

**The Wheeler-Stallard House:
An Interpretative History, 1888-1969**

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I. Introduction

For the last thirty years, the Wheeler-Stallard house has served as the headquarters of the Aspen Historical Society and the community's only historical museum. Yet, at the same time, much of the history of the house remains obscure. The house's exact chain of residency, its function and appearance over time, even its architect and date of construction were seemingly lost in the passage of the last one hundred years. This situation posed a problem when the Society began to contemplate an interior restoration of the house—returning the house to its original appearance and interpreting it to future visitors accurately naturally required an expansion of the concrete knowledge about the house. Therefore, this study is primarily aimed at filling the gaps in the Wheeler-Stallard house history and suggesting interpretative themes that may be useful in the upcoming restoration.

On one level, the history of the Wheeler-Stallard house is a story of individuals. Jerome Wheeler, the silver magnate who built the house in 1888 but never lived in it, the Stallards who toiled in the house to make ends meet during the post-crash years, Walter Paepcke, the Chicago businessman who made it part of his skiing and cultural empire, all left indelible marks upon the house. Therefore, it is natural that a history of the building would include a history of its residents. This means that part of the study must become what one Aspen historian called a “who-owned-which-land-when” history that traces the chronology of the construction, ownership, and occupancy of the house in great technical detail.¹ It is also necessary to reconstruct each resident's biography—by delving into the public and private lives of the home's occupants, we begin to understand their personalities, motives for coming to Aspen, family relationships, and daily concerns. Oftentimes, these factors provide insight into the character of domestic life in each household and the ways that each resident used and modified the house to suit his or her own needs.

¹ Anne Gilbert, *The People of Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley: A History of the Families and Daily Life of Miners and Ranchers, 1879-1960*, a research paper for the Aspen Historical Society under the auspices of the Roaring Fork Research Scholarship, 1991, iv.

This history of the Wheeler-Stallard house is also partially interpretative. Historians and archaeologists have often argued that reconstructing and understanding the intimate, day-to-day activities of the people of the past requires an intense study of the houses that they left behind.² Everything about a house, from its size and style to its floor plan and decorating scheme speak volumes about the people that produced it. By examining and interpreting these features of a house, researchers not only begin to understand a family's work patterns and aesthetic tastes, they also uncover the societal values that governed domestic life and the images that the residents hoped to project to their communities. Following in this tradition, this study of the Wheeler-Stallard house combines an analysis of the current features of the house with information from oral histories, contemporary newspaper articles, and secondary accounts of American domestic life. It then presents a "room-by-room" interpretation, examining each room within the context of both local and national trends in domestic life, speculating about its original purpose and appearance, and finally analyzing its symbolic meaning in the home. In this way, I hope to create a kind of "backwards" history in which the house itself can tell us just as much about the people who lived there as an analysis of the individual residents' biographies.

In the end, this combination of historical biography and interpretative history provides some fascinating insight into the history of the Wheeler-Stallard house and the town of Aspen itself. Namely, it reveals the radical transformations that both the house and domestic life in Aspen underwent as the economy boomed in the late nineteenth century, failed in the early twentieth century, and then boomed again in the period after World War II. In the silver boom era, the house was originally built to showcase its owners' wealth and broadcast their social status to the community. But the economic depression following the silver crash of 1893 ensured that economic survival took precedence over such conspicuous displays of wealth, and the Stallard family transformed the house from a "showcase" into a workplace where the family labored daily to avoid abject poverty. The importance of the labor of women and children in this new domestic economy led to significant changes in gender and family roles both in the

² See for instance, Randolph Delany, *In the Victorian Style* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1991).

house and in the community at large during the post-crash years. The rebirth of Aspen as a ski town in the late 1940s brought the most dramatic changes to the house. After serving as a private residence for almost sixty years, it lost some of its domestic function and became a commercial asset for the Aspen Company, playing a small but integral role in Aspen's economic rejuvenation. In this manner, the Wheeler-Stallard house changed as Aspen changed. Its appearance and function came to reflect the values, aspirations, and economic concerns of both its inhabitants and much of the larger Aspen community. In a larger sense then, studying the house not only has intrinsic value, it can also lead us to a new and ultimately more complete understanding of Aspen's evolution over the last one hundred years.

II. The Boom Era: 1888-1893

Part One: The Inhabitants

As early as 1879, miners and prospectors eager to make their fortunes in silver flocked to the former Ute Indian territory along the banks of Colorado's Roaring Fork River. Though these men and their families quickly founded the camp of Aspen in the heart of the valley's richest mineral field and staked out hundreds of mining claims, the town produced very little saleable silver ore in its early years. In the words of western historian Malcolm Rohrbough, Aspen remained a "mining camp without mining" for almost the first four years of its existence.¹ The explanation for the town's initial lack of success was simple: extracting silver ore was a highly capital and labor intensive process and few of Aspen's early investors or prospectors possessed the funds necessary to undertake such a venture. Even when Aspen's early miners did manage to extract ore, they were forced to haul it by mule train over Independence Pass—a time consuming and costly process—to the smelters at Leadville before it could be processed into saleable bullion. By the early 1880s, it became clear that without fully developed, productive mines and a large capacity smelter to process local ores, Aspen would fail and fade into obscurity like the majority of mining boom towns that preceded it. To many Aspenites, securing a coterie of wealthy eastern investors willing to pump millions of dollars into the region's fledgling silver industry seemed to be the only means of ensuring the town's future success.

Jerome B. Wheeler

When Jerome Byron Wheeler arrived in Aspen in 1883, he was the epitome of the mythical eastern capitalist that many small, struggling western mining towns looked to

¹ Malcom J. Rohrbough, *Aspen: The History of a Silver Mining Town, 1879-1893* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 55.

for financial backing in the late nineteenth century. A native of the east coast, Wheeler acquired enormous wealth through a variety of business ventures. Beginning in 1879, Wheeler became a full partner and major stockholder in R.H. Macy and Co., New York City's most prosperous department store, and his personal income exceeded \$125,000 a year.² Best of all, this wealthy and adventurous businessman wanted to diversify his interests and was willing to invest in the risky, capital intensive process of building up the silver mining industry in the West. The newcomer also had connections. Wheeler resided in New York City and maintained social and financial relationships with some of the city's wealthiest businessmen. His encouragement and favorable reports of the town might convince his wealthy friends to invest in Aspen's mines. On the whole, Jerome Wheeler's wealth and connections, combined with his entrepreneurial experience and his willingness to take financial risks, made him the ideal benefactor for the struggling town.

The man Aspenites would soon hail as their financial savior came from a relatively humble background. Although the Aspen press commonly identified Jerome Wheeler with New York City, he was actually a native of Troy, New York, a small town ten miles northeast of Albany.³ Founded in the late eighteenth century and incorporated in 1816, Troy evolved into a bustling agricultural and trade center in upstate New York. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1823 further stimulated the town's trade economy and Troy gained the distinction of being the first community to dispatch a westbound ship on the newly constructed waterway.⁴

It was into this fairly quiet, small town setting that Jerome Byron Wheeler was born on September 3, 1841. Wheeler's parents, in his own words, came from "good old New England stock."⁵ His father, Daniel Barker Wheeler, was born in Massachusetts and descended from an early founding family of that state that reputedly had connections with the ancient Norman nobility of England.⁶ Wheeler's mother, Mary Jones Emerson, belonged to an equally illustrious Massachusetts family; she was a second cousin of the

² Ibid., 69.

³ Jerome B. Wheeler, "The Autobiography of Jerome Wheeler," reprinted in *Aspen Daily News*, 4 January 1986, p. 8-9.

⁴ "Uncle Sam's History of Troy—A Modern Economy," at Uncle Sam's History of Troy website, www.uncle-sams-home.com/troyhis3.html

⁵ Wheeler, 8.

renowned transcendental essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson. When Wheeler was still a young boy, the family moved to the nearby town of Waterford, New York where he attended public school until the age of fifteen. Despite his seemingly distinguished family connections, the young Wheeler never attended private school or college and after leaving public school in 1856, he worked in a clerical position for about one year. From age sixteen to age twenty (1857-1861) he labored in “mechanical pursuits” which may have included engineering, mechanical, or machine shop work.⁷

The beginning of the American Civil War in the spring of 1861 shattered the peaceful isolation of Wheeler’s upstate New York home. The young Wheeler, who under other circumstances might have lived out his life in the relative quietude of his small native community, found himself caught up in the patriotic fervor that swept through the North at the start of the war. Military recruiting agents soon arrived in Troy to begin organizing the Sixth New York Cavalry and on his twentieth birthday Wheeler enlisted as a private with the regiment.⁸ After leaving Troy, the Sixth New York recruits trained at Staten Island, New York for a few months and then were stationed in Washington D.C. A short time later, the regiment transferred to Cloud Mills, Virginia where the men finally received horses. From this point on, the regiment remained on active duty for the remainder of the conflict and saw almost constant action during General George McClellan’s Peninsular campaign and the battles for the Shenandoah Valley.⁹

During the course of the war, Wheeler moved up steadily through the ranks. Shortly after enlisting with the Sixth, he received a commission and became a second lieutenant on the staff of cavalry commander Colonel Thomas Devin.¹⁰ He eventually earned the rank of brevet major and according to some reports he served as both the regimental and brigade quartermaster.¹¹ Late in the war, he was promoted to the rank of colonel, but his commanding officers reputedly revoked the promotion due to a breach of

⁶ “Bankers and Capitalists of Colorado: Major Jerome Byron Wheeler,” *Magazine of Western History*, November 1889, vol. 11, 56-60.

⁷ Wheeler, 8-9.

⁸ Wheeler, 8. In his autobiography Wheeler asserts that he enlisted on his twenty-first birthday soon after the war broke out in 1861 and was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in 1862. But Wheeler would have been twenty, not twenty-one in 1861.

⁹ Wheeler, 8.

¹⁰ Wheeler, 8.

¹¹ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 2 December 1918, p. 2.

discipline. It appears that Wheeler led a supply train through enemy lines to save a starving regiment of Union soldiers against the wishes of his superiors who thought the project was too dangerous.¹²

After he was mustered out of the army in September of 1865, the twenty-four year old Wheeler returned home to Troy where he again took a position as a bookkeeper. But his stay in his native town lasted only eight months. Around May of 1866, Wheeler moved to New York City where he took a clerical position with the grain merchant firm of John F. Barkley and Company. He remained with the company for two years and in 1869 accepted a bookkeeping position at Holt and Company, one of the largest flour and grain commission houses in the city.¹³ It was at this point that Wheeler began what a Colorado Springs newspaper called his “meteoric” rise in the business world. During the course of his ten years at Holt and Company, Wheeler worked his way up from bookkeeper, to clerk, to full partner in the firm.¹⁴ But, while Wheeler labored diligently to increase his status in New York’s business community, an event in his private life did more to improve his social and business connections than any of his work in the flour business.

In 1870, Jerome Wheeler married Harriet Macy Valentine.¹⁵ Born on Nantucket, Valentine was a direct descendent of Thomas Macy, the first man of European descent to settle on the island.¹⁶ An Englishman by birth, Thomas Macy originally belonged to a strict Baptist colony in Salisbury, Massachusetts, but he voluntarily left the settlement sometime between 1659 and 1661. It seems that Macy earned the displeasure of the colony’s governors because he advocated religious tolerance for Quakers and he once sheltered a group of them in his home during a severe rainstorm. Rather than compromise his belief in religious tolerance, Macy sought refuge on nearby Nantucket Island.¹⁷ The native islanders proved friendly and other Baptist dissenters soon joined him and created a large and prosperous colony. For at least eight successive generations, the descendents

¹² Ellen O’Connor, “Manitou Springs and Aspen Owe Much to Jerome Wheeler” in *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph*, 9 May 1948, p. 2.

¹³ Wheeler, 8.

¹⁴ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 2 December 1918, p.2; Wheeler, 8.

¹⁵ Wheeler, 9.

¹⁶ Unfortunately, there is no record of the date of Harriet Macy Valentine’s birth.

of the first Macy continued to make their home on Nantucket Island. Harriet Valentine's great grandfather, Sylvanus Macy, traded along the New England coast and later became a renowned whaler. John Macy, Harriet's grandfather, captained a merchant ship and operated a small retail bookstore in the island's business district.¹⁸ Harriet's mother, Charlotte M. Macy, was born on Nantucket on January 7, 1827 and was the youngest of six children born to John Macy and Eliza Barnard.¹⁹ In 1846, at the age of nineteen, Charlotte married David M. Valentine, a wealthy New Yorker, and moved to New York City.²⁰

Charlotte Valentine was not the only Macy descendent to abandon Nantucket for life in America's thriving business capital. In 1858, Rowland Hussey Macy, Charlotte's older brother, opened a small fancy dry goods store in New York City called R.H. Macy and Company.²¹ The store primarily catered to the tastes of women, offering a wide array of millinery and dress goods including feathers, flowers, and embroidery. Through aggressive advertising and consistently selling goods at lower rates than his competitors, Rowland Macy gradually cultivated a large clientele. His little store grew rapidly and he expanded his stock to include housekeeping goods (towels, linens, quilts, etc.) as well as ready-made clothing for men, women, and children. By 1860, R.H. Macy and Co. officially became a department store.²² That year, Macy created a distinctly separate department within the dry goods store dedicated exclusively to "French and German fancy goods" which included imported china, handbags, and toys.²³ Macy continued to stock more diverse goods, and by 1869 his store boasted twelve separate departments specializing in household items ranging from ribbons to furs to furnishings.²⁴ Fifteen years after its inception, R.H. Macy and Co. rivaled the largest and oldest retail

¹⁷ Ralph M. Hower, *History of Macy's of New York, 1858-1919: Chapters in the Evolution of the Department Store* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 5-7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Sylvanus J. Macy, *A Genealogy of the Macy Family from 1635-1868* (Elinwood, KS: Macy's of Elinwood, 1971), 245. This was Eliza Barnard's second marriage. She was the widow of Thomas Barnard. The Macys' six children were Charles B. Macy (1812-1856), Andrew M. Macy (1814-1853), Robert B. Macy (1820-?), Rowland Hussey Macy, founder of R.H. Macy and Co. (1822-1877), Harriet Macy Vantine (1825-?) and Charlotte M. Macy Valentine (1827-?).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Hower, 37.

²² *Ibid.*, 37-66.

²³ *Ibid.*, 100.

establishments in New York. While most of Macy's competitors remained content to specialize in a single merchandise field, Macy continuously expanded both the kinds of merchandise he carried and the variety of each line of merchandise. By 1877, Macy's store had twenty-two separate departments and its annual sales grew to over \$1,873,000.²⁵

In 1887, seven years after Jerome Wheeler married Rowland Macy's niece, R.H. Macy and Co. experienced a crisis in management and ownership. Beginning in the early 1870s, Rowland Macy began to suffer from Bright's disease, a malady that ultimately results in kidney failure. In the spring of 1877, Macy traveled to Europe to seek medical treatment, but he died in Paris on March 29, 1877.²⁶ At first glance, it might seem logical that Macy's son, Rowland Jr., would have inherited Macy's shares in the store. But in his will Macy stated that his son's uncontrollable "passion for strong drink" made it impossible to entrust him with the family business.²⁷ Realizing that his son could not manage the business responsibly, Macy admitted two trusted friends to partnership in his store shortly before his death. Abiel La Forge, a longtime store employee, and Rowland's nephew Robert Macy Valentine, the son of his sister Charlotte, stepped in to run the business.²⁸

After Macy's death, La Forge and Valentine purchased his shares from his estate and continued their partnership. But the ownership only lasted one year; La Forge, who suffered from chronic lung problems for several years, died of tuberculosis in 1878.²⁹ At this point, Robert Valentine quickly bought La Forge's stock from his grieving widow and became the sole shareholder in the business. A few weeks later, he allowed his distant cousin Charles B. Webster to become a partner in the store.³⁰ Unfortunately Webster, who began his career at Macy's as a floorwalker earning \$10 per week, had little large-scale business experience. This constituted an enormous problem because in February of 1879—barely a year after Abiel La Forge's demise and less than two years

²⁴ Ibid., 102-103.

²⁵ Ibid., 105-109.

²⁶ Ibid., 123 ; "Obituary: R.H. Macy" in *New York Times*, 31 March 1877, p. 10.

²⁷ Hower, 123.

²⁸ Hower, 123; 128.

²⁹ Rohrbough, 68.

³⁰ Hower, 158.

after Rowland Macy's death—Robert Macy Valentine died suddenly of lung congestion. He left the task of running the multi-million dollar business in the hands of the wholly unprepared and inexperienced Webster.³¹

Wheeler and R.H. Macy and Company

Charles Webster looked within his family for an experienced partner who could assist him to manage the massive R.H. Macy and Company store. He finally settled on Jerome Wheeler, the husband of Robert Macy Valentine's sister. Wheeler, who by this time acquired considerable business expertise as a full partner in the Holt and Company firm, readily accepted the challenge. In 1879, Webster and Wheeler contracted to purchase Valentine's shares in the business.³² Though neither possessed much personal capital, both men were coexecutors of Valentine's will and could thereby arrange for Valentine's heirs to keep their money in the store until the partners could finish paying for the shares. As an extra precaution, Webster quickly married Valentine's widow, ensuring that she would keep her inheritance money in the Macy's enterprise. While this hasty marriage alienated the rest of the Valentine family, it was rumored that Mrs. Valentine, who reputedly hated to be without male companionship, may have initiated the relationship with Webster.³³

The partnership of Webster and Wheeler, which lasted from 1879 to 1888, marked an era of "doldrums" in Macy's history. Rowland Macy's innovative and aggressive advertising and his drive to expand the store's range of services and merchandise were sorely missed.³⁴ During the first six years of the new partnership, Macy's profits continued to soar. By 1885 the store's annual sales revenue, which had climbed to over \$5 million, was nearly five times larger than it had been in 1877. But after 1885 annual sales revenue ceased to increase significantly and by 1888 total sales actually began to decrease.³⁵ Much of this failure was due to a marked increase in

³¹ Ibid., 159.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 170.

³⁵ Ibid., 171.

competition. Other major department stores mimicking Macy's advertising style and department system rose up to challenge the old store. In this environment, Macy's needed vigor and constant innovation to keep ahead of its rivals. But, for the most part, Webster and Wheeler simply remained content to operate the business as they had found it. After 1880, they made no efforts to improve or expand the store premises, nor did they seek to develop any new departments after 1883. Most importantly, the partners neglected Macy's advertising campaign; during the mid 1880s, many of the store's major rivals boasted larger and more creative newspaper advertisements than Macy's utilized.³⁶ As Macy's historian Ralph Hower observed, "the firm had lost its original momentum and was coasting into complacent mediocrity."³⁷

Two factors may account for the partners' conservative complacency. First, by most accounts Charles Webster was a conservative, humorless, tightfisted businessman who disdained innovation and change. Although Wheeler was ambitious, energetic, adventuresome, and willing to take risks, Webster possessed ultimate authority over business affairs. At the outset of the partnership, Webster retained fifty-five percent of the controlling shares in Macy's while he granted Wheeler only forty-five percent. As the senior partner and the largest shareholder in the company, the conservative Webster likely dictated the course of most company affairs without allowing Wheeler much input.³⁸ Second, the men's personalities constantly conflicted. Webster highly disapproved of Wheeler's propensity for speculation and risk-taking. Namely, he feared that Wheeler's desire to invest in western mining interests not only diverted his attention from Macy's affairs but also had the potential to damage the department store financially if such investments failed. In the end, Webster's intense conservatism and the tension between the partners resulted in the ineffective management of the store.³⁹

In addition to hindering Macy's progress, Webster's reluctance to share authority alienated his younger partner. The ambitious Wheeler accumulated considerable capital during his first years of partnership and began to seek outside venues where he could

³⁶ Ibid., 168-170.

³⁷ Ibid., 170.

³⁸ Rohrbough, 69.

³⁹ Hower, 213.

invest his money as well as exercise his personal leadership and business skills.⁴⁰ It was during this search for exciting investments that Wheeler first encountered the silver mines of Colorado and a little mining town on the Roaring Fork River known as Aspen.

Wheeler arrives in Aspen

In the fall of 1882, three years after he began his partnership at Macy's, Wheeler and his wife visited Colorado. According to information supplied by the Wheelers' daughter, Elsie Rupp, Harriet Wheeler suffered an attack of bronchitis and her doctor advised her to vacation in the Rocky Mountains because he hoped that the dry climate would improve her health.⁴¹ During his stay in Colorado Wheeler visited Denver, Leadville, and a small resort town outside of Colorado Springs known as Manitou Springs. In Manitou Wheeler met a young prospector and aspiring artist named Harvey Young who was a relative of the head cashier at Macy's.⁴² Though his paintings received acclaim in Manitou, Young dreamed of making a fortune in Colorado silver mining. In fact, at the time he made Wheeler's acquaintance Young had already purchased interest in several mining claims near Aspen. Since he bought these properties on credit, Young constantly ran low on cash and possessed little capital to develop his claims. He hoped to solve this problem by convincing Wheeler to become his co-investor in a number of Aspen silver mining interests. Eager to invest in promising new industries, Wheeler followed Young's advice and bought a five-eighths interest in the Morning and Evening Star mines, sight unseen.⁴³ As a courtesy to his new friend, Wheeler presented Young with a one-eighth interest in the properties.⁴⁴ In all, Wheeler spent \$20,000 purchasing these claims, indicating that for the time being he meant to become a serious investor in Aspen's future.⁴⁵

Wheeler returned to Manitou with his family in the spring of 1883 and in the company of his former business partner, Robert S. Holt, traveled by stage to Aspen to

⁴⁰ Rohrbough, 69.

⁴¹ O'Connor, 2.

⁴² Ibid.; Rohrbough, 69.

⁴³ Rohrbough, 69-70.

⁴⁴ Wheeler, 8.

visit his newly purchased mines for the first time.⁴⁶ While Wheeler soon developed enthusiasm for the richness of the town's mining resources, he realized that the little community could never prosper without a smelter to process raw ores from the surrounding mines. A group of Texas investors began to build a smelter in Aspen in the fall of 1882, but they quickly ran out of funds and abandoned the project. In the summer of 1883 Wheeler purchased the unfinished Texas smelter for something between \$20,000 and \$25,000 and began the long, painstaking, and expensive process of enlarging its boiler capacity and recruiting professional mining experts to oversee its operations. Aspenites learned, with considerable disappointment, that the new smelter would not "blow in" until the following year.⁴⁷

During the year it took to rebuild the smelter, Wheeler expended enormous amounts of effort and capital to prepare for its opening. To create a strong local market for ore and stimulate mining development, he spent several hundred thousand dollars purchasing raw ores from Aspen's mine owners.⁴⁸ He also bought two of the region's richest mines, the Spar and Galena, for between \$50,000 and \$75,000.⁴⁹ In the spring of 1884, Wheeler sought to defray the enormous costs incurred by the refurbishment of the smelter by organizing all of his Aspen interests into a corporation known as the Aspen Mining and Smelting Company (AMS). He capitalized the new corporation in New York at \$2 million and sold the 200,000 company shares at ten dollars a piece.⁵⁰ He even convinced Charles Webster and Robert Holt to purchase \$50,000 of AMS stock.⁵¹

1888: A Turning Point for Jerome Wheeler

During the period between 1883 and 1888, Wheeler gradually shifted his attention from his eastern business obligations to his western investments. To fuel the smelter, Wheeler bought a large expanse of coal land thirty-five miles from Aspen (probably near

⁴⁵ Rohrbough, 70.

⁴⁶ Wheeler, 8.

⁴⁷ Rohrbough, 70-71.

⁴⁸ Len Shoemaker, "Roaring Fork Pioneers: Walter B. Devereux" *The 1962 Brand Book of the Denver Posse of the Westerners* vol. 18, ed. John J. Lipsey (Boulder, CO: Johnson Publishing Company, 1963), 56.

⁴⁹ Rohrbough, 71.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Cardiff, Colorado) and constructed several coke ovens on the property. Though the region's isolation forced him to transport all the building materials for the ovens by wagon, making them in Wheeler's own words "the most expensive ones ever erected in Colorado," the venture had great potential.⁵² Wheeler recognized that if these properties were developed and organized effectively, they could provide all of the coal for the smelters and future railroads of the Roaring Fork valley. Therefore, shortly before the spring of 1888, he organized his coal interests into the Grand River Coal and Coke Company and established himself as the largest shareholder.⁵³ Ultimately, Wheeler's development efforts proved profitable; by 1889, the company's coal lands in the Cardiff, New Castle, and Jerome Park areas of Colorado produced 2,000 tons of coal per day.⁵⁴

Though the 1884 apex-sideline legal battle with David Hyman constituted an enormous financial and business setback for Jerome Wheeler, his dedication to investing in Aspen never flagged. That same year, Wheeler started Aspen's first banking institution, the J.B. Wheeler and Company Bank, which he initially capitalized at a cost of \$100,000. He also realized that Aspen mining would only continue to thrive if the town possessed a cheaper and more effective means of transporting ores to state and national silver markets. When his interests in Manitou Springs—including the Manitou Mineral Water Company, a bottling and resort development firm—also began to show promise, Wheeler considered investing in the extension of railroad service to both Manitou and Aspen. Around 1886, he joined forces with Colorado Springs railroad tycoon James John Hagerman and invested over \$100,000 in the extension of the Colorado Midland Railroad to the western slope.⁵⁵

In many ways, the year 1888 marked the fruition of Wheeler's Aspen investments. In February, the first Colorado Midland train steamed into Aspen marking the beginning of a multi-railroad era for the town. The year also saw the expansion of the J.B. Wheeler and Company Bank and the construction of a massive new bank building on the corner of Mill and Cooper Streets. As part of Wheeler's plan for Aspen's civic

⁵¹ Wheeler, 8.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵³ Shoemaker, 57; Wheeler, 9.

⁵⁴ Wheeler, 8-9.

⁵⁵ Rohrbough, 150.

improvement, he constructed an elaborate opera house, the third largest of its kind in the state, on the bank's third floor.⁵⁶ Overall, all of these projects indicated that Wheeler planned to maintain his mining interests in Aspen for the long term and that he was seriously devoted to stimulating the local economy and ensuring the town's future prosperity. They proved beyond a doubt that he was not the kind of eastern capitalist who sought to dabble in the town's economy for a few years, make a quick million and then abandon it in favor of eastern business concerns.

By the time the Midland reached Aspen, Wheeler's Colorado investments began to consume most of his attention and resources while his eastern business interests lost significance. In 1888, Wheeler's Aspen interests prospered, but his business and personal relationship with Charles Webster soured. Though Webster initially invested in the Aspen Mining and Smelting Company, by 1887 he objected to the great amount of time and money Wheeler poured into his western endeavors. He feared that serious financial failures in these speculative pursuits might damage the economic stability of R.H. Macy and Company.⁵⁷ This situation certainly resulted in tension between the men, but it took a more personal and scandalous event to actually sever the partnership. The cause of this ultimate dissension was a beautiful Macy's employee.

It appears that in 1887 Webster became infatuated with a striking Macy's floorwalker named Martha Toye and soon rewarded her with a promotion to superintendent of the store. Jerome Wheeler believed that the woman was unqualified for the position and he was probably also concerned that Webster's infidelity would disgrace the family name. When Webster embarked upon a long buying trip in Europe, Wheeler quickly fired Toye and replaced her with a man. When Webster heard about his favorite's hasty dismissal, he furiously dissolved his partnership with Wheeler and invited Isidor and Nathan Straus to become his new partners.⁵⁸ To avoid talk of the scandal, Webster and his associates announced in the *New York Times* that Wheeler retired from the company in order to "devote himself exclusively to his railroad, silver, and coal mining

⁵⁶ Ibid., 110;173.

⁵⁷ Hower, 213.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

and banking businesses in Colorado.”⁵⁹ Indeed, though Wheeler never completely severed his New York business connections (the Aspen Mining and Smelting was incorporated in New York and possessed many eastern investors), he took advantage of the freedom that came with his break from Webster and began to invest more heavily in his western pursuits.

Building a Home in Aspen

In 1888, Jerome Wheeler undertook another project that revealed that his Colorado interests began to take precedence over his other business affairs: he began to construct a home for his family in Aspen. In the early 1880s, Wheeler spent very little time in Colorado personally overseeing the operation of his mines. But as the multitude and variety of his interests increased near the end of the decade, Wheeler needed to maintain a constant presence in the state. In 1888, after his “retirement” from the department store, Wheeler made at least seven business trips to Aspen that varied in duration from three days to almost two weeks. Each time he visited Aspen, he was also obligated to spend several days overseeing his coal interests in the Glenwood Springs vicinity.⁶⁰ To look after his Colorado interests (and probably to escape the sweltering heat of New York City) Wheeler and his family spent the entire summer in Manitou Springs. By 1889, Wheeler spent almost one-third of the year developing his investments in the state. That year, he made nine trips to Aspen and spent more than a month and a half visiting his manifold interests in Pitkin and Garfield counties.⁶¹ His business travels to the east coast continued during this time and though he had a home on East Fifty-seventh Street in New York City until at least January of 1888, it remains unclear if he continued to maintain a residence in that city during the remainder of Aspen’s boom period.⁶²

The increasing frequency and duration of his business trips to Aspen was likely the motivation behind Wheeler’s decision to construct a family home in the town. But

⁵⁹ *New York Times*, 1 January 1888, p. 9.

⁶⁰ Note: The author compiled these statistics by counting the number of times the *Aspen Daily Times* mentioned that Jerome Wheeler visited the city, the surrounding coal towns or Manitou in 1888.

⁶¹ The author compiled these statistics by counting the number of times the *Aspen Daily Times* mentioned that Jerome Wheeler visited the city, the surrounding coal towns or Manitou in 1889.

building a house in Aspen had other advantages. When Wheeler boarded a train in Aspen, it only took him a short, two or three-hour ride to reach his coal mines in Glenwood Springs, Cardiff, and New Castle. Therefore, maintaining a residence in Aspen provided Wheeler with a kind of base of operations from which he could conveniently oversee most of his interests in the region. Also, maintaining a residence in Aspen made it possible for his wife and daughters to accompany him on these extended business trips and provided the family with a cool retreat where it could escape from the oppressive summer heat of New York City.

Regardless of Wheeler's reasons for constructing the house, records reveal that he probably envisioned building it long before 1888. As early as 1886 he began to acquire the land along Bleeker Street for constructing his new home. The block the house currently occupies (Block 23, lots A-S) initially belonged to the Aspen Town and Land Company, a Philadelphia corporation that purchased the land and development rights to the Aspen campsite in the early 1880s.⁶² James M. Downing, a lawyer associated with the Aspen Mining and Smelting Company and a member of Wheeler's legal counsel during the apex-sideline litigation, purchased the block on April 2, 1885 for \$3,600.⁶⁴ He turned a portion of the property (which included lots A-D, lots K-M, the east one-half of lot E and the west one-half of lot O) over to the AMS in October of 1885.⁶⁵ Wheeler then purchased these properties from the company for \$10,000.⁶⁶ Since he was the president and major shareholder of the AMS, Wheeler virtually bought the property from himself. At this point, Wheeler only owned the western half of the block on both sides of the alleyway. Perhaps he initially planned that his house would occupy half of the block. But only two months later, in July of 1886, Wheeler bought the remaining eastern properties from James Downing for \$3,000.⁶⁷

⁶² *New York Times*, 3 January 1888, p. 5.

⁶³ Quit Claim Deed, 2 April 1885, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 24, p. 124. Note: each city block in Aspen contains eighteen lots (nine on each side of the alley) lettered A-S, but there is never a lot labeled "J."

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Indenture, 15 October 1885, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 24, p. 427.

⁶⁶ Indenture, 20 May 1886, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 20, p. 522-523.

⁶⁷ Indenture, 14 July 1886, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 29, p. 326. Specifically, the property Wheeler bought from Downing included lots F-I, lots P-S and the east one-half of lot O.

