

PH 367371

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

OCT 1 1976

DATE ENTERED

NOV 8 1976

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 The Frost Place

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Ridge Road

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Franconia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

New Hampshire

__VICINITY OF

CODE

33

COUNTY

Grafton

CODE

009

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Private (see Continuation Sheet #1)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

__VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Grafton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Route 10

CITY, TOWN

North Haverhill,

STATE

New Hampshire

03774

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE VTN's Environmental Impact Statement for Franconia Notch highway construction.

DATE

Now being completed

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Public Works & Highways, State of New Hampshire

CITY, TOWN

John O. Morton Building, Concord, New Hampshire

STATE

03301

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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Frost Place is a low, white frame house, about 54' x 30', facing the Franconia range of the White Mountains. A porch runs the length of the front. On the ground floor, the main part of the house consists of a single large room, fronting on the porch behind the four windows and one door; a bedroom in the projecting ell under the attic window; and a smaller bedroom behind this one (see floor plans). On the floor above is a large front attic bedroom, and two smaller bedrooms over the living room.

The house is substantially as it was between 1915 and 1920, when it was owned by Robert Frost, although there have been changes. At that time, the porch extended only in front of the projecting ell, under the attic window (see 1913 photograph). A wing and dormer window in the attic have been added at the rear of the house.

The original room arrangement was also somewhat different. In Frost's time a pantry, kitchen and living room occupied the space of the present living room. A central fireplace has been added in this room. Frost's study was the larger of the rooms now used as first-floor bedrooms. The original steep attic stairway has been replaced, and the two bedrooms over the living room have been finished. Frost's bedroom, the large front attic room, is unchanged since his day, even to the orange paint on the floor.¹ The stove in the kitchen, a spruce piano, and a deal table he wrote on were also in the house in Robert Frost's time.

There is a barn 25' x 27', in excellent condition, where Frost kept his cow and hens. An orchard he planted and wrote a poem about, "Goodbye and Keep Cold," still stands on the northerly slope, as described in the poem.² The grounds are very well kept.

The house was sold by Willis Herbert to Robert Frost in 1915. In 1920, Frost sold it to Raymond Holden, who in 1922 sold it to Mrs. Della Harriman Herbert, the widow of Willis Herbert. Mrs. Herbert, who undertook the renovations described, bequeathed it to her niece, the present owner, Mrs. Robert Neill. Mrs. Neill, who was born in 1892, lived nearby when the Frosts bought the house and remembers them well.

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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input 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 checked="" 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 1915 - 1920, also early 20⁵ BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Frost Place in Franconia is famous as the house Robert Frost fell in love with at first sight. Searching for a house in April of 1915, he came along the Ridge Road, and saw it--a long white house with many large windows facing a magnificent view of Mt. Lafayette and the Franconia Range of the White Mountains. Around and above the house lay the fields and woods of the farm it belongs to. In the road was the owner, Willis Herbert, later Frost's good friend, raking leaves. Said Frost to him, with Yankee directness,

"I'm going to put you off this farm, I want it."
 "Where are you going to put me, in the road?"
 "I'm going to put you on the farm next door."³

and he did. Soon he and his family were able to move in, to make the house their home until October of 1920. Even after that time, Frost would return at times and seasons when he needed rest, staying with the Fobes up the road, at the guest house where his daughter was married in 1923.⁴

Frost loved the house, and no wonder. It has a charm all its own, white clapboards, a long front porch, part of which has a floor sagging towards the view. Here Frost used to sit for long periods scribbling, scandalizing his busy farmer neighbors.⁵ The house, a typical L-shape, has a gently-aged look, so settled in the landscape that it almost seems to be growing out of the ground. The present owner, Mrs. Robert Neill, most fortunately has cherished it and kept it as nearly as possible as it was when it sheltered the poet and his family.

Although unmarked in any way, it draws summer visitors like a magnet. They inquire for its whereabouts, struggle to find it, and then walk past, paying homage to New England's, and perhaps America's, greatest poet of the century, a people's poet, one anybody can understand and enjoy. Three busloads of Plymouth State College people came last summer to walk through the house and talk with Mrs. Neill, who graciously shared with them her lore of the poet and the town in his time.

