

**FOUR LOCKS SCHOOL**  
*Historic Structures Report*

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February, 1991



Four Locks School  
An Abbreviated Historic Structures Report Concerning  
The Architectural History, Condition and  
Recommendations for Restoration

Prepared for  
U. S. Department of Interior  
National Park Service  
C & O Canal National Park

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**[NOTE: Original images were generally not available for use in this edition.]**



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## **Photographs, Diagrams, and Maps**



Four Locks School ca. 1900



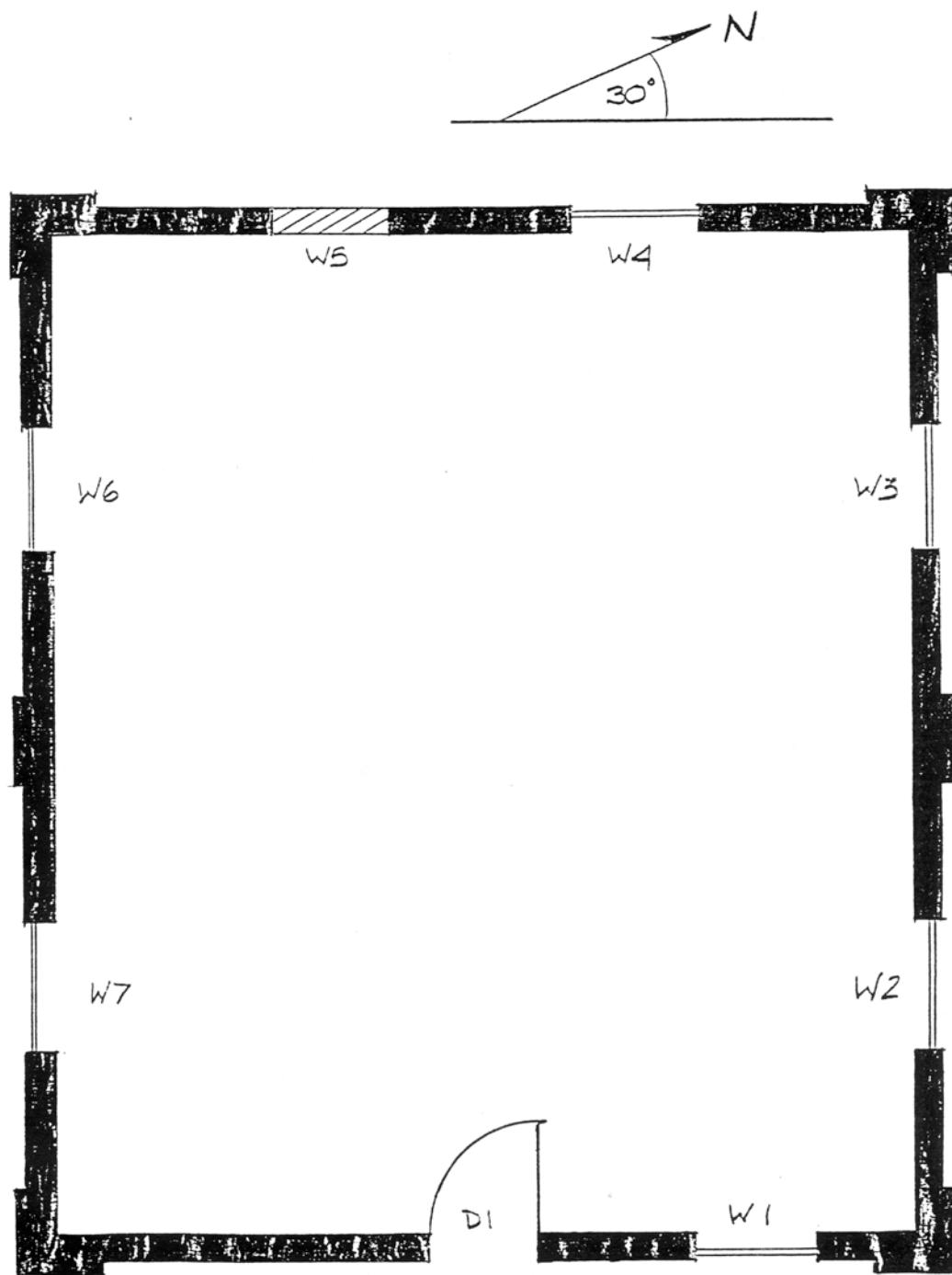
Four Locks school when converted into a residence.



Four Locks school, 1983.

