

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Palmer-Ferril House

other names/site number: Thomas Hornsby Ferril House 5DV 213

2. Location

street & number: 2123 Downing Street (n/a) not for publication

city, town: Denver (n/a) vicinity

state: Colorado code: CO county: Denver code: 031 zip code: 80218

3. Classification

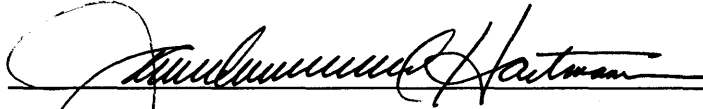
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
(x) private	(x) building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
() public-local	() district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> buildings
() public-State	() site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
() public-Federal	() structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	() object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x) nomination () request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x) meets () does not meet the National Register criteria.
() See continuation sheet.



September 17, 1992

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

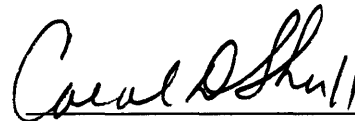
() entered in the National Register.
() See continuation sheet

() determined eligible for the National Register. () See continuation sheet

() determined not eligible for the National Register.

() removed from the National Register.

() other, (explain:) _____



11-3-92

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Domestic / Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne

Materials
(enter categories from instructions)

foundations Stone

walls Brick

roof Wood Shingle

other Wood porch

wood trim

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Palmer-Ferril House was built in 1889 by the builders Hughes and Llewellyn from plans drawn by the architect Mr. Franklin Goodnow for Mrs. J.N. Palmer, the great aunt of Thomas Hornsby Ferril. It is said that in designing the house Mrs. Palmer walked the streets of Denver and incorporated ideas she saw and liked from numerous homes of prominent Denver citizens. The house includes an unusual half-timbering pattern and an interesting application of lattice work that provides an eclectic feeling. However, with its vertical orientation, asymmetry, decorative porch and contrasting materials and textures, the home can best be classified as Queen Anne.

The property is located in a mixed use area which includes residential, commercial, restaurant and a hospital. The Ferril House is a single dwelling facing due east. It sits on less than one acre on Downing Street in the San Rafael Historic District. It is a two and one half story building of brick and wood. The first two floors are of brick, while the attic story is wood with decorative diamond shaped shingles and lattice work. There is a small one story porch of wood on the north side of the front with elaborate woodwork, similar to that found inside in the parlor. On the second floor, the porch is enclosed and was used as a sleeping porch. It is made of wood and contains windows all around. Below the east facing window there are decorative diamond shaped shingles. Above the first floor window is a stained glass lightbar. Above both the first and second story windows is wood lattice work. The attic floor windows each consist of small panes and are set directly in the center of the window.

Entrance is by way of the porch at the north front of the building. The front door leads into the foyer which contains a stairway leading to the second floor. The woodwork throughout the downstairs front of the house is in excellent condition including the banister with detail carvings. The stairway contains a wall

(X) See continuation sheet

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covering below the handrail which continues into the dining room as well as around the entryway. The stairwell has a stained glass window on the landing to the second floor.

In the parlor, east of the entryway, is one of the three tile faced fireplaces that are located on the first floor. There is woodwork surrounding the opening which includes a mantle with a mirror above. The parlor also contains extensive woodwork enhancing the entryway into the parlor similar to that in the foyer.

West of the entryway is the dining room where the second fireplace downstairs is located. This fireplace is much more ornamental than the first and also contains elaborate woodwork. In the southeast corner is a glass and wood built-in cabinet which is in excellent condition. Throughout the front section of the downstairs there are oak floors. These too are in excellent condition. Also in several locations the original gas jets are still on the walls of the front downstairs rooms which were used before electricity was installed.

Behind the dining room to the northwest is what was Will and Alice Ferril's (parents of Thomas Ferril) bedroom. This is an odd shaped room and quite dark as there is only one north window. The third fireplace is in this room and is the least impressive. The floors here are also hardwood.

The original kitchen, located in the rear of the house, has not been a functioning kitchen for quite some time. Another kitchen was installed on the second floor when Tom and Helen Ferril moved in. That one became the "permanent" kitchen after Alice passed away. The only thing remaining in the original kitchen is the sink and a built-in cabinet located on the east wall. On the inside of the cabinets are handwritten notes presumably by the Ferril women which remain quite legible. Off the kitchen is a screened-in porch overlooking the backyard where the family had their breakfast and lunch during nice weather. In the backyard was a beautiful garden tended by the live-in gardener.

