attic rooms are well-lit because of the dormers and pairs of lookouts at the ends.

The original fabric of the house is nearly intact, with minimal modification for utilities and the like, except for the bath added in the northwest room of the ell. The house has evidently been well-maintained throughout most of its history. The present owner has done some stabilization work, and plans to do further restoration as needed; a grant-in-aid will probably be requested for this purpose.

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"Sacred Home"

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The house faces east. The property to be included consists of the immediate surroundings of the house, basically the front yard and farmyard, including the probable site of any former outbuildings subject to archaeological investigation, as well as a very old family graveyard surrounded by a Victorian castiron fence and containing evidence for the occupancy of the house. The barn shown on the U.S.G.S. map northeast of the house is recent; there are no other surviving outbuildings (merely a frame garage at the southwest). There is now also a farmpond southwest of the house, not included in the boundaries.

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As far as can be ascertained, the house was built on the property of a John Robinson, who acquired the land from John Green at an undetermined date. Green had a land grant of about 6,000 acres patented in 1782 and 1786, southwest of what is now Paris; Robinson had a similar grant nearby. In any case, the property in question, consisting of 339 acres, was sold by Robinson and his wife Susannah, on September 27, 1827, to Dr. Matthew Anderson for \$7,500, a fairly high price. He sold it a year later, on August 12, 1828, to J. John Breckinridge for \$8,000. In his will filed in April 1854, Breckinridge left his wife Ann W. Brooks Breckinridge "the home - place purchased of Dr. Anderson and known as the Robinson place, containing about 339 acres, together with all the household and kitchen furniture, and so much of the farming utensils as she may need and to be selected by herself; also 6 horses, 6 cows, 50 sheep, and 25 hogs of her own selecting. I also will and bequeath to my said wife all my slaves during her lifetime. If any of the above slaves should prove refractory so that my wife cannot manage them, they shall be sold by my executor, which is Samuel Brooks, and my said wife to have the interest during her lifetime." Presumably, the Samuel Brooks of this revealing document was a relative of Mrs. Breckinridge, who was a daughter of Alexander Brooks.

Mrs. Breckinridge, who is shown as the owner of "Sacred Home" on the 1861 Hewitt map and also on the 1877 atlas, lived from August 18, 1798, until July 26, 1888, according to the inscription on her gravestone near the house. She apparently outlived her children and other relatives, frequently changing her will and making various other arrangements with the property. During the Civil War the two sons of J. John Breckinridge named in his will to receive the property after their mother's death assigned their rights to her (1/8 share each) for \$1,850 apiece; these were John W. and Alexander. At least one other son, Abijah B., "born Feb. 1, 1839, and...married in 1857 to Miss Amanda Boone, daughter of James Boone," according to Perrin, similarly signed over his right to the property. All of the dozen or so children (except O.H.P. Breckinridge, whose share was specifically limited to \$500 and who died a month after the will was filed, according to his gravestone) were to receive \$3,500 apiece from the estate, if they had not been given a comparable amount during J. John's lifetime: a not inconsiderable total of about \$39,000, in addition to their mother's portion.

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It appears that Mrs. Breckinridge's land was sold on the courthouse steps (in other words, in default of some payment) to James W. Ferguson in 1875. According to a law suit, however, the action was revoked. But on December 17, 1879, Ann W. Breckinridge did sell the property to Lafayette Ardery, a landowner in the area and perhaps related by marriage. When Ardery died on August 18, 1892, he left a lifetime interest in the house and about 136 acres to Fanny Ardery Wright (perhaps his sister; she had married into one of the earliest families in the area); after her death they were to go to his son, William P. Ardery. Fanny and her husband John Ward Wright were also often in litigation.

It was Fanny Wright who finally sold the property in 1902 to James W. Ferguson--presumably, in spite of the large number of connected Fergusons in the area, the same who had tried in vain to acquire it at the courthouse steps in 1875! According to Perrin, writing about 1882, Ferguson was a highly successful farmer, stock-raiser, and the owner of "over 4,000 acres of land, the greater portion self-acquired." He had also married a member of the prominent local Hume family, one of those who gave their name to the Hume-Bedford (or Hume & Bedford) Road on which the farm is located. Ferguson left it to his daughter, Mary Ferguson Bedford (who later remarried a Taylor). From her it passed into the hands of Matt Bedford and his wife Gladys, who sold it at auction to the present owner in 1977.

It appears, then, that although the house was associated with the Breckinridges during the second and third quarters of the 19th century, it earlier belonged to Dr. Matthew Anderson and may well have been built for John Robinson and his wife, as it was referred to as "the Robinson place" in J. John Breckinridge's 1854 will. In an area in which a relatively few families have frequently intermarried and divided farms, it is also likely that all of the occupants, at least from the 1820s through the 1960s, were connected with each other by blood or marriage. This may partially account for the remarkably few alterations made to the house (and those few in recent years, when a Victorian front porch was also removed). This degree of integrity may also reflect the relatively remote location between two roads, even though the house is in fact not far from the prosperous county seat. Such proximity, however, may account for such unexpected niceties as the parlor boasts.

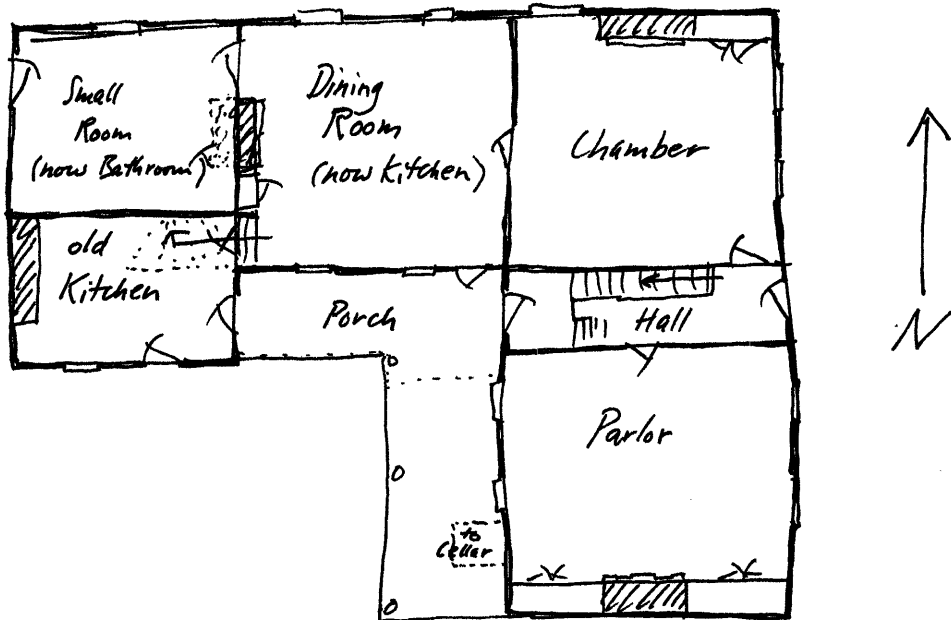
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Photograph 1. Sketch-plan of first floor by Walter E. Langsam.
Scale and direction approximate.



"Sacred Home" (Robinson-
Breckinridge House)
Paris
Bourbon County, Kentucky

Walter E. Langsam
Lexington-Fayette County Historic
Commission
July 1978

Photo 1. Sketch plan of first
floor.