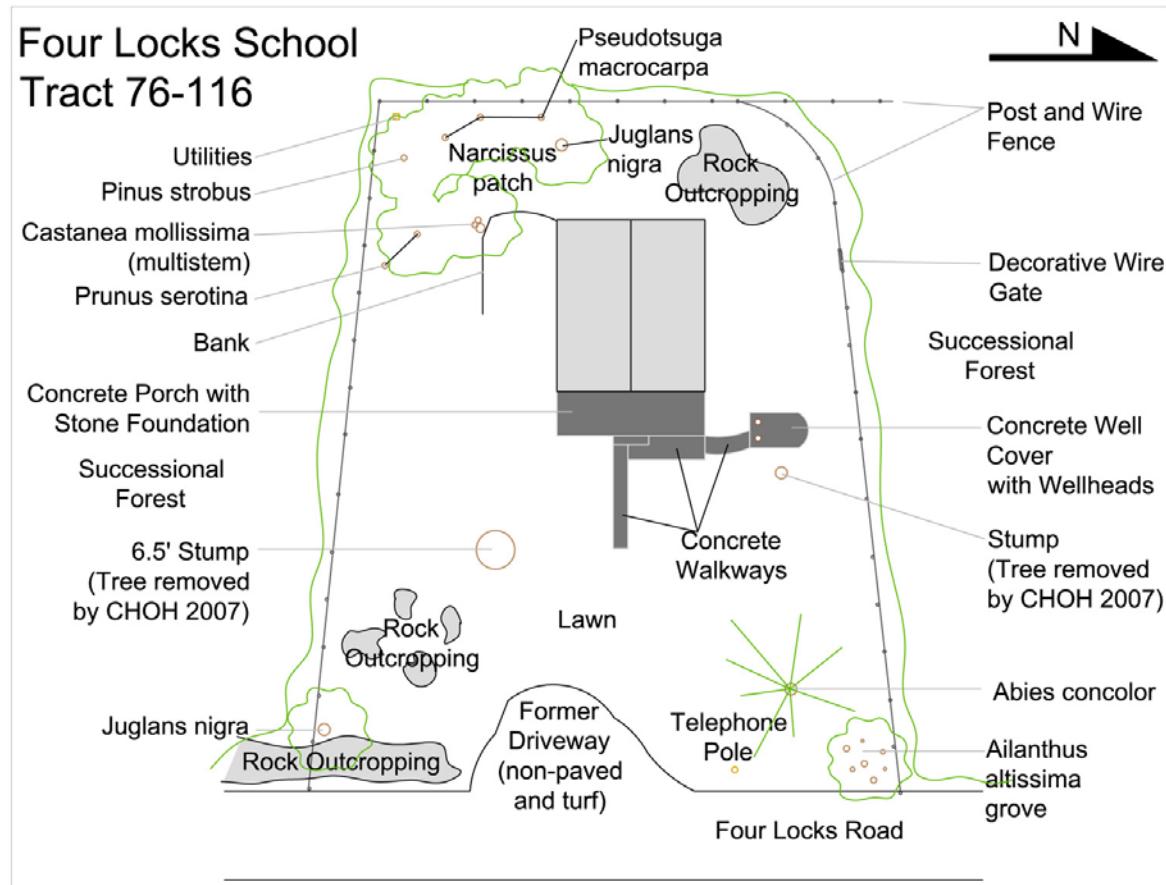


Four Locks School Partially Restored

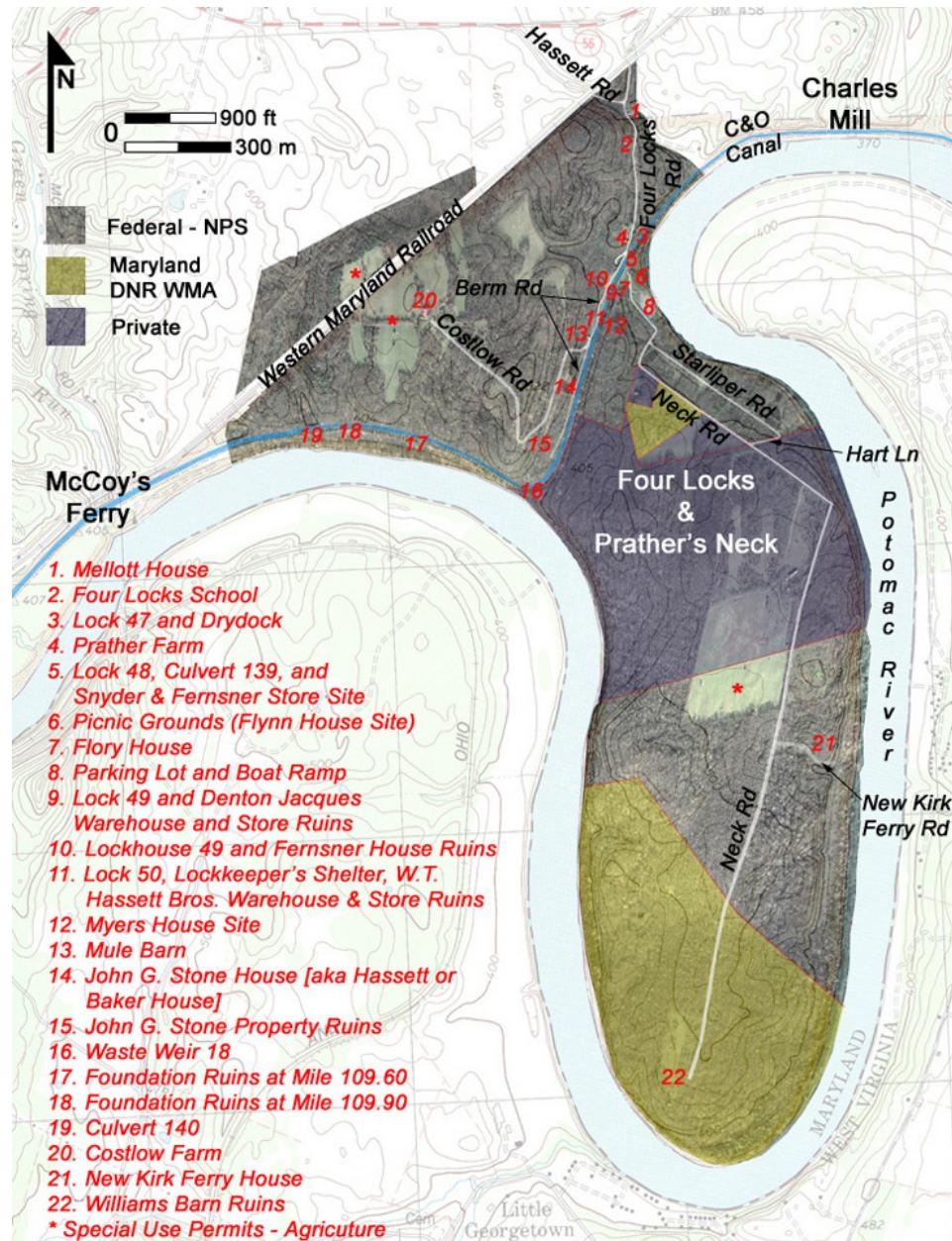


## FOUR LOCKS SCHOOL

Floor Plan, Door and Window Numbers



**Contextual Diagram from the Cultural Landscape Inventory 2009**



**Map of the Four Locks Area from the Cultural Landscape Inventory 2009**

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## **Introduction**

When the Four Locks School was built in the 1860s or '70s, it was one of approximately 130 schools in Washington County of which almost half were brick. Most of these schools were one-room structures scattered around the countryside to serve the surrounding children. According to an article in the Hagerstown Herald Mail newspapers on November 22, 1975, Washington County had more schools than any other county in the state in 1867, with 10% of all schools in Maryland. These schools are a legacy worth preserving.

Unfortunately, many of our one-room country schools are gone. During Theodore Roosevelt's administration, the Federal government began a program of school consolidation which continued through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As population grew, rural one-room schools were abandoned and children were moved to larger schools in villages and towns. The old schools stood vacant or were sold to private owners who converted them to other uses. Now, only a few remain intact.

Most one-room schools are recognizable as such. Generally they are rectangular structures, one story high with two or three windows along the sides. The entrances are usually in the gable end. The uniformity of design among schools of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the result of publications on the subject by educational reformers of the 1830s and 1870s, two periods when educational reform was particularly strong.

Four Locks School, which remained in use until 1943, is in good condition and retains most of its original features. Only two major elements are missing: the gabled entrance porch, of which both physical and photographic evidence remains and the raised platform for the teacher at the front of the room. Again, physical evidence remains of this element. Good descriptions of the interior arrangement of the school and its furnishings are available from former students from the time that the school was most recently used. These descriptions concur with general descriptions of interiors and how they ought to be arranged according to late 19<sup>th</sup> century educational leaders.

Since the Four Locks School is publicly owned by the National Park Service, is prominently located along the road to the Four Locks area of the C & O Canal, and is easily accessible, it offers an excellent opportunity to provide for an interpretation of public education in America during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It also enriches the picture of the cultural heritage of the community of Four Locks which developed along the canal. Many of the children who attended this school were from families who were connected in some way with the Canal.

## Chapter I

### Appearance and Evolution of Country Schools in America

According to Andrew Gulliford in *America's Country Schools*, as late as 1913, one half of America's school children were being educated in the nation's, 212,000 one-room schools.<sup>1</sup>

Public education of children has its roots in the early days of American history with the first law providing for the establishment of a public school system enacted by the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1647. Later when the Northwest Territories were opened for settlement, the land ordinances of 1785 and 1787 set aside public lands for educational facilities. The Northwest Territories eventually became the mid-west states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin.