Off the kitchen is the bathroom which contains built-in cabinets. Originally the bathroom did not have a bathtub but one was added sometime later. It did, however, contain a pull chain toilet, which Anne Folsom (Tom and Helen's daughter) remembers having a very high flushing box.

The basement is accessed from the kitchen by narrow stairs with a low ceiling where the gardeners room was located. It is a small room with its own toilet facilities.

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Off the kitchen in the opposite direction from the bathroom is a hall the family referred to as the long closet. This hall contains a back stairs to the second floor and a wall of cabinets used for storage. The hall connects at the opposite end to the parlor with a door off the side to the dining room. The hall is very dark as there is only one very small window. Some original wallpaper can be found on the south wall.

Originally the second floor of the house contained numerous bedrooms, the exact number is unclear. However, in 1922 when Tom and Helen Ferril moved into the upstairs a major renovation took place to turn it in to an apartment. This was the first remodeling of the house. At a later time, the front stairs were moved and entered the second floor at a different spot. A large living room was formed in the east front portion and was the scene of numerous parties of visiting artists and writers. This room contains a fireplace faced with blue tile with minimal woodwork surrounds (primarily only a mantle). Off the living room is the sun porch which was used for sleeping in warm weather.

On the south side off the living room is a very plain bedroom which was used by Tom and Helen Ferril. Inside the closet door are more handwritten notes by Helen Ferril which says when she painted the room and in what colors. There was a wash basin in the southwest corner.

Behind the living room is the small dining room. The cabinet in the corner was constructed by Tom Ferril. Like the front living room this room has hardwood floors.

Off the dining room is the kitchen which has built-in cabinets with glass fronts. The room was so small the refrigerator had to sit in the hall. Prior to the refrigerator it was the icebox. In the hall is a closet door which on the inside also holds the markings of the Ferril family. On Tom and Helen's daughter's (Anne) wedding night they had a knife throwing contest at the door. The marks are still there. At the end of the hall is a somewhat modern bathroom. It is unclear what is original and what isn't.

Off the hall to the back of the house is Tom Ferril's study where he did his writing. Ferril built many of the built-ins in the study. Off the study through an archway is Anne's room and, like the study, many things in this room were built by Tom. Her bed has a built-in spring base with a mattress on top. At the head of the bed are bookshelves installed by Tom. When Anne was about 7 or 8 years old Tom felt claustrophobic in the study and knocked out the study ceiling to create a mezzanine above and improve air circulation, an architectural device which long preceded the modern fashion of two-storied spaces. In Tom's day the walls were lined with many of his works as well as reference books.

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For access to the third floor there was a ladder similar to those in a library. This gave access to the spacious attic bedroom with dormer windows. However, there also were stairs to the bedroom from the sunny east living room. Entrance to the bedroom this way leads you through a gothic archway. The shelves in this room were put in by Tom.

In the hidden portion of the attic lies the true treasure of this house. Many years ago Tom installed tracks taken from an old mine which ran in the dead space behind the wall that was dropped to form the attic bedroom. On the track Tom placed a train that he had built which carried his guests, as in an amusement park, from the attic to an exit in his study where they would be pushed backwards back into the attic. According to Anne there were telescopes and other objects along the way to observe.

Through the years of use by a single family, the house has been thoroughly adapted to meet the unique needs of this literary family. The woodwork, finishings and fixtures have generally been maintained in original condition. The grounds need work but the care given to both the front and back gardens by the gardener is still obvious.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: (x) nationally () statewide () locally
Applicable National Register Criteria () A (x) B () C () D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) () A () B () C () D () E () F (x) G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

LiteraturePeriod of Significance1900 - 1988Significant Dates1926, 1927, 19371960, 1963, 1968**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Significant Person Architect/Builder**Ferril, ThomasArchitect - Mr. Franklin GoodnowBuilder - Hughes and Llewellyn

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Palmer-Ferril House, a designated Denver Landmark, is being nominated under criterion B for its association with Thomas Hornsby Ferril, poet laureate of Colorado and foremost figure in the literary history of Denver and Colorado. Ferril lived in the house from 1900 until his death in 1988. Criterion consideration G is also applicable for although the house is over 100 years old, Ferril's significance continues beyond 1942, the 50 year cutoff date established by the National Register.