The standard story passed down with the house asserts that Wheeler built the residence in 1888, but no records verify that this was the actual year of construction. It is clear that Wheeler did not begin building the home as soon as he purchased the property because fire insurance maps reveal that the block remained completely vacant through at least August of 1886.⁶⁸ But Wheeler must have started construction sometime between the end of 1886 and the spring of 1889 considering that the 1889 Aspen City Directory, published in March of that year, recorded that James Henry Devereux had already moved into the home. It is also doubtful that the house was constructed before 1888, because Wheeler did not actually purchase the rights to build over the alleyway through block 23 from the city until December of 1887. It seems unlikely that he would undertake the project before he obtained the deed to the land and the city's permission to build over the alley. Considering this evidence, it is certainly possible that the date of construction traditionally assigned to the house remains accurate. While construction may have started in 1888, tax records suggest that the house was actually completed sometime in 1889 because Wheeler did not pay any property taxes on the new house until 1890.⁶⁹

The identity of the house's original architect also remains a mystery. Two different legends of unknown origin attached to the house assert that it was either designed by a Denver architect named William Quayle or by Fred A. Hale, an architect who reputedly built Aspen's Presbyterian Church.⁷⁰ William Quayle, a native of Peoria, Illinois, moved to Denver in 1880 and started the architectural firm of William Quayle and Company. Quayle, along with his two sons, Charles and Edward, designed several commercial and public buildings in Denver including the Mack building, the old West Denver School, the First Congregationalist Church, and over twenty-five city school buildings in addition to several private residences.⁷¹ Though Quayle worked almost

⁶⁸ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Aspen, Colorado, Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, New York, August 1886. On microfilm at the Colorado Historical Society.

⁶⁹ Information supplied by the legal description of the home on record at the Pitkin County Assessor's Office.

⁷⁰ An undated history of the Wheeler-Stallard House prepared by an anonymous author after the latest exterior renovation states that "[t]he original architect for the house was Fred A. Hale who also built the Aspen Community Church." This is the only reference to this connection in any Aspen Historical Society document.

⁷¹ Thomas J. Noel and Barbara S. Norgren, *Denver: The City Beautiful and its Architects, 1893-1941* (Denver: Historic Denver, Inc., 1987), 215-216.

exclusively in Denver, he designed the Pitkin County Courthouse which was completed in Aspen in 1890. Therefore, Quayle did spend time in Aspen during the period that Wheeler's house was under construction, but no evidence suggests that he had any connections to Wheeler or the home. It also appears doubtful that the mysterious man named Fred Hale, the supposed Presbyterian Church architect, designed the home. No record of an architect by that name appears in any Aspen directory or newspaper account of the church construction.

The anonymous architect's finished product, completed sometime before the spring of 1889, was an elaborate three-story, 4,161 square foot Queen Anne style residence. The immense red brick house featured four timbered gables, a large bay window with exterior cut-brick decoration, three elegant fluted cut-brick chimneys, and a wide porch that began at the front door and wrapped around the entire eastern face of the building. The architect also added segmented sash windows and rustic roof trim along the tops of each gable to give the home the appearance of a country cottage.⁷² Most importantly, Wheeler's new Bleeker Street home had the distinction of being the only residence in Aspen to occupy an entire city block by itself. In the nineteenth century, the City of Aspen owned all the land that formed the town's streets and alleyways. In December of 1887, however, a Pitkin County judge ceded all the rights to the alley through Block 23 to Wheeler for a sum of \$248.25.⁷³ This decision enabled Wheeler to build the home nearly in the center of the block (blocking the alleyway) and also provided him with large, unbroken grounds on either side of the house.

Oddly, it appears that Wheeler and his family never occupied the monumental Bleeker Street house. Popular myth asserts that either chronic illness or an intense dislike for the mountains prevented Harriet Wheeler from visiting Aspen. However, contemporary Aspen newspaper articles documented at least three instances when she accompanied Jerome Wheeler on his trips to Aspen. On July 11, 1888, Harriet Wheeler, along with several of her husband's distinguished eastern guests, arrived in Aspen on a special Midland train car.⁷⁴ The length of this visit is unclear, but it must have been

⁷² See photograph 64.7.37 in the Aspen Historical Society photographic file.

⁷³ Quit Claim Deed, 29 December 1887, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 114, p. 144-146.

⁷⁴ *Aspen Daily Times*, 11 July 1888, p.4; *Rocky Mountain Sun*, 14 July 1888, p.2.

relatively short because on July 25, 1888, the *Aspen Daily Times* noted that another Midland special car bearing Jerome and Harriet Wheeler and their daughter Elsie arrived in town.⁷⁵ During this trip, Wheeler joined a handful of his eastern investor friends on their visit to coal properties in Garfield County and then returned to Aspen to spend a few days looking over his mines in the city. It is possible, though not verifiable, that Harriet and Elsie Wheeler stayed in Aspen during the three to five days that Wheeler spent overseeing his interests in the region. If the house had been completed by this date, it is even conceivable that the Wheeler family occupied it during this brief stay. At the very least, Harriet and Elsie probably saw the house that Jerome Wheeler intended to make their family home.

If the Wheeler family did reside in the house during this brief visit, it was the first and only time. It is possible that Wheeler stayed at the house during his short visits to Aspen in late 1888 and early 1889, but Harriet Wheeler did not return to Aspen until November of 1889 when she brought a train car full of New York friends to see the town.⁷⁶ By that time, Wheeler had already allowed the Devereux family to move into the home. In short, it seems that Wheeler never realized his dream of creating a family home in Aspen. Perhaps, as the popular legend surrounding the house suggests, the highborn and refined Harriet Wheeler refused to live in a rough and “uncivilized” mountain mining camp. It is also possible that Wheeler’s need to oversee his manifold interests in Manitou and New York never allowed him to spend significant lengths of time in the Roaring Fork valley. Lastly, perhaps the Wheelers’ reluctance to move stemmed from the fact that another house already captured their hearts. In 1889, Wheeler started building a large summer residence in Manitou complete with extensive gardens, large stables, and two bowling alleys.⁷⁷ The new home, which the Wheelers gave the romantic name

⁷⁵ *Aspen Daily Times*, 25 July 1888, p. 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 August 1889, p.4. Among Harriet Wheeler’s party were J. Henry Devereux and Dr. Mary Woolsey Noxon, who the *Times* called “one of New York’s distinguished physicians.” Also, in between her July 1888 visit and her November 1889 visit, the *Times* of 22 October 1888 reported that Harriet Wheeler and her mother Charlotte M. Valentine did visit Glenwood Springs in late October of that year.

⁷⁷ O’Connor.; John J. Lipsey, *The Lives of James John Hagerman, Builder of the Colorado Midland Railway*, ed. Edith Powell (Denver: Golden Bell Press, 1968), 119.

“Windermere,” soon became the family’s favored Colorado summer retreat and its permanent home in the 1890s.⁷⁸

James Henry Devereux

By 1889, Wheeler probably realized that his family never intended to occupy his Aspen home. Rather than let it fall into abandonment and disrepair, Wheeler sought temporary tenants for the house. He settled upon a close personal friend and a former employee named James Henry Devereux.

Sometime between January and March of 1889 James Henry Devereux, his wife, and his newborn daughter left their residence at 201 East Hyman Avenue and moved into Wheeler’s Bleeker Street mansion.⁷⁹ Wheeler and Devereux were longtime business associates—in 1886 J. Henry had succeeded his brother, Walter Devereux, as the general manager of the company.⁸⁰ Though the two men remained close personal friends, Devereux left Wheeler’s employ sometime after 1887 to become the secretary and treasurer of the Roaring Fork Light and Power Company, an enterprise financed by Walter Devereux, James Downing, and D.R.C. Brown.⁸¹ Since Henry Devereux did not work for Wheeler during any of the time that he occupied the house, it is probably incorrect to assume that Wheeler offered the house to him as a kind of free or rented “employee housing.” Although the agreement between the men remains unknown, it is likely that Devereux rented the property for a short term. The Devereuxs were a nomadic family. Like the Wheelers, they spent several weeks out of each year visiting the east coast and constantly rented out different Aspen homes for short periods of time rather

⁷⁸ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 2 December 1918, p. 2.

⁷⁹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 9 January 1889, p. 2. In this paper J. Henry Devereux placed a want ad for a domestic servant which listed his home address as 201 E. Hyman Avenue. About two months later, the 1889 Aspen City Directory, published in March of 1889, recorded his address as 620 W. Bleeker Street, the address of the Wheeler house (see 1889 Aspen City Directory, 65). Therefore it seems most likely that the Devereuxs moved into the house between January and March.

⁸⁰ *New York Times*, 16 June 1931, p.27; 1887 Colorado State Business Directory, 127.

⁸¹ 1889 Aspen City Directory, 65; *Aspen Daily Times*, 1 January 1888, p. 2 contains an advertisement for the Roaring Fork Electric Light Company that lists J.H. Devereux as the company secretary.

than planting roots in one particular residence.⁸² Therefore, Henry Devereux probably only rented Wheeler's house with the intention of making it his family's temporary home.

James Henry Devereux (who commonly went by Henry or J. Henry) was born on March 4, 1857 in Deposit, New York, a small town in the Catskill Mountains, five miles north of the Pennsylvania border. He was the third of six children born to Alvin Devereux Sr. and Julia Tanner.⁸³ During his youth, Henry attended school at the Williston Seminary in East Hampton, New York.⁸⁴ Though not fabulously wealthy, his father Alvin Devereux maintained a lucrative cattle-raising business that provided him with enough income to send his sons to the best New York universities. After leaving the seminary, Henry, like his older brothers, studied at Princeton and at the age of twenty-one graduated with a degree in science or engineering.⁸⁵

For the next twenty years of his life, Henry Devereux accompanied his brilliant and innovative older brother, Walter Bouchier Devereux, on his career-seeking travels around the western United States. Walter Devereux graduated from Princeton in 1873 and later earned his master's degree at that institution. While attending Princeton, he received a prestigious Experimental Science Fellowship award and went on a United States government astronomical expedition to Tasmania to observe the transit of Venus across the sun.⁸⁶ When he returned, Walter attended the Columbia University School of Mines where he earned a second bachelor's degree in mining engineering and in 1880 he set out to find a career in the mining west.⁸⁷ Accompanied by his younger brother Henry, he traveled to the Black Hills of South Dakota where both brothers eventually found employment as mining engineers.⁸⁸ One year later, Walter accepted a position as the head manager of the Dakoma Copper Company mines in Globe, Arizona. The twenty-four

⁸² Between 1889 and 1893 the Devereuxs occupied at least four different homes: 201 E. Hyman in early 1889 (*Aspen Daily Times*, 1 January 1889 p. 2), the Wheeler house between the spring of 1889 and the spring of 1890, the Stimson residence on West Hallam Street beginning in early 1891 (*Aspen Daily Times*, 6 January 1891, p.4) and 110 East Bleeker Street beginning in early 1892 (1892 *Aspen City Directory*, 58).

⁸³ Kathy Rippy Fleming, *Walter B. Devereux, The Legend, The Man: Creator of the Glenwood Hot Springs Resort* (Glenwood Springs, CO: Twin Aspen, 1997), 1;17; Shoemaker, 55.

⁸⁴ *New York Times*, 16 June 1931, p.27.

⁸⁵ Fleming, 17.

⁸⁶ Shoemaker, 55.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*; *New York Times*, 16 June 1931, p.27.

year old Henry soon followed him to Globe and began a career as an assayer.⁸⁹ The brothers remained in Arizona for two years and might have continued their professional lives there if Walter had not made the acquaintance of the newly arrived Jerome Wheeler.

Jerome Wheeler possessed many of the qualities necessary for success in the mining west: he had considerable personal income, extensive business experience, and a willingness to take financial risks in new ventures. But he never acquired a formal engineering education nor did he possess any technical mining expertise. Constructing and operating a smelter required an extensive knowledge of mining technology and engineering skill. Poor construction and the use of incorrect smelting procedures could limit a smelter's productivity or even permanently damage expensive smelting equipment. Since Wheeler lacked the expertise and time to manage the smelter himself and the fledgling camp at Aspen had no experienced, professional metallurgists capable of undertaking the project, he sought to import mining experts from other western mines. In 1883, Wheeler visited the copper mines at Globe, Arizona and during his stay he convinced Walter Devereux that his engineering and metallurgical skills would best be put to use in Aspen.⁹⁰ Devereux arrived in the camp the same year and assumed management of Wheeler's new smelter.

Walter Devereux soon proved to be one of Wheeler's most valuable assets. During his term as manager he demonstrated his technical brilliance by inventing fourteen different pieces of smelting equipment—including a slag pot with a hole in the side to draw off molten slag while still allowing the processed ores to settle in the bottom—which greatly improved the efficiency of the Aspen smelter.⁹¹ A man of considerable business talent, Walter Devereux also developed a highly efficient transportation system by which coal could be shipped to Aspen by mule train from Crested Butte and processed ore could be transferred to the nearest railroad point at Granite.⁹² In 1886, he helped develop Wheeler's Grand River Coal and Coke Company

⁸⁹ Shoemaker, 55; *New York Times*, 16 June 1931, p.27

⁹⁰ Shoemaker, 55-56.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 57.

by opening several new mines and constructing coke ovens in the Jerome Park region. These lands later proved a valuable source of fuel for the Aspen smelter.⁹³

Devereux's accomplishments in Aspen revealed that recruiting and importing talented mining experts was a key element in the success of Wheeler's mining ventures and the progress of the town's mining industries. But hiring Walter Devereux had other distinct advantages for Wheeler and for Aspen. Devereux soon persuaded two of his brothers, both of whom were educated and experienced mining engineers, to accept positions with the Aspen Mining and Smelting Company. By 1884, J. Henry Devereux abandoned his career as an assayer in Globe, moved to Aspen, and became the head manager of Wheeler's Emma mine.⁹⁴ Likewise, Horace K. Devereux, Walter and J. Henry's younger brother and an adventuresome, fun-loving, perpetual bachelor, moved to Aspen and worked under Walter as superintendent of the AMS. During their early years in Aspen both brothers continually invested their money, time, and skill in the development of important Aspen industries. In 1887, Horace Devereux helped to incorporate and finance the Roaring Fork Water, Light and Power Company along with D.R.C. Brown and James Downing.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, J. Henry entered into partnership with the Tompkins and Gill Hardware Company to form the Aspen Plumbing Company.⁹⁶ As a direct result of Wheeler's early recruiting efforts, Aspen now boasted a distinguished family of educated, wealthy, and experienced engineers dedicated to its future improvement. With Wheeler's help, the eastern capitalists that eluded the anxious mining camp five years before now abounded in the thriving young city.

By the time J. Henry Devereux took up residence in the Wheeler house in 1889, he had established a reputation as one of Aspen's leading mining men and most innovative engineers. In 1886 he replaced his brother Horace as superintendent of the Aspen Mining and Smelting Company. The next year he became the general manager of the company when Walter Devereux resigned from the office to pursue his numerous

⁹³ Fleming, 6.

⁹⁴ *New York Times*, 16 June 1931, p.27.

⁹⁵ Shoemaker, 59.

⁹⁶ *Aspen Daily Times*, 3 January 1888, p.4. On this date, a notice appeared that announced the dissolution of the partnership between J. Henry Devereux and the Tompkins and Gill Hardware Company.

investments in the hot springs and coal lands near Glenwood Springs.⁹⁷ But J. Henry's career as Wheeler's highest-ranking Aspen employee was short lived. His interests soon turned from smelting to experimenting with new techniques of hydroelectric engineering. After about a year as manager of the AMS, he left Wheeler's employ to work at the Roaring Fork Light and Power Company plant that was originally designed by Walter Devereux and partially financed by Horace Devereux.⁹⁸ Though he officially served as secretary and treasurer of the power company and probably spent much of his time managing its finances, J. Henry also took on several other duties. He frequently traveled to Denver to buy supplies and equipment for the plant and he became well versed in the intricacies of hydroelectric engineering. He worked alongside his brothers to increase the capacity of the power company by combining the output of its Castle Creek, Roaring Fork, and Hunter Creek plants together.⁹⁹ When a delegation of government officials from Takio, Japan arrived in Aspen to study the company's hydroelectric plant, J. Henry personally conducted their tour of the facilities and the hydroelectric hoisting plant at the Veteran Tunnel that he helped to design and install.¹⁰⁰

On March 22, 1887, J. Henry married Mary Crocker Brown. Brown was a Canadian immigrant from New Brunswick and the sister of D.R.C. Brown, one of Aspen's wealthiest and most respected businessmen.¹⁰¹ Despite this notable social connection and Devereux's reputation as a knowledgeable businessman, neither J. Henry nor his wife pursued the social prominence that Aspen's other leading families achieved. While the B. Clark Wheelers, the J.M. Downings, and the Gillespies threw elaborate parties that were described meticulously in the social columns of the *Aspen Daily Times*, the Devereuxs rarely attended lavish soirees, and apparently never hosted social gatherings during the time they occupied Wheeler's mansion. This was probably due in large part to Mary Devereux's extended absences from the city. In the upper-class Victorian household, husbands typically worked to improve the family's financial

⁹⁷ 1887 Colorado State Business Directory, 127.

⁹⁸ J. Henry Devereux probably left Wheeler's employ in late 1887 because the *Aspen Daily Times*, 1 January 1888, p. 2 contains an advertisement for the Roaring Fork Electric Light Company that lists J.H. Devereux as the company secretary.

⁹⁹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 27 January 1888, p. 4; 5 September 1888, p.4.

¹⁰⁰ *Aspen Daily Times*, 29 December 1888, p.6.

¹⁰¹ *New York Times*, 16 June 1931, p. 27.

standing while wives cultivated social relationships that promoted its social status. But from February of 1889 to May of 1890, Mary Devereux stayed with friends in Pasadena, California. Perhaps illness, recuperation from childbirth—Mary gave birth to her first child, a daughter named Dorothy in 1888—or a dislike of Aspen’s climate prompted her to seek respite on the warm western coast.¹⁰² J. Henry remained in Aspen and apparently lived in the Wheeler house alone.¹⁰³ But Devereux rarely had time to engage in the social activities of Aspen’s elite during his wife’s absence; like his former employer, Jerome Wheeler, Devereux frequently left Aspen for long periods to oversee his business interests in different parts of the state. Since neither Devereux nor his wife spent enough time in Aspen to host numerous entertainments and teas or endure the endless rounds of visits necessary to cultivate social connections, the Wheeler house likely saw no social functions within its walls during this first year.

The Devereuxs’ lengthy absences from Aspen during 1889 suggest that they occupied Wheeler’s house infrequently. Also, the fact that the couple moved out of the house sometime in the spring of 1890, only one year after they initially moved in, indicates that they had probably always intended to make it a short term, temporary residence.¹⁰⁴ For these reasons, it is doubtful that the family invested significant amounts of effort and money to decorate the house. But the Devereuxs, like many wealthy families of the period, avidly collected Middle Eastern and Asian furniture, rugs, and textiles. In 1888, after nearly suffering a physical and nervous breakdown after the death of his five year old daughter, Walter Devereux vacationed in Egypt and the Far East where he developed a passion for Oriental rugs. He purchased several rugs that he then presented as gifts to his family members, brothers, and friends.¹⁰⁵ A short time later, J. Henry and Mary Devereux also acquired a passion for Oriental decorative works. Sometime before March of 1891, J. Henry took his own sightseeing trip to Europe and the Far East and purchased several Asian decorative pieces.¹⁰⁶ The items, which Mary Devereux donated

¹⁰² Fleming, 17; *Aspen Daily Times*, 26 February 1889, p.4.

¹⁰³ *Aspen Daily Times*, 14 March, 1889, p.4.

¹⁰⁴ *Aspen Daily Times*, 9 March 1890, p.2.

¹⁰⁵ Fleming, 21.

¹⁰⁶ *Aspen Daily Times*, 18 March 1891, p.4.

for display at an “oriental bazaar” hosted by the Ladies Aide Society of the Presbyterian Church in 1891, were described by an *Aspen Times* reporter:

two beautiful silk embroidered spreads which at one time belonged to the Shah of Persia... a great variety of doylies [sic] and tablespreads of beautiful design and exquisite workmanship made by the Turkish refugees in Constantinople... costly Persian rugs covered all the floors, while from the walls and every available space was displayed many rare specimens of Oriental art... There were also some queer little Turkish tables about eighteen inches high, inlaid with pearl, the bed of the table being a large tray made of brass.¹⁰⁷

Though Devereux probably purchased these particular items after leaving the Wheeler house, this description certainly illustrates both his love of Middle Eastern textiles and his passion for collecting numerous styles of Asian art. Therefore, if the Devereuxs made any significant decorative decisions while residing in the Wheeler home, it is likely that this kind of Oriental eclecticism characterized most of their interior décor.

It is doubtful, however, that the Devereuxs intended to make any long-term investment in the home, decorative or otherwise. By early 1890, Devereux, whose wife and young child had not yet returned from their California vacation, demonstrated that he did not plan to put down roots in the Bleeker Street mansion. Sometime before March of 1890, less than one year after he initially rented the Wheeler home, Devereux moved out and took up residence at yet another Aspen house in the West End. It remains unclear whether Devereux chose to leave or if Wheeler stopped renting to him because he already had other tenants in mind for the house. Regardless of the reasons behind Devereux’s departure, Jerome Wheeler swiftly installed new occupants in his grand home.¹⁰⁸

Henry R. Woodward

In 1890, Wheeler selected tenants who were more likely to make the Bleeker Street home their permanent, year-round residence. On March 9, 1890, the *Aspen Daily*

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ J. Henry Devereux continued to live and work in Aspen until at least 1900. During this period, however, he spent much of his time in Glenwood Springs where he served as the president of the First National Bank, an institution financed by the Devereux brothers. Theodore Roosevelt, a friend of the Devereuxs, visited Glenwood in 1902 and supposedly contacted J. Henry in hopes of organizing a lion hunt with him. J. Henry moved back to New York in 1902 and established himself as a mining consultant. He retired in Northampton, Massachusetts where he died on June 13, 1931.

Times society column noted that “Mr. and Mrs. H.R. Woodward have returned from their Eastern visit and have taken the Devereux mansion as their residence.”¹⁰⁹ Again, the nature of the housing agreement between Wheeler and Woodward remains unknown. It seems likely, however, that the two men had a special rental agreement. Unlike James Henry Devereux, Henry Woodward worked directly for Wheeler in a position of enormous responsibility. Therefore, it is entirely possible that Wheeler rented the house to Woodward at a discounted rate or allowed him to occupy it free of charge. In short, Woodward may have been allowed to use the house as a kind of extra fringe benefit or bonus for the valuable services he provided to his employer.

Like the Devereux brothers, Henry Woodward was one of Wheeler’s numerous imported experts, but his expertise consisted of strong management and business skills rather than technical mining knowledge. Woodward began his Aspen career in the fall of 1889 when Wheeler made him the manager of the Wheeler Opera House. According to the *Aspen Times*, Woodward moved to Aspen from New Albany, a small Indiana town directly across the border from Louisville, Kentucky, where he owned and managed the Bijou Theater. On June 23, 1889, Ralph Weill, the first manager of the opera house, resigned and Woodward immediately assumed the office. The *Times* remarked favorably on the new appointment, noting that Henry Woodward seemed to be “a young man of ability.”¹¹⁰ Despite the paper’s encouraging remarks, he resigned from the post only four weeks later. In July of 1889, the *Times* announced that Woodward would be replaced by Robert J. Cutler, the opera house’s capable stage manager, but that he would remain in Aspen to “engage in some new enterprise.”¹¹¹

There are two possible explanations for Woodward’s resignation. First, he may have quit due to a family crisis—his wife constantly suffered from poor health and he often left Aspen to accompany her on her recuperative trips to the east coast. The fact that Woodward left Aspen immediately after his resignation and stayed on the east coast for almost a month before returning to the city might support this explanation.¹¹² But Woodward’s sudden resignation also occurred just two days after Jerome Wheeler

¹⁰⁹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 9 March 1890, p.2.

¹¹⁰ *Aspen Daily Times*, 23 June 1889, p. 4.

¹¹¹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 24 July 1889, p.4.

arrived in Aspen on a business trip and may indicate that Wheeler himself prompted the resignation. Perhaps Wheeler or the Aspen public disapproved of Woodward's management of the opera house. Indeed, after Woodward quit, the *Times* assured its readers that the new manager, Robert Cutler, would operate the house in a way that would not leave "the slightest cause for grumbling," suggesting that some found Woodward's management dissatisfactory.¹¹³ It is doubtful, however, that Wheeler himself detected any serious fault with Woodward's conduct because only a few months after this sudden resignation he appointed Woodward to a position of enormous responsibility. Starting on January 1, 1890, Henry Woodward became Wheeler's Colorado general agent and assumed managerial control over his investments throughout the state.¹¹⁴

In early March of 1890, Henry Woodward took up residence at the Wheeler mansion and began the daunting task of overseeing Wheeler's diverse and multitudinous Colorado business interests. These new duties required Woodward to travel across the state and consumed most of his time and energy. Shortly after his appointment, Wheeler put Woodward in charge of inspecting all three J.B. Wheeler and Company banks in Aspen, Manitou Springs, and Colorado City.¹¹⁵ Solving bank problems became Woodward's personal responsibility. For instance, when a head employee at the Wheeler bank in Manitou Springs took a vacation, Woodward left his home and affairs in Aspen, took up temporary residence in Manitou, and personally supervised bank business during the man's absence.¹¹⁶ In 1892, Wheeler made him a director of the J.B. Wheeler and Company Bank in Aspen and Woodward later rose to become the bank's vice-president.¹¹⁷

In addition to his banking duties, Woodward also assisted Wheeler to develop his properties throughout the state. Wheeler invested heavily in the Black Eagle mining property on Sheep Mountain that was located in the nearby Crystal River valley. While Wheeler probably purchased the property for its mineral ores, the Sheep Mountain region

¹¹² *Aspen Daily Times*, 17 August 1889, p.4.

¹¹³ *Aspen Daily Times*, 24 July 1889, p.4.

¹¹⁴ *Aspen Daily Times*, 31 December 1889, p.4.

¹¹⁵ *Aspen Daily Times*, 23 February 1890.

¹¹⁶ *Aspen Daily Times*, 10 July 1890, p.4.

later became known for its deposits of pure white marble that rivaled the stone produced by the famous quarries in Carrara, Italy. Woodward often traveled by train and coach to the banks of the Crystal River to inspect operations at the Black Eagle and to oversee improvements at a nearby camp called Clarence which Wheeler hoped to develop as a base town for miners in the valley.¹¹⁸ But Woodward also watched over Wheeler's mining enterprises closer to home. While Wheeler and his family vacationed in Europe during the spring and summer of 1890, Woodward assumed the presidency of Wheeler's Tourtelotte Tramway company.¹¹⁹ Wheeler organized the company with the hope that it would eventually build a tramway that could transport raw ores from the small mining town of Tourtelotte Park (located 2,400 feet up Aspen Mountain) to Aspen. Under Woodward's direction, Wheeler's goal was finally realized. The 1.75 mile tramway was completed in April of 1890 and opened with much fanfare and celebration in both mining towns.¹²⁰

Unlike J. Henry and Mary Devereux, Henry Woodward and his wife gained prominence and popularity within Aspen's society circles. Mrs. Woodward (whose first name remains unknown) was a fashionable woman who actively pursued and forged social connections with some of Aspen's leading families.¹²¹ Soon after their arrival in Aspen, the Woodwards joined the German Club, a group of prominent Aspen married couples who enjoyed dancing intricate, multi-couple dances known as "germans." The club was composed of "Aspen's society people" and sponsored several dances at the Rink Opera House during the spring and fall.¹²² Aspen's wealthy social elite came to the club functions to be seen. Most dances were exclusively formal "dress affairs" where the town's society women displayed their elegant new evening costumes. On the days following such dances, the *Aspen Times* regaled its readers with lengthy descriptions of

¹¹⁷ 1892 Colorado State Business Directory, 122; 1893 Colorado State Business Directory, 126.

¹¹⁸ *Aspen Daily Times*, 18 August 1891, p. 4. Clarence later merged with the town of Marble and long after Wheeler and Woodward ceased to take an interest in the region, it became the site of the largest marble architectural processing mill in the world.

¹¹⁹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 4 April 1890, p. 4.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ For the most part, Victorian women always used their husbands' first names in public. For example Mary Devereux was always called Mrs. J.H. Devereux and Henry Woodward's wife was always called Mrs. H.R. Woodward.

¹²² *Aspen Daily Times*, 5 October 1890, p. 5.

these dresses and glowing comments upon each woman's fashion taste.¹²³ As the wife of Jerome Wheeler's highest-ranking employee, Mrs. Woodward gained acceptance in this elite club and quickly established herself as one of its prominent members and dance leaders.¹²⁴ Henry Woodward joined the club's invitation committee and helped determine which Aspen society people would be included on its short guest list.¹²⁵ In this manner, the Woodwards were able to expand their social circle rapidly only a few months after their arrival in town.

While the Woodwards entered Aspen society by joining a club, they eventually engaged in the endless rounds of private parties, teas, and receptions that defined social status among Aspen's society elite. By making a favorable impression at a party, a wealthy Aspen couple could potentially gain invitations to more exclusive soirees. Likewise, throwing a successful party was also key to raising the family's social status and garnering invitations to other upper-class social functions. Apparently, the Woodwards excelled at both of these tactics. In June of 1890 Mrs. Woodward arrived at a reception held by the prominent Eames family clad in a white silk-trained gown with elaborate pearl trim and wearing a set of "magnificent diamonds." Her stunning appearance elicited glowing comments from the *Times* and impressed her newfound society acquaintances.¹²⁶ In the following months, the Woodwards frequently attended receptions, concerts, and teas hosted by Aspen's society families including the T.J. Lysters and the Stormers. Soon, another event signaled the Woodwards' acceptance into high society. Like the other social elite of Aspen, the Woodwards' daily activities, including their family trips to the Crystal River valley and their excursions to the Wheeler Opera House, suddenly became news items in the *Times* society column. All Aspen citizens eventually became aware that the Woodwards represented one of the town's leading society families.

Like Aspen's other social elite, the Woodwards also established their status in the town by entertaining their society friends at luncheons, receptions, and intimate private parties. The large parlor and dining room of the Wheeler house occasionally served as the

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ *Aspen Daily Times*, 20 April 1890, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 28 September 1890, p. 2.

site of these functions. In the early 1890s, it became popular for Aspen's society women to host small afternoon luncheons in honor of out of town guests or departing friends. On November 9, 1890, the *Times* society column announced that another of these "pleasant affairs" was held by Mrs. Woodward "at her beautiful home on West Blecker street."¹²⁷ According to the brief clipping, Miss Holt, a popular young woman visiting from New York, acted as Mrs. Woodward's guest of honor and "quite a number of ladies were present to enjoy the entertainment of their charming hostess."¹²⁸

The Woodwards also included their close society friends in their private celebrations. On June 2, 1891, the couple celebrated their fifth wedding anniversary at a small, intimate party that may have been held at the Wheeler house. The Woodwards invited a few close friends to attend the gathering including Dr. Charles Rose, one of Aspen's leading physicians, Mrs. Rose, and Jerome Wheeler who happened to be in town on business. The Woodwards received several "beautiful presents" from well wishers and the couples whiled away the evening to the music of an orchestra specially hired for the event.¹²⁹ A few weeks later, the departure of Mrs. Woodward's sister who had been visiting Aspen for several months prompted the Woodwards to organize an elaborate reception in her honor. This ostensibly private family event eventually grew to become a large society function that could not be contained within the Wheeler house. The Woodwards rented a large hall in the Hotel Jerome and invited around forty of Aspen's prominent society couples to an evening of dancing. The Weston orchestra provided the music as the large party danced the night away and immersed itself in the "lively and beautiful scene of mirth and enjoyment" that the Woodwards graciously created.¹³⁰

While many of the details of the Woodwards' social activities have survived in newspaper accounts, information about the family's private, domestic life remains obscure. It appears that the couple had at least one young daughter under the age of five. Although no other information about this child exists, it is evident that the little girl grew up in a musical household. Both Henry Woodward and his wife were talented amateur

¹²⁶ *Aspen Daily Times*, 30 June 1890, p. 5.

¹²⁷ *Aspen Daily Times*, 9 November 1890, p. 6.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 7 June 1891, p. 6.

¹³⁰ *Aspen Daily Times*, 31 June 1891, p. 4.

musicians; Henry possessed a well-trained baritone singing voice of “much power and rare quality” and was a popular performer at local concerts while Mrs. Woodward often accompanied him on the piano.¹³¹ Therefore, it is likely that the Woodwards often practiced their duets at home and may even have converted one of the rooms in the Wheeler house into a conservatory or music room.