There is much to be shared. One can see the perfectly-preserved barn where lived the cows of whom he wrote to a friend, "You will be glad to hear that my cows and I have composed our differences and I now milk them anchored at one end only."⁶ Beyond the house one can find half-buried in thin woods the apple orchard Frost himself planted late one fall, deliberately putting it on the exposed northern slope. "Goodbye, little orchard, goodbye, and keep cold./ Dread fifty above more than fifty below." But he worried about it left alone. "Its heart sinks lower under the sod,/ But something has to be left to God." One can walk where Frost walked with the city man who

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Complete Poems of Robert Frost, Henry Holt & Co., N.Y., 1949

Robert Frost, The Years of Triumph, 1915-1938, Lawrance Thompson, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y., 1970

The Letters of Robert Frost to Louis Untermeyer, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y., 1963.

Family Letters of Robert and Elinor Frost, State University of New York Press, N.Y. 1972.

(See also Statement of Significance)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 8 - 9

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	279710	+	4899000	B			
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C					D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Dr. Evangeline Machlin, Chmn. Subcommittee on the Frost Place September 1975

ORGANIZATION

Bicentennial Committee of Franconia

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

Box 89

TELEPHONE

603-823-8859

CITY OR TOWN

Franconia,

STATE

New Hampshire

03580

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

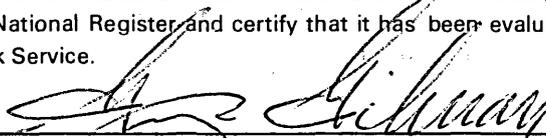
NATIONAL X

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



TITLE

SHPO

DATE May 27, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11/30/76

DATE 11-24-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1 ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Multiple Private)

1. Mrs. Robert Neill
Ridge Road
Franconia, NH
2. Mr. G. Hammond (son)
25 Maple Street
Bristol, VT
3. Mrs. Norine Lesser (daughter)
1340 Commonwealth Avenue
Allston, MASS

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CONTINUATION SHEET

2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

wanted a thousand of his fir balsams to sell as Christmas trees for three cents each, as told in the poem of that name. He says, "I doubt if I was tempted for a moment/ To sell them off their feet to go in cars,/ And leave the slope behind the house all bare."⁷ It is wooded to this day. One can look as Frost must have done often, at clouds massing above the peaks, dwarfing "the pitiful reality/ Of Lincoln, Lafayette and Liberty." One can speculate where the neighbor's sugar house was where Frost "lingered in a lull in March,/ Outside the sugar house one night for choice,"⁸ and got the fireman to send up sparks for him to admire against the sky. Franconia itself is celebrated in the poem New Hampshire. So is its small neighbor Easton, "whose name appeared/ Between the pictures on a movie screen/ Election night once in Franconia/ When everything had gone Republican,/ And Democrats were in sore need of comfort,/ Easton goes Democratic, Wilson 4,/ Hughes 2. And everybody to the saddest/ Laughed the loud laugh the big laugh at the little."⁹

There can be no doubt that Frost's stay in this house coincided with a burst of creativity. All except nine of the poems in his third book of poems, Mountain Interval,¹⁰ and some of those in his fourth, New Hampshire, were written in Franconia, as his own dated list, now in the Yale University Library, shows. The Pulitzer Prize for Poetry was awarded to New Hampshire, as the best book of poems published in 1923.

The place names scattered through his poetry provide a fascinating study. Nearly all are names of small villages and towns in New Hampshire. Several towns are the locale of the events of a single poem: for instance, Coos of The Witch of Coos, and Littleton of The Starsplitter.¹² It is noteworthy that these towns encircle, not Derry, his earlier home, but Franconia.¹³

There are still present in the town some respected senior citizens who remember Frost and his family from their childhood days. Among them are Mrs. Sarah Welsh,¹⁴ great-granddaughter of Luke Brooks, discoverer of the Great Stone Face; Mr. Joseph Fobes, son of the family who befriended the Frosts for many years; Mrs. Ruth Ayres Givens, whose father Philip Ayres saved Franconia Notch for the State. Their memories can and should be tapped for every encounter with the Frost family that they and others may recall, to enrich our knowledge of his time.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 3 ITEM NUMBER PAGE

7 and 8. Footnotes to the DESCRIPTION of the Frost Place, and the SIGNIFICANCE:

1. "Irma is in her room, Papa is upstairs, and Carol and I are in the dining-room." Letter of Elinor Frost to Lesley Frost, Dated Franconia, April, 1920. Family Letters of Robert and Elinor Frost, University of New York Press, 1972. p. 89.
2. Goodbye and Keep Cold, Complete Poems of Robert Frost, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1949. p. 281.
3. New Hampshire, op. cit., p. 203-4.
4. The wedding is described in The Years of Triumph, Lawrance Thompson, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1970, p. 307.
5. "Right now, I am thinking of the view from our old place in Franconia." Letter of R.F. to Charles A. Monroe, 5 Sept. 1928, op. cit., p. 331-2.
6. R.F. to Louis Untermeyer, July 1915, quoted in The Letters of Robert Frost to Louis Untermeyer, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York, 1963, p. 12.
7. Christmas Trees, Collected Poems, p. 132.
8. Evening in a Sugar House, op. cit., p. 289.
9. New Hampshire, op. cit., p. 205.
10. "July, 1916...Harcourt has been and gone...I am to be out this fall with a book to be known as Mountain Interval." Letters of Robert Frost to Louis Untermeyer, p. 38.
11. See attached Xeroxed copy of a list in Frost's own handwriting, dating poems written in Franconia, The original is in the Yale University Library.
12. Complete Poems, pp. 247, 218.
13. New Hampshire northcountry placenames, with titles of Frost's poems to which they relate:

Coos	<u>The Witch of Coos</u>
Dalton	<u>A Fountain, A Bottle, A Donkey's Ears, and Some Books</u>
Easton	<u>New Hampshire</u>
Franconia	<u>New Hampshire</u>
Grafton	<u>The Pauper Witch of Grafton</u>
Lancaster	<u>A Hundred Collars</u>
Littleton	<u>The Starsplitter</u>
Lunenburg	<u>The Mountain</u>
Woodsville	<u>A Hundred Collars</u>

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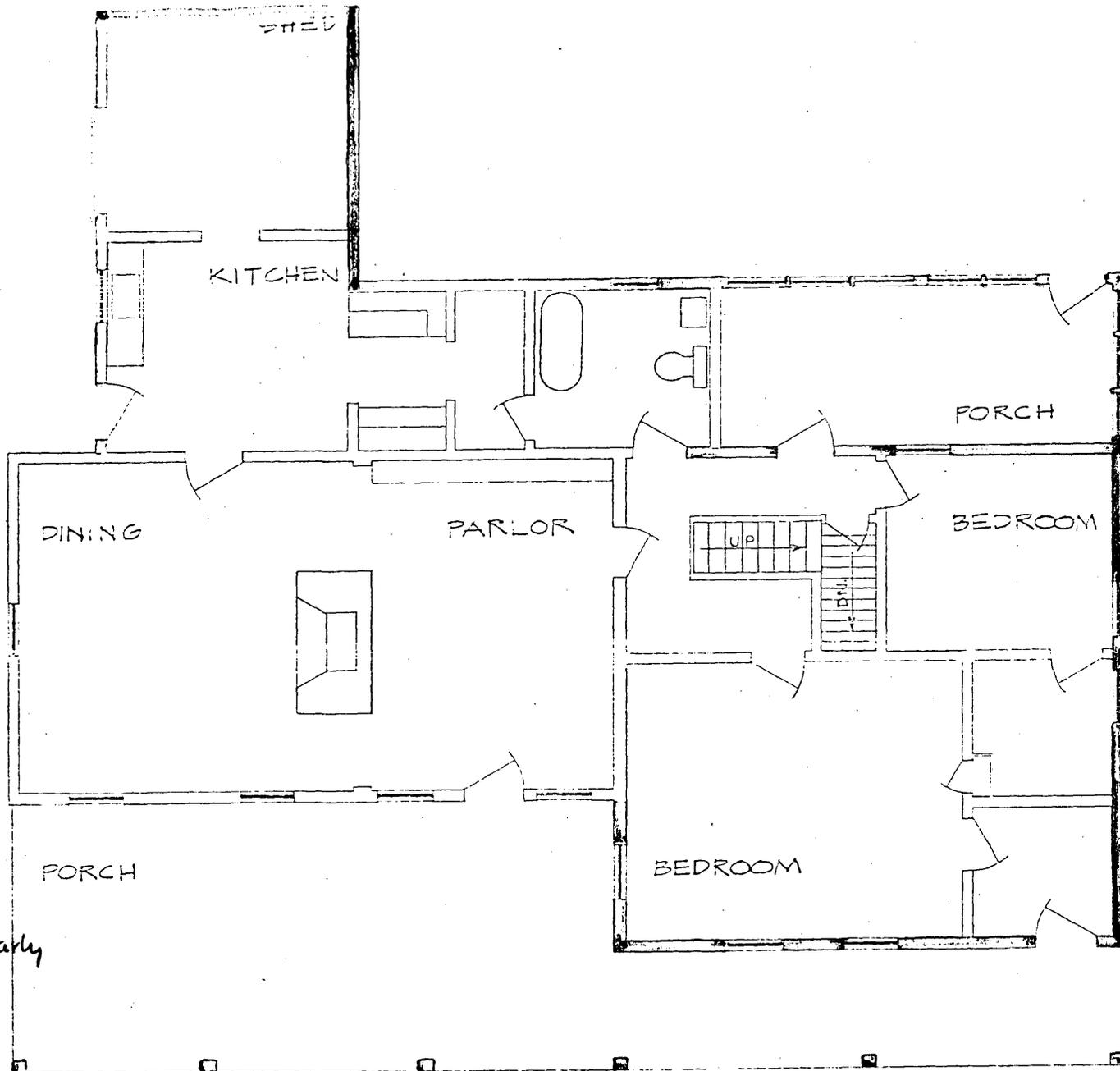
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CONTINUATION SHEET 4 ITEM NUMBER PAGE