Thomas Hornsby Ferril's earliest contribution to Denver journalism was a paper route. After graduating from Colorado College in 1918, he served in the Army during World War I as a Signal Corp officer. Upon discharge, he returned to Denver and began his journalism career. From 1919 through 1921, Ferril was a general assignment reporter for the Denver Times. His salary was \$20 a week with an extra \$10 for writing and editing a theater page.¹ Ferril was also a police reporter for the Rocky Mountain News. During this time he started writing for his father's newspaper, the Rocky Mountain Herald, and eventually became contributing editor. When his wife Helen took over the paper in 1939, he became a co-editor and started writing a column entitled "Ideas and Comments," which he wrote until 1972.

In 1926 Ferril began his 42 year career as a public relations director for the Great Western Sugar Company, managing publicity and advertising. He made promotional films and edited "Through the Leaves," the company's agricultural magazine. While working there he also wrote a column for Harper's magazine entitled "Western Half Acre" which appeared from 1945 to 1947.

Although described as a "graduate of the Denver school of rakehell journalism" and an unlikely newspaperman,² Ferril is best known as a poet. He began making rhymes

(x) See continuation sheet

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when only three years old and in 1906 at the age of ten, he published his first poem in a newspaper.³ In the early 1920s the Rocky Mountain News paid him \$5 for each weekly poem. Acclaim came in 1926 when his first volume of poetry, High Passage, appeared. This collection of poems, first published on the editorial pages of the Rocky Mountain News and in the Rocky Mountain Herald, won the prize offered by the Yale University Press for younger poets. This honor given by the Yale Press was considered one of the biggest of the year for poets under age 30. The following year (1927) he received the Nation poetry prize. The awards continued: the Oscar Blumenthal prize for poetry in 1937; the prize from the Academy of American Poets in 1939; the Robert Frost award from the Poetry Society of America in 1960; and the Ridgely Torrence award in 1963, to name a few.⁴

Thomas Hornsby Ferril never lacked markets for his poems and essays. He published six volumes of poetry and his work appeared in numerous anthologies. His work also appeared in the Atlantic, Harper's, The Saturday Review, Yale Review, The New Yorker, New York Times and even Popular Mechanics (an article on how to burglar proof basement windows with old tire chains). Thirty seven lines of his poetry are inscribed under the murals that encircle the Colorado State Capitol rotunda. His poem, "Two Rivers," is engraved in bronze at the historic confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek in Denver. The dramatization of his poem "Magenta" has been presented numerous times in Colorado. His play "... And Perhaps Happiness" won a \$10,000 Denver Post award in 1957 and was performed at the Central City Opera House (listed in the National Register).

Tom Ferril's impact went beyond the state of Colorado. In 1963, Ferril was one of 31 American poets whose words were chosen for interpretation in engraved crystal. The Poetry Society of America chose the 31 poets for the project. That same year the 31 crystal pieces went on display in the Steuben Glass Galleries in New York City. In 1968, as part of the Archive of Recorded Poetry and Literature, the Library of Congress recorded Ferril reading 15 of his own works.⁵

Thomas Hornsby Ferril's poems most often dealt with mountains, rivers, Colorado miners and the prairies of the West. Proclaiming the essence and spirit of the Western experience, a New York newspaper called him the "Poet Laureate of the Rocky Mountains."⁶ Although he was Colorado's poet laureate in spirit for most of the century, he did not officially receive the honor until 1979. Ferril was the subject of a 1981 Emmy Award winning television documentary that was shown nationally on the Public Broadcasting System. He received the Denver Press Club's Outstanding Colorado Communicator award in 1983. Ceremonies in 1985 dedicated the Thomas Hornsby Ferril Collection to the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library.

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Ferril's work was recognized around the country and praised by such men as Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost and H. L. Mencken. Robert Frost wrote a jingle about him: "... I know a Denverite / Who, measured from sea to crown / Is one mile five-foot ten / And swings a commensurate pen."⁷ Sandburg described Ferril as "terrifically and beautifully American"⁸ and once said of him: "You have the great poet of the West in your midst. He is the poet of the Rockies, and someday he will be recognized as one of the great poets of America."⁹

Ferril also played the mandolin and another of Ferril's hobbies was woodworking, much of which was performed in the basement of the house. He made toys for his daughter and built cupboards, bookcases and cabinets throughout the house. When Tom and Helen began their occupation of the second story, they renovated the entire floor into an apartment. Tom designed his own study, including knocking out the ceiling to improve air circulation because he felt claustrophobic. The attic became the site of a narrowgauge rail and flat car. This railway was a popular diversion for the family and for the frequent party-goers.