As Thomas Jefferson's republican ideals of government became stronger in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the notion of free public education to create an informed generation of yeoman farmers was encouraged. The growth of public education was most supported in New England and the mid-west where schools were established early. In the South where large, self-contained plantations dominated the culture and the slave labor force was generally barred from education, schools were usually private with home tutoring being the rule.

With the predominantly rural character of early America, and its widely dispersed population, the vehicle for public education was a single school room which served students from age four to adult. In many cases, in the flatlands of the mid-west and plains area, schools were lightweight frame structures designed to be moved as population shifted. One-room schools were generally rectangular structures with their size determined in part by the ability of the human voice to be heard and writing on the blackboard to be seen.

In the colonial period and the years of the early republic there was little standardization of the school curriculum or professional requirements for teachers. In general, students learned by rote, memorizing material and recitation. The usual "text" was McGuffey's Electic Readers which contained moralistic stories in progressively difficult levels from primer through grade 8.

There were major reforms in education at several periods, the 1830s, 1870s, 1890s and early 1900s. These involved changes to teaching methods and content as well as changes to school architecture. In colonial America and the early republic, education was haphazard with no set curriculum, term of study or educational requirements for schoolmasters. Students usually sat on backless benches. Desks, if they were present, consisted of a shelf or counter in front of the benches extending either across the room or around its perimeter. If desks and benches were arranged around edge of the room, the center was open for placement of a wood stove and for movement around the room.<sup>2</sup>

The decade of the 1830s was significant for school building design with published essays written by several reformers. First among these was William A. Alcott, himself a schoolmaster, who

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country Schools*. (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984) p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> Fred Schroeder, "The Little Red School House" *Icons of America*, Ray Brown and Marshall Fishwick, ed. (Bowling Green, Ohio: Popular Press, Bowling Green State Univ., 1978).

published his *Essay on the Construction of School Houses* in 1832. He suggested several new concepts, including backs on seats, desks arranged in rows, large windows for more light, placed above eye level and display space for maps, prints and other aids. In 1838, Henry Barnard published *School Architecture*, which presented his philosophy that well-built and impressive school buildings would inspire pupils to learn. He prepared several designs in current styles, including two Greek Revival style schools “because he was convinced that ‘every school house should be a temple, consecrated in prayer to the physical, intellectual, and moral culture of every child in the community.’”<sup>3</sup> At the time Barnard was writing in 1838, the Greek Revival style was at the peak of its popularity for both residential and institutional buildings. While most rural school districts could not afford the fancy architectural monuments suggested by Barnard, their vernacular adaptations did include some design elements from currently popular architectural styles. Many one-room school houses follow basic Greek Revival design tenets of rectangular form with a gable roof, symmetrical fenestration and gable-front entrances. Some examples even suggest the temple form through the use of pilasters, corbelled friezes or porticos. The vernacular expression of the Greek Revival style among one-room school houses became a tradition, lasting into the twentieth century, and makes these school houses easy to recognize by their form.