It is also important to note that the Woodwards, like the Devereuxs, rarely spent a significant amount of time in the house. Both Woodwards enjoyed traveling and the family frequently took short excursions to Denver and the Crystal River valley as well as a long vacation in California. Mrs. Woodward left Aspen for months at a time to visit her friends in her former hometowns of Louisville, Kentucky and Middleburg, Virginia.¹³² The family also traveled for more serious purposes; Mrs. Woodward suffered recurring bouts of illness throughout the early 1890s and occasionally sojourned to the east coast with her husband to recover. It was during one of these recuperative excursions that the Woodwards suddenly disappeared from Aspen’s society circles. In early March of 1892, the Woodwards sailed from New York City to Havana, Cuba, ostensibly seeking a climate that would benefit Mrs. Woodward’s failing health.¹³³ This time, the family did not return to Aspen for four months. Henry Woodward’s desire to avoid legal prosecution was probably the underlying motive behind his decision to stay out of the country for such an extended period.

On April 12, 1892, just one month after Woodward’s departure, Jerome Wheeler began a bitter lawsuit against James John Hagerman, his partner in the Colorado Midland Railroad and the Mollie Gibson mine.¹³⁴ In February of 1891, Wheeler sold all of his 190,501 shares in the Mollie Gibson to Hagerman and his associates for ninety cents a piece.¹³⁵ Up until this time, the mine showed promise but failed to produce much ore of significant value. After Wheeler made his deal with Hagerman, it soon became apparent that the Mollie Gibson contained vast and extremely valuable mineral veins. A reporter for the *Aspen Times* estimated that almost \$3,000,000 worth of silver ore lay between the

¹³¹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 20 July 1890, p.2.

¹³² *Aspen Daily Times*, 2 March 1890, p.2; 14 August 1890, p.4; 28 September 1890, p.2.

¹³³ *Aspen Daily Times*, 8 March 1892, p.4.

¹³⁴ Lipsey, 149.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

third and fourth levels of the mine.¹³⁶ The indignant Wheeler charged Hagerman and his partners with concealing the value of the Mollie's deposits when they purchased his shares and sued to get his stock back.

During the Wheeler vs. Hagerman trial both sides procured old telegrams from the Western Union telegraph office in Aspen that they subsequently presented as evidence. Hagerman submitted copies of telegrams sent between Wheeler and his managers in Aspen. The telegrams suggested that Wheeler had been fully aware of the potential of the Mollie Gibson but decided to sell his stock anyway. Likewise, Wheeler's associates obtained copies of ciphered (coded) telegrams sent between Hagerman and his employees which suggested that they purposely kept Wheeler unapprised of the value of the Mollie so they could buy his shares at a low price. The telegraph cipher situation soon became a scandal in itself. The Western Union office was supposed to destroy all copies of telegrams three months after the initial sending date. Yet, the Western Union agent kept the copies for almost a year and a debate raged over whether Hagerman and Wheeler had illegally procured the telegrams from him through bribes, coercion, or theft.¹³⁷

As Wheeler's chief Aspen employee, Henry Woodward came under suspicion for perpetrating or at least condoning this illegal activity on Wheeler's behalf.¹³⁸ Meanwhile, Woodward, who either remained in Havana or New York during the trial, stayed safely out of the reach of the local law enforcement. By the late summer of 1892, Wheeler apparently began to realize he was fighting a losing and costly battle; on July 16th, he instructed his lawyers to drop the suit.¹³⁹ The only concession Wheeler sought from Hagerman was that Henry Woodward could return to Aspen and that Hagerman would not seek his prosecution and arrest. Such a plea indicates that there must have been substantial evidence implicating Woodward in the illegal telegram procurement, but Hagerman quickly agreed to Wheeler's demands and the case was dismissed.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Ibid., 145.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 117-150.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 150.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 149-150.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 150.

Henry Woodward returned to Aspen on July 23, 1892 only one week after Jerome Wheeler sought the dismissal of the suit.¹⁴¹ Despite the dubious character of his business activities, Henry Woodward retained Jerome Wheeler's unflagging trust. He continued to serve as Wheeler's general agent well into the post-crash era. But Woodward no longer occupied Wheeler's house. The 1892 Aspen City Directory indicates that sometime before March of that year, the Woodward family vacated the house and took up residence at a nearby home located at 527 West Hallam Street.¹⁴² Yet again, Wheeler faced the task of finding temporary occupants for his Aspen home.

A Home Without a Family: The Wheeler House after 1892

It appears from existing records that Jerome Wheeler never procured tenants for the Blecker Street home after the Woodwards left. By the fall of 1892, Wheeler had found a different use for the property. On August 24, 1892, Wheeler gave lots R and S on the southeastern corner of the block to his mother-in-law, Charlotte M. Valentine.¹⁴³ Six weeks later, on October 1, 1892, Wheeler sold the entire property to Valentine for \$20,000. The sale of the house was only one of several large sales of property that Wheeler transacted in the late summer and early fall of 1892.¹⁴⁴ On July 12, 1892, Wheeler sold his entire interest in the Grand River Coal and Coke Company—an asset worth almost \$1,000,000—to the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company.¹⁴⁵ A little more than a month later, he sold the Hotel Jerome to Archie Fisk for \$125,000.¹⁴⁶ In early December of 1892, Wheeler transferred the ownership of the opera house to Charlotte Valentine.¹⁴⁷ Little by little, Wheeler was trading his prized Aspen properties for hard cash.

¹⁴¹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 23 July 1892, p. 8.

¹⁴² 1892 Aspen City Directory, 154. Though it appears that Woodward left Aspen after 1893, he continued to act as Wheeler's agent well into the late 1890s. In fact, it appears that he loaned Wheeler money to pay off his debts in the post-crash years.

¹⁴³ Quit Claim Deed, 24 August 1892, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 115, p. 90.

¹⁴⁴ Quit Claim Deed, 1 October 1892, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 115, p. 88.

¹⁴⁵ *Aspen Daily Times*, 12 July 1892, p. 5.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 26 August 1892, p. 8.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6 December 1892, p. 8.

Wheeler's sudden liquidation of his Aspen assets might be attributed to several factors. First, Wheeler may have been frightened by the dramatic decreases in silver prices in 1892 and sold his assets to avoid being too heavily invested in silver interests. Second, and probably most likely, Wheeler may have been forced to sell these properties to pay debts incurred by mining litigation. In the late summer of 1892, Wheeler lost an enormous lawsuit to Judge A.W. Rucker. In 1884 Rucker had contracted to buy a one-sixth interest in the Aspen mine from Harvey Young, Wheeler's artist-turned-miner partner in the Aspen mining property, for \$15,000. Soon after the purchase, miners struck a rich vein of ore in the Aspen and Young refused to take Rucker's money and complete the trade. Young then sold the interest promised to Rucker to Wheeler who, according to Rucker's complaint, had full knowledge of the previous contract. In December of 1888, Rucker sued Young, Wheeler, and the Compromise Mining Company for his one-sixth interest in the mine and for one-sixth of the ores that had been extracted from the Aspen since 1884. Though the courts made several decisions in favor of Rucker, Wheeler appealed every decision and litigation dragged on for nearly four years. Finally, on July 2, 1892, just before Wheeler began his massive liquidation of assets, a state appeals court found in favor of Rucker and forced Wheeler to give him a one-twelfth interest in the mine and a one-sixth share of the mine's proceeds totaling \$801,670. Wheeler's situation worsened two weeks later when an appeals court reversed a former decision and declared that he would have to return one-third of the interest in the Emma mine to the heirs of one of his former mining partners.¹⁴⁸

Since most of his money was tied up in mining investments, Wheeler had little free cash available to settle the debts incurred by this litigation. This is probably the reason why he sold the Blecker Street house and the Wheeler Opera House to a family member. By selling the house to his mother-in-law for \$20,000, Wheeler simultaneously kept the house within the family while he quickly generated some of the cash he needed to settle his new financial obligations. By agreeing to pay a large amount of money for a house that she never intended to live in, Charlotte Valentine was essentially providing her son-in-law with a no-interest loan to pay off his debts. Later, she even allowed the

¹⁴⁸ *Aspen Daily Times*, 13 July 1892, p.5.

Bleeker Street house and her Wheeler Opera House property to be held in bond against Wheeler's debt to Rucker. In a Deed of Trust filed at the Pitkin County Courthouse on June 8, 1893, Wheeler agreed to pay Rucker the full value and interest on several promissory notes worth \$158,000 over a period of thirty-six months. If he defaulted on any of these payments, Valentine agreed to forfeit the entire Bleeker Street property and all its improvements along with the Wheeler Opera House building to Rucker who could then dispose of them as he pleased.¹⁴⁹ Despite the devastation caused by the crash of 1893, Wheeler honored the debt and both the Bleeker Street house and the opera house were released back to Charlotte Valentine in 1896.¹⁵⁰

Though Wheeler succeeded in selling off some of his Aspen assets before 1893, he still had significant investments in several of Aspen's silver mining interests. When the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and the worldwide economic depression of 1893 caused silver prices to plummet and forced almost every mine in the state to close, Wheeler, like most of Aspen's investors and miners, faced financial ruin. In early July, economic conditions forced Fred Bulkley, the manager of Wheeler's Aspen Mining and Smelting Company, to lay off all his employees. "It is expected that everything will be closed up tight, and only one man will be retained in the office, and that for only a couple of months," the *Times* lamented on the day of the closure.¹⁵¹ To the further shock and dismay of the townspeople, the J.B. Wheeler and Company Bank closed on July 19, 1893 when it simply did not have the funds to pay out withdrawals. The *Times* assured its readers that "no one will lose a dollar of their money deposited there."¹⁵² Indeed, the bank's assets greatly exceeded its liabilities and Wheeler reopened it in 1895. Poor business forced Wheeler to close his banks in Aspen and Manitou two years later, but he assured a reporter for the *Rocky Mountain News* that the banks' assets far exceeded their liabilities and that "our depositors... will be paid dollar for dollar."¹⁵³

Though it appears that Wheeler's depositors did not suffer from his financial insolvency, his creditors soon received disturbing news. On July 3, 1901, Wheeler filed

¹⁴⁹ Deed of Trust, 8 June 1893, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 114, p. 144-146.

¹⁵⁰ Deed of Release, 30 June 1896, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 83, p. 451.

¹⁵¹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 2 July 1893, p. 8.

¹⁵² *Aspen Daily Times*, 20 July 1893, p. 4.

¹⁵³ *Rocky Mountain News*, 8 May 1897, p.2.

for bankruptcy. He reported owing \$1,596,574 in debts to various western parties including Henry Woodward, D.R.C. Brown, Fred Bulkley, and the First National banks of Denver and Colorado Springs. Wheeler explained the reasons for his bankruptcy:

During the last 18 years many suits have been instituted against me by designing and unscrupulous persons, who claimed equities in silver mines which were fairly and honestly purchased by me. During that period I have been obliged to pay large legal fees to protect my interests. In addition to this drain upon my resources there occurred a still larger decrease in my income caused by the great decline in the price of silver, which resulted in practically closing the mines in which I am interested. Now that I am crippled, these persons are pressing their claims so persistently that I must prevent myself from being further plundered...¹⁵⁴

Wheeler also expressed his intention to do justice to those he owed money. A writer for the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that Wheeler “said he intended to pay all his just creditors in full, if possible.”¹⁵⁵

Even though Wheeler was still heavily invested in Aspen’s mining interests, he never spent much time in the town in the post-crash era and almost certainly never occupied the house he built. Wheeler spent the remainder of his life at his beloved Windermere in Manitou. He gardened, played chess, and enjoyed spending time with his two daughters.¹⁵⁶ Elsie Wheeler Rupp was married and lived nearby with her husband and two children and the Wheelers’ other daughter, Mary Wheeler, remained unmarried and lived at home until at least 1918. Harriet Macy Valentine Wheeler died in early May of 1916 and though the Colorado Springs and Denver newspapers reported nothing about her passing, her obituary appeared in the *New York Times* where her relationship with the city’s leading retail family made her an important social figure. Two years later, on December 1, 1918, Wheeler died of double pneumonia at the age of seventy-seven.¹⁵⁷ His grand Bleeker Street house remained abandoned and in disrepair for nearly thirteen years. It served as a very visible symbol of the fabulous wealth, prosperity, and enthusiasm that Aspen had achieved but had lost in the aftermath of 1893.

¹⁵⁴ *Denver Republican*, 5 July 1892, p. 9.

¹⁵⁵ *Rocky Mountain News*, 4 July 1901, p.2.

¹⁵⁶ O’Connor, 2.

Part Two: Life in the Wheeler House

The Victorian Home and the Victorian Woman

For Americans of the late nineteenth century, a home was much more than a place to live. At a very basic level, the home symbolized the fondest ideals, morals, and aspirations of the nation. Within its walls the American family—the single most important bastion of morality in Victorian American society—carried out its daily functions. The home was a place for mundane activities; domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, dining, and doing laundry consumed the daily lives of most American families. But the Victorians also believed that the home should be a place that fostered traditional values and morals. In the home, children, the future lifeblood of the nation, absorbed the moral principles and religious ideals that ultimately molded them into morally responsible adults and citizens.¹⁵⁸ Men, who were deemed to have a natural predisposition to vices like gambling, violence, alcoholism, and sexual promiscuity could be tamed and reformed within the moral environment of the home. It was thought that only the Victorian woman, who supposedly possessed inherent moral superiority, piety, and compassion, had the ability to create this domestic utopia and shape the moral character of her family. Summed up in the words of Gilbert Holland, a popular nineteenth-century writer on family life, “the foundation of [the American] national character is laid by the mothers of the nation.”¹⁵⁹

Since she was deemed to be the leading moral influence in the home, the behavior of the “proper” Victorian woman was governed by a strict set of social guidelines dubbed the “Cult of True Womanhood” by historians. While her husband earned the family income in the public sphere, the “true woman” exercised her moral superiority within the confines of the domestic sphere to improve her family. The ideal wife and mother

¹⁵⁷ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 2 December 1918, p.1-2.

¹⁵⁸ Harvey Green, *The Light of the Home: An Intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 29-36.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

embodied all of the values that Victorian Americans held dear: she was chaste, modest, and instinctively religious. Her most important and most sacred duty in life was to instill these same qualities in her husband and children so that they would be morally responsible citizens. She also realized, however, that though she retained her moral superiority within the home, her husband was the ultimate source of authority in the family and she submissively bent to his will. Lastly, and most importantly, the “true woman” did not seek fulfillment or employment outside the home. Her instinctive domesticity taught her that the greatest personal fulfillment she could hope to achieve came from staying at home and properly caring for her family.¹⁶⁰

Of course, “The Cult of True Womanhood” was only a set of ideals and did not govern the behavior or opinions of all women. Working-class women who had to seek employment outside the home to support their families certainly did not have the ability to live by the standards of the cult. In addition, some middle and upper-class women who had the opportunity to become “true women” rejected these restrictive ideals and sought fulfillment in endeavors outside the home. Historians even question the cult’s influence over women’s behavior in the American West. Some argue that the concept of separate spheres did not exist in the western frontier household. Both husbands and wives worked side by side in the fields of the pioneer homestead and each of their labor was equally important to the family’s economic survival. Therefore, the notion that women’s duties were distinctly separate from those of their husbands and should be confined exclusively within the home began to break down in the West. As a result, the cult gradually lost its following there.¹⁶¹

While this theory might apply to family relationships on the frontier homestead, it probably does not reflect gender roles in Aspen’s upper-class families. The majority of Aspen’s wealthy elite, including all the families that occupied the Wheeler house during the boom period, came directly from the urban areas of the east coast and the Midwest and not from the western homestead. Therefore, the town’s upper-class women

¹⁶⁰ Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1966): 151-174.

¹⁶¹ For a discussion of the role of the Cult of True Womanhood in the West see Elizabeth Jameson, “Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West,” *The Women’s West*, eds. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 145-164.

undoubtedly carried eastern conceptions of women's roles that closely mirrored those valued in the Cult of True Womanhood to their new western home.

Indeed, Aspen's upper-class women adhered to traditional notions that a woman's primary duty was to manage her household and raise her children. There is no record of any Aspen society women seeking employment outside the home. Yet, the wives of Aspen's elite rejected the idea that their influence should be strictly confined to the domestic sphere. As Aspen historian Anne Gilbert suggests, Aspen's eastern upper-class women sought to transform the harsh, unregulated male mining camp into a "civilized" community that conformed to the traditional Victorian family values that they brought with them.¹⁶² In the late nineteenth century, women throughout the nation sought to expand their public roles by participating in moral reform movements. Women justified leaving the confines of the home to participate in these movements by asserting that their natural moral superiority made them the keepers of "civilization" and the nation's morality. Their profound sense of moral righteousness gave them special "expertise" that allowed them to improve American society by cleansing it of corruption, vice, and inhumanity.¹⁶³ Though Aspen's upper-class women may not have voiced this justification, they certainly sought moral leadership within their community and created organizations dedicated to the improvement of the town. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), an organization dedicated to the eradication of drinking because it led to the abuse of women and children, was particularly active in Aspen. Other groups such as the Women's Relief Corps and the King's Daughters, a charitable organization made up of Aspen's elite teenage girls, provided meals and clothing for the town's poverty stricken families.¹⁶⁴

Aspen's upper-class women assumed the responsibility for maintaining their households and "civilizing" their community, but one of their most important duties was displaying their family's wealth and superior social status to their neighbors. By adhering

¹⁶² Anne Gilbert, *The People of Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley: A History of the Families and Daily Life of Miners and Ranchers, 1879-1960*, a research paper for the Aspen Historical Society under the auspices of the Roaring Fork Research Scholarship, 1991, 17-18.

¹⁶³ Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *History of Women in the United States* vol. 18, ed. Nancy Cott (New Providence: K.G. Saur Publishers, 1994), 196.

¹⁶⁴ Gilbert, 19.

to the principles of the Cult of True Womanhood, the upper-class wife not only proved that she was a “proper” and “respectable” woman whose behavior befitted her husband’s high social status, she also demonstrated her family’s wealth—only wealthy and middle-class men could afford for their wives to stay at home. Likewise, her physical appearance, dress, manners, and entertaining ability which were scrutinized and sometimes praised in the society columns of the *Aspen Times* publicly proclaimed her husband’s wealth and reinforced perceptions of her family’s social status in the community.

Most importantly, the upper-class woman molded her home into a showcase for her family’s economic superiority and social rank. Her interior decorating scheme proclaimed her wealth and cultivated, sophisticated taste to all who entered her home. She spent the majority of her time in the house engaged in leisure pursuits, indicating to her neighbors that her family was rich and important enough to hire servants to perform mundane and distasteful household chores. She carefully chose the kinds of parties she hosted and the people she received in her home in order to leave every visitor with an indelible impression of her family’s social superiority. In short, the upper-class Victorian woman strove to create a home that was both a moral stronghold and a very conspicuous symbol of her family’s place within Aspen society.

The Wheeler House: A Room by Room Interpretation

Like the homes of Aspen’s other wealthy and prominent men, Wheeler’s grand Bleeker Street mansion served as the symbol of his family’s economic and social standing in the community. Upon arriving in Aspen, wealthy eastern businessmen began a particularly urban social practice. They built their homes in the western neighborhoods of Aspen, far from the industrial heart of the town and the railroads, saloons, and homes of the working classes. As a result, Aspen’s West End gradually became home to an enclave of the town’s richest and most powerful families. Bleeker Street even earned the nickname “Bullion Row” because it boasted several millionaire residents. In a part of

town where land became increasingly expensive, Wheeler placed his home squarely in the middle of an entire city block on Aspen's most exclusive street, subtly broadcasting the immensity of his wealth to his surrounding neighbors. The placement of the house and Wheeler's ability to convince local authorities to let him build over the alleyway also reflected his status in Aspen. It showed the community that he was the only man significant enough to reside on an entire city block and it indicated that he was too important to be bound by the city ordinances that governed the building activities of all other town citizens.

The Wheeler home's interior, like its outside appearance, was orchestrated to impress outsiders. Every aspect of the house, from the size of its rooms and its modern amenities to the style and expense of its furnishings dazzled the visitor and left him or her with an indelible image of the importance, wealth, and rank of the people residing within.

Public Rooms: The Foyer

The foyer or entrance hall was the most public room in the private Victorian home. It served as a transitional space between the public outdoors and the more intimate rooms used by the family such as the parlor and dining room.¹⁶⁵ For this reason, the foyer had a number of practical functions. It was a place where guests, fresh from the notoriously muddy Aspen streets, wiped their feet, deposited their coats, umbrellas, and boots and made themselves presentable before they entered the formal rooms and met the family.¹⁶⁶ It also served as a waiting room where guests who were not immediately received by the family could seek shelter from the noise, dirt and foul weather outside. Family members also used the foyer as a place to don their outdoor apparel before venturing into the street.¹⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, practical, functional furniture abounded in this room. A hall tree for depositing the coats, hats, umbrellas, and gloves of family members and guests adorned every Victorian foyer. Perhaps a few chairs provided comfort for waiting guests while a clock kept them apprised of the length of their wait.

¹⁶⁵ Allison Kyle Leopold, *Victorian Splendor: Re-Creating America's Nineteenth-Century Interiors* (New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1986), 86.

¹⁶⁶ Green, 95-96.

In addition to its practical functions, the foyer was also a place to impress guests. Every visitor to the home, whether a close family friend, a little-known social acquaintance, or a working-class woman seeking a job waited in this room before receiving admittance into the presence of the family. Since the foyer gave the visitor his or her first impression of the house, it was often luxuriously decorated to emphasize the family's superior economic status.¹⁶⁸

Indeed, the architect of the Wheeler house designed its foyer to radiate luxury and wealth. Since size denoted grandeur and importance, the entrance hall of a Victorian home often occupied a disproportionately large amount of space within the house. The hall within a typical Victorian middle or upper-class house spanned the entire length of the lower floor and measured between six to eight feet wide and between twelve and twenty feet long. It often rivaled contemporary dining rooms and bedrooms in size.¹⁶⁹ In fitting with this trend, the foyer of the Wheeler house, which measures sixteen feet long by nine feet wide, occupies nearly ten percent of the living space on the first floor. To complete the room's appearance of grandeur and opulence, the architect added a grand wooden staircase to the second floor (perhaps finished in a cherry color) complete with elaborately carved balusters and pickets. A graceful arched inglenook containing a tiled fireplace for the comfort and warmth of guests newly-arrived from the cold outdoors further contributed to the luxurious air of the room.¹⁷⁰

Though it is impossible to tell how the Devereuxs or the Woodwards originally furnished and decorated the foyer, contemporary interior design literature provides insight into typical decorating schemes. Though the current wainscoting is probably not original, interior decoration experts of the period did advocate using rich, strong, wallpaper and paint colors combined with dark wooden wainscoting to give the foyer an air of stability and tasteful opulence.¹⁷¹ It is also likely that the furnishings reflected the

¹⁶⁷ Leopold., 86; Randolph Delany, *In the Victorian Style* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1991), 94-95.

¹⁶⁸ Green, 94; 145.

¹⁶⁹ Leopold, 86-88.

¹⁷⁰ Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, interviewed by the author, 29 June 1998, at the Wheeler-Stallard house, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS. Louiva Stapleton remembers that the staircase and all other woodwork in the foyer was finished in a cherry color in the 1920s and speculates that this was the original finish. The fireplace and staircase, according to her interview, are both original to the house.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 88. I speculate that the wainscoting is not original because all accounts from the Stallard era indicate that there was a door leading from the foyer to the backroom which currently houses the kitchen

wealth and status of the family living within the home. The practical pieces of furniture in the foyer often evolved into status symbols; a large, elaborately carved and mirrored hall tree, an imposing grandfather clock and a gleaming silver card receiver not only served necessary functions but constantly reminded the guest of the family's social and economic prominence. Also, cleaning was of optimum importance in making this high traffic area both sanitary and pleasing to the eye. Therefore, the foyer was not only decorated in a way that radiated elegance it was also designed to promote cleanliness. Wainscoting that could easily be wiped clean of soil, dirt, and mud may have covered the lower halves of the foyer walls and the floor of this room was probably either tile or wood planking and covered with throw rugs that could be removed and beaten frequently.¹⁷²

In addition to reflecting the wealth and importance of the home's occupants, the Wheeler foyer probably also served as a backdrop for the "social call," the most important upper-class activity in Victorian Aspen. A set of very strict and specific rules governed calling behavior and a Victorian woman's ability to follow them could bolster her family's social fortune.¹⁷³ If a woman followed the rules of calling to the letter, a woman of higher social status might receive her visit. If her appearance and manners made a favorable impression, she could expect to receive a return call and might even receive invitations to call from other prominent society women. Little by little, she could be accepted into progressively higher circles of society and simultaneously boost her own family's social standing.¹⁷⁴ On the other hand, a woman's failure to follow the strict calling code or to impress her social betters ensured that her family would never win acceptance in "good" society.

Aspen's calling system, like those in towns across the United States, operated under a set of strict guidelines. In Aspen, society women deemed Thursdays the only appropriate days for calling and receiving calls.¹⁷⁵ Though social calls were traditionally

display. If the wainscoting was original, it would show breaks in the place where the door used to be. Since the current wainscoting shows no such breaks, I believe that it was probably installed during the Paepcke era after builders walled up the original door.

¹⁷² Ibid., 85-88.

¹⁷³ Delany, 96.

¹⁷⁴ Greene, 145.

¹⁷⁵ *Aspen Times*, 16 March 1890, p.2.

called “morning calls” they always took place in the afternoon and a *Times* etiquette column advised women that the only proper calling hours were between three and five o’clock.¹⁷⁶ Once invited into the family’s parlor or drawing room, social etiquette also limited the length of a woman’s call—to avoid being perceived as overly familiar, visitors rarely stayed longer than fifteen minutes or a half an hour.¹⁷⁷ Ultimately, any woman who flouted these rules earned a reputation for impropriety, carelessness, and rudeness and severely damaged her family’s social standing.¹⁷⁸

Calling also involved an elaborate exchange of calling cards. The Wheeler foyer probably contained a receptacle known as a “card receiver” or “calling card tray” that provided a place for visitors to leave their cards. A woman left two of her husband’s cards (one for the husband and one for the wife of the family she visited) if the lady of the house had been at home to receive her. She left one of her own cards and two of her husband’s if the family she came to visit was not at home.¹⁷⁹ By memorizing the strict rules of calling card etiquette, the “proper” Victorian Aspen woman learned to send and read coded messages. For instance, folding the entire left side of the card indicated that the visitor wished to call on all of the women of the household while folding nothing but the upper left corner simply meant “congratulations.”¹⁸⁰ Hand-writing the words “to inquire” under the visitor’s name indicated that she wished to inquire about the illness of the lady of the house. Complex rules also dictated the appearance of a woman’s calling card. The proper card simply stated the name of the visitor in plain print and any attempt to include a fancy crest or design signaled her lack of taste and propriety.¹⁸¹ At the end of the day, a servant carried the card receiver to the woman of the household and she decided—based on the messages and appearance of each card—whether she would respond with a card or a personal call.¹⁸²

Since the foyer served as a backdrop for this elaborate social game it could often reinforce or enhance callers’ perceptions of the family’s social status. Callers waited in

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 January 1889, p.2.

¹⁷⁷ Delany, 96

¹⁷⁸ Green, 144.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas J. Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 118.

¹⁸⁰ Green, 144.

¹⁸¹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 22 January 1889, p.2; Delany, 96.

this room to be received and in the event that the lady of the house was absent, they left their cards in the foyer's elegant calling card receiver. The grand, opulent foyer of a socially prominent woman reminded both her social equals and her socially "inferior" callers of her wealth and status and subtly admonished them to act with due respect and propriety. On the other hand, the foyer of a less prominent woman actually enhanced her status in the eyes of others. When a woman's social "betters" called on her, a luxurious and fashionable foyer could convince them that she was a woman of wealth, social sophistication, and good taste. This could ultimately result in an intensification of their social relationship and invitations to call from other socially prominent women. In short, a foyer carefully designed, furnished and decorated to adequately reflect the social and economic standing of the family could be crucial components of success within Aspen's upper-class society circles.

The Parlor

The foyer served as a prelude to the parlor, the most important and intimate social center in the home. In the parlor the family socialized with its closest friends and family members, received desirable callers, and entertained friends with dances, dinners, and parlor games. While strangers, traveling salesmen, servants, and "unreceivable" guests might frequent the more public foyer, only the family's friends and approved acquaintances could hope to be received into this social heart of the home. Since the parlor was the most intimate "public" room in the private household, the Victorians often sought to shield it from the intrusions of strangers and servants.¹⁸³ In the Wheeler house, a pair of large, heavy wooden doors concealed the parlor from the view of strangers lurking in the foyer while another door at the end of the servants' hallway shielded the family and its guests from the bustle and noise produced by the hired help.¹⁸⁴ Likewise, according to one later account, large French or folding doors separated the parlor from

¹⁸² Schlereth, 118.

¹⁸³ Delany, 92-93.

¹⁸⁴ Beverly Stallard Doremus, interviewed by the author, 3 July 1998, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS: (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998) Both women remember that

the dining room.¹⁸⁵ While closing these doors also served to retain heat within each room, they were also undoubtedly installed to maintain the parlor's atmosphere of privacy and intimacy.

While the foyer merely hinted at the affluence of the household, the parlor presented the guest with a full display of the family's wealth and superior taste. Decorative arts historian Anne Kyle Leopold notes that the Victorian parlor was "the most lavishly and carefully appointed room in the home, the reflection of Victorian pride at its height. It was here that Americans of the nineteenth century most blatantly flaunted their wealth and status for all to see."¹⁸⁶ The typical Victorian parlor was crowded with the family's finest and most expensive bric-a-brac and furniture. Costly lace and sumptuous draperies adorned plush, overstuffed sofas and elaborately carved parlor tables and chairs. The family's étagère or bric-a-brac cabinet housed its collection of fine porcelains and glassware.¹⁸⁷ A piano or organ, the single most expensive piece of furniture in most Victorian households, usually occupied a corner of the room. Victorian families like the Devereuxs that traveled frequently and collected furniture, art, and rugs from the Middle and Far East often used the parlor as a showcase for their treasures, emphasizing their own worldliness and sophisticated taste.¹⁸⁸

The Victorian parlor also became a showcase for upper-class women's handicrafts. This was probably true in Aspen where wealthy women and their daughters exhibited a particular fondness for needlework and other arts and crafts. Though it was not considered proper or fashionable for women to do anything but dabble in the arts, nineteenth-century Aspen women frequently attended formal art classes to enhance their skills.¹⁸⁹ In 1888, a young woman named Miss McClean offered lessons in "metallic or lustre painting, painting on cloth and needlework."¹⁹⁰ Mrs. M.A. Moore operated a

wooden double or French doors separated the foyer from the parlor. Architectural evidence suggests that there was a standard hinged door at the end of the servants' hallway leading into the parlor.

¹⁸⁵ Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, unknown interviewer, July 1986, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS; (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998) In both oral histories, Stapleton asserts that there were French or folding doors between the parlor and the dining room.

¹⁸⁶ Leopold, 97.

¹⁸⁷ Green, 98-99; Schiereth, 119.

¹⁸⁸ Leopold, 111-113.

¹⁸⁹ Green, 147.

¹⁹⁰ *Aspen Daily Times*, 29 August 1888, p. 4.

successful small art school that specialized in teaching women still life painting, crayon drawing, and needlework. Her upper-class students, including Katherine Cowenhoven Brown, often exhibited their works in special shows at the Hotel Jerome that received long descriptions in the *Times* society columns.¹⁹¹ By 1890, Aspen's society women had become so proficient in these leisure arts that the *Times* remarked that "quite a number of ladies in Aspen have some magnificent examples of needlework that would do credit to the most advanced schools in this branch of art."¹⁹²

Though crafts provided Aspen's society women with entertainment and a creative outlet, the products of their work also served as reminders of their wealth and superior social status. By displaying her intricate, time-consuming painting or needlework in a conspicuous place in the parlor, a Victorian wife or daughter subtly showed her guests that she possessed ample leisure time to pursue cultured activities. In other words, her family was rich enough to hire servants to do menial household work. A well-executed, beautiful artwork also demonstrated that the woman of the household possessed sophisticated taste and a highly developed aesthetic sense. Since Victorian magazine authors deemed both these qualities to be signs of genteel femininity, a woman's fine artwork revealed to her guests that she was a "proper" lady.¹⁹³

The parlor was also the primary venue for entertaining within the nineteenth-century home. This is probably the room where the Woodwards hosted their parties and luncheons. Though contemporary records offer little information about the Woodwards' parties, an examination of home entertaining in Victorian Aspen provides insight into the kinds of social functions that they might have held in the Wheeler house.