This house contains the study where Ferril did his writing. It best represents Ferril and his literary contributions to Colorado's heritage. Because he was a self-made carpenter, the house is an important reflection of the man.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

While Thomas Ferril is the most prominent resident of the house, four generations of talented individuals lived in the home. The present day Ferril House began as the home of John N. and Joanna MacHarg Palmer. John Palmer was a mining engineer for various Colorado mining companies and travelled frequently as a requisite of his job. Joanna was an artist, had an art studio in Idaho Springs, and purportedly built Colorado's first china kiln. The couple never had children and Joanna spent much of her married life without her husband. She often sought the company of her family in Rome, New York and in her fifties she invited a favorite niece, Alice MacHarg, to come and live with her. In 1889 John Palmer contracted a construction company to build the Queen Anne style house at 2123 Downing. Joanna moved into the home in 1891 and continued to live there until her death in 1922.

Joanna's niece, Alice MacHarg married William C. Ferril, the city editor of the Denver Republican in 1888. They had three children; two daughters and a son, Thomas Hornsby, born in 1896. In that same year, Will became the curator for the Colorado State Historical and Natural History Society (later divided into the Colorado Historical Society and the Museum of Natural History). Because his wages were not sufficient to support a family of five and because Aunt Joanna was living alone in the twelve room house, the family moved into the second floor of the home in 1900. Alice and Will lived in the house for the rest of their lives.

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The only son of Alice and Will Ferril, Thomas Hornsby Ferril, was born February 25, 1896. Tom was four when they moved into 2133 Downing. In November 1921, Thomas married Helen Drury Ray in Newark, Ohio and returned to post-war Denver where housing was scarce. When Aunt Joanna died in 1922, Alice and Will moved downstairs and Tom and Helen officially took over the second floor. Six months later their only daughter, Anne, was born and the fourth generation began its occupancy of the house. Like the previous two generations, Tom and Helen also lived in the home for the rest of their lives.

While Thomas Ferril is by far the most significant individual to occupy the house, his father's accomplishments are also worth noting. After a quick review of Will Ferril's life, it becomes obvious from where Tom inherited his writing skills.

William C. Ferril began his journalistic career in the early 1880s when his attempts to mine for gold failed. He became a staff member, editor and part owner of several papers in Silver Cliff. In 1883 he came to Denver where he worked on the staff of the Denver Republican and became city editor. After one year as editor of the Rocky Mountain News, he returned to the Denver Republican. Will was also a regular contributor to the Commonwealth, a magazine published in Denver to promote better literature in the west and the south. The magazine received nationwide acclaim and Will received substantial praise for his articles. During this time, Will was also syndicated writer and his articles appeared in newspapers throughout the United States.

In 1896, Will left the newspapers when he was appointed the first curator of the Colorado State Historical and Natural History Society. During his 14 years as curator, he made significant contributions to the Society that ensured its success. He launched an education program for school children, began the most extensive collections of Colorado newspapers held by any institution, added six new departments and acquired operating funds that allowed for the expansion of the Society.

In 1912 Will purchased the Rocky Mountain Herald. He ran the paper and contributed articles every week for 22 years. In 1934, when his health started to fail, he turned the operation of the paper over to his daughter-in-law, Helen Ferril (Tom's wife). Will Ferril died in 1939.

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Will's wife, Alice, was a painter, poet, author and musician (the banjo). Their house was a hub for the literary and artists of the region. Will and Alice set the social pace that Tom and Helen were to follow and eventually surpass. Numerous newspaper articles described how a visit to the home was an adventure. Tom and Helen continued the tradition of hospitality that Will and Alice began. The house continued to be a hub for regional literary and artistic talent and there was a steady stream of famous visitors and guests such as Thomas Wolfe, Robert Frost, Dorothy Parker and Carl Sandburg. The home characterizes the several generations of the Ferril family, their lifestyles and their contributions to Colorado's cultural heritage.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS BY THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