Another concern that Henry Barnard expressed in 1838 was the location of windows in school buildings. He believed that windows should not be placed directly behind the teacher. The preferred light came from the north because it is even and without glare. North lighting, however made school rooms much colder in the winter. Many schools were situated, consequently, with their entrance on the east, the teacher’s desk against the west wall, opposite the entrance and windows on the north and south sides. Schools generally did not employ artificial means of lighting until the 1940s with conversion to electricity.

By the 1870s another wave of reforms led to early efforts at standardization of education throughout the United States. A system of eight grade levels was instituted. This process was aided by publications such as the *American Journal of Education* which in 1873 carried an article by Horace M. Hale, Colorado Superintendent of Public Instruction giving standards for Colorado schools: The teacher’s platform should be six by ten feet, or five by eight feet, eight or ten inches high. Wainscoting should extend entirely around the room and entry areas. He further recommended blackboards of “liquid slating” entirely around the room, in width not less than four-and-one half feet.<sup>4</sup>

In general, late 19<sup>th</sup> century schools featured wooden tongue and grooved flooring, often of maple or pine, walls that were painted white or cream. Frequently dark wainscoting extended around the walls, level with the window sills.<sup>5</sup> Floors were typically oiled with raw linseed oil and there was usually no lighting other than what came in the windows. The teacher’s desk sat at the front of the room along the wall opposite the door, and was often on a platform raised above the rest of the floor. By the 1890s, the use of raised platforms for the teacher was discouraged by educational experts as being too authoritarian.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Henry Barnard, *School Architecture*, 1838, as quoted in Gulliford, *America’s Country Schools*, p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> Horace M. Hale, *American Journal of Education*, 1873 as quoted in Gulliford, *America’s Country Schools*, p. 188.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Gulliford, *Schools*. p. 188.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 191.

Blackboards were made from a variety of materials depending upon cost. The most expensive option was slate. Cheaper alternatives included planed pine boards painted black, or beaver boards<sup>2</sup> or stretched canvas painted black. The term “liquid slating” used by Horace M. Hale in 1873 is not explained or defined, suggesting that it was generally understood and known. Presumably it referred to thick black paint consisting of linseed oil, lampblack and a little turpentine.

Fred Schroeder in “Educational Legacy: Rural One Room School Houses” described Sunny Crest School built in 1894, as it appeared when he began teaching there in 1952:

Ill-lighted by three widely separated windows on each side, the crowded room reeked of kerosene, oil-mopped floors, chalk dust, perspiration, damp wool and chlorine bleach that was poured into the pit of the attached privy at the rate of a gallon a day . . .

The furniture arrangement of four rows of five desks per row reflected an advance in education dating from 1832; the fixed desks of oak and cast iron with tilting seats and book storage space were of a commercial design that was perfected before the Civil War...The fact that the teacher’s desk was not on a platform stage marked the school as being from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when such elevations were regarded as excessively authoritarian.”<sup>7</sup>

The preceding recollection indicates how traditional and stable one-room schools remained over time. Except for the major innovations involving seating and placement of the teacher, traditional arrangements and methods continued in use well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These rural schools also became an integral part of community life serving as social centers and meeting places for the surrounding area.

During the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, in 1908, the federal government instituted a program of school consolidation and standardization which led to the gradual abandonment of most one-room schools.

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<sup>2</sup> A light board made of compressed wood pulp.

<sup>7</sup> Fred Schroeder, “Educational Legacy: Rural One Room School Houses” as quoted in Gulliford, Schools, p. 189.

## CHAPTER II

### Architectural Description, Exterior and Interior

#### Exterior Architectural Description

The Four Locks School, also known as School #8 in the Indian Spring Election District, is a one story, gable fronted brick structure dating from about 1875. The school is situated approximately 100 feet west of Four Locks Road and faces east. The building rests on limestone foundations and currently has a channel drain sheet metal roof.

Side bays of the building are defined by brick corbelled pilasters and a corbelled frieze band, while the front (east) and rear or west elevations have corbelled pilasters. Centered in the front elevation is the main entrance which includes a three light transom under a segmentally arched brick header. The door would appear to have been reused from an older building and had six panels with early 19<sup>th</sup> century detailing, such as curved corners on the panels. The two upper panels of the six panel door were replaced with glass. The door also shows evidence of having been altered to fit its present location and has evidence of an earlier set of hinges. This door is a relatively recent addition to the school.

Just north of the door is a window which was added to the building sometime in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps when it was converted to a residence in the 1940s. The window does not appear in a turn of the century period photograph of the school. The opening also has no brick header and the window frame itself differs from others that are original.

The tops of the pilasters at the entrance elevation have been damaged by a later porch which extended across the front. However, the pilasters at the rear (west) elevation remain intact to indicate the probable finish of those at the front elevation. Evidence remains of two porch configurations at the front elevation. The most recent was a porch that extended across the entire front of the school. This porch was supported by four turned or chamfered posts as suggested by paint outlines on the brick wall. The base for this porch is a still extant poured concrete slab or deck extending along the front of the building. This porch replaced an older gabled entrance porch which sheltered the doorway. According to a ca. 1900 photograph (page v), the original gabled roof was supported by paired posts and was enclosed at the sides with two-board rails and possibly benches. The gable pediment was painted white or a light color and the posts and rails were dark. The porch was reached by two wooden plank steps.