The quality of the entertainment provided in the parlor, like its interior decoration, was often closely linked with status in Aspen's upper-class Victorian community. By giving a successful tea or luncheon for their fellow society women, the wives of the town's elite businessmen could enhance the public perception of their families' social status. A series of impressive entertainments won a family the attention

¹⁹¹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 4 April 1889; 6 April 1889 p. 3.

¹⁹² *Aspen Daily Times*, 15 June 1890, p. 2.

¹⁹³ Green, 100; L. Greenlee, "Women as Decorators," *The Household*, VOL. XXV reprinted in Norton Juster, *A Woman's Place: Yesterday's Women in Rural America* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1996), 271-272.

and favor of Aspen's other society people and might ensure that it received invitations to the best social functions in town. Also, in small towns like Aspen the newspapers often printed detailed descriptions of successful parties and praise for their hostesses.

Therefore, a woman's talent, sophistication, and wealth would be made known to the entire community if she succeeded in throwing the party of the season. For these reasons, women often sought to outdo their neighbors by hosting the most elegant or novel social event in town.

Though no hard evidence suggests that Aspen society women directly competed with each other in entertaining, the social functions they held in their homes gradually became more innovative, lavish and expensive. In June of 1890, a society woman named Mrs. Triplett gave a novel "pink tea" in her home for several of her friends and served all pink and white foods.¹⁹⁴ This departure from the traditional tea evidently became popular with Aspen society women because more elaborate theme teas abounded during the following year. For instance, in March of 1891 Katherine Cowenhoven Brown hosted an "oriental tea" at her home to benefit the Ladies Aide Society of the Presbyterian Church. The tea featured authentic Asian art for decorations and several young co-hostesses dressed in Asian costume.¹⁹⁵ Not to be outdone, Mrs. G.H. Jacobs, wife of a prominent town businessman, soon hosted an elaborate "orange tea" for seventy of her friends and acquaintances in her parlor and dining room. A *Times* reporter called it a "novel and decidedly successful affair" and described the lavish food and decorations in considerable detail.¹⁹⁶ The reporter noted:

The rooms were darkened and electric lights were brought into requisition, thus softening and developing the effect of the nicely arranged surroundings. From the electric burner over the center of the table, ribbons had been brought to the table, forming a circle enclosing a large and handsome bouquet of cut flowers consisting of tea roses, double carnations, double daffodils and smilax. A large pyramid of macaroons, decorated with yellow ribbons, on either side of which were brass candlesticks holding yellow candles, ornamented a sideboard, and the pictures

¹⁹⁴ *Aspen Daily Times*, 30 June 1890, p. 5.

¹⁹⁵ *Aspen Daily Times*, 15 March 1891 p.2; 18 March 1891, p.4.

¹⁹⁶ *Aspen Daily Times*, 24 May 1891, p.3.

were appropriately draped. The tableware used was yellow, harmonizing perfectly with the decorations.¹⁹⁷

The success and publicity that this event received prompted other Aspen society women to copy Mrs. Jacobs's example. A few months later, Mrs. J.M. Downing, the wife of the Aspen Mining and Smelting Company's powerful lead attorney, hosted a similar tea at her home that featured dimmed lights and profuse bouquets of smilax as well as dainty rose corsages for every guest.¹⁹⁸ From these examples, it becomes clear that entertaining in Aspen reached new levels of expense and complexity by the early 1890s.

Evening parties for male and female guests of all ages were also important social functions that took place within the parlors of Aspen's upper-class homes. Again, Aspen's society hostesses strove to enhance their social status by giving the largest or most unique and expensive entertainment of the season. While most evening parties included parlor games, some Aspen women created elaborate entertainments that revolved solely around a particular game.¹⁹⁹ Themed evening parties dedicated exclusively to games like whist, euchre, or angling abounded in the early 1890s and eventually became more expensive and elaborate. For instance, in December of 1890 a society woman named Mrs. Hutchinson hosted a "progressive angling" party at her home on Main Street that featured eight gaming tables and elegant prizes including a towel rack, a silver whisk broom, and men's smoking and toilet sets.²⁰⁰ Parlor musicales where the hosts and guests performed solos or group songs also became popular evening amusements in Aspen. During such entertainments, the lady and daughters of the house showed off their superior musical skills and taste to their neighbors, indicating that they came from a family of culture and refinement.²⁰¹

Holidays also presented Aspen's society women with prime opportunities for throwing novel and lavish parties that could boost their family's social standing. Though in 1890 the *Aspen Times* noted that Christmas was a quiet day when people stayed at

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ *Aspen Daily Times*, 25 September 1891, p. 4.

¹⁹⁹ See for instance, *Aspen Daily Times*, 14 March 1890, p.4, 13 April 1890, p.2, 27 April 1890, p. 2 and 12 July 1890 p. 4.

²⁰⁰ *Aspen Daily Times*, 28 December 1890, p.6.

²⁰¹ See for instance, *Aspen Daily Times*, 7 August 1888, p. 1.

home “enjoying Christmas dinners with their families,” the parlors and dining rooms of Aspen’s social elite often buzzed with activity during the holiday season.²⁰² Most of Aspen’s society families hosted “Christmas tree jubilees,” small, intimate holiday parties accompanied by a special dinner.²⁰³ But a few elite families sought to impress their neighbors with grand, expensive holiday spectacles. In 1890, some Aspen families hosted Christmas banquets and small dances known as “hops” in their homes. One wealthy family eschewed the notion that Christmas Day was a time for small, intimate gatherings and invited forty-three of its closest friends, relatives, and acquaintances to its home for a full-fledged Christmas ball.²⁰⁴ On New Year’s Eve, some upper-class women held an “at home” day or “open house” and invited their friends and neighbors to drop by for lunch.²⁰⁵ Later in the year, Halloween prompted the most unique and elaborate home parties. In 1890 a family on West Bleeker Street threw the town’s grandest Halloween social. The elaborate party featured novel parlor divination games including “mystical spells of ancient England and Scotland” as well as dancing and card playing.²⁰⁶

In sum, everything that took place within the Victorian parlor had a cultural and social meaning. The parlor’s interior decorating scheme, the objects that cluttered its *étagère* and the quality of the social activities held in the room spoke volumes about the family that occupied the home. For this reason, the upper-class Aspen woman worked diligently to make her parlor tell the right story. She carefully orchestrated everything in the room—including the functions held within it—to best display her family’s superior resources and status. She was only successful if every visitor to her home walked away with a favorable impression of her family’s wealth and consequence in the community.

The Dining Room

The dining room of the Wheeler house was probably the least functional and least used area in the home. Most upper-class Victorians preferred to eat morning meals in

²⁰² *Aspen Daily Times*, 27 December 1890, p.4.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 3 January 1888, p.4.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 November 1890, p.5.

their bedrooms or in cheery sunlit “breakfast rooms.”²⁰⁷ Therefore, many families only ate one or two meals a day in the formal dining room. Occasionally, the woman of the household might put the room to another use. For example, the Victorians often used the dining room in conjunction with the parlor when they engaged in entertaining.²⁰⁸ The Wheeler dining room probably served this purpose very well; by merely opening the large, heavy wooden doors that separated the parlor from the dining room, the hosts could make the two rooms into a single, large entertainment area for guests.

Though the dining room’s practical functions were limited, the room served an important symbolic purpose. Like all the other public rooms in the house, every element in the dining room broadcast the economic and social preeminence of the household. The very existence of a dining room within a late nineteenth-century home signified that the family occupying the house possessed great wealth. In eighteenth-century America, dining rooms could only be found in the mansions of the wealthiest citizens. Most families simply could not afford to maintain a room used exclusively for the purpose of eating so they often took their meals in the kitchen during the winter or in the parlor during the summer.²⁰⁹ This trend continued well into the nineteenth century. Dining rooms rarely appeared in nineteenth-century rural, working-class, and multi-family homes because space was at a premium and these families could not afford to dedicate an entire room to an activity they only performed three times a day.²¹⁰ In working-class or lower middle-class homes that did have a dining room, the family maximized the space by using it for other household activities such as sewing or ironing.²¹¹ Since only the economically advantaged could spare the space and afford to maintain and furnish a large room that served exclusively as an eating area, the dining room became a symbol of prosperity within the Victorian home.

The décor of the dining room, like that of the parlor and foyer, emphasized the wealth, social status, and superior taste of the people that used it. As Anne Leopold notes, “[t]he substantiality of the[dining] room’s appearance was in keeping with the new,

²⁰⁷ Leopold, 129; 144.

²⁰⁸ Green, 100.

²⁰⁹ Lawrence Grow and Dina von Zweck, *American Victorian: A Style and Source Book* (Cambridge, Harper and Row, 1984), 126.

²¹⁰ Leopold, 127.

purse-proud style of entertaining. Like those of the hallway and the drawing room, its elements were scrupulously arranged to indicate that people of consequence lived [t]here.”²¹² At the same time, many Victorians enjoyed the dimness of the room and strove to make it feel warm, cozy, and secure. To achieve both of these effects, contemporary decorators advised decorating the room with draperies, wallpapers and paints in dark, rich shades of crimson, blue, and olive. According to one contemporary interior decorator, any color that might even “suggest economy” should not be used in the room.²¹³ The woodwork of the Wheeler dining room may have been stained in dark mahogany or cherry to complement this color scheme and heighten the room’s air of richness and solid comfort. Dark, heavy window draperies, plush area rugs on the hardwood planked floor and rich damask, lace, or velvet tablecloths may have also contributed to this room’s opulence and dim coziness.²¹⁴

The Victorian woman would have used this dining room to display her costliest domestic treasures. The dining room sideboard, whether quaint and simple or intricately carved and topped with gleaming marble, functioned as the primary showcase for this wealth. Though it served a practical purpose by providing a place to arrange food before it was served, according to Anne Leopold it possessed great symbolic meaning by “broadcast[ing] a message of prosperity and means as obviously as a movie marquee.”²¹⁵ When fully decorated, the sideboard resembled a kind of domestic altar. The home’s finest china, flanked by tall silver-plated candlesticks, flatware, and serving pieces, graced the sideboard’s surface.²¹⁶ Exotic, rare and costly foods—Aspen boasted a fresh oyster shop, a French confectionery, and a butcher’s shop that specialized in rare game meats like elk and pheasant—also cluttered the sideboard and symbolized the hosts’ wealth and good taste. The dining room table, which was often covered with damask, velvet, or lace and crowded with china, candlesticks, expensive castor sets and enormous bouquets of fresh flowers, echoed the message of wealth and good taste sent by the

²¹¹ Schlereth, 125.

²¹² Leopold, 129.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 137-140.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 140.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

sideboard arrangement.²¹⁷ Likewise, a freestanding china cabinet with a glass front displayed the family's most opulent and expensive goods for all visitors to see. But, it is important to note that the built-in china closet in the Wheeler dining room, if it was original to the home, probably had a solid wooden door and was used for storing dining room items rather than displaying them.²¹⁸

Private Rooms: The Bedrooms

While most of the ground floor of the Wheeler house functioned as a public area where the family constantly interacted with strangers, acquaintances, close friends, and servants, the second floor of the home was the exclusive, private domain of the family. The Victorians' strict morality and propriety dictated that the rooms where the family engaged in its most private and intimate activities such as sleeping, dressing, and bathing should never be seen by anyone outside the family circle.²¹⁹ For this reason, bedrooms and bathrooms were almost always placed on the upper floors where they were both practically and symbolically separated from the public areas of the house by a grand flight of stairs.²²⁰

Unlike the public rooms of the home, the Victorian bedroom was decorated to serve practical rather than symbolic purposes. Since outsiders never glimpsed these rooms, the Victorian woman had no reason to transform them into opulent showcases of her family's wealth.²²¹ Rather, she focused her energy on making these rooms clean and practical. In an age when disease ran rampant and its causes remained mysterious, many people considered sanitation and hygiene to be of the utmost importance in rooms frequently used by the family.²²² During the Victorian era, people commonly believed that toxic "effluvia" and "bad air" built up in sleeping rooms and caused disease.²²³ Since sunlight and fresh air were popularly deemed to be natural cleansing agents, the Victorian

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Colorado Historical Society Curatorial Report, Wheeler-Stallard House Museum. Conducted by Georgianna Contiguglia, Curator of Decorative and Fine Arts, submitted June 26, 1986.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 154.

²²⁰ Delany, 93.

²²¹ Leopold, 153.

²²² Green, 102-103.

woman sought to make the family's bedrooms as light and airy as possible. She also avoided decorating the room with wallpapers, carpets, heavy draperies, or ornate furniture that absorbed soil and were difficult to clean. The typical Victorian bedroom had simple, light-colored, painted walls and wainscoting that could be easily cleaned. Lightweight, transparent curtains allowed sunshine and air to enter the room freely.²²⁴ The conscientious housewife also eschewed wall-to-wall carpeting in favor of hardwood floors that could be easily swept and area rugs that could be removed frequently and beaten to remove dirt.²²⁵

Since the ground level rooms of the home were probably grand and formal and reserved for receiving company, the families that occupied the Wheeler home may have used the second floor as their primary living area. Indeed, many typical Victorian bedrooms contained areas where the family could engage in more mundane, everyday activities. Large Victorian bedrooms, like the southern bedroom of the Wheeler house, often contained simple sitting areas. Furnished with castoff chairs, tables and desks too out of fashion to be used in the parlor or dining room, the bedroom sitting area provided husbands and wives with a bright, cheerful place to breakfast, read, or write letters. It might also contain a small couch where the woman of the house could rest during the day without crumpling the freshly-made bed.²²⁶ One or two large wardrobes probably housed the occupants' extensive and elaborate collection of clothing—Aspen's elite often visited the stores of the local milliners and seamstresses well-versed in the latest Parisian fashions in hats, suits, and dresses. To maintain decorum, a couple might also place a folding screen in the corner to create a private dressing area.²²⁷ Lastly, in keeping with the "hygienic" atmosphere of the room, a washstand with a basin, pitcher, and towels invariably occupied a space in every Victorian bedroom.²²⁸

Though it appears that all three large rooms on the second floor of the Wheeler house were used as bedrooms, the true function of each room and the identity of each room's occupants remain unknown. In 1888, Jerome and Harriet Wheeler had two grown

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Leopold, 155-161.

²²⁵ Green, 102-103.

²²⁶ Delaney, 88; Leopold, 173-174.

²²⁷ Delany, 93.

daughters who still lived at home. Therefore, Wheeler may have intended to make the south bedroom with the adjoining closet across the hall the master suite while his daughters occupied the smaller east and west bedrooms. Perhaps the Devereuxs and the Woodwards, like some other upper-class Victorian couples, occupied separate second-floor bedrooms. Contemporary health experts deemed separate bedrooms the most sanitary sleeping arrangement because it kept toxic male and female “effluvia” from mixing and spared modest husbands and wives from the mortification of undressing in front of each other. Despite this advice, maintaining separate bedrooms remained a uniquely British custom in the nineteenth century; American Victorian couples rarely occupied separate rooms unless one spouse was disabled or bedridden. For this reason, it appears likely then that the married couples that occupied the Wheeler house shared the large south bedroom.²²⁹

If the south bedroom served as the master suite, each family probably used one of the smaller bedrooms as a nursery or children’s room. The Devereuxs had a one-year-old daughter and the Woodwards had at least one daughter under the age of five. The families may have also converted one of the smaller bedrooms into a library, music room, sewing room, or family sitting room. The smaller eastern bedroom might even have served as a “boudoir” or a private sitting and dressing room for the western bedroom directly across the hall. Regardless of the special function the smaller bedrooms may have served, their placement on the second floor and their close proximity to the family’s private bathroom and master suite probably ensured that they were reserved exclusively for the use of family members.

The Bathroom

The indoor bathroom, like the dining room, can be seen as a kind of status symbol because it was a “new,” highly specialized room that only wealthy Victorian families could afford to install in their homes.²³⁰ Most working and middle-class families did not

²²⁸ Green, 104.

²²⁹ Leopold, 159.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 233.

reserve a room exclusively for bathing and other “necessary” functions. In these homes, a washstand, pitcher, and basin in the bedroom and a portable tin tub filled with water heated on the kitchen stove provided the only means of daily washing and bathing.²³¹ On the whole, Americans performed their “necessary” functions in noxious, foul-smelling, outdoor privies or outhouses well into the twentieth century.²³² The indoor Victorian bathroom contained technological conveniences that eliminated both of these practices. In the upper-class bathroom, rich wooden cabinets topped by gleaming marble basins replaced washstands while stationary tin or wooden bathtubs with hot and cold running water took the place of the meager tin bathing tub. Likewise, an indoor water closet, which instantly whisked away waste and refilled with fresh, clean water, gradually replaced the outhouse.²³³ In short, the upper-class family that could afford to install an indoor bathroom escaped the inconvenience of traditional bathing and the repugnant experience of using an outdoor privy that most American families faced everyday.

Cleanliness was often the primary focus of bathroom decoration in the Victorian era. But by the late nineteenth century, interior decoration experts began to disagree on how to best achieve a clean, hygienic environment in this room. As decorative arts experts Lawrence Grow and Dina von Zweck explain:

Since the bathroom was a room without any precedent in domestic history, a debate raged between those who treated the room traditionally – as a space to be wainscoted and furnished with handsome cabinets that disguised the fixtures – and those who were “modern” and influenced by a growing army of scientific “home economists.” The battle cry of the latter might very well have been “tile or die!”²³⁴

The “traditionalists” delicate propriety prompted them to conceal all “intimate” or private objects from view and they often advocated encasing toilets and bathtubs in rich wooden cabinets. To maintain the aesthetic attractiveness of the room, they enclosed plumbing pipes within cabinets and covered bathroom walls with opulent wallpapers and

²³¹ Schlereth, 127; Green, 104.

²³² Schelereth, 127.

²³³ Ibid., 128.

²³⁴ Grow and von Zweck, 134-135.

draperies.²³⁵ The “modernists,” on the other hand, firmly believed that wood, wallpaper, and draperies absorbed dirt and other unsanitary elements. They proposed that all bathroom appliances should be exposed and all floor and wall surfaces covered with tile so they could be easily cleaned. Though the debate raged on, neither side won complete influence—richly decorated bathrooms with wooden interiors remained as popular as simple, sparse, exposed bathrooms in the late nineteenth century.²³⁶

The bathroom at the northern end of the second-floor hallway in the Wheeler house was probably the site of the original bathroom. It always served this function during the Stallard period (1905-1945) and Mary Ella Stallard, a later resident of the house, recalled that she had been told that the north second-floor bathroom was the first indoor working bathroom in Aspen.²³⁷ A stained glass window, supposedly installed during the Victorian era and reputed to be the first stained glass window in Aspen, graced the bathroom’s eastern wall but was removed sometime after 1986.²³⁸ During the Stallard era, a stationary tin bathtub occupied the space against the western wall and a pull-chain toilet sat against the northern wall, but it is impossible to tell if these fixtures originally belonged to the room.²³⁹ It is also possible that the house did not always contain a working bathroom. A fire insurance map from 1890 indicates that there were two small wooden outbuildings on the property that might have either served as sheds or outdoor privies.²⁴⁰ Also, this bathroom was located in the servant’s quarters of the house, separated from the family’s bedrooms by a door at the end of the hall. This might indicate that Wheeler wanted to tuck the “necessary room” out of plain sight, or it might suggest that the room originally served as a servant’s bedroom and was later converted into a bathroom.

²³⁵ Ibid.; Leopold, 234-235.

²³⁶ Ibid., 134-135; Green, 105.

²³⁷ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

²³⁸ Ibid.; (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1986) Stapleton’s interview indicates that the stained glass window was still in place in 1986.

²³⁹ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

The Attic

The odd layout of the Wheeler house attic—it is composed of a large center room with three small enclosed rooms under each gable—has sparked speculation about its original purpose and appearance. One theory suggests that each of the three gable rooms might have functioned as bedrooms for servants during the Victorian era and that the large middle room served as a communal sitting or eating room. Though it was common to house servants in the attic, Beverly Stallard Doremus, a granddaughter of Edgar and Mary Ella Stallard, distinctly remembered that the attic was never finished when she visited it in the 1930s and 40s. The walls were made of raw wood planking and not plastered or papered. She also remembered that the attic was one large open space and not split up into separate rooms.²⁴¹ Therefore, it seems most likely that Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke finished the attic and created the smaller rooms when they turned the house into overflow skier housing for the Aspen Company in the 1940s or 1950s. If the attic was indeed unfinished during the Victorian era, family members or servants probably used it as an area to complete household projects like drying fruit, flowers and laundry or the family may have converted it into a guest bedroom on occasion. Also, as America's consumer culture grew and changed throughout the era, the attic probably doubled as a place to store discarded or unfashionable items that still possessed some functional value.²⁴²

“Invisible Rooms”- The Servants’ Quarters, Backstairs, and Servants’ Hallway

The servants’ quarters, kitchen, back stairs, and servants’ hallway might best be classified as the “invisible” rooms of the upper-class Victorian home. These areas were often closed off or placed in the rear of the house so that servants remained hidden from the view of the family and its guests. For instance, in the Wheeler house, the hired help could not walk directly from the rear kitchen through the dining room and into the parlor.

²⁴⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Aspen, Colorado, Sanborn-Perris Map Company, New York, September 9, 1890. On microfilm at the Colorado Historical Society.

²⁴¹ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998); Randolph Delany notes that servants quarters were typically placed in the rear of the house or the attic to separate them from the family’s quarters.

²⁴² Schlereth, 130.

Rather, the only interior kitchen door led directly into a long, hidden hallway with separate doors into the dining room and parlor.²⁴³ In this manner, the presence of the servants and the bustle of their movement from room to room intruded as little as possible on the family's entertaining.

A similar plan characterized the upper floor of the Wheeler house. The upstairs hall narrowed and split off into a separate, smaller hallway with less elaborate woodwork closed off from the family's bedroom area by a large door. Behind this door lay one or two small servants' rooms and the narrow back stairwell to the kitchen. This layout hid the servants and their activities from plain view while simultaneously allowing them to attend the needs of the family members on the second floor such as tending young children, assisting the woman of the house to dress, or cleaning the family bedrooms. At the same time, the back stairwell eliminated "undesirable" servant traffic on the grand foyer staircase and allowed the servants to come and go between their own private rooms and their kitchen chores without disturbing or even being seen by the family.²⁴⁴

Why was this physical division between master and servant so important within the Victorian home? Besides preventing the bustle of servants' activities from intruding upon the family, this layout symbolically shielded the upper-class family from "distasteful" aspects of domestic servitude. Victorian ideology held that the home should be a sanctuary from the "evils" of the public sphere including wage labor and commerce. But the presence of the domestic servant brought commercial wage labor directly into the home, challenging the notion of domestic isolation and sanctity.²⁴⁵ Relegating domestic labor to a relatively invisible part of the house may have made this infiltration less noticeable and symbolically kept evil conventions of the public sphere from spreading throughout the rest of household.

The strict division of the servant sphere from the family sphere within the home may have also signified an attempt by the Victorian upper class to separate itself from people deemed to be socially inferior. Young women from working-class backgrounds

²⁴³ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998) According to this interview the door currently leading from the dining room to the modern kitchen is a twentieth-century addition. During the Stallard era, the only kitchen door was located at the end of the servants' hallway. No doorway led directly from the kitchen to the dining room during this time.

²⁴⁴ Schlereth, 117.

composed the majority of the domestic servant population in nineteenth-century America and by 1870 half of all wage-earning women sought employment in this sector.²⁴⁶

Though demand for servants increased steadily throughout the latter part of the century and the number of female American domestics doubled from 960,000 in 1870 to 1,830,000 by 1910, native born American women increasingly rejected domestic employment. Discouraged by the low wages, long hours, and the lack of personal freedom that accompanied these jobs, native born women sought employment in the industrial sector. By the latter decades of the century, economically disadvantaged young immigrant women (primarily Irish Roman Catholics), desperate for income and employment, began to fill the ever-growing demand for household help. The immigrant status of these women, their poor working-class backgrounds and their religion made them socially “undesirable” or even morally and racially inferior in the eyes of their native-born, middle or upper-class Protestant employers.²⁴⁷ In this manner, the separate servants’ quarters provided the upper-class family with both a symbolic and a physical barrier that separated and distinguished it from its social, economic, and moral “inferiors.”

Though no records concerning the domestic servants in the Wheeler house exist, examining trends in domestic servitude in Aspen can provide insight into the kinds of women that might have worked in the house and the tasks that they performed. By 1885, forty-one percent of Aspen’s wage earning women worked as domestic servants.²⁴⁸ For the most part, women who wanted to find work as servants in Aspen had two different options: they could place or answer an advertisement in the local newspaper or they could apply at Mrs. L.M. West’s employment agency. Those who chose the second option registered with Mrs. West and boarded with her until she matched them up with employers.²⁴⁹ As in the rest of the nation, Aspen’s immigrant women came to play an integral role in the domestic service sector. Newly arrived German and Swedish women sought domestic employment by advertising their cooking and cleaning skills in the

²⁴⁵ Green, 90.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 90-91; Delany, 93.

²⁴⁷ Green, 87-91; Delany, 93.

²⁴⁸ Rohrbough, 130. According to the 1885 census, twenty-four of fifty-eight total Aspen working women labored as domestic servants.

Aspen Times and potential employers frequently placed advertisements requesting domestic help from German girls. Though such employer advertising was probably aimed at discouraging Irish and other “undesirable” immigrant women from answering, Aspen’s Irish immigrant population was so large (nearly 4.7% of the total population) that some Aspen households probably employed Irish servants.²⁵⁰ Evidence also suggests that these immigrant servants were mainly teenagers or young adults. The word “girl” appeared in almost every want ad and one even required that the applicant be fourteen years old.²⁵¹

Aspen’s middle and upper-class families hired domestic servants to perform a number of different tasks. In the typical American home, the woman of the household often did her own baking and sewing and expected her servant to handle most cleaning and cooking duties. Indeed, *Aspen Times* want ads from the boom era reflected this situation. Phrases such as “WANTED- a girl for general housework” and “WANTED - Girl... Good cook esp. required” and variations upon them surfaced in almost every advertisement.²⁵² But some of Aspen’s upper and middle-class women had additional needs and advertisements requesting childcare services commonly appeared in the *Times*. Items such as “WANTED-A girl about 14 years of age to take care of a baby. Good wages for proper person,” “WANTED-young girl to assist in the cars (sic) of a little child” and “WANTED- A nurse girl at D.R.C. Brown’s” typified these types of advertisements.²⁵³ Regardless of their specific duties, Aspen’s domestic servants probably labored non-stop to complete them—the average American servant worked eighty to one hundred hours per week with only one afternoon off.²⁵⁴ Not surprisingly, these kinds of working conditions caused a great deal of turnover and dissatisfaction among domestic servants and Aspen’s wealthy families, like those across the United States, probably resorted to want ads on a frequent basis in order to find better and more reliable help.

²⁴⁹ See Mrs. West’s advertisement, *Aspen Daily Times*, 9 October 1890, p. 4.

²⁵⁰ Statistic taken from Gilbert, 23.

²⁵¹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 31 August 1888, p. 2.

²⁵² See want ads in *Aspen Daily Times*, 9 January 1889, p. 2 and 18 April 1888, p. 3.

²⁵³ See want ads in *Aspen Daily Times*, 31 August 1888, p.2, 18 April 1888, p.3 and 13 February 1890, p. 2.

The Kitchen

The kitchen of the upper class home was almost exclusively the domain of domestic servants. In a typical wealthy household, a servant rose before six o'clock a.m. and began preparing an elaborate breakfast for the family that might include bread, potatoes, fruit, and a serving of beef, pork, or fish.²⁵⁵ Cooking meals on a coal or wood-burning stove required considerable time and expertise. A skilled cook knew exactly how much and what kinds of wood to add to the fire so that it burned efficiently.²⁵⁶ Fueling the stove was an enormous task within itself—a nineteenth-century experiment revealed that the average 1890s cook fed her stove 292 pounds of coal and fourteen pounds of kindling every week. Cooks also developed a particular adeptness for cleaning the stove and keeping it in good working order. During an average week, operating a coal stove required twenty minutes for sifting ashes, twenty-four minutes for setting fires, one hour and forty-eight minutes for tending the fire and fifteen minutes for hauling fuel, not to mention the weekly stove blacking that took more than two hours to complete.²⁵⁷ After she finished serving the morning meal, a female domestic began cooking food for the midday and evening meals. For the most part, the mistress of the house, regardless of her social class, supervised the meal preparation and dictated the daily menu. Since baking was considered to be an art which best displayed a woman's domestic skill, many privileged women never left this cooking chore to a servant. Rather, they often participated in every step of the baking process from making and rolling out the dough to setting the fire in the oven.²⁵⁸

A domestic servant working in the kitchen of the Wheeler house probably took on many other responsibilities in addition to cooking. While some families chose to send dirty clothing out to be cleaned and ironed by professional laundresses, others charged their hired help with completing these tasks. On laundry day, which occurred weekly or biweekly in most households, a domestic servant separated the delicate and white

²⁵⁴ Green, 91.

²⁵⁵ Leopold, 211; Green, 60.

²⁵⁶ Green, 61.

²⁵⁷ Schlereth, 130-131.

²⁵⁸ Green, 60-61.

clothing, calicos and gingham, and heavy woolens into three distinct loads. With the help of a washboard or hand-held agitator, she scrubbed the clothing in a washtub of warm soapy water and then placed it in an empty washtub. To this second tub she added boiling water from the hot water reservoir of the stove and soap. After allowing the clothes to boil for a half an hour, she drained, rinsed, and wrung them out and then hung them out to dry. The next day, she heated irons on the kitchen stove and ironed the clothing on a table or board covered with flannel. All in all, washing, drying, and ironing constituted at least a day and a half of constant, backbreaking work and was the most dreaded household chore.²⁵⁹ In addition to completing the laundry, the typical domestic servant was responsible for a number of smaller or seasonal kitchen tasks; she made household soap, scoured pots and pans, made jelly, pounded herbs, cared for the family's linens and scrubbed the kitchen floors. In homes without running water, servants heated pans of hot water and carried them to the family's bedrooms where they were used for shaving and bathing.²⁶⁰ In many upper-class households, the sheer magnitude and variety of all these kitchen tasks, combined with housekeeping and childcare chores, required the labor of more than one live-in servant.

Though the twentieth-century renovation of the Wheeler house kitchen obliterated almost all of its Victorian features, contemporary descriptions of kitchens, combined with oral history accounts from the Stallard era, provide some insight into the room's original appearance. At the very least, the proper Victorian kitchen contained a stove, a hot water heater, a chest of drawers for storing tablecloths and napkins, an icebox for refrigerating food and a work table.²⁶¹ The Stallard stove, which may or may not have been original to the home, sat against the east wall.²⁶² Since the Wheeler house had indoor plumbing, its kitchen probably also featured a granite, cast iron, or galvanized sink accompanied by a small table for storing newly washed dishes. During the Stallard era, such a sink occupied the space along the northern wall, across from the entrance to the servants' stairs.²⁶³ The kitchen in the Stallard era had a backdoor leading directly into the coal shed attached to

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 72-75.

²⁶⁰ Leopold, 211.

²⁶¹ Green, 70.

²⁶² (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

²⁶³ Ibid.

the rear of the house and this might have also been a feature of the original kitchen as well. In the Stallard era, the backroom that currently houses the kitchen display also contained a stove and a sink and the family used it as a summer kitchen and a workroom.²⁶⁴ Therefore it is possible, though not in any way verifiable, that the backroom served a similar purpose in the Victorian era. On the other hand, the backroom's location and its airy, sunlit atmosphere may have made the room more useful as a back parlor or a breakfast room in the original house.

The Victorian obsession with cleanliness resulted in a rather uniform decorating scheme for kitchens. Most often, kitchen walls and woodwork were painted or varnished so servants could clean them easily. Likewise, the kitchen floor was usually constructed of painted or oiled hardwood planks that facilitated frequent scrubbing and sweeping.²⁶⁵ In addition to promoting hygiene, some contemporary interior decoration experts suggested that the mistress of the home should make the kitchen a comfortable, homey environment for her servants by adding potted plants, framed prints, and one or two comfortable chairs.²⁶⁶ But function and efficiency were tantamount in the "invisible" rooms of the house and, in many cases, upper-class families preferred to spend their time and money decorating the rooms frequented by their guests rather than providing for the comfort of their working-class hired help.

