



## NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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### NOTES ON THE DAVID CLARK HOUSE BUCK STREET BRIDGE EAST PEMBROKE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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These notes record observations made during a quick visit to the David Clark House on the afternoon of March 19, 2001. The house is now owned by David and JoAnne Richards. Mr. Richards is a former president of the Pembroke Historical Society. The purpose of the visit was to inspect some loose plaster on the north wall of the downstairs sitting room; the walls of the room are colored gray and have Moses Eaton stenciling. Polly Forcier of MB Historic Décor, Quechee, Vermont, was present to study the stenciled decoration here and in a nearby house owned by Joseph Tomas.

**Summary:** The David Clark House is a large, two-story, center-chimney dwelling standing on a foundation of fieldstone topped with split granite underpinning. The house appears to date from about 1825, although the second-story rooms were finished or remodeled after 1830.

**Frame:** The frame of the house appears to be pine. Some members were sawn on a reciprocating saw; longer members were hewn. The room above the kitchen was never plastered. Here can be seen sawn posts and braces, combined with hewn chimney girts. Attic floor joists were sawn on a reciprocating saw. The attic was not inspected, but a quick glimpse up through a trap door in the ceiling of the room above the kitchen revealed that the rafters and purlins were all sawn. David Clark, the reputed builder of the house (*History of Pembroke*, pp. 358-9) operated a sawmill at a nearby water privilege that had been occupied since the eighteenth century. Clark reportedly purchased the sawmill from ten shareholders in 1824 and added a grist mill to the older sawmill. In 1829, Clark deeded both mills and the dwelling, "which Clark had built," to three purchasers.

**Joiner's Work:** The front doorway or frontispiece of the house has a horizontal cornice of thin, Grecian mouldings (not observed closely).

The staircase in the front entry is a triple-run stair with winders. The newel and angle posts, handrail profile, and baluster pattern are very similar to comparable features of the Bailey Parker House (c. 1830) at North Pembroke. The stairway stringer is decorated with sawn brackets.

The first-story doors in the house are four-panel doors with flat-paneled faces and ovolo-and-fillet sticking, similar to the doors of the Bailey Parker House (c. 1830) in North Pembroke. The rear faces of these doors have raised panels with no mouldings on the stiles and rails. These doors have Norfolk thumb latches and butt hinges. Sliding window shutters in the room to the left (north) of the front door run on rails at the height of the meeting rails of the 12-over-8 sashes. These shutters have the same pattern of paneling as the first-story doors.

Doors on the second story are unusual two-panel doors, with the panels running vertically the full height of the doors between top and bottom rails. These doors are clearly later than those on the first story, probably dating between 1830 and 1850.

Mantelpieces in the first floor parlor (to the south of the front door and entry) and the sitting room (to the north of the entry) are typical federal-style chimneypieces. Mantelpieces in the corresponding chambers on the second story are of the Greek Revival style.

Window sashes on the first and second stories are all modern units with ogee-and-fillet muntin profiles. The attic sashes were not seen, nor was the transom sash above the front doorway observed.

**Mason's Work:** The kitchen fireplace is an expansive hearth with a crane. The oven is at the left of the hearth, enclosed behind a wooden door. The oven has a sheet metal stopper, not a cast iron door, but has its own flue in front of its inner door. The ash pit beneath the oven appears to be a large circular recess, without a chute leading to a vault in the chimney base. The kitchen forehearth is a large slab of hammered granite.

The fireplace in the north sitting room also has a crane.

The chimney base is a massive brick vault, with the axis of the vault parallel to the roof ridge. To the north of the vault, the granite forehearth of the kitchen fireplace is supported by a series of brick piers. Spanning the intervals between these piers are a series of shelves made of two-inch planks set into the brickwork. The entire chimney base is laid in lime-sand mortar.

The fieldstone walls of the cellar are pointed on the interior with lime-sand mortar. The house is underpinned at grade level with split granite slabs. Time did not permit a close

enough examination to observe the splitting technique employed in fashioning these underpinning stones.

**History of the House:** *The History of Pembroke, N.H.* (1895) states (p. 358) that

It will be seen that this old saw-mill [at Buckstreet mills] had a great number of owners, but in 1824, Daniel, Nehemiah, and Hiram Knox, Thomas Kimball, Jr., Josiah Richardson, Ephraim C. Robinson, Mark Tilton, David Clifford, Nehemiah Cochran, and Alexander Salter, into whose hands it had come, gave David Clark a warranty deed of the saw-mill “on the southeast side of Suncook river on Buckstreet with all the privileges belonging thereto.”

Clark not only kept a saw-mill there, but built a grist-mill a few feet south of the old saw-mill, taking the water to it in a flume. In 1829, Clark deeded both mills with the house where Retyre M. Davis lives, which Clark had built, to David Clark of Plaistow, John Clark of Chester, and Nathaniel Clark of Sandown. In 1831 John and David Clark deeded the same property to John Richardson of Haverhill, Mass. In August, 1835, Richardson deeded the same to Josiah Rogers, Josiah Rogers, Jr., and Daniel M. Head. They mortgaged the same to the Concord Bank, and in due time it came into the possession of the bank. In 1841, the Concord Bank deeded the property to Joseph Gregg of New Boston, who mortgaged it back to the bank. The mills were burned, and the privilege came back to the bank.

In 1844, the Concord Bank gave Theodore French and Lewis Downing a quit-claim deed of the mill privilege, house, and land. In 1845, French and Downing deeded the same property to William M. Morse and Moses Martin. They built a building there which they used for a bedstead factory, and other purposes.