The north and south elevations each have two bays. The window bays are framed by brick corbelled pilasters and frieze banding. Below each window just above the foundation is a metal vent which was added or rebuilt as part of the recent work to the building. The walls are laid in common bond brick work with five or six courses of stretcher bricks between header rows. The original finish of the walls included joints that were stained red and striped with white, a common treatment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both window frames in the south elevation are original and are approximately two inches wide with chamfered inside edges. Window sash have six lights and are hung with some sash retaining their original glass. Above all original windows is a course of upright header bricks.

The rear or west elevation is plain, but has corbelled brick pilasters extending from the ground to the eaves. Evidence remains of an original window on the south side of this wall which was removed and filled in with brick. A later window was added in the north half of the west end wall. It is not original as indicated by the disturbed brick work around the opening and the absence of the brick header which is above all other original openings. However, this window was inserted into an original window opening which was filled-in for some time, prior to the construction of the present window. Brick headers once above the window were removed and their location is marked by later brick infill.

The north side elevation shows, perhaps the greatest evidence of change, although the building has been returned to its original fenestration configuration. When the school was converted to a residence in the 1940s both windows in the north elevation were made into doors opening into an addition. Therefore, beneath the present windows is evidence of recent brick infill. Vents above the foundation are also recent. Some parts of the original window frames remain, being narrow with chamfered edges. During the time that these openings were doors, the window sashes were preserved. They are now in their frames with most of their original glass in place.

### **Interior Architectural Description**

The Four Locks School is entered through a door in the east elevation. The interior space is one large room encircled with a dado of vertical beaded boards. The original tongue and groove boards forming the dado are approximately seven inches wide with a 1/8-inch bead at the edge. At the top of the dado is a flattened rail above a band of Grecian ogee molding.

The ceiling of the room is peaked and high, following the rafter plane, and is finished with plaster. The flooring is of random width pine boards which are recent replacements of the original floor system. Evidence remains just at the tops of the windows of a later dropped ceiling dating from the time when the school was used as a residence. Across the east wall of the school room are two parallel horizontal boards, apparently four inches wide and one inch thick with beaded edges. The lower board is approximately four feet above the floor and the upper one about five feet, eight inches from the floor. Numerous nail holes remain in the boards. Presumably these boards held hooks for hanging coats and hats. One cast iron hat hook remains in place at the north end of the wall on the upper rail. The wall area between the boards was originally painted dark brown.

Above the dado, walls are plastered with multiple layers of calcimine paint. The first observable layer was biff-gray-white or "drab" as it was termed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was brushed-on with vertical strokes. This was a nineteenth century practice that carried into the early twentieth century. Near the west end of the room there was a "ghost" or outline on the wainscoting of the south, west and north walls of a platform which extended across the room, north to south. The teacher's desk sat upon this platform which extended out from the west end wall six feet, and was raised ten inches above the main floor.

Also visible on the south wall are lines indicating the location of partitions added when the school was converted to a residence. A horizontal line marking the location of a dropped ceiling just above the windows is also evident.

Along the west end wall of the interior is the same paneled dado as found elsewhere in the room. Above the dado is a band of black painted wall which served as "blackboard." This blackboard is interrupted by the remaining window in the west wall and the patched area where the more southerly window was infilled. There was no painted blackboard between the west windows. The blackened area extends around a corner and along the north wall to the first window. These blackboards would appear to have been made of a material known as "liquid slate" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century which seems to have been a thick paint colored with lampblack.

Under the windows of the north wall are areas where the vertical board paneling of the dado has been replaced. This replacement was done recently and indicates the alteration from original windows to doors when the school was converted to a residence with an addition attached to the north side. The north interior wall also shows evidence of a later partition between the windows and a lowered ceiling from the period that the building was a residence.

The only heating source in the school is a stove flue which projects from the center of the west gable wall just above the window lintel height. This flue has a round opening into which a stove pipe was inserted. The exterior portion of the chimney above the roofline has been removed. The old photograph of the school, however, shows a chimney emerging from the north slope of the roof just below the peak toward the east end of the building. The present flue in the west gable appears to have been original or an old change and accommodated a stove in the center of the room. The stove pipe made a 90 degree turn and extended horizontally from a point above the stove to the flue. Pairs of metal hooks remain in the ceiling to which were fastened wires or bands which suspended the stove pipe.

A superficial examination of paint layers on the wood wainscot revealed six, the first four of which appear on all walls of the building. The top two layers vary from area to area indicating that they were applied after the school was divided into several residential rooms. The top two colors are also missing from those portions of the dado hidden by studs for the later partitions. Also, the area beneath the teacher's platform at the front is covered by only the top two layers of paint suggesting that the platform was in place for the entire time that the building functioned as a school. The first four layers of paint in order of their application on the woodwork were: Drab or buff-grey-white; bright medium blue; dark red-brown; and bright dark green. On the walls, the first layer was a similar drab but slightly lighter than that on the woodwork, applied with vertical brush strokes, followed by a cream color with more even application. Later layers are associated with the residential use of the house.

The school is situated on a grassy lot with many large stone outcroppings. The lot is fenced and has large trees. A privy site has been found approximately 35 feet northwest of the school along the back fence line. The privy hole was large enough to accommodate a two seated structure. Its foundation was of limestone.

The Four Locks School appears to be in good condition.