Conclusion

The Wheeler house was much more than a place to live. Certainly, the rooms and furniture of the house often served functional, practical purposes and the family spent much of its time within the home carrying out mundane, daily activities. But many aspects of the house also had profound symbolic meaning. The grand scale of the home combined with its luxurious and opulent interior proclaimed the wealth, social status, and taste of the family residing within it as blatantly as a billboard or newspaper

²⁶⁴ Ibid.; (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

²⁶⁵ Leopold, 212-215.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 210-211.

advertisement. The home also symbolized the strict divisions inherent to Victorian society; heavy wooden doors and grand flights of stairs separated distinctly public rooms frequented by servants and “unreceivable” strangers from the intimate, private rooms used by the family and their favored guests. Likewise, the creation of separate servants’ areas closed off in the rear of the house ensured the “sanctity” of the upper-class domestic sphere by separating it from the “evils” of commercial labor and the working-class men and women who labored in the home’s “invisible” rooms. All in all, the house served both to display the family’s superior status to the community and to uphold the social decorum and class distinctions essential to perpetuating this status.

III. The Stallard Era: 1905-1945

Part One: The Inhabitants

By 1905, Wheeler's Bleeker Street mansion stood empty and abandoned, a mute testament to the grandeur, wealth, and prosperity that had died with the end of Aspen's silver boom. The length of time that the home stood tenantless remains a mystery. Between 1892 and 1905 there is no record of a family dwelling within the house and according to a local oral history it had been abandoned and severely vandalized sometime before 1905.¹ Though these facts do not rule out the possibility that a family occupied the house during this thirteen-year period, it is conceivable that the home remained vacant the entire time. In 1896, Jerome Wheeler's mother-in-law, Charlotte Valentine, sold the house to a fellow New Yorker named Dr. Christopher M. Bell for \$5,000.² Later that day she also sold him the Wheeler Opera House property. Apparently, Bell was a friend or business partner of Jerome Wheeler and frequently loaned him money in the post-crash years.³ Buying these almost worthless properties may have been Bell's way of aiding Wheeler and his family financially without giving them a loan that would plunge them even further into debt. It appears that Bell was an absentee property owner—*Aspen Times* articles and contemporary playbills never mentioned him in any connection to the Wheeler Opera House—and this situation could explain why he allowed the Bleeker Street house to fall into abandonment and disrepair for thirteen years.

In 1905, the arrival of new occupants in the Wheeler house soon breathed new life into the neglected relic of the mining era. Christopher Bell died in 1902 and his will transferred both the Bleeker Street home and the Wheeler Opera House to his young son,

¹ Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, interviewed by the author, 29 June 1998, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

² Warranty Deed, 30 June 1896, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 119, p. 202.

³ Will of C.M. Bell, 27 May 1904, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 143, p. 303-304.

Dennistoun Bell.⁴ Shortly before the elder Bell's death, an Aspen real estate agent named Edgar Stallard became deeply involved in the affairs of the opera house. He approached the City Council and tried to convince its members to reduce the annual license fee for the theater from \$100 to \$50 because Aspen was no longer a flourishing city. Though the council argued that the fee should not go down because the manager sold seats for extremely high prices, Stallard attempted to convince the committee that the fee cut would benefit the opera house and its owners and future leasees.⁵ Though it is unclear whether Stallard won this battle, championing the cause of the opera house seems to have won him the favor of its owners. Beginning in 1904, Stallard became the manager of the Wheeler Opera House and in 1905, according to family legend, "Edgar was offered occupancy of the house at 620 Bleeker to compensate for certain business courtesies he had extended to owners no longer residing in Aspen."⁶ If this statement is true, it is likely that the Bells allowed Stallard to move into the abandoned house either as a courtesy or as payment for the services he rendered them in connection with the opera house.

The Stallards

Edgar Stallard was a longtime Aspen resident who had joined the city's business community at the height of its prosperity. Born in Culpeper County, Virginia on April 18, 1853, Edgar was the eldest child of David Pitts Stallard and Jane S. Millam. His father descended from the Culpeper County Stallards, one of region's oldest and most respected families.⁷ Nothing is known about his early life in Virginia, but records indicate that Edgar Stallard moved to Aspen in 1889 at the age of thirty-six. He boarded at the Hotel Jerome and sold real estate and mining properties at an office at 304 South Mill Street.⁸ By 1892 Edgar's younger brother, David Pitts Stallard, moved to Aspen to help his brother manage his thriving business which had rapidly expanded to include loans and

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Aspen Daily Times*, 19 August 1902, p. 3.

⁶ 1904 Colorado State Business Directory, 142; Nancy Clark Baker, Gladys Julian Stallard and Margaret Russell Stallard, eds., *The Stallard Connection: A Family History* (Lawrenceville, GA: Graphics Communication Company, 1981), 900.

⁷ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 896.

investments.⁹ The nature and scope of Stallard's business in the pre-crash years is best explained in his advertisement published by the *Aspen Daily Times*:

Great Success, such has been the Three Year's Record of EDGAR STALLARD In 1889 Edgar Stallard opened up a real estate and brokerage business in this city and since that time he has prospered exceedingly and gained the fullest confidence of every resident of Aspen... He does the largest real estate business in the city and always has on hand a few bargains in choice city and suburban property... Mr. Stallard also pays considerable attention to the renting of houses and the collection of rents for non-residents. If you wish to rent a house or have one for which you wish to find a tenant call on Mr. Stallard and he will fit you out. Mr. Stallard has acquired quite a reputation for dealing in nothing but the most reputable mining stocks and his business in this line is quite extensive. Men who have money to invest understand that Stallard is thoroughly reliable... He has on hand at all times plenty of Eastern money which he is willing to loan on unimproved property at from 8 to 12 percent per annum. One advantage borrowers have when dealing with Mr. Stallard and that is that they experience no aggravating and unnecessary delays. All local loans can be made at once and at low rates of interest.¹⁰

Stallard's decision to diversify his business interests instead of focusing solely on mining investments allowed him to thrive in Aspen after the crash of 1893. Since he cultivated a strong real estate and property renting business, the mass exodus of Aspen's residents actually helped him financially. In the post-crash years he made most of his living from managing, renting, and selling properties for these absent homeowners.¹¹

Sometime in the early 1890s Edgar Stallard began to court a dressmaker named Mary Ella Pattison. Pattison, like Stallard, was a native of the eastern United States. She was born on December 8, 1866 in Alexander Bay, a small port town on the New York coast. Mary Ella was the second of five daughters born to Will Pattison, a Canadian-born hunting and fishing guide who worked in the Thousand-Island area of the St. Lawrence River, and his wife Bridget, an immigrant from County Cork, Ireland.¹² In 1890, at the age of twenty-four, Mary Ella left New York and traveled by train to Aspen. One story asserts that Pattison's old friend Elizabeth Johnson wanted to travel to Aspen to meet her

⁸ 1889 Aspen City Directory, 110.

⁹ 1892 Aspen City Directory, 137.

¹⁰ *Aspen Daily Times*, 1 January 1893.

¹¹ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 900.

husband but was afraid to undertake the trip alone. She convinced Pattison to accompany her on the long train ride to Colorado.¹³ Another version suggests that Elizabeth Johnson and her husband Silas decided to move to Aspen to make their fortune in silver mining and that Mary Ella accompanied them on their journey.¹⁴ Regardless of her original motives for coming to Aspen, Mary Ella soon decided to stay in the booming town. By 1892, she opened her own dressmaking shop in a frame house that she rented near the intersection of Fifth and Main Streets.¹⁵ She and Edgar Stallard probably began their acquaintance as neighbors; in 1893 Stallard owned property at 530 West Main Street, only a few doors away from Pattison's dress shop.¹⁶

Though the silver crash brought economic hard times to Aspen in the early 1890s, Edgar Stallard and Mary Ella Pattison decided to stay in the town and begin a life together. They were married on March 14, 1895 at a small evening ceremony at one of their homes on west Main Street and later celebrated the event with an elegant wedding dinner and an informal party. "The bride and groom are well and favorably known in this community," noted the *Times*, "Mr. and Mrs. Stallard have gone to housekeeping in their handsome residence at the corner of Fifth and Main Streets."¹⁷ According to family history, the couple moved into the dressmaking shop on west Main Street where Mary Ella supplemented Edgar's real estate income by sewing party dresses for the women of the elite families that remained in Aspen after the crash.¹⁸ On September 11, 1896, Mary Ella gave birth to a boy named Edgar. Six months later, the infant developed bronchial pneumonia and lingered between life and death for two weeks before dying on March 18, 1897.¹⁹ The arrival of a second son, Robert Millam Stallard, less than one year after Edgar Jr.'s death helped to assuage the grief of the heartbroken parents. The couple doted on the surviving boy; on Robert's fourth birthday Edgar drove a sleigh around Aspen,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, interviewed by Judith Gertler, 2 August 1995, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

¹⁴ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 898.

¹⁵ Ibid.; 1892 Aspen City Directory, 118;161.

¹⁶ *Aspen Daily Times*, 31 March 1893 noted that "Edgar Stallard is building on his property at 530 West Main Street."

¹⁷ *Aspen Daily Times*, 16 March 1895, p. 4.

¹⁸ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 900.

¹⁹ *Aspen Daily Times*, 18 March 1897, p. 4.

picked up forty-one of the boy's friends and brought them back to the house at Fifth and Main where Mary Ella threw an elaborate party.²⁰ On March 30, 1901, the family expanded again when thirty-four year old Mary Ella gave birth to a third son, David Pattison Stallard. The little frame house soon became cramped quarters for the growing family and when the Bells offered Edgar Stallard occupancy of the abandoned Wheeler house in 1905, he and Mary Ella eagerly accepted.²¹

A New Life for an Old House

During the Stallard era, the Wheeler house served a different function than it had during Aspen's silver boom. By the time that the Stallards occupied the home, supporting a growing family in Aspen became increasingly difficult. The steadily decreasing value of silver and the corresponding drop in Aspen's silver production that came in the aftermath of 1893 resulted in a period of chronic economic depression in Aspen traditionally known as the Quiet Years. In most Aspen families, a concern for day to day economic survival became more important than the conspicuous displays of wealth that had been the focus of domestic life in the boom period. The Stallards, by necessity, transformed the Wheeler house from a showcase for wealth into a workplace. It became a place where all members of the family, including women and children, labored to produce the food, goods, and extra income that was crucial to their economic survival. Subsistence, not status, became the primary concern of domestic life in Quiet Years Aspen.

Unlike her Victorian counterparts, Mary Ella Stallard's family did not have the economic resources to release her from domestic and commercial labor within the home. During Aspen's Quiet Years, most families could not survive on a single income. Edgar Stallard worked diligently outside the home to support his family. In addition to running his real estate business, he took a job as the agent for the Hotel Jerome where he supervised the refurbishment of the hotel's dining and billiard rooms.²² In 1904 he

²⁰ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 900.

²¹ Ibid.

²² *Aspen Democratic Times*, 15 August 1902, p.2.

became the manager of the Wheeler Opera House. Nevertheless, the Stallards found it impossible to support themselves and their two children on Edgar's earnings alone. Their economic situation became more difficult in 1906 when Mary Ella gave birth to another son, Albert Young Stallard. For these reasons, it became imperative that Mary Ella work at home to produce food, household goods, and extra income. Mary Ella engaged in traditional women's domestic chores; she washed clothes, cooked, and cleaned house. But she also grew food for her family in an extensive vegetable garden on the east side of the house and she ranched a plot of land outside town where she cultivated potatoes, hay, and grain to feed the family's animals. Mary Ella also supplemented the family income through commerce with her neighbors. She kept a small dairy and a chicken coop on the Bleeker Street property and sold milk and eggs to neighboring families. She also continued her dressmaking business in the parlor of the home and earned three to four dollars per garment. When not in school, the Stallards' sons helped Mary Ella chop wood, deliver milk, and graze the dairy cows.²³ Clearly, the labor of women and children on the domestic front became just as crucial to the family's survival as wages earned by the man of the household in the public sphere. The Victorian ideal that the domestic sphere should be a place distinctly separate from commerce and commercial labor lost validity in an era when economic necessity required all family members to produce income.

By 1908 the Stallards' dedication to fulfilling their neighborly and familial duties further taxed the household income. In early Quiet Years Aspen, state or local social welfare programs were virtually nonexistent. The tasks of aiding the starving, raising orphaned children, nursing the sick, and caring for the elderly often fell to relatives, neighbors and fraternal associations. As Charles Grover, a survivor of the Aspen Quiet Years concluded plainly, "there were very few people who had any money and everybody lived off everybody else."²⁴ The Stallards, like many Aspenites, truly took this principle to heart. Shortly after Mary Ella arrived in Aspen in 1890 her sister Prometcha (Pro-mee-cha) Pattison came to join her. The sisters were extremely close and after

²³ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

²⁴ Charles Grover, interviewed by Anne Gilbert and Ruth Whyte, 1 July 1991, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

Prometcha married an English miner named William Bennett, she and her family lived directly across the street from the Stallards at a home on west Hallam Street.²⁵ In July of 1908, Prometcha died a lingering and painful death from Bright's disease, leaving her husband and two daughters, Fredericka (Freda), age sixteen, and Mary, age twelve, to fend for themselves.²⁶ Apparently, William Bennett was unable to care for his teenage daughters alone. Though the addition of two extra mouths to feed probably put a considerable strain on the family's economic resources, Edgar and Mary Ella Stallard immediately took the motherless girls in and raised them as their own.²⁷ For the Stallards, the duty to support one's relatives and neighbors in times of crisis clearly took precedence over economic concerns.

Despite the hardship and backbreaking work she endured and the many mouths she had to feed, Mary Ella Stallard thrived in her home on west Bleeker Street. When Edgar joined the local chapter of the Woodmen of the World, a men's fraternal and social club that provided its members with burial insurance, she joined the Columbine Circle of the Neighbors of Woodcraft, a women's auxiliary of the Woodmen. The club events included games, banquets, mock military drills, and statewide conventions. Mary Ella became a leading member of the Circle and represented her chapter at the regional convention in Leadville.²⁸ During the time that she lived at the Wheeler house, she also developed several personal hobbies. In the early years of her marriage, she bought a camera and became adept at taking, developing, and hand-tinting photographs. Mary Ella began her amateur photography by taking pictures of her own family and creating a number of self-portraits.²⁹ By the time that she moved into the Wheeler house she started photographing her neighbors and their children and even converted the small room under the attic stairs into a darkroom to develop her work. According to her great niece, Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, she never charged for her photographic services because she did not view it as work but simply as a "neighborly thing to do."³⁰ Mary Ella's innate aesthetic sense and artistic ability also prompted her to pursue other kinds of art. For many years,

²⁵ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

²⁶ *Aspen Democrat*, 8 July 1908, p.1.

²⁷ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

²⁸ *Aspen Democratic Times*, 29 April 1925.

²⁹ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 899-901.

she sketched and painted landscapes and later in life she dedicated much of her free time to quilting.³¹

After living and working in the Bleeker Street house for twelve years, the Stallards finally had the opportunity to purchase it in 1917. It appears that after the Stallards moved into the home in 1905, the Bell family continued to ignore the house as it had done in the past. In 1908 the house became the property of the county when the absentee owners neglected to pay taxes on it.³² Two years later, county officials attempted to sell the house at public auction but failed to find any potential buyers. This was not surprising considering that scores of houses lay vacant throughout the town as Aspen's population steadily dwindled in the early twentieth century. In 1917, a prominent rancher named Fred Light purchased the house from the county for \$2.48 plus \$147.52 in back taxes.³³ A few weeks later, Light agreed to sell the home to Mary Ella Stallard for \$150.³⁴ The house that had been a neglected financial burden for absentee owners and Pitkin county officials for twenty-one years finally became the property of the family that maintained and cherished it.

Only two years after the Stallards purchased their Bleeker Street home, tragedy struck the family. Near the end of the decade, many Aspenites suffered from outbreaks of contagious diseases—Pitkin County lost forty-two residents to the influenza epidemic of 1918 that killed 20 million people worldwide.³⁵ In 1919, local concern over the spread of other contagious diseases such as diphtheria among Aspen's children began to grow. One pharmacist's advertisement warned parents that the common cold could leave children one hundred times more susceptible "to the wandering diphtheria (sic) germ." It advised every parent of a child with a cold "to take him out of school and take him off the street until fully recovered" to avoid catching the deadly disease.³⁶ Unfortunately, despite all this advice the dreaded disease struck a fatal blow in the Stallard home.

³⁰ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

³¹ Beverly Stallard Doremus, interviewed by the author, 3 July 1998, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

³² Treasurer's Deed, 1917, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 149, p. 282.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Quit-Claim Deed, 12 September 1917, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 170, p. 172.

³⁵ *Aspen Democratic Times*, 7 January 1919, p. 4.

³⁶ Ibid., 7 April 1919, p. 2.

In July of 1919, twelve-year-old Albert Young Stallard, Edgar and Mary Ella's youngest son, suddenly took ill with diphtheria. A few days later, on July 10, 1919, the little boy died at the family home on west Bleeker Street.³⁷ His sudden death shocked and devastated both the Stallard family and the community at large. "He was a bright, intelligent boy, of a lovable nature and was a universal favorite with all who knew him," lamented the *Aspen Democratic Times*. "His death is a severe blow to his parents and elder brothers...and will bring sorrow to many hearts outside the family circle," the *Times* reporter noted, "[t]he entire community will sympathize with the stricken family in its sorrow."³⁸ The funeral was held at the family's house the next day. While the community mourned the loss of a favorite citizen, Mary Ella Stallard sunk into deep despair. Though only fifty-two years old at the time of the boy's death, she began to appear much older. "When she lost her last child, she never really quite got over it," Louiva Wilcox Stapleton remembered, "she never ever got over that... She became an old woman, let us say, when that happened."³⁹ Mary Ella gathered the boy's belongings and stored them in the third-floor attic room. She forbade all the children in the house to enter the attic without her permission lest they disturb the painful memories she kept hidden there.

Though the Stallards' economic situation actually began to decline by the early 1920s—the elderly Edgar Stallard had quit his real estate business in 1918 and took a poorly paying job as deputy county assessor—the family again opened its doors to disadvantaged relatives. By this time, Edgar and Mary Ella's adopted nieces Freda and Mary Bennett had grown to adulthood and left the Stallard house. In 1911, Freda married a popular young local rancher named Glenlee Wilcox and moved to the mining town of Colbran, Colorado. She quickly gave birth to three daughters: Louiva in 1913, Marie in 1915, and Ruth in 1918.⁴⁰ Shortly after the birth of her third child, the twenty-six year old Freda Bennett Wilcox died in the 1918 influenza epidemic. Her husband remarried the following year, but his new wife and her children came into immediate conflict with his three young daughters. "She kept saying I looked so much like my mother, I kept

³⁷ Ibid., 11 June 1919, p. 1.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

reminding my father of my dead mother,” Louiva Wilcox Stapleton remembered, “and she had two other children at the time and of course her son and I didn’t get along so that was one of the big problems.”⁴¹ By 1921 the tension between Louiva and her stepmother became so intense that Glenlee Wilcox asked Mary Ella Stallard to take the girl and raise her in Aspen. “My father finally wrote to Mrs. Stallard and said if you want Louiva come and get her...the two of them don’t get along,” Stapleton recalled.⁴² When she visited the Wilcox home, Mary Ella became so distressed by the conditions that the girls were living in that she took all three back to Aspen.

Although the separation from her stepmother came as a relief to the young Louiva Wilcox, she found life at the Stallard house extremely difficult. The addition of three new family members to feed resulted in more domestic chores for the family. When not in school, Louiva grazed Mary Ella Stallard’s cows along Castle Creek and helped her plant and harvest crops on the small ranch outside of town. Everyday after school she chopped wood and hauled it inside to fuel the stoves in the house. She washed clothes, looked after the vegetable garden, and helped her sisters clean the house.⁴³ At the same time, Louiva dealt with the emotional trauma of being an orphaned child. The Wilcox sisters had a good relationship with the Stallards and Mary Ella even insisted that everyone in the house, including her own children and grandchildren, call her “Lollie” instead of “mother” so that her adopted grandnieces would not feel excluded.⁴⁴ But Mary Ella’s strict demeanor and occasional threats to send the girls back to their father when they did not behave reminded Louiva that the Stallards were not her real parents. Nevertheless, she was extremely grateful that the Stallards took her in and gave her a stable home and she even refused to go back to Colbran with her father when he begged her to come home a few years later.⁴⁵

The early 1920s brought further economic hardship for the Stallards and their newly adopted grandnieces. While many Americans enjoyed immense economic prosperity in the wake of World War I, the final closing of Aspen’s major silver mines in

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1995)

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1995 and 1998)

⁴⁴ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

1919 meant a continuation of economic depression in Aspen. Edgar Stallard closed his real estate and insurance business sometime around 1918 and took a poorly paying job at the county courthouse where he served as the deputy county assessor.⁴⁶ In 1923, the elderly Stallard began to suffer from chronic lung congestion. He continued to work at the courthouse during most of his illness, but by April of 1925 his condition confined him to his bed. After a painful six-week bout of choking and coughing fits, Edgar finally died at the Bleeker Street house on May 23, 1925.⁴⁷ Edgar's death left the fifty-nine year old Mary Ella to support and care for her two grown sons and three young grandnieces alone. Though she inherited some property and valuable jewelry upon her husband's death, Mary Ella's frugality prompted her to save these assets for future use.⁴⁸ She and her grandnieces toiled continuously to keep the domestic economy operating. When not in school or performing household chores, the Wilcox girls spent the majority of their time selling milk and eggs, caring for farm animals, and cultivating the Stallard vegetable garden and ranch land. Robert and David Stallard who lived at home well into their late twenties, supplemented the meager income earned by the women's domestic labors by prospecting and mining in the surrounding mountains.⁴⁹ In short, instead of basking in the glory of the nation's newfound economic success in the 1920s and engaging in its rapidly growing consumer culture, the Stallards, like many Aspen families, struggled daily to avoid debt and abject poverty. When the stock market crash of 1929 plunged the United States into widespread economic depression, life in Aspen changed very little. As one Aspen old timer noted, the Great Depression had little effect on the town's residents because they had already had thirty years of practice with economic hardship.

The Close of the Stallard Era

By the early 1930s, Mary Ella Stallard lost the workforce that had sustained her household through the economic struggles of the 1920s and the Depression years. Only a

⁴⁵ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁴⁶ Bureau of the Census. Population Schedules of the Fourteenth Census of the United States, Colorado. Pitkin County. Hereafter referred to as 1920 Federal Census, Pitkin County.

⁴⁷ *Aspen Democratic Times*, 25 May 1925, p.1.

⁴⁸ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

few years after arriving in Aspen, Marie Wilcox, the middle of the Stallards' three grandnieces, agreed to return home to Colbran to live with her father and stepmother.⁵⁰ In 1928, David Stallard married Mary Paulich, a local woman of eastern European descent, and moved out of the Bleeker Street house.⁵¹ In 1933, one year after graduating from Aspen High School, nineteen-year-old Louiva Wilcox married a local man named William Stapleton and began a family.⁵² At the age of thirty-eight, Robert Stallard finally married and moved to Pueblo. He left his aging mother with the teenage Ruth Wilcox, the youngest of the three grandnieces, as her sole company and household laborer.⁵³ Fortunately, Mary Ella saved the property and jewelry she inherited upon her husband's death and used it to pay her expenses in later life. After a life of backbreaking hard work, she also used these assets to pamper herself on occasion. As her family obligations steadily decreased in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Mary Ella found she had the time and resources to develop a love for travel and occasionally sold pieces of her fine jewelry to finance vacations all over the country.⁵⁴

Mary Ella Stallard remained in the Bleeker Street house until the early 1940s. When she found it difficult to maintain and heat the entire house, she closed off the entire upper floor, moved her bedroom furniture to the dining room, and used the small north backroom (currently the kitchen display) as her only kitchen.⁵⁵ Though most of her family members moved away from Aspen by the 1940s, Mary Ella was rarely alone in her old age—she frequently visited her children in Pueblo and Montrose and entertained her young grandchildren with dress up tea parties in the Wheeler house parlor. But sometime before 1945, Mary Ella realized that the Bleeker Street house was too large for her to maintain by herself and she moved to a smaller house on Main Street.⁵⁶ In 1945 she sold the Bleeker Street house to William Tagert, a longtime Aspen livery and feed store proprietor, who then immediately sold the property to a newly arrived Chicago

⁴⁹ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 897.

⁵² (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁵³ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, unknown interviewer, July 1986, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

businessman named Walter Paepcke.⁵⁷ Mary Ella spent the last twelve years of her life wintering with her son Robert in Pueblo. In November of 1950, at the age of eighty-three, she lapsed into a coma while visiting one of her grandchildren and was rushed to the Pitkin County hospital where she died five months later on April 26, 1951.⁵⁸ In an effort to clear out the thousands of papers Mary Ella accumulated over the last half century, some Stallard relatives reputedly burned most of her photographs and letters.⁵⁹ The house that had been her beloved Aspen home for nearly forty years met a better fate. In the hands of outsiders the old Wheeler house was transformed from a decaying relic of Aspen's glorious mining past into a commercial asset that played a small but integral role in the economic and cultural rebirth of the town.

Part Two: Life in the Stallard House

Introduction

The silver crash of 1893 not only marked a dramatic downturn in the economic fortunes of the people of Aspen, it fundamentally changed the way Aspenites carried on their daily domestic activities. In the boom era, much of the domestic life of upper and middle-class families revolved around conspicuous displays of wealth and social status. Oftentimes, this situation led to distinctly separate roles for the men and women of the household. While the upper or middle-class Victorian man was generally expected to work outside the home to earn the family's income, social decorum dictated that the "proper" Victorian wife never labored in the public sphere. Rather, she worked exclusively in the domestic sphere to create a home that was both a moral haven and a visible testament to her family's economic and social superiority. Aspen's upper-class women, whose husbands usually generated enough income to hire servants to perform mundane housekeeping and childcare activities, spent much of their time and effort

⁵⁷ Quit-Claim Deed, 19 July 1945, Pitkin County Recorder's Office, Book 170, p. 231.

⁵⁸ Baker, Stallard and Stallard, 899; *Aspen Times*, 26 April 1951.

⁵⁹ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

throwing the proper parties for the proper people, selecting the most sophisticated decorating schemes for their homes, and developing skills in art and music. They specifically undertook all of these activities to impress their neighbors and social acquaintances in hopes of raising or perpetuating their families' status in the community.

With the coming of the Quiet Years, the priorities of domestic life and the roles of women in the family changed profoundly. Though descendants of Aspen's mining elite retained some of their wealth and continued the grand style of entertaining they grew accustomed to during the boom era, the silver crash and its aftermath marked a time of severe economic hardship for most Aspenites. In a town where almost all families struggled daily to combat poverty, the class distinctions and displays of wealth integral to Victorian society lost much of their validity. Domestic life in Quiet Years Aspen reflected this change. Financial hard times transformed most Aspen homes from showcases for wealth into workplaces—household duties revolved more around creating income and goods necessary for the family's daily survival and less around impressing outsiders. The new function of the home brought more equality for women within the family. In many households, economic necessity superceded social decorum and women began to work both within and outside their homes to supplement their husbands' meager incomes. The Quiet Years woman was not relegated to being an ornamental fixture within the home, nor did she function solely as the family's public relations agent like many of her Victorian predecessors. Rather, she was an integral breadwinner whose labor and production was almost as important to the economic security of her family as that of her husband.

In many ways, life in the Stallard household reflected these domestic trends. For the Stallards, the displays of wealth and status that constituted the focus of domestic life in the boom era were virtually unknown. With anywhere between three to five children to feed and a large house to maintain, the Stallards could not subsist on Edgar's income alone in times of economic depression. The family combated this problem by shifting the focus of the domestic sphere to income and food production. The Bleeker Street property that had once functioned to proclaim the wealth and grandeur of the family living within now served primarily as a workplace—every room of the house and acre of the yard was used to complete domestic chores, grow food, and produce goods for commercial sale.

Obviously, this new domestic economy depended primarily on the labor of Mary Ella Stallard. Assisted by her children and grandnieces, Mary Ella constantly labored at home to generate the extra money and goods that allowed the family to survive the financial challenges brought on by the silver crash and the Great Depression. In short, in the Stallard household, women's labor in the domestic sphere within the home was just as crucial to the family's economic well-being as men's work outside the home.

The Stallard House: A Room by Room Interpretation

The Foyer

While maintaining a large, richly decorated foyer indicative of one's wealth and status was considered a necessary women's activity under the social tenets of the boom era, this practice lost relevance during the Quiet Years. Though some descendents of Aspen's mining elite continued to host formal social events in their homes, the Stallards, like many local families, simply did not possess the income or time to carry on the elaborate social rituals of home entertaining. For this reason, public, community-wide social activities such as high school basketball games, town-wide carnivals, parades, balls hosted by the local fraternal societies, and informal gatherings at local dance halls replaced the endless rounds of exclusive, Victorian private parties. This decline in home entertaining reduced the foyer from an integral showcase of wealth and social standing to a purely functional room where family members entered and exited the house and occasionally greeted special visitors. In short, maintaining a large, luxurious foyer primarily designed to impress guests constituted an obsolete and wasteful women's pursuit in an era when economic circumstances required wives to spend the bulk of their time producing supplemental income and food just to ensure their families' survival.

In the Stallard home, the foyer was the least used and least functional room in the house. According to Louiva Stapleton, the family never used the front staircase in the foyer to reach the second floor. Instead, all traffic between the two floors was usually

confined to the narrow back staircase in the former servants' quarters of the house.⁶⁰ The close proximity of the backstairs to the Wilcox girls' bedroom (located in the former servants' bedroom) and the main work areas of the house such as the summer and winter kitchen probably explains this traffic pattern. Also, due to the grand scale and formality of the front stairs, the Stallards were reluctant to use them for anything but special occasions and greeting guests.⁶¹ The foyer's sparse furnishings also reflected the relative unimportance of the room in the Stallard household. During the 1920s, the room may have contained a small couch and a hat tree with a mirror and a seat but Beverly Stallard Doremus, the Stallards' granddaughter, remembered that the room was completely unfurnished when she visited the home in the mid 1930s.⁶²

The Stallard foyer reflected a combination of Victorian elements and Mary Ella Stallard's own decorative tastes. Oral history accounts agree that the woodwork in the foyer, including the staircase and fireplace, was originally cherry wood or finished to look like cherry. The fireplace, brown fireplace tiles, and arched nook currently adorning the foyer were in place during the 1920s and remain unchanged since that time.⁶³ A pair of heavy wooden double doors separated the foyer from the parlor just as they did in the Victorian era. Originally, a door to the back workroom or summer kitchen of the home occupied the north wall just to the left of the fireplace.⁶⁴ Since Mary Ella loved joyful, bright rooms, she abandoned the dark, rich foyer wall colors favored by the Victorians for light colored, cheerful, floral patterned wallpaper. It also appears that she opted to install wall-to-wall carpeting instead of using the hardwood floor and area rug combination popular in the health-conscious Victorian era.⁶⁵ All in all, the foyer's loss of social significance and formality in the Stallard household allowed Mary Ella to abandon popular decorative edicts and decorate the room according to her own aesthetic tastes.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1986); (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁶³ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998); (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁶⁴ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1986)

The Parlor

Like their Victorian predecessors, the Stallards used the parlor as a showcase for their finest and most expensive household items. The family's immense and ornately carved Chickering square grand piano dominated the east side of the room while Mary Ella's walnut and red velvet couch set occupied the space along the west wall.⁶⁶ By the mid 1930s, the family's large, expensive rectangular phonograph sat in the northwestern corner.⁶⁷ In general, the other decorative aspects of the room reflected the Stallards' own idiosyncratic aesthetic tastes. In accordance with Mary Ella Stallard's passion for bright, cheerful rooms, light colored wallpaper with an abstract pattern replaced the rich, dark tones that characterized the typical Victorian-era parlor. Though wall-to-wall carpeting gained popularity in the early years of the twentieth century, the Stallards chose to conceal the pine plank floor with a large, room-sized area rug.⁶⁸

Though the parlor was definitely the "best" room in the Stallard house, the Victorian concept that the room should be reserved for the sole purpose of formally entertaining guests also underwent a radical transformation during the Quiet Years period. The Stallard parlor was a center for the family's informal social activity. During the 1920s Robert and David Stallard belonged to a dance band known as the "Roamers" that played in local dance halls and frequently traveled to Basalt, Glenwood Springs and Meeker to provide music for dances. The young men often converted the Stallard parlor into a rehearsal room for the band and requested that their young cousin Louiva Wilcox join them so that she could transpose their sheet music to different keys for each of the instruments. These parlor rehearsals constituted a crash course in music for the young girl who had little formal musical training. "You learned quick when you had to," she remembered, "you learned to do a lot of things you had to do in the olden days. You didn't go to school for it, you just learned it."⁶⁹

⁶⁵ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998); (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁶⁶ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998); (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁶⁷ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁶⁸ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁶⁹ Ibid.

The parlor was also the center of family holiday activities. From the time the Stallards moved into the house, the family celebrated its annual Christmas festivities in the room. Mary Ella always provided the children of the house with an ornament-bedecked pine tree that she sometimes placed in the large bay window, next to the fireplace, or between the dining room double doors and the door to the servants' hallway. For Mary Ella, these celebrations presented a prime opportunity to photograph the family—throughout the years she invariably took photos of her sons, nieces, and grandnieces as they gathered around the tree with their toys on Christmas morning.⁷⁰

The transformation of the Bleeker Street house from a Victorian showplace to a Quiet Years workplace is also evident in the Stallards' use of the parlor. In the Quiet Years, the Stallard parlor, like many of the other rooms in the house, was a place to produce family income. During the 1920s, Mary Ella Stallard operated her dressmaking business out of this room. She kept her sewing machine and bolts of dressmaking fabric next to the fireplace and requested that her young nieces keep the room spotless so that dust and soil would not ruin the valuable material.⁷¹ A gifted seamstress since her early youth, Mary Ella created fancy party dresses for Aspen's women without ever consulting a pre-made pattern. "She was a fantastic dressmaker," her granddaughter Beverly Stallard Doremus noted, recalling her skill at creating patterns from scratch, "I can remember that she would take a newspaper and hold it up against you... and she would take a pair of scissors and just start cutting."⁷² For each dress that she made, Mary Ella received around four dollars, two or three of which she spent on materials. Considering that she only earned ten cents for every gallon of milk produced by her dairy cows, a one to two dollar profit per dress made Mary Ella's dressmaking one of her most lucrative means of raising income.⁷³ The parlor that had little practical use other than impressing and entertaining outsiders in the Victorian era had come to serve an integral function in the day to day operation of the domestic economy in the Quiet Years.

The Dining Room

⁷⁰ See photographs 79.3.1, 79.3.2, 79.3.3 and 79.3.5 in the Wheeler-Stallard house photo file, AHS.

⁷¹ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁷² (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

As formal entertaining in the home began to decline in twentieth-century Aspen, the dining room, like the parlor, became a center for more routine, everyday family activities in the Stallard home. While the dining room of the Victorian era probably only saw use once a day during formal family dinners and occasionally served as a venue for parties, the Stallards used the room on a more regular basis. From the routine family breakfast to the more elaborate holiday banquet, the family ate every meal together in this room.⁷⁴ The dining room also served as one of the primary living spaces in the home. Sometime in the 1920s, the aging Mary Ella Stallard converted the room into a makeshift bedroom by placing a brass bed along the east wall where it was hidden from the parlor by closing the left-hand folding door.⁷⁵ This arrangement had two distinct advantages: it was much easier to heat the small dining room than the enormous south second-floor bedroom that Mary Ella shared with Edgar before his death, and it saved her from climbing stairs in her old age. It also allowed her to live in close proximity to the summer and winter kitchens, two of the primary work areas in the Stallard home. In later life, the dining room also functioned as Mary Ella's work area. When the elderly woman closed off the rest of the house in the mid 1930s and lived primarily in the dining room and summer kitchen, she moved her sewing machine and materials into the southwest corner of the dining room.⁷⁶ At this point in her life, however, sewing had become more of a hobby than a domestic moneymaking venture.

Though the function of the dining room changed dramatically with the coming of the Quiet Years, the room's furnishings resembled those that might have been found in this home during the silver boom era. As in Victorian times, a large decorative area rug that could be easily removed and cleaned of crumbs and soil hid the plain plank floor. It was positioned directly under Mary Ella Stallard's massive wooden square dining table that occupied the center of the room. The sideboard, the domestic altar of the late nineteenth-century residence, also found a place in the Stallard home. In fact, the family possessed two such pieces of furniture—a large rectangular oak sideboard sat to the left

⁷³ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1995)

⁷⁴ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁷⁵ Ibid.

of the built-in china cabinet, and a smaller wooden washstand that served as a sideboard sat along the south wall, just to the right of the door that led into the parlor.⁷⁷ Though faced with economic hard times during most of her life in Aspen, Mary Ella Stallard managed to accumulate some pieces of fine china and porcelain.⁷⁸ Though her china collection was perhaps not as elaborate and large as that of the typical upper-class Victorian woman, the dining room table and sideboards provided Mary Ella with a place to display her treasured pieces to occasional guests, just as they had in the boom era.

The Kitchens

In the Stallard home, the kitchen was not an “invisible” room reserved primarily for the activities of hired help. Rather, the kitchen was the primary workplace in the house where female family members cooperated to complete the domestic chores that kept the household running. Mary Ella Stallard, reluctant to teach her grandnieces to cook because she feared that they might burn or ruin the family’s precious food, performed all of the household cooking by herself. For the most part, however, female family members shared kitchen chores. Though the Wilcox girls were barred from cooking, they probably helped Mary Ella by gathering fuel for the stove and sifting stove ashes. Every fall, the girls joined Mary Ella in the kitchen and assisted her to can vegetables from the family garden so they could be stored over the winter. One of the Stallard women—usually Louiva Wilcox—spent every Saturday in the kitchen completing the backbreaking and time consuming task of laundering the family’s dirty clothes using only a tin tub and a washboard. After the clean clothes dried, either Mary Ella or one of the girls proceeded to iron them with irons heated on the kitchen stove.⁷⁹

In many instances, the seasons governed labor in the Quiet Years household because each time of year came with its own distinct set of chores. For this reason, the Stallard family created two separate kitchens, one that was more convenient for completing warm weather tasks and another that was used more frequently in the

⁷⁶ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁷⁷ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998); (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁷⁸ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

winter.⁸⁰ The door leading directly out to the main section of the east porch made the backroom that currently houses the kitchen display more attractive as a summer kitchen. From the backroom, Mary Ella could exit through the porch door and walk directly down the porch steps into the vegetable garden that she tended all summer. The porch door could have also provided easy access to the family icebox—the only means of refrigerating food in the summer—which in many households was located on the porch so the water that leaked from it would not damage the wooden floors inside the home. When tasks such as ironing and boiling clothes on wash day made the room unbearably hot on warm summer days, the family could open the porch door for ventilation and cool air. An exterior door to the central part of the porch also facilitated taking domestic projects outside on hot days. Every Saturday during the summer, Louiva often took advantage of the sunlight and cool breezes afforded by Aspen's summer days by carrying the family's laundry out to the porch where she washed it and later hung it out to dry.⁸¹

The Stallard's winter kitchen, located on the site of the current modern kitchen, possessed characteristics that made it useful during Aspen's coldest months. During the Stallard era, a door in the north wall of the kitchen connected it with the coal shed behind the house.⁸² Naturally, the shed served as a place to store the coal and wood that fueled both the kitchen stove and the stoves and fireplaces throughout the house during the winter months. The interior exit to the coal shed would have allowed Mary Ella and the girls to carry in fuel for the kitchen stove several times a day without having to venture outside into Aspen's subfreezing winter weather. The winter kitchen's location also allowed Mary Ella easy access to the basement where the canned goods and preserves that became the staples of the family's winter diet were stored.

The Bedrooms

During the early part of the Stallard era, all four large rooms on the second floor, including the back servants' room, served as bedrooms for the family. Edgar and Mary

⁷⁹ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁸⁰ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁸¹ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

Ella shared the large south bedroom while Robert Stallard occupied the west bedroom and David Stallard lived in the smaller east bedroom. When the three Wilcox girls joined the family in 1921, they shared the small, unheated servants' room at the northern end of the house.⁸³

As family members began to depart in the 1920s and 1930s the functions of each of the second-floor rooms gradually changed. After Edgar Stallard's death in 1925, Mary Ella began to sleep in the dining room and the south second-floor room that she shared with her husband became a spare bedroom and a workroom for sewing and quilting. On some occasions, the south bedroom served as a quarantine area. "I had the measles in that room," Louiva Wilcox Stapleton recalled, "they quarantined you in those days and I had to be clear away from everybody. The door shut, the windows shut, the shades pulled tight and everything."⁸⁴ In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the marriage and departure of the Stallards' two sons left the east and west bedrooms empty. It appears that Mary Ella reserved the boys' old rooms for their use when they and their grandchildren made their frequent visits to Aspen. Ruth Wilcox, the youngest of the grandnieces and the only one still living with Mary Ella in the mid 1930s, continued to occupy the small servants' room at the north end of the house during this time.⁸⁵

The exact layout and furnishings of the bedrooms remains unclear. According to Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, each of the four bedrooms contained a bed and a wardrobe. The floors were made of plain pine planking and covered with room-sized area rugs and the walls in each room were papered.⁸⁶ The most significant modification made to the rooms since the Stallard era was the removal of the fireplaces in the east and west bedrooms. Wooden fireplaces with tiled insets, similar to the original fireplaces in the south bedroom and foyer, originally occupied the northern wall of the west bedroom and the southern wall of the east bedroom.

⁸² (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁸³ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998); (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998) At one point in her interview, Louiva Stapleton recalled that David occupied the west bedroom while Robert occupied the east bedroom. But earlier in the interview, she asserted that David occupied the east bedroom while Robert occupied the larger west bedroom. Given that Beverly Stallard Doremus distinctly remembered that her father David lived in the east bedroom as a child, I have chosen to adopt this second interpretation.

⁸⁴ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁸⁵ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁸⁶ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

The Bathroom

The narrow northern room in the rear of the house adjacent to the servants' room functioned as the only bathroom in the Stallard residence. A pull chain toilet with a wooden overhead water tank stood against the north wall while a stationary tin bathtub sat against the west wall.⁸⁷ The room may have contained a small washstand with a basin and it remains unclear whether or not the Stallards or their predecessors ever installed a sink with running water. A stained glass window, reputed to be original to the house and the first window of its kind in Aspen, also graced the room but was removed sometime after 1986.⁸⁸

The Attic

Little is known about the appearance and function of the attic during the Stallard era. Louiva Wilcox Stapleton distinctly remembered that Mary Ella Stallard kept the possessions of her deceased son in the attic and forbade anyone to enter the room without her permission.⁸⁹ Likewise, Beverly Stallard Doremus remembered that she was never allowed to play in the attic unless Mary Ella supervised her activities. Though she only visited the third floor on a few occasions, Doremus recalled that the attic was one large unfinished room—the walls were raw wood rather than plastered or papered and there were no smaller rooms closed off under the gables. Mary Ella might have stored a handful of boxes there, but, for the most part, Doremus remembered that the room remained completely empty.⁹⁰

The Grounds

⁸⁷ (Beverly Stallard Doreums, 1998)

⁸⁸ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1986)

⁸⁹ Ibid.

While the extensive yard surrounding the Bleeker Street house probably served a decorative function in the Victorian era and also provided a kind of park where wealthy families engaged in leisure pursuits such as lawn parties and lawn tennis, it formed the primary domestic workplace in the Stallard era. On these grounds, Mary Ella Stallard and her grandnieces produced food for the family and completed domestic chores. The grounds also housed the Stallards' farm animals that produced commercial income in the form of eggs, cream, milk, and butter that could be sold to neighbors. In short, the grounds were far from secondary, aesthetic extensions of the home. Rather, they played an integral role in the family's struggle for economic survival.

Though widespread economic difficulties in Aspen forced many local grocery stores to provide customers with goods on credit, the Stallards preferred to raise most of their own food. In fact, according to Mrs. John Snyder, a longtime Aspen resident, the only way most Aspen families survived the Depression years was by independently cultivating and harvesting food crops.⁹¹ Mary Ella Stallard owned a plot of ranch land on the western outskirts of town near the current Highway 82 where she and the Wilcox girls grew staple crops like potatoes and hay that fed both family members and farm animals. Mary Ella also converted a portion of the yard on the eastern side of the house into a vegetable garden. She grew peas, potatoes, lettuce, and carrots and every fall after the harvest she and her nieces labored for several tedious hours to can the vegetables so they could be stored in the basement and consumed over the course of the winter.⁹² When Beverly Stallard Doremus visited her grandmother's home in the 1930s, Mary Ella maintained a small orchard of cherry, chokecherry, and crabapple trees in the eastern yard and she periodically harvested the berries to make homemade wines and jams.⁹³

The Stallard grounds also provided the family with fuel. The immensity of the old Wheeler house made it particularly difficult to heat in the winter. Though the Stallards installed more efficient Franklin stoves in front of the fireplaces in the parlor and dining room and boarded up the fireplaces to prevent the heat from escaping up the flue,

⁹⁰ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁹¹ Mr. and Mrs. John Snyder, unknown interviewer, no date, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

⁹² (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998); (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

gathering enough fuel to maintain warmth in the home required large amounts of time and money.⁹⁴ This became a problem in the 1920s when the family did not have the funds to purchase firewood from neighbors or local merchants. During the Victorian era, one owner of the house planted a row of large cottonwoods around the perimeter of the yard and these grand trees soon fueled the Stallard stoves and fireplaces. One by one the Stallard sons felled the cottonwoods. Everyday after school Louiva Wilcox hacked a large piece of wood off the fallen tree and drug it into the coal shed adjoining the rear of the house where she chopped it into smaller pieces. She then gathered the pieces, along with coal for the coal stoves, and carried them inside to the fireplaces. As economic conditions grew worse, this practice remained a part of the Stallards' daily routine and continued until most of the trees in the yard—with the exception of Mary Ella's orchard and two pine trees planted by Louiva on the south side of the house—had been completely cleared away.⁹⁵

Mary Ella Stallard's four dairy cows, her primary source of commercial income, were housed in one or two small barns on the northwest corner of the property. Though she primarily sold milk to her West End neighbors and found customers by word of mouth, Mary Ella sometimes advertised her dairy services in the local newspaper.⁹⁶ By the 1920s, operating this small-scale dairy service in addition to running her household and dressmaking business required the constant labor of Mary Ella's young nieces. Though the Stallards used part of the northern yard as pasture for the cows, Louiva Wilcox often herded the animals to areas where they could graze on more abundant vegetation. She rode Mary Ella's bony black cow and the other cows followed her obediently through the streets of the West End to the banks of nearby Castle Creek where she let them graze. In the evenings, Louiva herded the animals back to the Stallard barn where Mary Ella milked them and later made some of the milk into cream and butter. The following morning Louiva delivered the goods to a handful of neighboring houses and

⁹³ (Beverly Stallard Doremus, 1998)

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Paepcke, unknown interviewer, July 1986, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

⁹⁵ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁹⁶ See for instance *Aspen Democratic Times*, 23 May 1919, p.4.

collected approximately ten cents for every gallon of milk she sold.⁹⁷ To supplement the dairy income, Mary Ella also gathered eggs from her chicken coop in the east yard and sold them throughout the neighborhood.⁹⁸

Though the yard of the Bleeker Street house primarily served as a workplace for the family, it could sometimes be a place for having fun. The Wilcox girls spent most of their after school time laboring to feed the family, but they occasionally finished their chores early and enjoyed free time to play outdoors. During these brief moments of leisure, Louiva Wilcox ventured to the small horse barn adjoining the dairy barn to play with Wootsy, the little Hamiltonian pony that Mary Ella Stallard purchased for her in the early 1920s. Louiva and her sisters often played together in the yard and they sometimes joined other Aspen children to play games like “kick the can” and “run sheep, run” in the dusty West End streets.⁹⁹ Though Charles Grover, a resident of the West End during the Quiet Years, remembered that his mother forbade him to play with the Austrian and Italian children because she claimed they were a bad influence, Louiva Wilcox and her sisters played with children from all ethnic and class backgrounds.¹⁰⁰ Every evening, children from the poor immigrant families of the East End walked all the way to west Bleeker Street to play with West End children under the streetlights. In a community where almost every family faced hardships and poverty, strict class distinctions of the previous era had seemingly lost most of their validity and meaningfulness.

Conclusion

The Quiet Years marked a dramatic change in Aspen domestic life. After the end of the boom era, economic survival took precedence over conspicuous displays of status in the average home. This change manifested itself in the Stallard household. The grand mining-era Wheeler house that once proclaimed the wealth and social status of Aspen’s elite, became a workplace where the family labored constantly to generate the income it needed for daily survival. At the same time, the domestic roles of Aspen women also

⁹⁷ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1995)

⁹⁸ (Louiva Wilcox Stapleton, 1998)

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ (Charles Grover, 1991)

underwent a profound transformation. Unlike her Victorian predecessors, Mary Ella Stallard did not have the resources to engage in leisure activities or focus her energy on promoting her family's social status. Rather, financial circumstances forced her to turn the domestic sphere into an income-producing operation in which her labor became just as integral to the family's economic well being as Edgar Stallard's work in the public sphere. Certainly, all of these changes resulted in profound differences in the function, appearance and symbolic meaning of the Wheeler house, but the new economic and cultural trends that began to take shape in Aspen after 1945 led to an even more radical transformation for the old house.

IV. Aspen's Rebirth: The Wheeler-Stallard House After 1945

On Memorial Day of 1945, Walter Paepcke, a wealthy Chicago businessman and the president of the Container Corporation of America, arrived in Aspen with his wife, Elizabeth. What the couple saw captured their imagination. For years, the cultured Paepckes dreamed of creating an American music festival that could serve as a counterpart to the renowned Salzburg festival held in the mountains of Austria. The pristine beauty of the mountain wilderness surrounding the Roaring Fork Valley suggested that Aspen would be a prime location for such an undertaking.¹ But in the Paepckes' eyes, the town itself was somewhat less promising. Many of the town's Victorian homes and buildings, the relics of its prosperous silver mining era, lay vacant and dilapidated. Homes that remained inhabited throughout the Quiet Years era were equally run down and mazes of decaying barns, chicken coops, and sheds cluttered almost every property.²

Walter Paepcke realized that Aspen's economic rejuvenation and the restoration of its Victorian character was essential if the town was to become the center of his musical utopia. He called a meeting of town residents and outlined his plans for the future, including his desire to stimulate the economy by turning local resources such as silver and Aspen wood into novelty items to sell to tourists. He provided free paint to town residents who would agree to spruce up their houses, but Aspenites resented his intervention and few took advantage of his offer. For the time being, Paepcke remained content with purchasing the Hotel Jerome and eighteen other Aspen properties that he renovated with the help of Herbert Bayer, the Bauhaus architect he imported from Chicago.³

¹ Sidney Hyman, *The Aspen Idea* (Norman, OK: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 33.

² *Ibid.*, 27-42.

³ *Ibid.*

On a sunny day during the summer of 1945, the Wheeler-Stallard house became part of the Paepckes' growing dominion. Judge William Shaw, a longtime Aspen resident, informed Walter and Elizabeth that Mary Ella Stallard had moved out of the home and that she might be willing to sell it at a low price. When Walter Paepcke showed interest, Shaw took the couple to the home and jimmied a first floor window open to gain access to the interior. On first glance, the old house appeared to be a renovation nightmare—many of the wooden fireplaces had been boarded up, some mantels had been stripped away, and the plaster on the walls sagged. Open umbrellas covered the few remaining pieces of furniture to protect them from the rainwater that leaked through the ceilings. When Elizabeth Paepcke attempted to walk up the front staircase to the second level, old letters and papers that had been stored in the third-floor attic room rained down on her like confetti.⁴ Despite the home's ramshackle appearance, Elizabeth, who had been trained as a designer and architect, thought that it had potential. For reasons unknown, the couple did not purchase the home directly from Mary Ella Stallard. Rather, they enlisted the help of William Tagert, an old Aspen resident and one of Walter's new business colleagues, to contract to buy the house. On July 19, 1945, Mary Ella sold the house to Tagert and he promptly turned it over to Paepcke the same day. A year later, Paepcke consolidated the house, along with his other Aspen properties and enterprises, to form the Aspen Company.⁵

At the same time that he was purchasing West End properties, Walter Paepcke joined forces with Friedl Pfeifer, a 10th Mountain Division veteran and avid promoter of the local ski industry, to create the Aspen Skiing Corporation. In January of 1947 the Aspen ski resort, developed by the Skiing Corporation and boasting the longest ski lift in the world, celebrated its grand opening. While the Paepckes pursued their cultural interests and began preparations for the 1949 Goethe Bicentennial, Aspen gradually

⁴ Elizabeth Paepcke, unknown interviewer, July 1986, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

⁵ Quit Claim Deed, 19 July 1945, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 170, p. 231. In 1959, the Aspen Company sold the corner lots H and I to Bertram and Maxine Bidwell for "\$10 and other valuable considerations," on the condition that the lots would only be used for constructing a private residence. Under the covenant, the Bidwells had to have Aspen Company approval for any house they built. In 1961, Bert Bidwell sold the lots to Robert S. McCollum who then sold them to Alvin Eurich, president of the Aspen Institute, in 1964. (See Quit Claim Deed, 19 September 1961, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 189, p. 215, and Quit Claim Deed, 1 May 1964, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office, Book 208, p. 269.)

garnered a reputation as a world-class ski resort; the First Annual Roch Cup Race in 1947 and the 1950 FIS World Ski Championships attracted hundreds of people to the town and gave the resort valuable international exposure.⁶ As a natural outgrowth of this early fame, hundreds of skiers and tourists began to flock to the little town every winter. Though the newly renovated Hotel Jerome could house some guests, the Aspen Company often had to find alternative accommodations for extra skiers. The Company solved this problem by converting several of its satellite properties, most of which were West End Victorian homes purchased by the Paepckes in the mid 1940s, into guest housing facilities.⁷

The Wheeler-Stallard house came to play a small but integral role in this rebirth of Aspen. Though the function of the house and the exact changes it underwent in the period shortly after the Paepckes purchased it remain unclear, by 1952 it served as one of several of the Aspen Company's overflow guest houses. Obviously, the original condition of the house required the Paepckes and the Company to undertake a significant amount of restoration work before it could be inhabited. Elizabeth Paepcke recalled tearing the original plaster off of the walls and replacing it with sheet rock. Unfortunately, no records indicate which walls or parts of the house were sheet-rocked over.⁸ Likewise, she removed the remnants of the original fireplaces in the parlor and dining rooms and replaced them with mantels taken from the Gillespie "Ghost House" property in Aspen that she and Walter owned.⁹ It also appears that Elizabeth or one of the

⁶ Sally Barlow-Perez, *A History of Aspen* (Aspen, CO: Who Press, 1991), 47-50.

⁷ King R. Woodward, interviewed by the author, 9 July 1998, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

⁸ (Elizabeth Paepcke, 1986) This oral history is basically a walkthrough of the house with Elizabeth Paepcke. Unfortunately, the interviewer neglected to indicate on the tape which object or portion of the house was being talked about. Also, the tape is extremely unintelligible. Therefore, when Paepcke indicates that she made changes to certain walls in the house, it is sometimes impossible to determine which ones she is referring to.

⁹ (Elizabeth Paepcke, 1986) The origin of the mantels in the dining room and parlor remains somewhat of a controversy. Louiva Stapleton, who belonged to the Aspen Historical Society for several years, asserted in both her interviews that the Paepckes took the mantels from an old hotel in Chicago that was torn down. Perhaps there may be some confusion with the Hotel Jerome—the Paepckes installed old mantels, fixtures and furniture removed during the renovation of Chicago's Palmer House hotel in the Hotel Jerome. In her interview, Mrs. Paepcke, referring to the mantelpieces downstairs, clearly remarks, that "these mantle pieces came out of an old house that we [Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke] had which was called the Ghost house," and then goes on to explain where that house once stood in Aspen. Certainly, Paepcke's recollection may have been mistaken, but since she herself was responsible for the installation of the mantelpieces, I have chosen to adopt the view that they did come from the Ghost House.

workers she hired removed the mantels in the first-floor backroom and in the east and west bedrooms and blocked up the fireplace holes. Elizabeth also noted that in an effort to save time and money, one of the architects in charge of the renovation might have simply closed up the doorway between the bottom of the servants' stairs and the kitchen. It also appears that the door between the foyer and backroom was blocked off and the current bathroom adjacent to the backroom was added during this time. Since the home also contained a modern kitchen during the early 1950s, it is also likely that the Paepckes began renovating and modernizing it during the late 1940s. It is unclear, however, if these changes occurred during this first renovation or during a later remodeling. The modernization of the old north bathroom and the installation of another bathroom in the storage closet across from the south bedroom may have also taken place at this time. Elizabeth Paepcke also remembered repairing, finishing, and remodeling the attic room during this first renovation.¹⁰

By 1952, the Paepckes' remodeling work had transformed the Wheeler-Stallard house into a habitable and comfortable haven for visiting skiers. Merrill Ford, who came with her husband from Detroit to ski in Aspen during the winter of 1952, stayed in the house and remembered the experience fondly. Ford and about eight relatives and friends, including Dan Holly, the inventor of the first metallic ski, and his brother, rented the house for approximately one week. Typically, no hotel staff resided in the Aspen Company's guesthouses. Guests simply arrived at the Hotel Jerome, checked in, picked up a key, and were directed to their guesthouse. Once it arrived, a group of skiers generally had free rein of the Wheeler-Stallard house. The parlor and dining room of the home served as common areas for the guests to talk and relax. In fact, during Ford's visit the parlor was the site of an informal party attended by several members of the Skiing Corporation. Friedl Pfeifer, Frank Iselin, Maury Shepard and perhaps even Johnny Litchfield, the owner of the Red Onion, were among the visitors to the old house that night. The function of the current modern kitchen during this period is less clear. Though Ford remembered that the kitchen was in place and available to guests, it was seldom used—instead, everyone walked or drove to the Hotel Jerome dining room to eat their

¹⁰ Ibid.

meals. On the second floor, the south, east, west and servants' rooms all served as guest bedrooms. Guests residing in the south bedroom may have used a newly installed bathroom across the hall in the old storage closet while other guests shared the narrow north bathroom. Merrill Ford and her husband shared the large center room on the third floor—the doors to the three rooms under the gables were shut and locked—and used the north bathroom on the second floor. Maids from the Hotel Jerome came to the house everyday and cleaned it before the skiers came home in the evening.¹¹

Within a few years, the Wheeler-Stallard house began to serve in a different moneymaking capacity for the Aspen Company. Sometime between the winter of 1952 and the summer of 1956, the home became employee housing for the Hotel Jerome. This was an extremely common fate for many of the Aspen Company's West End properties. In the 1950s, the Aspen Company paid its employees fairly low wages but gave them special perquisites like free housing and meals. Given the abundance of the Company's satellite properties and the relatively low cost of maintaining them, almost all of its employees received company housing of some kind.¹²

During the summer of 1956, Henri Cashid, a chef from the Alsace-Lorraine region of France prepared all the meals for the dining room at the Hotel Jerome. Though Cashid was a superb cook, he became known for his fiery disposition and ill temper. In fact, on particularly busy nights, he would storm out of the kitchen and imbibe a shot of brandy in the Jerome bar. He sometimes repeated this ritual three or four times in a single night. Despite Cashid's flaws, his cooking skills won him the position of head chef and, in addition to his salary, the Aspen Company allowed him and his French wife to occupy the Wheeler-Stallard house free of charge. According to one account, the Cashids closed the doors between the foyer and parlor and resided on the lower floor.¹³ An interview with Elizabeth Paepcke seems to indicate that the couple used one of the rooms on the lower floor (perhaps the dining room or backroom) as their bedroom, but other accounts

¹¹ Merrill Ford, interviewed by the author, 15 September 1998, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

¹² (King Woodward, 1998)

¹³ Ibid.

assert that the couple may have used one or two of the large bedrooms on the second floor.¹⁴

While Elizabeth Paepcke stated that the unused upstairs rooms continued to serve as overflow guest housing for the Jerome, they were definitely converted into employee housing during the summer of 1956. King Woodward, a longtime Aspen resident, served as maitre d' at the Hotel Jerome dining room during this period and remembered that four or five female waitresses lived on both the second and third floors of the house. As the headwaiter, Woodward was responsible for making sure that the women came to work on time. The company installed a communal phone in the foyer or second-floor hallway and Woodward called any waitress who failed to arrive at the hotel fifteen minutes before her shift. On some occasions when the dining room staff was especially shorthanded, Woodward drove to the Wheeler-Stallard house and personally roused late waitresses from their beds and drove them to work. Very little is known about the activities of the female employees within the house. According to Woodward, they probably never used the cooking facilities in the house. Not only did Henri Cashid and his wife have the only access to the modern kitchen, but most Hotel Jerome employees ate one free meal during their shifts and opted to eat all other meals at the inexpensive, company-run, cafeteria in downtown Aspen. Very few of the waitresses could afford cars, so most of them walked or bicycled to the Jerome and the Company's downtown facilities to work and take their meals.¹⁵

At the same time that Aspen's ski industry flourished, the cultural and intellectual institutions started by Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke in the late 1940s also showed progress. In particular, the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, an outgrowth of the Goethe Bicentennial, expanded throughout the 1950s. Though the Paepckes originally designed the Institute as a forum for addressing issues in the humanities, science, theology, government, and labor, the Institute's participants, intent upon bringing positive change to the world of commerce, soon targeted businessmen. In 1951, the Executive Seminar, possibly the most popular and influential Institute program, began drawing the nation's captains of industry to the small town on the Roaring Fork. When the Container

¹⁴ Ibid.; (Elizabeth Paepcke, 1986)

¹⁵ Ibid.

Corporation of America's expansion in Europe forced Walter Paepcke to pay less attention to his Aspen interests, he gave leadership of the Institute to Robert O. Anderson, an oil tycoon who had been a trustee of the organization for several years. Anderson changed the direction of the Institute by shifting its focus away from being a community center for Aspen and pursuing a broader world outlook and creating more international programs. In a few years, the Institute's growth and success warranted the construction of a permanent home in Aspen and in 1963, the Meadows, an extensive complex that included seminar rooms, a restaurant, lodge, and health club was constructed on the edge of Aspen's West End.¹⁶

Interestingly, the Wheeler-Stallard house played a small but important role in the Institute's development during the 1960s. While no record of the house's function during the period between 1956 and 1963 exists, it is probably safe to assume that it continued to serve as guest or employee housing for the Aspen Company. At some point during this time, however, Elizabeth Paepcke, who controlled many of her husband's properties when she became a trustee of his estate after his death in 1961, decided that the old house should serve a more illustrious purpose—in 1963 she and Robert Anderson apparently agreed that it would become the future home of Alvin Eurich, the first president of the Aspen Institute.¹⁷

Transforming the house into a residence worthy of the Institute's most important and respected officer required an immense amount of effort and money. Elizabeth Paepcke, eager to support the organization that she and her husband had helped to found almost thirteen years before, personally supervised and financed the restoration.¹⁸ Making the house structurally sound was the first item on her agenda. According to Paepcke, the architect in charge of the earlier renovation completely neglected to repair the basement and foundations. "You could see daylight four ways through the stone," she lamented, "can you imagine what happened in winter? Everything froze up, all the pipes and

¹⁶ Barlow-Perez, 52-64; 71-72.

¹⁷ (Elizabeth Paepcke, 1986)

¹⁸ Ibid.

everything. They were always renewing the pipes and never repairing the basement.”¹⁹
To rectify this situation, Paepcke began with the reconstruction of the stone foundations.

The exact nature of her other renovation work during this time remains unclear. It appears that Paepcke did undertake some significant exterior renovations. She remarked that the Eurichs, the future residents of the house, disliked the way the porch wrapped around the house to the door of the modern kitchen. Apparently, either they or Paepcke removed the section of the porch between the backroom door and the modern kitchen door during this time. The date of most of the interior renovation measures is unknown. The removal of the three fireplaces, the addition of the bathrooms downstairs and in the south storage closet, the removal of the doorways in the foyer and servants’ hallway and the installation of the current parquet flooring could have taken place during either the late 1940s renovation or the 1963 renovation. It is certain, however, that Paepcke installed much of the current décor during the 1963 renovation—the black foyer wallpaper, the gold wallpaper in the parlor and dining room, and the black woodwork are all products of her decorating taste. Though Elizabeth Paepcke saved some money during the renovation because her status as a professional designer allowed her to buy many of the decorating materials wholesale at Chicago merchandise marts, the project still cost her the princely sum of \$38,000.²⁰ It appears that she then “sold” the house to Robert Anderson—the Institute reimbursed her for the costs she incurred during the renovation, as well as the money she and Walter had paid for the house and land in order to obtain the right to use the house—but the house remained under the ownership of the Walter Paepcke Life Insurance Trust.²¹

On November 15, 1963, the executive committee of the Aspen Institute appointed Dr. Alvin C. Eurich as the organization’s first president.²² In Eurich, the Institute found a man of immense intellectual capabilities and extensive experience in the fields of education and business. A former psychology professor at Stanford University, Eurich

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. No record of the “sale” between Paepcke and the Institute was recorded in county records. For evidence that the house remained under the ownership of the Paepcke Trust, see Deed of Trust, 18 November 1969, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder’s Office, Book 244, p. 566.