7 and 8. Footnotes (Continued).

14. "Robert Frost served on the Board of Education (of Franconia) for three years. He also was President of the PTA. His children attended the local school."
A History of Franconia, Sarah N. Welsh, Courier Printing Co., 1972. p. 180.



Interior partitioning appears to have been rearranged several times prior to Frost occupancy, as well as after it. 2/2 windows are not original and I suspect the east elevation of the 1826 section has been modified - particularly the door location! 1850's section front door is in proper position for the period, but does not appear in 1913 photo - perhaps concealed by middle porch post.

THE FROST PLACE
EXISTING PLAN - 1975



± north

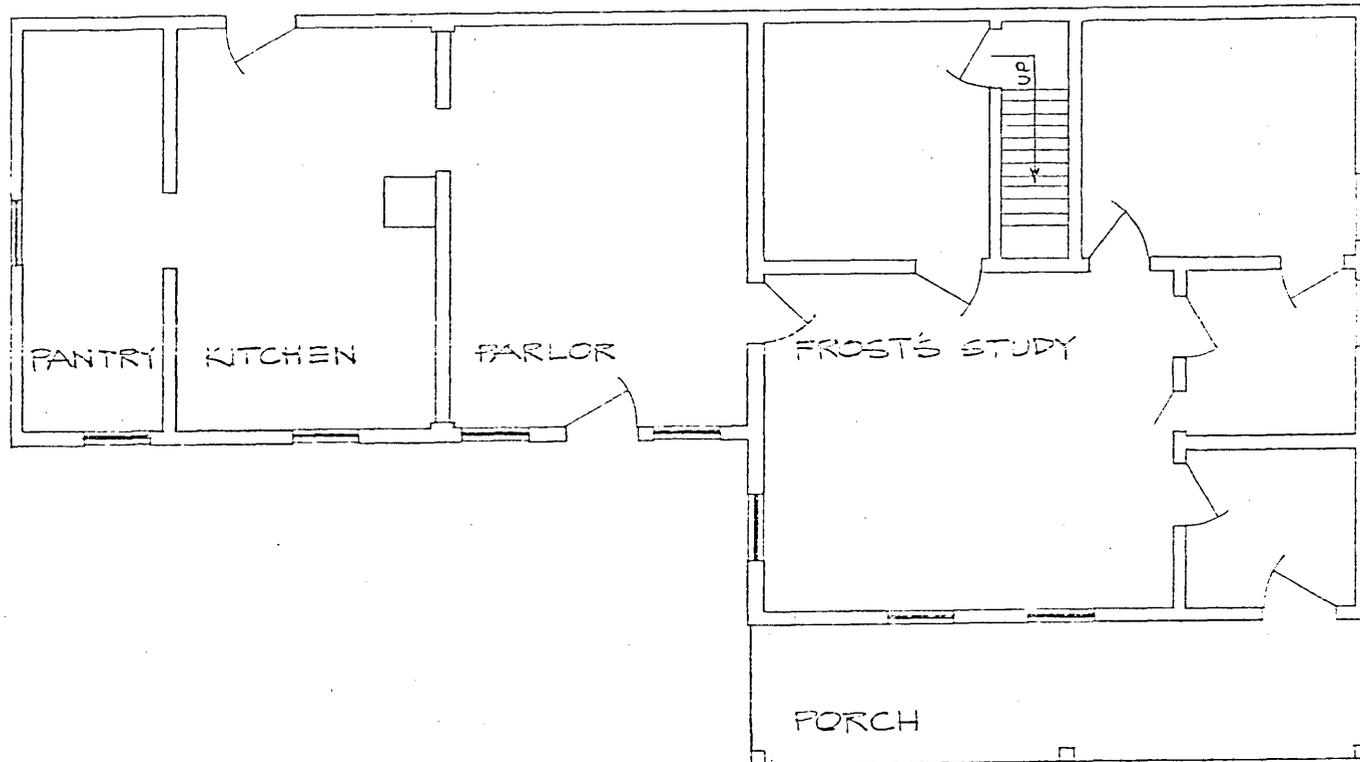
- ca. 1826-1858 - per 1850/1858 plan case from N.H. - '56.
- ca. 1856-1858
- post 1922