High Passage	1926
Westering	1934
Trial by Time	1944
New and Selected Poems	1952
Words for Denver and Other Poems	1966
I Hate Thursday (essay)	1946
...and Perhaps Happiness (verse play)	1958
The Rocky Mountain Herald Reader	1966

Other: Tom Ferril was a contributing editor for the Rocky Mountain Herald and Harpers. He also contributed numerous poems and articles to numerous periodicals and poetry journals.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Harry Farrar, "Graduate of 'Rakehell' School Trades Barbs for Bard's Life," Denver Post, 6 July 1978, p. 29.
2. Ibid.
3. Jack Kisling, "Colorado Poet Laureate Ferril Dies at 92," Denver Post, 29 October 1988, p. 1A.
4. Contemporary Authors, (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1977), Vol. 65-68, p. 214.
5. Rocky Mountain News, 13, September 1968, p. 39.
6. Ruth Lechlitner, "Poet Laureate of the Rocky Mountains," New York Herald Tribune, 9 December 1934.
7. Robert de Roos, "One Mile Five-foot Ten and Swings a Commensurate Pen," San Francisco Chronicle, 30 October 1966.
8. Gene Amole, "Birthday Boy," Rocky Mountain News, 25 February 1982, p. 4.
9. Steve Chawkins, "To Laureate Ferril, the Trite is in Peril," Rocky Mountain News, 24 February 1985, p. 8.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(x) See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

- Primary location of additional data:**
- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other

Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: under one acre

UTM References

A	<u>1 3</u> Zone	<u>5 0 2 1 2 0 </u> Easting	<u>4 3 9 9 8 5 0 </u> Northing	B	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
C	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	D	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

() See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 21, Block 9, San Rafael Addition

() See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of the one lot the house is located on. The boundaries encompass the property historically associated with the Ferril residence.

() See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Connie S. Kruman

Edited: Holly Wilson 6/12/92

Organization: N/A

Date: 8/1/91

Street & Number: 7887 Allison Way #301

Telephone: (303)424-3797

City or Town: Arvada

State: CO Zip Code 80005

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Newspaper Clipping Files. Denver Public Library - Western History Department.

CITY DIRECTORIES

Denver City Directory. Denver: Corbett and Ballinger's. Vol. 1883-1901.

Idaho Springs City Directory. Idaho Springs: Journal Press. Vol. 1877-1888.

PERIODICALS

Rocky Mountain News, 13 September, 1968, p. 39, 3 October 1979, p. 4 and 26 February 1989, p. 13.

Amole, Gene. "Because He Has To." Rocky Mountain News, 30 September 1979, p. 6.

----- "Birthday Boy." Rocky Mountain News, 25 February 1982, p. 4.

----- "Poet of the Rockies Dies at 92." Rocky Mountain News, 29 October 1988.

Chawkins, Steve. "To Laureate Ferril, the Trite is in Peril." Rocky Mountain News, 24 February 1985, p. 8.

deRoos, Robert. "One Mile Five-foot Ten and Swings a Commensurate Pen." San Francisco Chronicle, 30 October 1966.

Farrar, Harry. "Graduate of 'Rakehell' School Trades Barbs for Bard's Life." Denver Post, 6 July 1978, p. 29.

Fenwick, Robert. "Ferril Ruptures Tales about Poetic Rapture." Denver Post, 1 December 1957.

Foster, Jack. "He's a Yes-Sayer to Life." Rocky Mountain News, 3 December 1955, p. 35.

King, Pat. "Hard Work and Like Interests Ferrils' Formula for Marriage." Rocky Mountain News, 4 March 1951.

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Kisling, Jack. "Colorado Poet Laureate Ferril Dies at 92." Denver Post, 20 October 1988, p. 1A.

Lechlitner, Ruth. "Poet Laureate of the Rocky Mountains." New York Herald Tribune, 9 December 1934.

Melrose, Frances. Rocky Mountain News, 6 February 1977.

Patty, Mike. "Poet of the Rockies Dies at 92." Rocky Mountain News, 29 October 1988, p. 7.

Perkin, Robert L. "Ferril's Work Selected for Poem in Crystal." Rocky Mountain Herald, 20 April 1963, p. 1.