²² *Aspen Times*, 22 November 1963, p. 1. Before Eurich’s appointment, the Institute had a director, but no president.

rose through the ranks to become Stanford's executive vice-president and later served as its acting president. A few years later, he became the first president of the State University of New York and brought thirty-two state colleges together to form a unified state university system. At various times, he was also a member of the Hoover Commission on the Reorganization of the Executive Branch, Truman's Commission on Higher Education, and Kennedy's Task Force on Education. He acted as a consultant for NASA, the Surgeon General, and the Peace Corps while simultaneously serving on the board of directors of the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company, the Commercial Bank of North America, and the Prentice-Hall Publishing Company. After serving as the vice-president and director of the Fund for the Advancement of Education, he made his most significant foray into the business world in 1958 when he agreed to head the Ford Foundation Fund for the Advancement of Education.²³ Despite the large amount of resources at his disposal at Ford, bureaucratic obstacles frustrated Eurich's attempts to institute meaningful or innovative educational programs. When offered the presidency of the smaller, more flexible Aspen Institute, Eurich, enthusiastic about the organization's potential for educational experimentation, readily accepted the position.²⁴

Dr. Nell Eurich, Alvin's brilliant and vivacious wife, accompanied him to Aspen in 1964. A woman of immense intellect, Nell Eurich met her future husband when she was a student in his psychology class at Stanford.²⁵ Though she was several years younger than her husband, she matched him in educational accomplishments. She earned her Ph.D. at Columbia University where she specialized in seventeenth-century English literature and she later taught at New York University. She served as the director of the Special Committee on Liberal Studies of the American Association of Colleges and was a member of the fellowship selection committee for the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1952, she became the acting president of Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri and later served as the academic dean of New College in Sarasota, Florida. At the time that Alvin Eurich received his appointment with the Aspen Institute, Nell Eurich

²³ Hyman, 173.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁵ Joan Fitzpatrick, interviewed by the author, 16 July 1998, at the Wheeler-Stallard House, Aspen, Colorado.

was a member of the board of trustees of New College and was working on her first book, *Science in Utopia*.²⁶

Sometime during the summer of 1964 Alvin and Nell Eurich and their two children, Julie, age thirteen, and Donald, age ten, moved into the Wheeler-Stallard house. Though the family maintained an expensive apartment in New York City and a house in Sherman, Connecticut, the old Aspen mansion became their permanent home during the remainder of Alvin Eurich's term as the Institute president. Elizabeth Paepcke loaned the family several pieces of Victorian furniture from her Aspen homes, but the Eurichs primarily furnished the house with up-scale, modern furniture from their New York apartment.²⁷ Joan Fitzpatrick, Alvin Eurich's personal secretary, remembered that the family had a large grand piano in the parlor and a long dining table in the dining room. On the second floor, Alvin and Nell shared the south bedroom, while Donald and Julie occupied the east and west bedrooms. The family's British live-in cook resided in the small north bedroom in the servants' quarters. Nell Eurich, whose educational and academic work continued after the move to Aspen, converted the third-floor attic room into an office complete with desks and bookshelves.²⁸

Little is known about the Eurichs' home life. A New Yorker at heart, Nell Eurich disliked the quiet and often slow-paced life of the mountain town. To occupy herself, she became heavily involved with improving Aspen High School and eventually reorganized its entire curriculum and instituted at least one new summer program.²⁹ On occasion, she also entertained her husband's prominent friends, including Herbert and Joella Bayer, at dinners at the house.³⁰ It also appears that the Eurichs' children spent little time in Aspen with their parents—by 1966, Julie attended the Milton Academy in Massachusetts while Donald was sent to a private school in Michigan.³¹

The Wheeler-Stallard house also became a venue for Aspen Institute entertaining. According to Joan Fitzpatrick, the Institute wanted to expand conference participants' experiences in Aspen beyond the Meadows building and to establish a more personal,

²⁶ *Aspen Times*, 1 December 1966, p. 1.

²⁷ (Elizabeth Paepcke, 1986); (Joan Fitzpatrick, 1998)

²⁸ (Joan Fitzpatrick, 1998)

²⁹ Hyman, 175; *Aspen Times*, 1 December 1966, p. 1.

³⁰ (Joan Fitzpatrick, 1998)

familiar relationship between participants and Institute officers. As a result, the Eurichs began to host the opening cocktail receptions of the Institute's summer conferences in their home.³² Depending on the weather or size of the party, the receptions were either held in the house or on the east lawn. Staff from the Aspen Meadows set up a makeshift bar and appetizer table in the dining room for indoor parties and on a flagstone patio that once stood on the east side of the house for outdoor receptions.³³ After mingling and enjoying cocktails, the conference members and staff typically returned to the Meadows for dinner.³⁴

Of course, entertaining was only a secondary concern for Alvin Eurich—much of his time and energy was spent expanding and reinvigorating the Institute's educational programs. Eurich had lofty aspirations for the Institute. "I am convinced," he wrote to Robert Anderson in 1963, "that we can make Aspen the outstanding international center in the humanities... We don't want large numbers; we want Aspen to be distinctive in its purposes, people, and its influence on the intellectual life of our time."³⁵ During the first year of his presidency, time and financial constraints prevented Eurich from expanding Institute programs in any meaningful way. But one year later, many of his plans for the organization began to take shape. In 1965, Eurich, assisted by the board of trustees and Robert Anderson, developed a new fundraising system and initiated the Institute's first Artists-in-Residence program. Dismayed by the program of intermittent, disconnected Institute conferences, Eurich also began organizing the different meetings into thematic categories and giving each set of conferences an identifying name. Eurich and Anderson hoped that by creating a series of sustained conferences with consistent themes, the Institute would attract a nucleus of continuing participants who would come together every year and update each other on their new findings in the field. The "Man in 1980" program, a sustained series of conferences that addressed the population, ethical, and

³¹ *Aspen Times*, 1 December 1966, p. 1.

³² (Joan Fitzpatrick, 1998)

³³ The flagstone porch adjoined the east porch. It stood on the current site of the concrete patio.

³⁴ (King Woodward, 1998)

³⁵ Hyman, 174.

education problems that might face humankind in the future, was the most significant outgrowth of Eurich's work.³⁶

By 1966, only two years after his initial appointment as president, Alvin Eurich became disconcerted by the financial instability of the Institute and decided that there was little more he could do for the organization without a steady, substantial budget. In addition, his outside interests, including the Academy for Educational Development that he founded while working in Aspen, consumed much of his time and attention. In a friendly meeting with Robert Anderson in November of 1966, Eurich decided that he would resign the presidency, but would remain on the Institute's board of trustees. Until his successor was named, Eurich worked with Anderson to convince the other trustees to remedy the organization's financial woes by adopting a balanced budget initiative and forging institutional ties with an outside university.³⁷ But Eurich's duties no longer kept him in Aspen. In the winter of 1966, the family rented an apartment in New York City. It was during this time away from Aspen that Nell Eurich was named Dean of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York and anticipated beginning her new position in January of 1967.³⁸ Nell's new career, combined with Alvin's projects on the east coast, made remaining in Aspen impossible and it appears that sometime between the winter and summer of 1967, the family vacated the Wheeler-Stallard house to move back to New York.

The Wheeler-Stallard house's small role in the Institute was short-lived—after Eurich's brief presidency, no other president lived in the house. From 1967-1968, William Stevenson, a former ambassador to the Philippines and former president of Oberlin College, served as the interim president until a replacement for Eurich could be found, but he never occupied the house. In 1968, Joseph Slater ascended to the position and moved both the presidency and the Institute's headquarters to New York, making a president's home in Aspen unnecessary.³⁹

But new circumstances ensured that the house would continue to play a part in Aspen's cultural development. In 1968, the Aspen Historical Society leased the house

³⁶ Ibid., 175-212.

³⁷ Ibid., 216-220.

³⁸ *Aspen Times*, 1 December 1966, p. 1.

with an option to purchase it from the Paepcke Trust. The Society, which began in 1963, established several small historical exhibits in the City Hall and Wheeler Opera House and hoped to make the Wheeler-Stallard house a permanent home for Aspen artifacts. On January 25, 1969, the Society opened the house as a museum and within a few months, it raised nearly \$90,000 toward the \$140,000 purchase price.⁴⁰ Robert Anderson, on behalf of the Institute, donated the remaining \$50,000 needed to purchase the house and the Society officially bought the property in November of 1969.⁴¹ For the next thirty years, the Wheeler-Stallard house served as Aspen's only historical museum and the headquarters of the Aspen Historical Society. In 1976, the Society built the "Carriage House," the building that currently serves as the Society archives, on the north side of the property for a cost of about \$24,000.⁴² Initially run by volunteers, the Society now boasts a full-time staff and coordinates several community programs each year. Standing as a monument to both the upper-class men and women who helped build Aspen in the boom era and the average families that struggled through the Quiet Years, the Wheeler-Stallard house educates residents and visitors alike about the town's long and diverse history. In its own small way, it continues to contribute to Aspen's ongoing cultural expansion.

³⁹ (King Woodward, 1998)

⁴⁰ "Wheeler-Stallard House Renovation Project," memo in the Wheeler-Stallard House file, Aspen Historical Society; "Statement by Romona Markalunas," 1974, memo in the Wheeler-Stallard House file, Aspen Historical Society.

⁴¹ "Wheeler-Stallard House Renovation Project"

⁴² *Ibid.*; (Elizabeth Paepcke, 1986) It remains unclear whether Anderson donated the money outright or if he simply gave the portion of the house purchased by the Institute from Mrs. Paepcke in the early 1960s (see footnote twenty-one in this chapter), to the Society at no charge.

V. Conclusion

When longtime Aspen residents are asked to talk about their impressions of modern Aspen, many of their responses bear distinct similarities. Most respondents remark upon the profound changes Aspen has undergone since the early twentieth century; the fast pace of modern life, the new people coming and going, and the transformations in the physical appearance and economy of the town stand in stark contrast to the conditions of the Quiet Years. Violet Ritchie Lavey, a longtime Aspen resident commenting upon the changes in her hometown, distilled the sentiments of most old timers when she noted sadly that “Aspen isn’t Aspen anymore.”¹

But in a sense, the change that the survivors of the Quiet Years now lament has always been a feature of life in Aspen. Most notably, the town has grown, evolved, and changed economically over the last century. Within a few years of its founding, the wealth and influence of eastern businessmen transformed Aspen from a small, unprofitable, mining camp, into one of the most prolific silver producing districts in the country. With the failure of the silver market, the town itself witnessed a decline in prosperity and wealth, which ultimately culminated in the economic depression and doldrums of the Quiet Years. In many ways, the “rediscovery” of Aspen in the late 1940s and its transformation into a ski resort constituted its economic resurrection. Naturally, these fluctuations in broad economic trends also led to dramatic changes in other aspects of town life. As many historians of Aspen have noted, the character of the town’s cultural institutions, the class and social distinctions among its residents, and even its physical appearance have often been inextricably linked to the ebb and flow of the local economy.

Though economic trends both in Aspen and the mountain west resulted in town-wide changes, it is important not to overlook the influences they had on the daily, domestic lives of Aspen’s inhabitants. In many ways, studying and interpreting the Wheeler-Stallard house provides valuable insight into this evolution of home life in the town. Examining the house’s place within the context of the Victorian silver boom era,

¹ Frank Garrish and Violet Ritchie Lavey, unknown interviewer, no date, Aspen, Colorado, tape recording, AHS.

reveals that for upper-class families, homebuilding and domestic life centered almost entirely around conspicuous displays of wealth and maintaining strict class distinctions. The decline of silver, while it diminished the upper-class presence in Aspen, simultaneously led to changes in the function of the house during the Quiet Years. In an era when mere economic well being supplanted broadcasting social status as the primary concern of domestic life, the Stallard family transformed the house into a workplace where the labor of women and children on the domestic front was just as crucial to the family's survival as men's work in the public, commercial sphere. Likewise, the 1940s and the arrival of the Paepckes brought profound change to the town, converting both the Wheeler-Stallard house and other Aspen homes from traditionally domestic venues into commercial assets that contributed to the town's economic and cultural rebirth. In this manner, both the functions of the house and life within its walls mirrored the daily economic realities faced by Aspen residents.

Ultimately, this study reveals that the Wheeler-Stallard house, as it stands today, is an important historical "document." On one level, it demonstrates the ways domestic life both evolved with and reflected the larger trends in economics that shaped the character of the town. But, by rigorously analyzing and interpreting the shape, function, and appearance of the house we also gain a better appreciation of the variety of Aspenites' concerns, ideals, and goals as they confronted the constantly changing environment of the town over the last century. Restoring the Wheeler-Stallard house then, not only constitutes breathing new life into an old residence, it is also a significant step toward expanding our understanding of daily life in this dynamic and diverse mountain community.

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Appendix A:

Dates of the Wheeler-Stallard House

Dates of the Wheeler-Stallard House

- May 20, 1886 - July 14, 1886- Block 23 purchased by Jerome Wheeler
- Sometime before March 1890 - House built
- Sometime Between Jan. 1889 and March 1890: Occupied by James Henry Devereux and family (secretary of the Roaring Fork Light and Power Company married to Mary Crocker Brown, sister of D.R.C. Brown)
- Starting March 1890 ending around March 1892: Occupied by Henry R. Woodward and family (Jerome Wheeler's agent managing his Aspen industries)
- August 24, 1892 – sold to Mrs. Charlotte M. Valentine, Jerome Wheeler's mother-in-law, for \$20,000 (It appears that the house remained vacant from at least this time until 1905 when the Bells allowed the Stallards to move in)
- June 30, 1896- sold by Valentine to Dr. Christopher M. Bell for \$5,000, and upon his death in 1902 transferred to Dennistoun Bell, his son
- 1905 – Stallard family moves into house
- February 1917 – Rancher Fred Light purchased the house for back taxes (around \$150) and then sold it to Mary Ella Stallard for the same amount
- July 1945 – Mary Ella Stallard sells house to W.C. Tagert who immediately sold it to Walter Paepcke.
- Sometime between 1945 and early 1952 – house is renovated by the Aspen Company to be overflow guest housing for the Hotel Jerome.
- Summer 1956 – the house serves as employee housing for Henri Cashid, the chef at the Hotel Jerome, and his wife, as well as four or five waitresses from the Jerome dining room.
- 1960 – Upon Mr. Paepcke's death, it became part of his Life Insurance Trust
- 1963 or early 1964 - Elizabeth Paepcke spent \$38,000 redecorating the house for the Aspen Institute, to house Alvin Eurich, the president of the Aspen Institute, and his family.
- 1968 – leased to the Aspen Historical Society by the trustees of the Walter Paepcke's Life Insurance Trust
- 1969 – purchased by the Aspen Historical Society from the Paepcke Trust.

Appendix B:

Family Trees of House Residents

I. Jerome Wheeler

David Barker Wheeler married **Mary Jones Emerson**
Born: ?, Massachusetts Born: ?, Massachusetts

Jerome Byron Wheeler married **Harriet Macy Valentine**
Born: 3 September 1841, Troy, New York Born: ?, Nantucket Island,
Died: 1 December 1918, Manitou Springs, Colorado Massachusetts
Died: May 1916, Manitou
Springs, Colorado

— **Mary Wheeler**
Born: ?
Died: ?

— **Elsie Wheeler**
Born: ?
Died: ?
Married: D.H. Rupp

— **Child that died before 1889**

— **Child that died before 1889**

II. Harriet Macy Valentine

Thomas Macy

John Macy

Richard Macy

Caleb Macy

Silvanus Macy

John Macy Married
Born: ?, Nantucket Island (7 August, 1808)

Eliza Myrick Barnard
Born: 3 May 1790, Nantucket Island
Widow of Thomas Barnard

1. Charles B. Macy

Born: 20 March 1812, Nantucket Island, Mass.
Died: 27 May 1856, Marysville, California

2. Andrew M. Macy

Born: 13 October 1814, Nantucket Island, Mass.
Died: 6 October 1853, San Francisco, California

3. Robert B. Macy

Born: 3 September 1820, Nantucket Island, Mass.

4. Rowland Hussey Macy (founder of Macy's)

Born: 30 August 1822, Nantucket Island, Mass.
Died: March 29, 1877, Paris, France

5. Harriett Macy

Born: 11 January 1825, Nantucket Island, Mass.

(continued on next page)

6. Charlotte M. Macy

Born: 7 January 1827, Nantucket Island, Mass.

married

David M. Valentine

(25 January, 1846)

1. Robert Macy Valentine

Born: 10 November 1850, Boston, Mass.

Died: 15 February 1879, New York City, New York

2. Harriet Macy Valentine

Born: ?, Nantucket Island

Died: May 1916, Manitou Springs, Colorado.

III. James Henry Devereux

Alvin Devereux Sr.

married

Julia Tanner

1. **Alvin Devereux Jr.**

(suffered from mental illness)

2. **Walter Bouchier Devereux**

married

Born: 5 December 1853, Deposit, New York
Died: 19 September 1934

Mary Porter Gregory

Born: New York

3. **James Henry Devereux**

married

Born: 4 March 1857, Deposit, New York (22 March 1887)
Died: 13 June 1931, Northampton, Mass.

Mary Crocker Brown

Born: ?, New Brunswick,
Canada
Died: ?

4. **Horace K. Devereux**

Born: 1859, Deposit, New York
Died: 1937, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Friend of Theodore Roosevelt, wounded
at the battle of San Juan Hill, never married,
died at the Broadmoor Hotel of heart failure

Sister of D.R.C. Brown

5. **Olivia Devereux**

6. **Paul Devereux**

Died: 1895, Denver, of tuberculosis after
following his brothers to Colorado to
work as a stockbroker

1. **Dorothy Devereux**

Born: 1888

2. **James Henry Devereux Jr.**

Born: 1892

3. **Mary Crocker Devereux**

Born: 1893

IV. The Stallards

David Pitts Stallard

Born: c. 1820, Virginia

married

Jane S. Millam

1. Edgar Stallard

Born: 18 April 1853, Culpeper Co., Virginia
Died: 23 May 1925, Aspen, CO.

married

14 March
1895

Mary Ella Pattison

Born: 8 December 1866 in
Watertown or Alexander Bay,
New York
Died: 23 April 1951, Aspen, CO.

2. Ivana Stallard

Born: 1856

3. David Pitts Stallard Jr.

Born: 1859

Traveled to Aspen with Edgar

1. Edgar Stallard Jr.

Born: 11 September 1896, Aspen, CO.
Died: 18 March 1897, Aspen, CO. of
Pneumonia

2. Robert Millam Stallard

Born: 31 January 1898, Aspen, CO.

Died: 24 October 1966, Pueblo

Married: May Elizabeth Freund, 24 May 1936

1. James Edgar Stallard

Born: 30 April 1939

3. David Pattison Stallard

Born: 30 March 1901, Aspen, CO.

Died: 22 June 1965, Sterling, CO.

Married: c. 1928, in Aspen CO., Mary Paulich

1. Marilyn Stallard (Birch)

Born: Aspen, CO.

4. Albert Young Stallard

Born: 1906, Aspen, CO.

Died: 10 July 1919, Aspen, CO. of diphtheria

2. Beverly Stallard (Doremus)

Born: 26 April 1930

V. Mary Ella Pattison and the Wilcox Girls

Will Pattison

Born: Canada

married

Bridget (?)

Born: County Cork, Ireland

1. **Teresa Pattison (Davis)**

2. **Mary Ella Pattison (Stallard)**

Born: 8 December 1866, Waterton or Alexander Bay, NY.

Died: 23 April 1951, Aspen, CO.

Married: Edgar Stallard, 14 March 1895 (see family tree IV)

3. **Prometcha Pattison (Bennett)** married

Born: 10 April 1870, Alexander Bay, NY. (25 December, 1890)

Died: 7 July 1908, Aspen, CO.

William Bennett

4. **Grace Pattison**

5. **Bertha Pattison (Solomon)**

1. **Fredericka Grace Bennett**

Born: c. 1893, Aspen, CO.

Died: 1918, Colbran, CO.

married

(19 July 1911, Aspen)

Gleenlee Wilcox

Born: Aspen, CO.

2. **Mary Bennett**

Born: c. 1896, Aspen, CO.

1. **Louiva Prometcha Wilcox**

Born: 28 October 1913, Colbran, CO.

married

William Stapleton

2. **Marie Wilcox**

Born: 1915, Colbran, CO.

3. **Ruth Wilcox**

Born: 1918, Colbran, CO.

Appendix C:

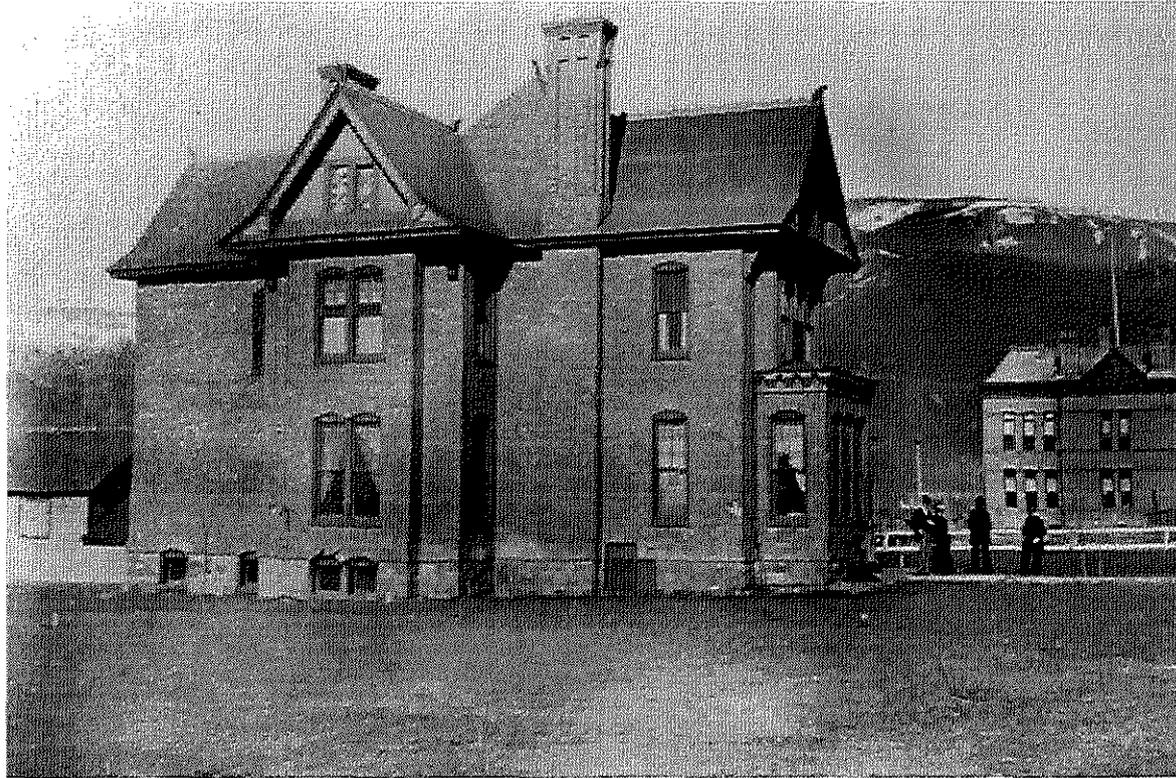
Photographs



The Devereux brothers, from left to right, Paul (who died of tuberculosis at a young age), Horace (a personal friend of Theodore Roosevelt and injured at the battle of San Juan Hill, he lived and mined in Aspen), J. Henry, (mining engineer in Aspen, resident of the Wheeler-Stallard House, married Mary Crocker Brown, D.R.C. Brown's sister), Walter, (Aspen's preeminent mining engineer in the mid to late 1880s, promoter of the Glenwood Springs hot springs, and founder of the Hotel Colorado), Alvin Jr., (suffered from mental illness, lived and died in Hancock, New York. This picture was reputedly taken in New York in 1888 before Walter Devereux left on his trip to the Far East. [Photograph from Len Shoemaker, "Roaring Fork Pioneers: Walter B. Devereux" *The 1962 Brand Book of the Denver Posse of the Westerners* vol. 18, ed. John J. Lipsey (Boulder, CO: Johnson Publishing Company, 1963), 57.]



This photograph originally appeared in an 1890 promotional book about Aspen that notes that it is the home of H.R. Woodward, Jerome Wheeler's agent. It illustrates the appearance of the original attached coal shed and the porch. In the original picture, one can just barely discern an unidentified person standing on the porch. It is likely that the picture was taken in the summer months because the family's outdoor chairs are visible on the east porch. (Photograph 64.7.37, Aspen Historical Society Collection)



This is one of the two earliest known photographs of the Wheeler house, believed to have been taken sometime in 1890 and was found in the collection of Colonel Bowman. This is probably the best photograph of the original roofline and roof trim. The massive Washington School can be seen just to the east of the house. The people in the photograph, three men, one woman, and two young children, remain unidentified. (Photograph 65.14.1, Aspen Historical Society Collection)



The house as it looked in 1907 when the Stallard family lived there. The child is Albert Young Stallard who was born in 1906 and died in 1919 at the age of twelve of diphtheria. The photograph shows the original attached coal shed (far right), the original appearance and dimensions of the porch, and the small enclosure around the front door is barely visible on the far left side of the porch. (Photograph 79.3.2, Aspen Historical Society Collection)



1926-1927. From left to right, Marie, Ruth, and Louiva Wilcox pose in front of the Stallard Christmas tree in the bay window of the parlor. The original moldings and floor coverings are just barely discernable. Mary Ella Stallard took this photo as well.
(Photograph 79.3.3, Aspen Historical Society Collection)



Early 1920s. From left to right, Marie, Ruth, and Louiva Wilcox, nieces of Edgar and Mary Ella Stallard, pose in front of the Christmas tree in the bay window of the parlor. It was taken by Mary Ella Stallard. The white lace window treatments, moldings and area rug covering the floor are visible. (Photograph 79.3.5, Aspen Historical Society Collection)



1908. From left to right, Robert, Albert and David Stallard pose in front of the family Christmas tree. It appears that the tree is in the parlor between the door into the servants' hallway and the door into the dining room. A patterned rug is visible as well as some of the moldings around the doors. Mary Ella Stallard, who was an avid amateur photographer, probably took the picture. (Photograph 79.3.4, Aspen Historical Society Collection)



From left to right, David Stallard, Freda Bennett, and Robert Stallard in front of the Stallard Christmas tree next to the parlor fireplace. The photo is dated 1913, but this is probably incorrect because David Stallard would have been twelve, Freda Bennett would have been in her early twenties and married, and Robert would have been fifteen in 1913. Given the young ages of the children and the absence of Albert Stallard (born in 1906), it is more probable the photo was taken much earlier, perhaps around 1905 or 1906. It was probably not taken earlier than this because it appears that the Stallards did not occupy the house until sometime in 1905. It might even be possible that Mary Bennett, not Freda, is the young girl in the picture. In 1905 or 1906, Freda would still have been thirteen or fourteen, much older than the girl in the photograph. This picture is particularly interesting because it shows the appearance of the original wooden mantel in the parlor, topped by a mirror and a shelf. The picture rail, wallpaper, and a patterned rug are also visible. (Photograph 79.31, Aspen Historical Society Collection)

Appendix D:

Maps and Floorplans

Sanborn Map, Block 23, March 1898

ON microfilm at the Colorado Hist. Society's

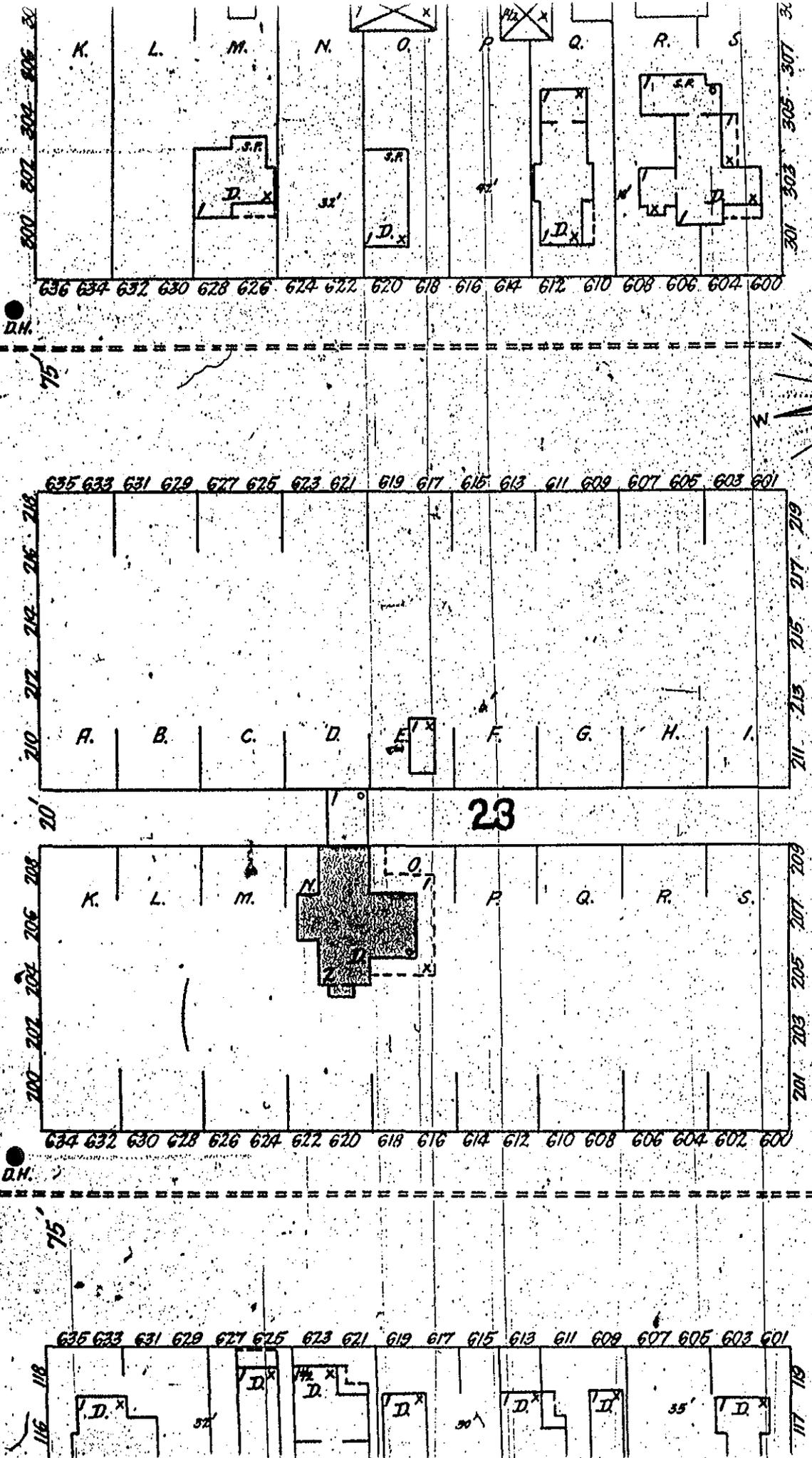
ST.