11/30/76

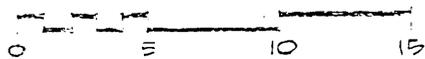
Re: Forest Place
Deafton Co., New Hampshire

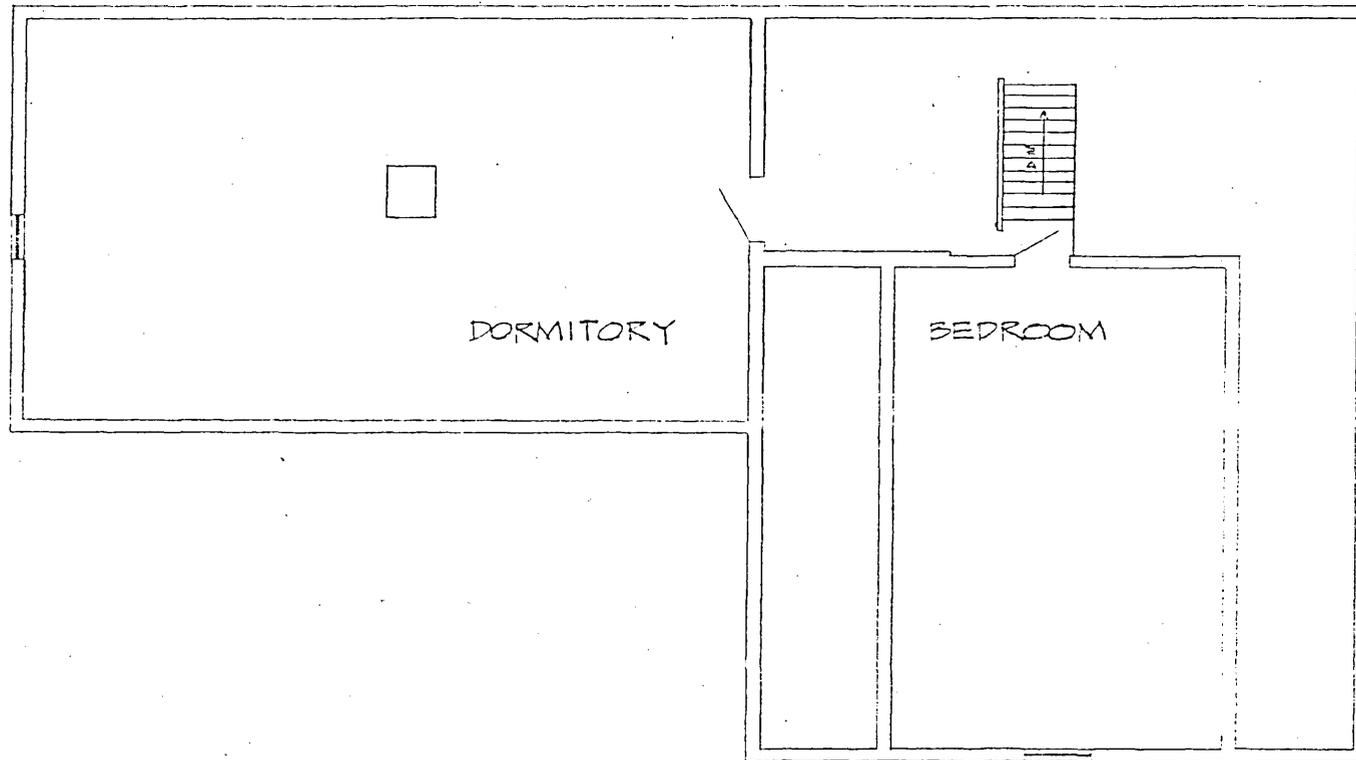
Loc. _____

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