## CHAPTER III

### The History of Four Locks School

Little information has come to light to pinpoint the construction date of Four Locks School. The school does not appear on Thomas Taggart's 1859 Map of Washington County, but it is shown on the 1877 Atlas of Washington County as School #8 of District 15.

The Washington County Board of School Commissioners did not acquire title to the school property until 1906, although it is clear that they operated school #8 on the site for at least 15 years prior to their purchase of the land, according to annual reports on the public schools of Maryland.

Architectural evidence provided by the building could indicate a construction date anytime in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially when consideration is given to the fact that schools in general were very conservatively designed and may look older than they actually are because older methods, types of materials and design elements were perpetuated. It appears likely that the school house indicated on the 1877 Atlas of Washington County is the same building that stands on the property today. Some sources suggest that the school is much older and was known as Cedar Grove School before the C & O Canal was constructed, as the Daily Mail newspaper reported in 1979:... "in the Big Spring area was the Cedar Grove School, later known as Four Locks School after the C & O Canal was constructed. The Four Locks School which closed in 1943 is believed to have been more than a century old."<sup>1</sup> However, the fact the school is not shown on the 1859 Taggart Map of Washington County, and that no records have been found that mention a school, indicate that one was probably not there prior to 1859.

In 1865, the General Assembly of Maryland established a highly centralized state system of education.<sup>3</sup> Washington County had an already existing school system since 1848 when the Maryland General Assembly passed an act enabling the voters of the County to establish public schools on an optional basis.<sup>4</sup> According to the Federal Census of 1850, only two years after the passage of the first General Assembly Act, there were 83 public schools in Washington County, serving 3522 students.<sup>4</sup> Fifteen years later, in 1865, there were 123 schools in the county of which 51 were log, three were frame and 33 were brick.<sup>5</sup> The greatest period of expansion in the school construction program for Washington County occurred in the nine year period from 1867 to 1876 when 60 new schools were built. It was probably during this time that the Four Locks School was constructed.

According to the annual *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland* for 1892, there were in that year, 120 schools in Washington County, plus 20 which were rented. Fifty of the schools were frame, 66 brick, 13 were log and 11 stone. School #8 in Election District 15, Four Locks School,

<sup>1</sup> The Daily Main newspaper, September 11, 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Summers, "A History of Education in Washington County" (University of Maryland: thesis, Master of Arts, 1950), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Lowell M. Sowers, "The Early History of Education in Washington County," (University of Maryland: thesis, Master of Arts, 1936), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 123, quoting the Federal Census of 1850.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

had 35 students on its roll for that year. The teacher was Nellie M. Kerr. Expenses for the year included fuel \$10.00; repairs \$10.68; incidentals \$2.00; furniture, stoves and blackboards \$0.50; and teacher's salary \$210.00.<sup>6</sup> (In the annual reports, each school in each county of Maryland is listed with attendance statistics and annual expenses under the categories listed above.) Although the state educational system was set up for four seasonal terms, sessions were held only in fall, winter and spring.

In 1893, Washington County had 121 schools of which 54 were frame, 64 brick, twelve log and ten stone. Twenty schools were rented. School #8 at Four Locks had a total of 47 students enrolled for the three terms, although attendance at any one term was much lower. Twelve dollars was spent on fuel, \$0.50 for repairs, \$2.00 for incidentals and \$210.00 for the teacher's salary for a total expenditure of \$224.50.<sup>7</sup> Apparently nothing was spent in 1893 for furniture, blackboards or stoves.

The 1894 report shows a total of 134 schools in the County, of which 14 were rented. Of these, 50 were frame, 66 brick, ten log and eight were stone. The teacher at Four Locks School was M. A. Bachtell and there was as total of 59 pupils on the roll for the three terms that the school operated. Fourteen dollars was spent on fuel that year, suggesting a cold winter, \$4.20 was allocated for repairs; \$1.56 on incidentals; \$0.25 for furniture, stoves and blackboards. This year \$1.50 was spent for books, an item not usually in the expenses list and the salary for instructor Bachtell was \$240.00 for a total expenditure of \$261.51.<sup>8</sup>

In 1895, the total number of students on the rolls of Four Locks School was 45. The teacher this year was Kieffer Hoover. The fuel bill was \$11.25; repairs cost \$2.00; incidentals were \$0.98; the cost of stoves, furniture and blackboards was \$14.03, perhaps the price of a new stove, and Mr. Hoover's salary of \$210.00 for a total of \$238.26.<sup>9</sup>

The reports of 1896 and 1897 show major expenditures for repairs and for furniture, blackboards and stoves, suggesting a substantial refurbishing of the school. Perhaps at this time the two rear (west) windows were filled in, the walls painted with their second application of paint in a cream color and, possibly the original blackboards of "liquid slate" were replaced with actual slates. In 1896, \$11.63 was spent on fuel; \$8.50 for repairs; \$17.07 for furniture, blackboards and stoves; \$3.92 for books and \$262.73 for salary, for expenditures of \$303.85. A total of 44 students was enrolled and the teacher was Mazie Slaughenhaupt.<sup>10</sup>

In 1897, \$42.96 was spent on repairs and furniture, blackboards and stoves cost \$20.43. Fuel costs were \$9.50, incidentals were \$0.18 and the teacher, Edgar P. Eyler was paid \$209.70. The total spent was \$281.97.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1892.* (Baltimore, MD: Press of Thomas and Evans, 1893), p. 266.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1893.* (Baltimore, MD: King Brothers, 1894), p. 264.

<sup>8</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1894.* (Annapolis: King Brothers, 1896), p. 236.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1895.* (Annapolis: King Brothers, 1896), p. 236.