3

76

78

4 N E



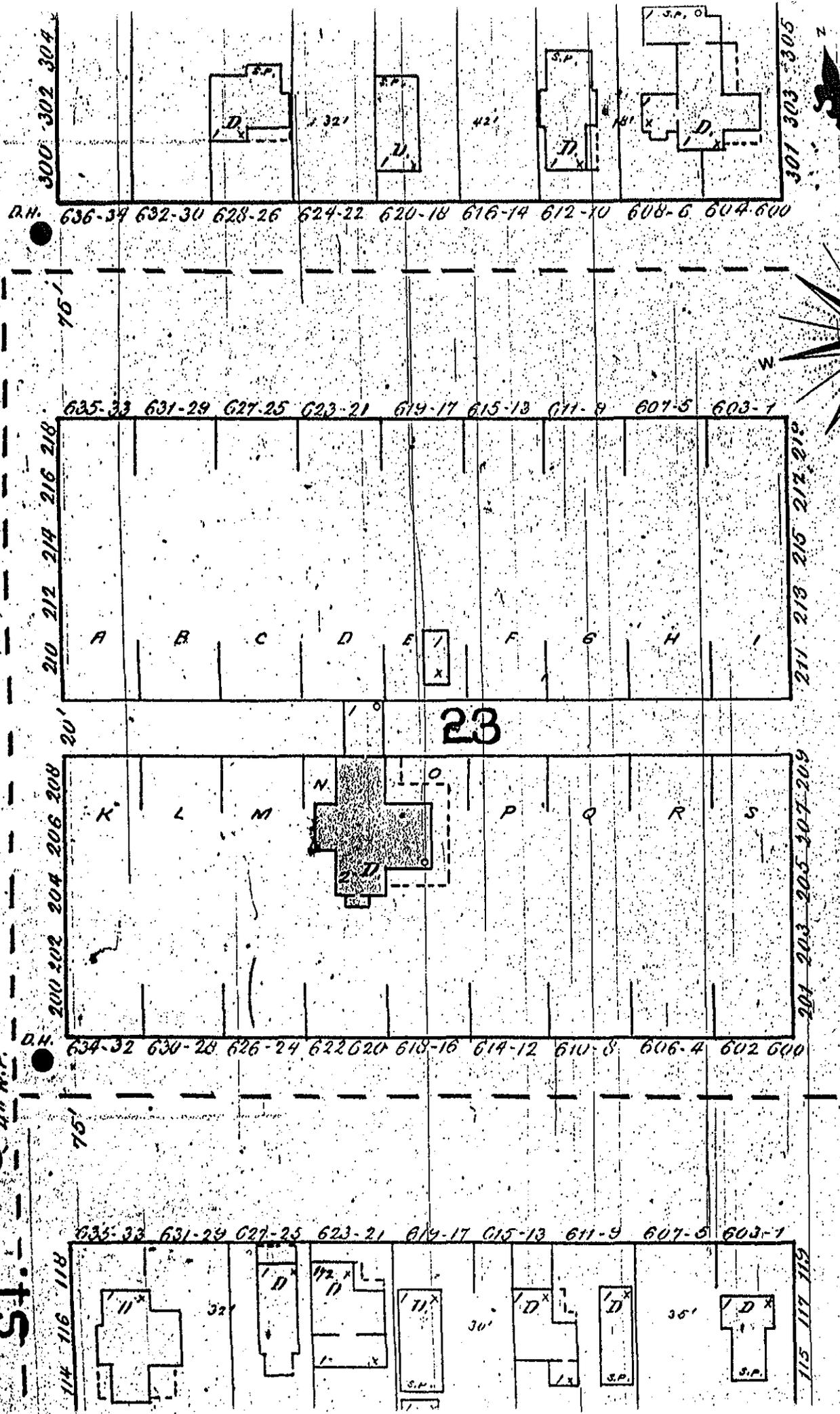
Sanborn Map, Block 23, Feb. 1893

on microfilm at the Colorado Hist. Society

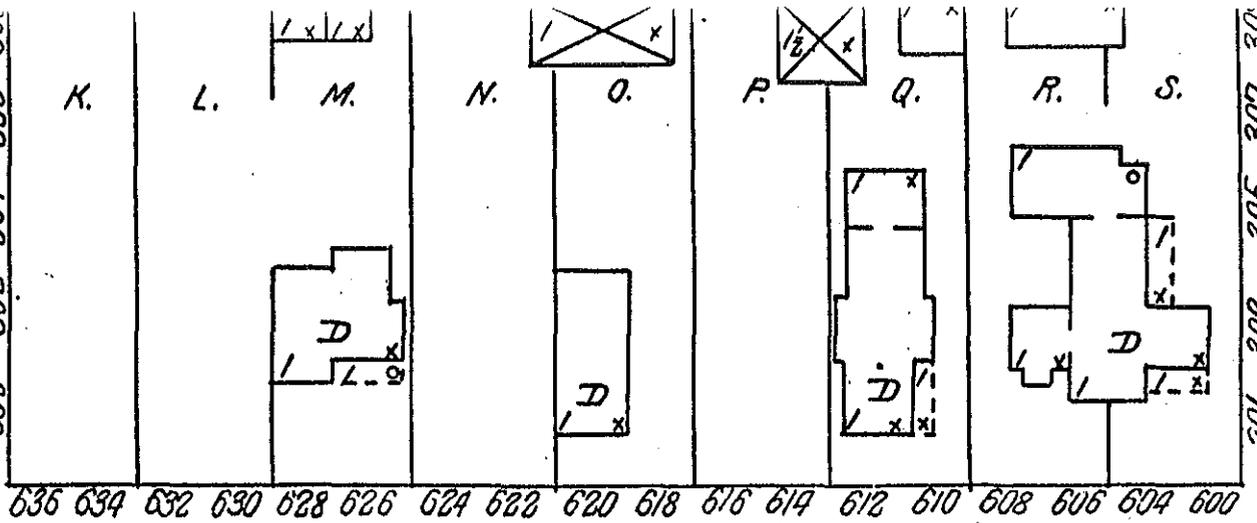
(76)

3

ST. 15



Appearance of Stallard
 Property, c. mid to late
 1930s. According
 to Beverly Stallard Duronis
 oral history 1998
 300 302 304 306 30

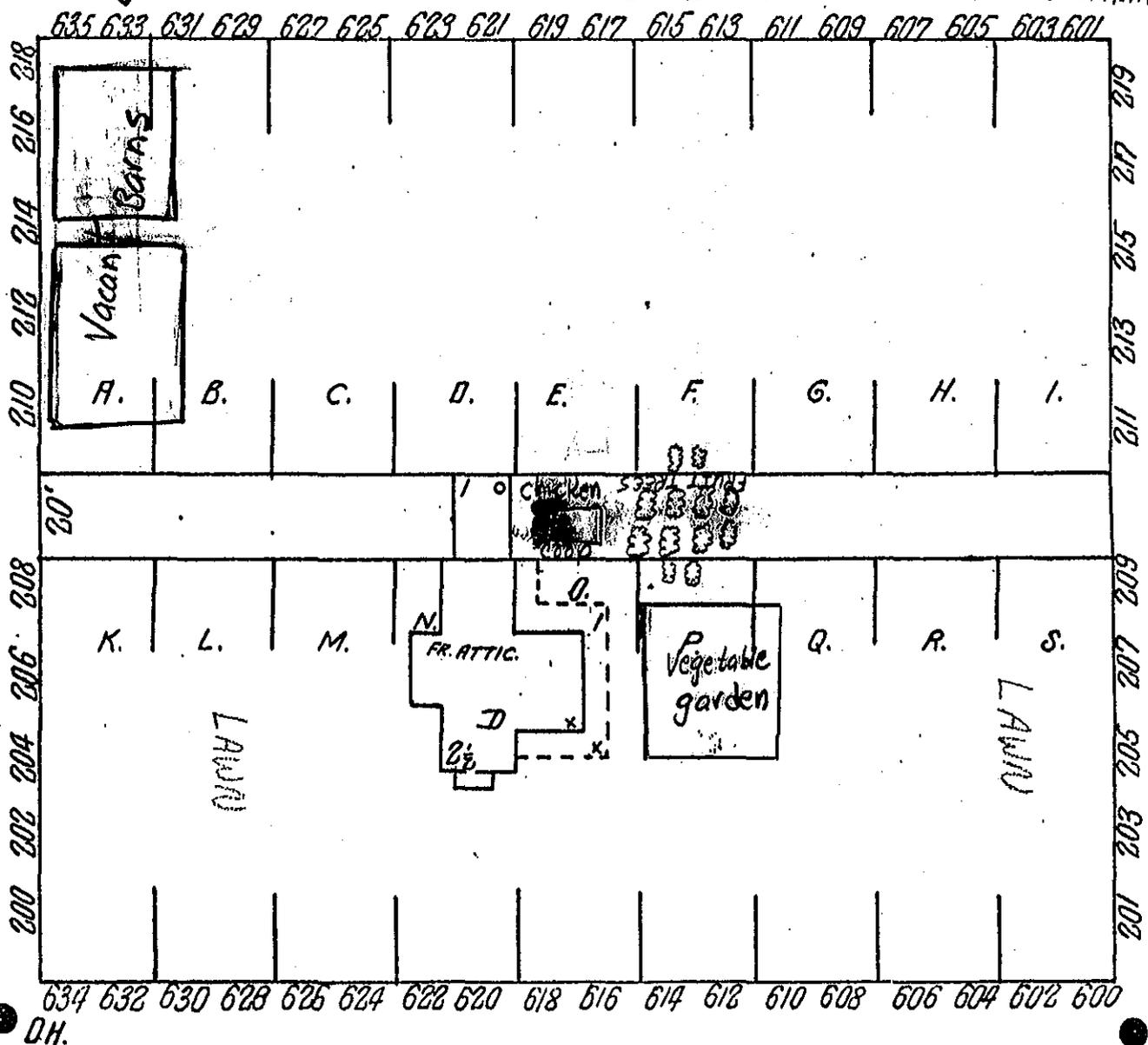
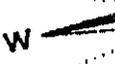


(76)

D.H.

Sizes and locations are
 approximate.

Size, exact location, and
 number of barns in NW corner remains unknown



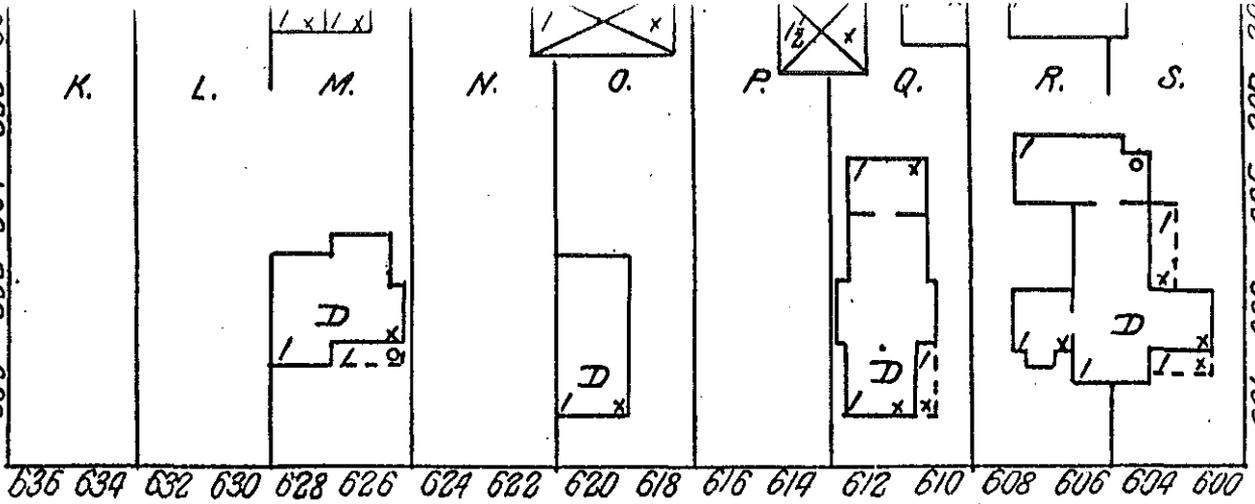
15

4 W. PIPE

D.H.

Appearance of Stallard
Property c. 1921-1933

According to Louisa Wilcox
Staple bar, Oral history 1998

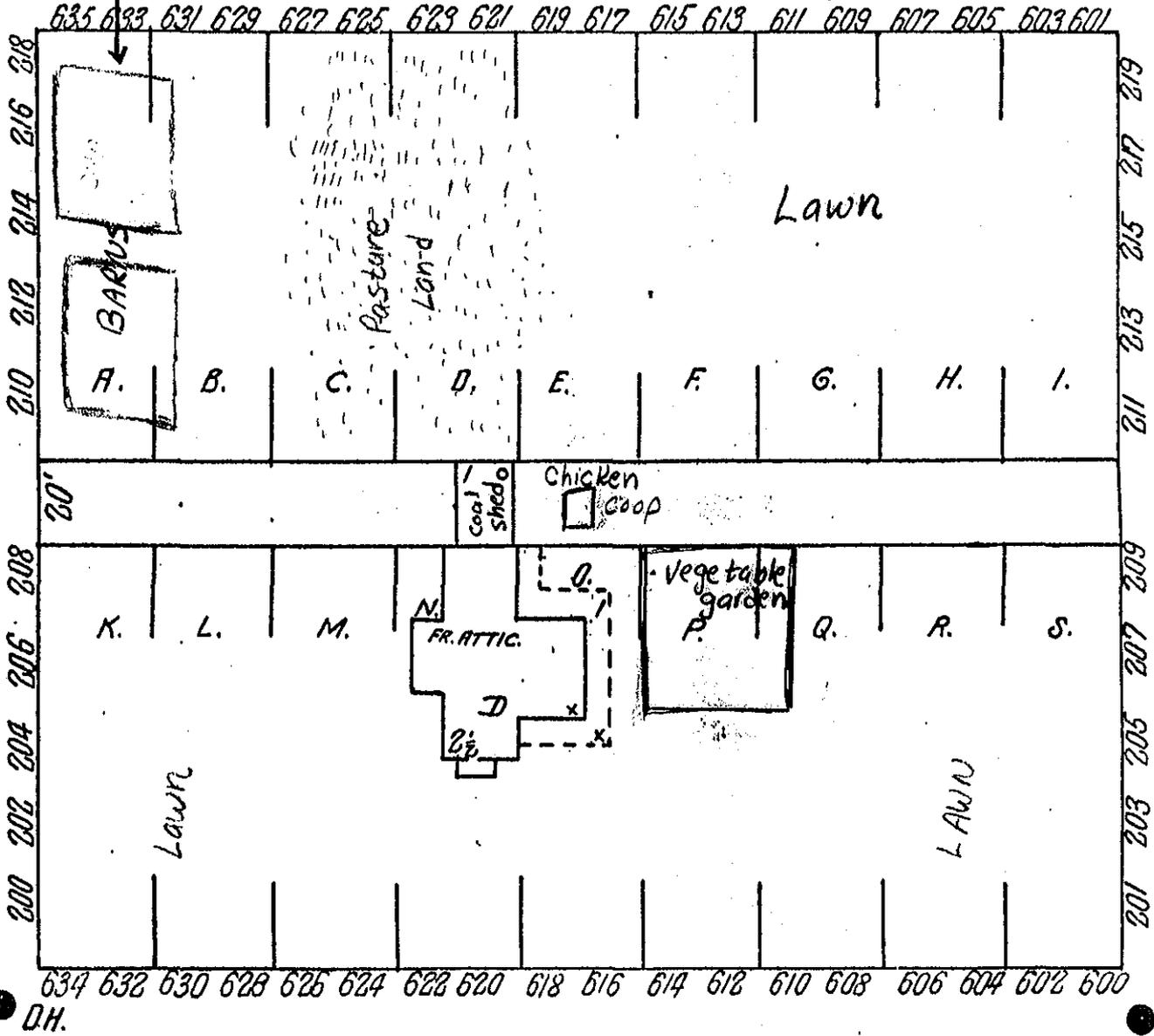


76

Sizes and locations are
approximate



Size, exact location, and number of barns in NW corner
remains unknown



ST.

W. PIPE

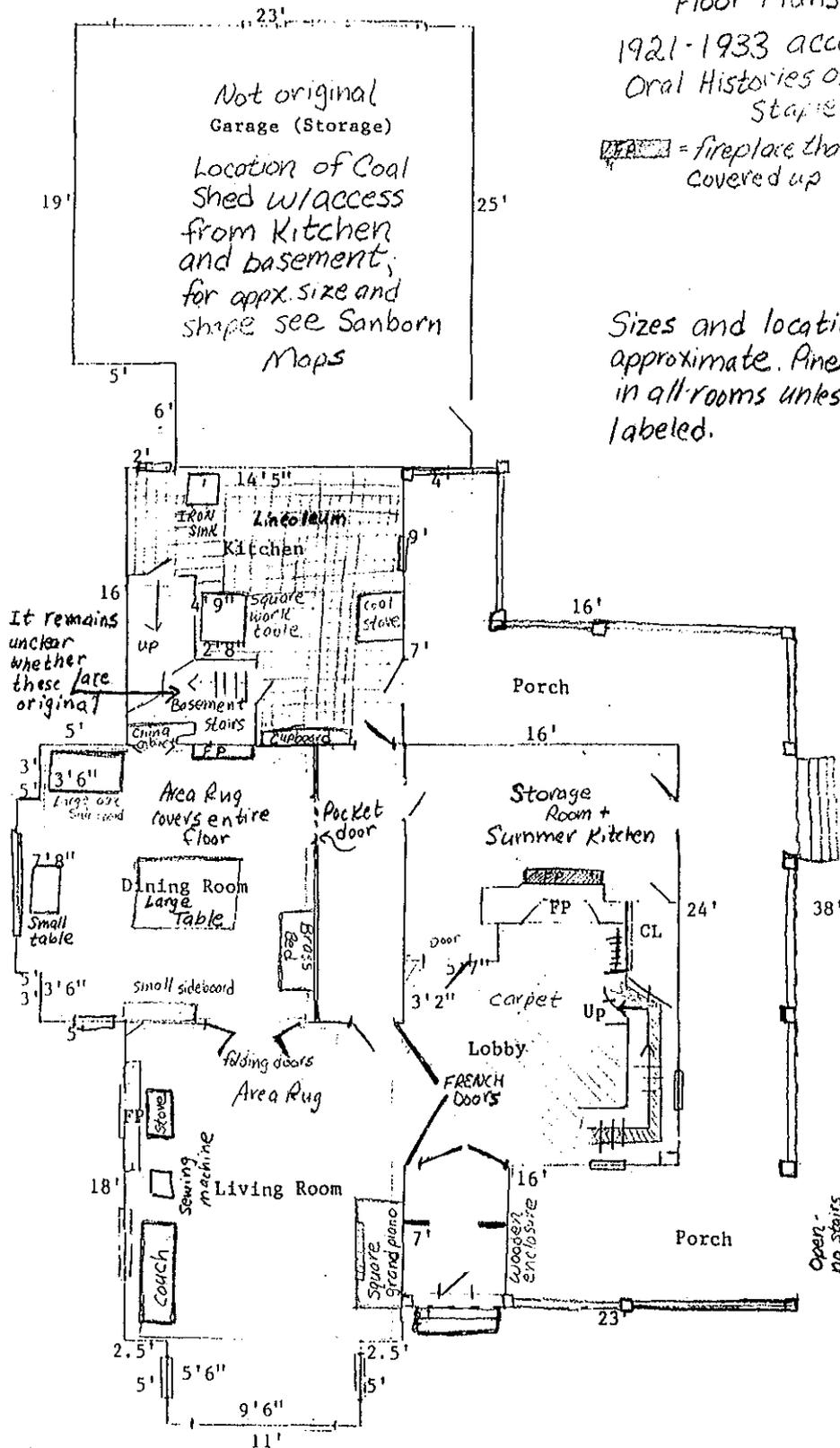
D.H.

Wheeler-Stallard House Floor Plans

1921-1933 according to
Oral Histories of Lavinia Wilcox
Stapleton

 = fireplace that is currently covered up

Sizes and locations are approximate. Pine plank floors in all rooms unless otherwise labeled.



FIRST FLOOR

16 x 16	=	256 SF
16 x 24	=	384 SF
16 x 18	=	288 SF
5 x 11	=	55 SF
21 x 16	=	336 SF
10 x 1.5	=	15 SF
Total		1,334 SF

GARAGE

23 x 19	=	437 SF
6 x 18	=	108 SF
Total		545 SF

PORCH

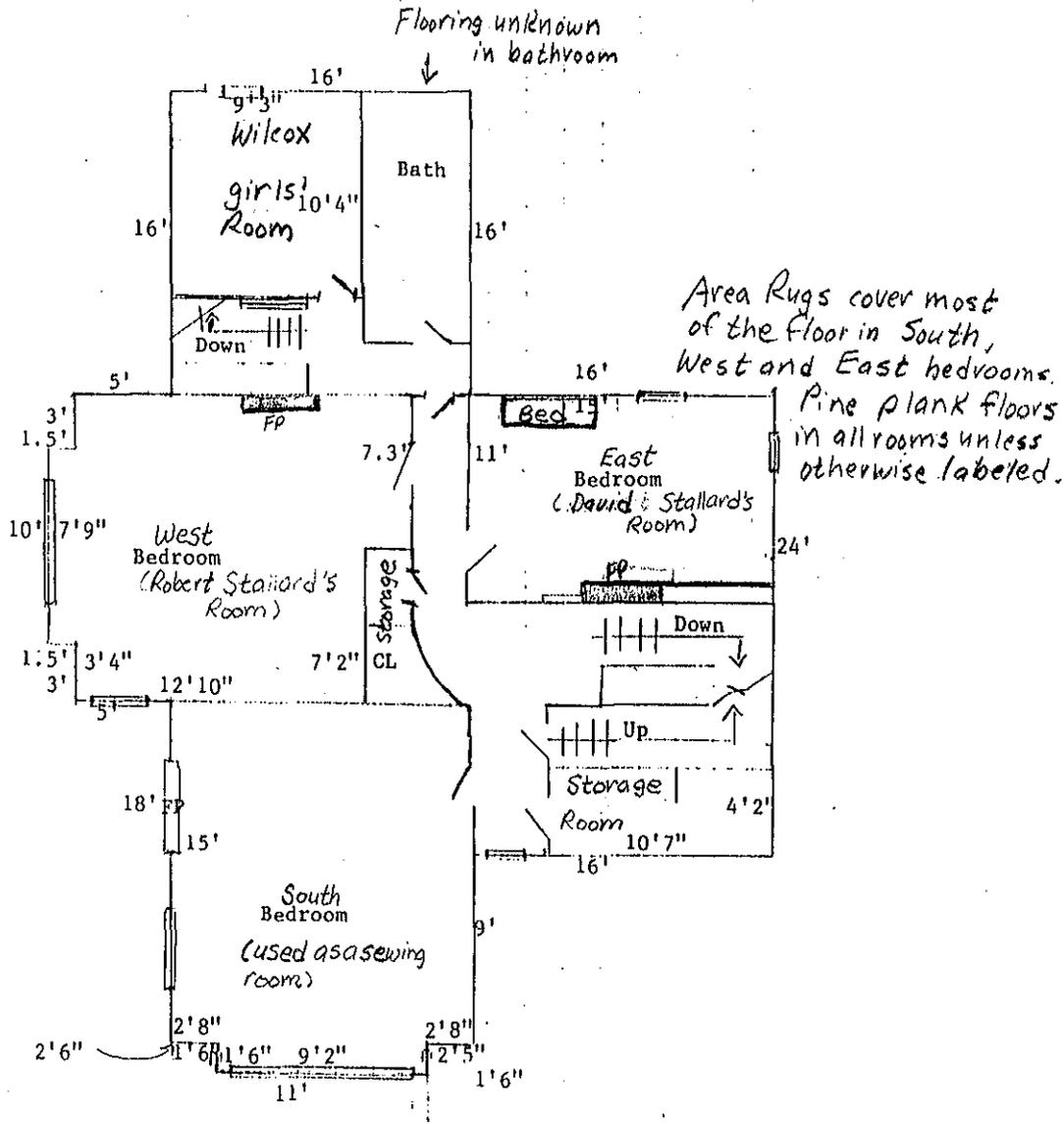
16 x 7 x 2	=	112 SF
38 x 7	=	266 SF
Total		378 SF

Wheeler-Stallard House

Floor Plans

1921-1933 according to
Oral Histories of
Louisa Wilcox Stapleton

 = fireplace that is
currently covered
up



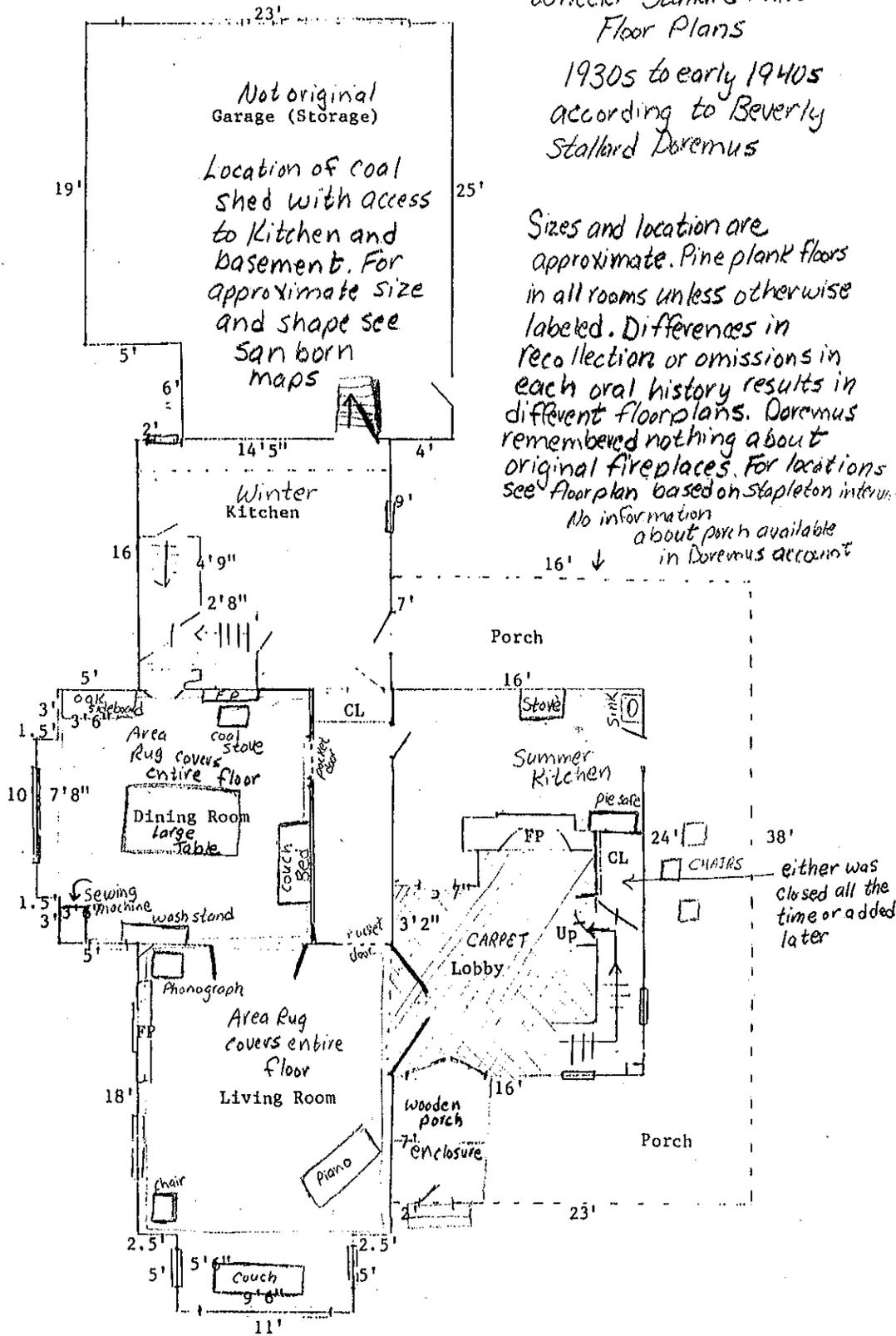
SECOND FLOOR

- 16 x 16 = 256 SF
- 16 x 24 = 384 SF
- 16 x 18 = 288 SF
- 1.5 x 11 = 16.5 SF
- 21 x 16 = 336 SF
- 1.5 x 10 = 15 SF
- 1,295.5 SF

Wheeler-Stallard House Floor Plans

1930s to early 1940s
according to Beverly
Stallard Doremus

Sizes and location are approximate. Pine plank floors in all rooms unless otherwise labeled. Differences in recollection or omissions in each oral history results in different floorplans. Doremus remembered nothing about original fireplaces. For locations see floor plan based on Stapleton interview. No information about porch available in Doremus account



FIRST FLOOR

16 x 16	=	256 SF
16 x 24	=	384 SF
16 x 18	=	288 SF
5 x 11	=	55 SF
21 x 16	=	336 SF
10 x 1.5	=	15 SF
Total		1,334 SF

GARAGE

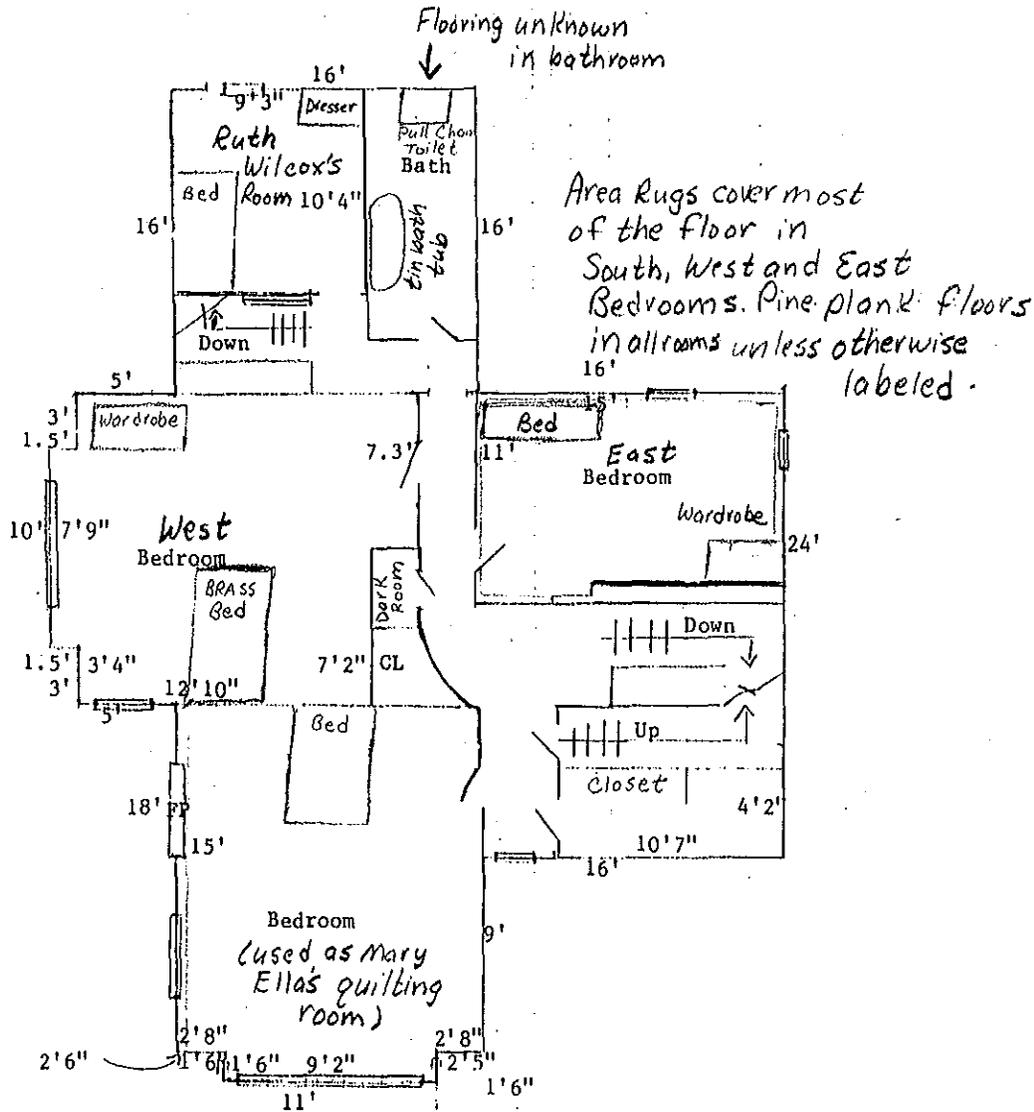
23 x 19	=	437 SF
6 x 18	=	108 SF
Total		545 SF

PORCH

16 x 7 x 2	=	112 SF
38 x 7	=	266 SF
Total		378 SF

Wheeler-Stallard House
Floor Plans

1930s to early 1940s
according to oral history
of Beverly Stallard Doremus



SECOND FLOOR

16 x 16 =	256 SF
16 x 24 =	384 SF
16 x 18 =	288 SF
1.5 x 11 =	16.5 SF
21 x 16 =	336 SF
1.5 x 10 =	15 SF
	<u>1,295.5 SF</u>