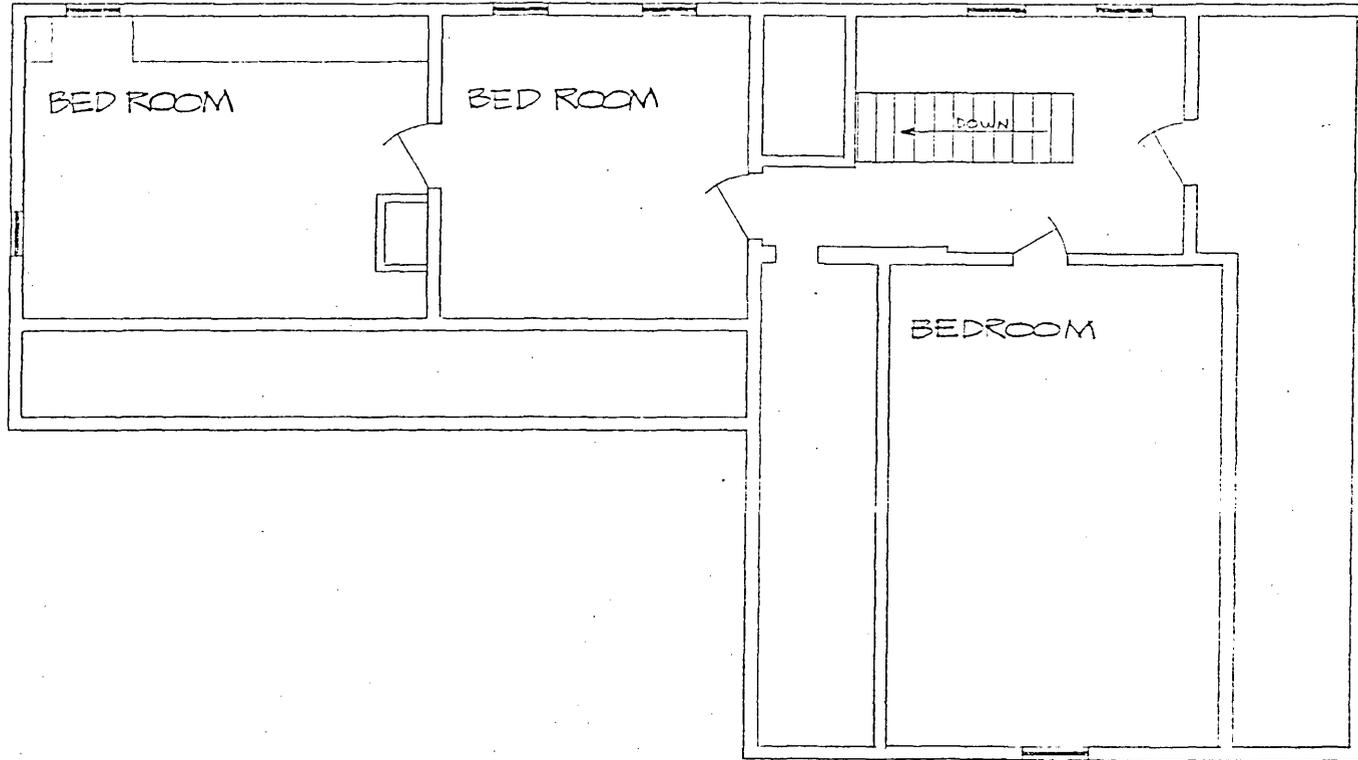


THE TOWN PLACE
FIRST FLOOR - 1915/1920





THE FROST PLACE
SECOND FLOOR - 1915/1920



THE FROST PLACE
SECOND FLOOR - EXISTING