<sup>10</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1896.* (Baltimore: King Publishing, 1898.)

<sup>11</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1897.* (Baltimore, MD: King Publishing, 1899.)

For the next two years, expenses for repairs and furnishings were lower. In 1898 fuel was \$9.60; repairs \$3.50; furniture, blackboards and stoves \$0.55; and salary \$210.00 for a total of \$223.65.<sup>12</sup> In 1899, \$12.87 was spent on fuel, suggesting another cold winter; \$1.50 for repairs and \$5.11 for furniture, blackboards and stoves and salary for the new teacher, Edmund J. Miller, \$209.60 for a total of \$229.60. There were a total of 52 pupils on the roll.<sup>13</sup>

In 1900, fuel cost \$8.12; repairs \$9.69; furniture, blackboards and stoves \$1.90 and \$210.00 for salary. The total expenditures were \$229.71.<sup>14</sup>

The fairly substantial amounts spent on repairs in 1892, 1896, 1897 and 1900 would suggest that the school building had acquired some age by the 1890s. This supports the premise of a construction date in the 1860s or '70s.

By the early 1900s, the format of the annual report on the public schools had changed and lists of itemized expenses were no longer published. There is, however, a notation under the heading of "School houses built or enlarged during the year," in 1906, that School #8, District 15 purchased a lot for \$25.00. (Other construction projects noted material, dimensions and cost.) This 1906 report records one of two parcels purchased by Washington County Board of County School Commissioners of Washington County in that year. This particular lot was acquired for \$25.00 and included 40 square perches purchased on June 11, 1906 from Samuel P. Angle.<sup>15</sup> Another parcel, also containing 40 square perches was acquired by the School Commissioners from Lantz Rhodes for \$35.00 on May 17, 1906.<sup>16</sup> The state education *Report* apparently did not pick up the May 17, 1906 transaction. Clearly School #8 was owned and operated as a public school from 1892 or earlier. The expenses for that school show no payment of rent for building or grounds, yet the school sat on privately owned ground until 1906 when the land was purchased by the School Commissioners.

It is not clear which of the two parcels purchased in 1906 held the school, but the one with the higher price of \$35.00 may have had the improvements on it. That \$35.00 parcel was acquired by Lantz Rhodes on March 8, 1900, from Daniel M. L. Brewer and Anna A. Brewer according to Washington County deed book 112, page 261. In that transaction the property contained one acre, more or less. On January 17, 1891, Daniel M. L. Brewer acquired the property, then containing approximately seven acres from Mary A. Gsell and Andrew Gsell (Washington County deed book 96, page 337). Mary A. Gsell was Mary Ann Brewer prior to her marriage and may have been related to Daniel M. L. Brewer. The earliest reference to the property was in a will written by Barbary Shank on May 28, 1849 in which she bequeaths her seven-acre "plantation" which she bought from Jacob Rhodes and John Lantz, to her only son, Peter Shank Brewer. The will was probated on July 31, 1883. Mary Ann Brewer was Barbary Shank's granddaughter. (Will Book G, page 248.) There is no mention of a school in any of these transactions, although the 1891 deed from Mary A. Gsell and Andrew Gsell to Daniel M. L. Brewer says that the seven acre parcel was improved with a two story frame dwelling house.

<sup>12</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1898.* (Baltimore, MD, King Publishing, 1899.)

<sup>13</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1899.* (Baltimore, MD: William C. Dulany Co., 1900.)

<sup>14</sup> *Report of the Public Schools of Maryland, 1900.* (Baltimore, MD: William C. Dulany Co., 1901.)

<sup>15</sup> Washington County Land Records, volume 124, page 153.

<sup>16</sup> Washington County Land Records, volume 112, page 261.

The other 40 square perch parcel which was purchased by the school commissioners from Samuel P. Angle on June 11, 1906, was acquired by Mr. Angle as part of an 87 acre farm on November 11, 1905 from Harrison Angle (Deed book 122, page 604). Harrison Angle acquired the farm in 1868 from David Wiles, acting as trustee in the equity court case of Samuel E. Tice vs. Emanuel Tice et al. When Harrison Angle acquired the property, it contained 97  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres. Again, there was no mention in these records of the school.

The C & O Canal archives have a copy of a school register for School #8 covering the years 1898–1903. It lists names of pupils registered, their attendance for each of the three terms, age and subjects taught. According to this volume, students ranged from age five to age 17 and lived from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the school.

The school operated until 1943. In December of that year the Four Locks School was sold by the Board of Education of Washington County to Carl F. Clopper and Roger T. Grimes. Shortly thereafter, it was converted into a residence. The former school was used as a house until 1973 when it was purchased by the National Park Service.

Three former students of Four Locks School have been located and two were interviewed for this report. Their names and addresses are:

1. Marshall “Don” Hull  
106 Greenmont Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21740
2. Ernest Eichelberger  
21 E. Baltimore Street  
Hagerstown, MD 21740
3. Mrs. Harold D. Swisher (not interviewed)  
220 S. Westside Avenue  
Funkstown, MD 21734

Mr. Hull and Mr. Eichelberger, who were interviewed separately, concurred on major details of the interior of the school during the years they attended in the 1930s. Both recalled the raised platform or “stage” upon which was placed the teacher’s desk. They remembered a round pot-bellied coal stove and coal bucket in the center of the room. Neither former student remembered any windows in the west end wall; they said blackboards extended across the entire length of that wall. According to both, the desks were cast iron and wood with flip-up seats attached to the desk behind. Mr. Hull remembered that girls and boys were mixed but that children were divided by age. Mr. Eichelberger remembered that the floors were oiled and he remembered George Washington’s picture hanging on the wall. Both were sure that there was no artificial means of lighting, only that which came through the windows. The windows, they said, were shaded by pull blinds; there were no shutters. They both recalled coats and hats hung at the back (east end) of the room, and that there was no separate coat room. Both gentlemen remarked that the school was very cold in the winter. There was a privy, they said to the right (north) of the school build-

ing. Mr. Eichelberger remembered a small gabled entrance porch like the one shown in the historic photo of the building.