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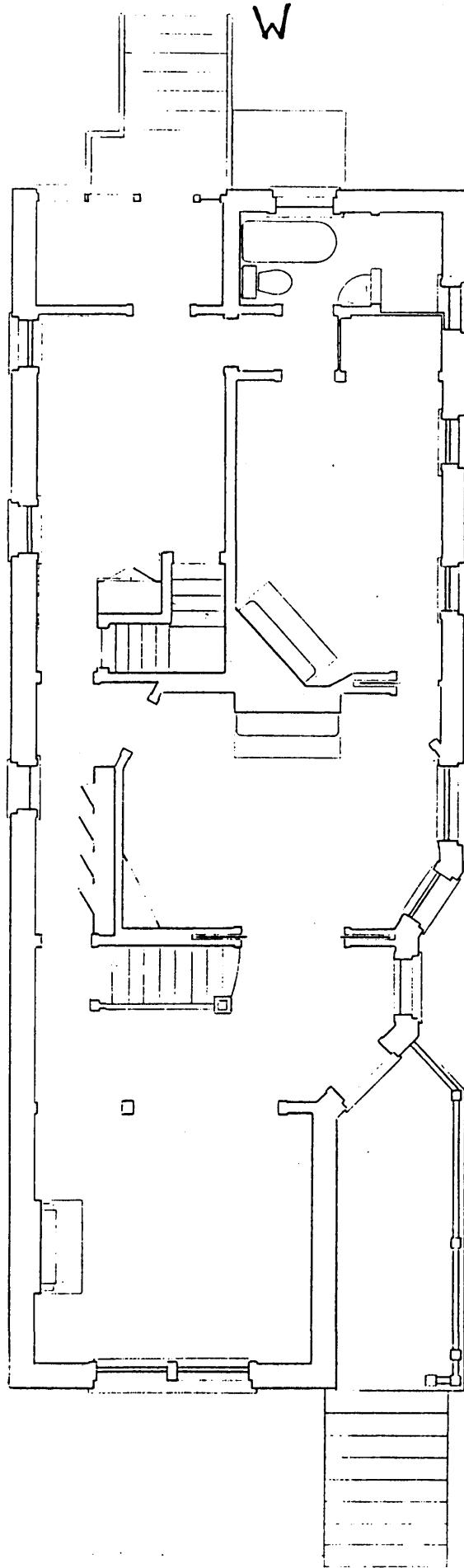
Thomas Hornsby Ferril House

BLACK & WHITE PHOTO LOG

1. Thomas Hornsby Ferril House
2. Denver, Colorado
3. Connie Kruman
4. June 22, 1991
5. Historic Denver
6. See Below
- 7.

Photo #	Description
1	Detail of front, view west
2	Attic detail, view west
3	North side porch, enclosed sleeping porch, view south
4	Front porch detail, view west
5	Detail of lincrusta-walton on walls of entry way and dining room
6	Detail of woodwork in archway of parlor
7	Books located in the basement, originally located in the study
8	Tom Ferril's study, view of bookshelves and ladder leading to the third floor
9	Tom Ferril's study from Anne's room
10	Study door, bookshelves
11	Train in third floor attic

First Floor



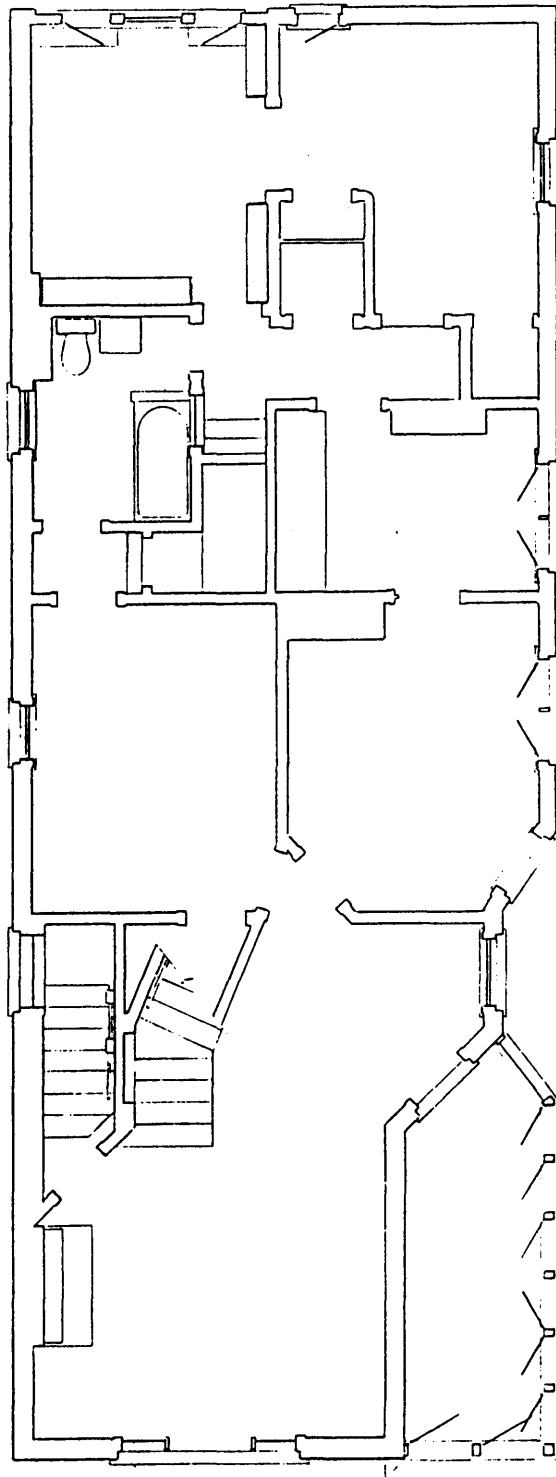
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Second Floor



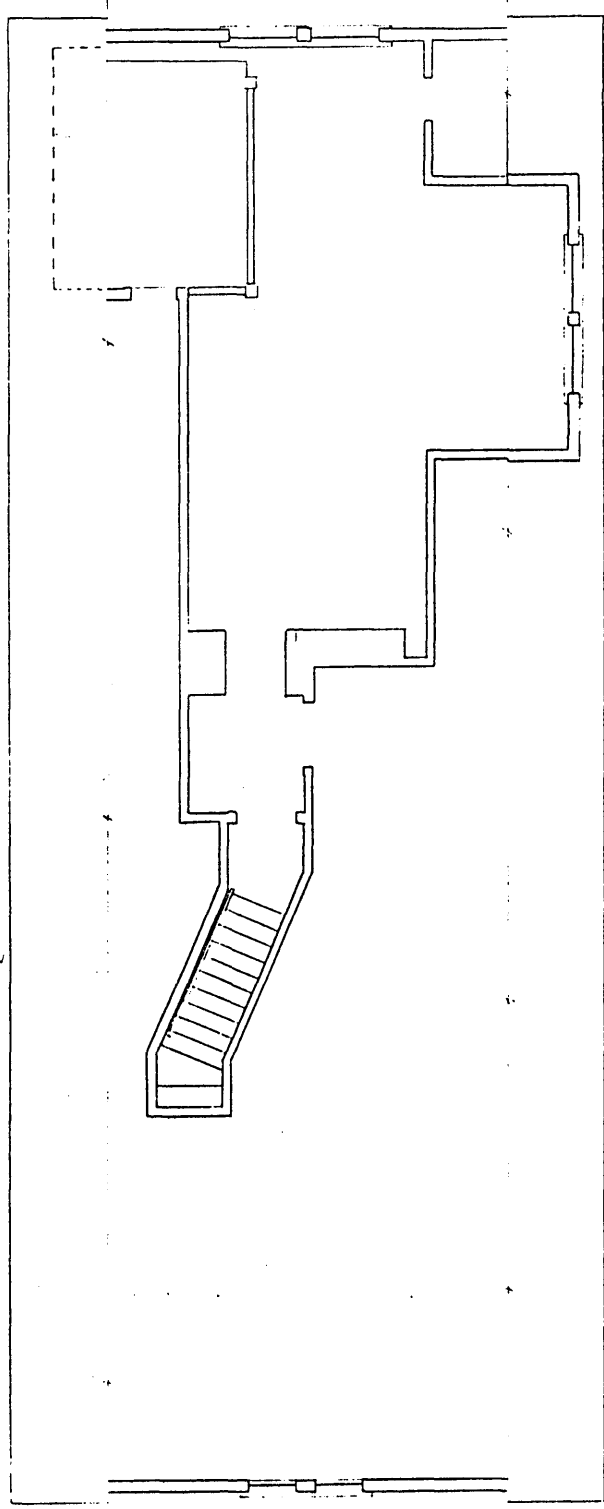
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E

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Attic Level



S

N

E