The recollections of these former students supports the physical evidence provided by the building itself. The fact that by the 1930s there were no windows in the west wall puts the blocking of the original openings there prior to that time, reinforcing the correlation with expense records of the 1890s. It is also noteworthy that the school retained throughout its entire history such 19<sup>th</sup> century features as the raised teacher's platform, cast-iron flip seated desks, and no artificial lighting.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Condition Analysis of Building**

**January 4, 1991**

#### **Brief Overview**

Four Locks School is a one room brick structure with an exterior measurement of approximately 29 feet long by 26 feet wide. The building sits on a field stone foundation exposed out of the ground only a few inches. There are four vents cut into the brick just above the stone foundation to provide air circulation under the floor. The building is entered through the east gable front over a large concrete slab poured up against the exterior brick work. The roof consists of sheet metal channel drain roofing with half round galvanized gutters and downspouts. The roof overhangs the building on all four sides about one foot. The structure of the building is articulated by reinforced brick pillars at each of the four corners and in the middle of each of the long walls for a total of six pillars. The bricks are laid in a full bed of soft lime mortar. The exterior brick walls were originally painted with a red iron oxide and the joints were striped with white lines. There are currently six windows and one door. The interior has a floor to ceiling height of 10'6". The floor is a standard 4 1/8" wide tongue and grooved yellow pine directly onto the brick. The ceiling is plastered onto lath attached to the scissors collar beams spanning the width of the building. There are the remnants of the wood stove chimney that cantilevered off the rear west wall.

#### **Topographical Features**

The school building is located on a gently downward sloping hill. A man-made flat area was landscaped for the placement of the building. The ground has no drainage on the south side and poor drainage on the west and southeast sides. There is some drainage to the north and northwest. The building sits relatively in the open on its east and south sides. There is a large oak tree off the southeast corner by about 50 feet and a few smaller trees directly south of the building. There is also a close in grouping of trees and scrub growth to the west side and off the southwest corner with a semi-dense growth of bushes located off the north and west sides. A well mowed swath of grass is maintained several feet out from the building on the north and west sides.

The building is fairly well ventilated on the exterior. This scrub trees and bushes on the west and north sides are beginning to encroach on the structure. Because of the proximity of the trees the gutters are full and clogged with leaves. There are a few areas where water runs into the foundation due to negative drainage.

#### **Concrete Stoop**

There is a poured concrete stoop spanning the full width of the east side projecting approximately seven feet from the wall. It is poured on top of a stone foundation. The stoop has some spalling at the edges and the northeast corner. The one concrete step is in good condition.

## **Stone Foundation**

The field stone foundation appears to be stable and in good condition. It is missing some pointing mortar at the exterior. The interior side of the stone foundation could not be observed. Only the south stone foundation on the exterior is exposed to view.

## **Brick Walls**

The brick walls are built in the typical interlocking three brick thick wall at the panels and at the six pillars of four bricks thick. The walls are generally in good condition. There are areas of natural deterioration and man-made destruction.

### **East Wall Exterior**

The concrete stoop was poured directly against the brick wall. The backsplash from rain in addition to the puddling effect of the water on the slab is causing rising damp in high concentrations along most of the front wall. The damage is so far not severe, but some bricks are beginning to crumble. There are a few spalling brick and the tops of the two pillars have been torn apart when an earlier porch roof was removed. If restoration is the ultimate goal, the window to the north of the door is not original and, therefore, the brick wall was cut open when it was added. There are some areas of hard and incompatible mortar that so far is causing little damage, but it is understood the mortar is relatively new in the structure and would not have had enough time to manifest the problems of hard mortar against soft brick.

### **South Wall Exterior**

The alignment of the wall is good and the overall condition of the wall appears to be good. There are a few spalling bricks, missing mortar joints and the paint is almost entirely in failure as far as providing a protective coating. There have been two vents cut into the brick just above the stone foundation to provide ventilation under the floor. The recent mortar work is poorly executed and done with inappropriate hard mortar.

### **West Wall Exterior**

The alignment of the wall is good and the overall condition of the wall appears to be good. There are several spalling bricks and missing mortar joints. The paint is nearly non-existent and provides no protection as a coating. The south window (W5) has been removed and the wall bricked in to close the opening. Fortunately, little damage was done to the original brick opening. The north window (W4) is in an original location. However, the window was replaced and in doing so, the brick opening was modified in both width and length. There once was a chimney that rose out of the roof at the peak on top of and centered on the west wall.

### **North Wall Exterior**

The wall exhibits a shallow bulge at the lower third of the brick panels between the pillars. The center pillar is slightly bowed as well. No structural cracks are apparent. The rolling of the wall

may be due to several factors. Shallow footers or footers placed on disturbed soil that later compacted and allowed the footers to roll slightly outward may be a primary cause. No subsoil investigation was done as a part of this investigation. Negative drainage or puddling against the footers may have allowed water to saturate the ground, and, in so doing, to change the soil structure allowing for soil compression and the roll of the wall. The cutting of the wall at the two windows for the later additions may have weakened the wall and allowed for the roll. It could be a combination of all three or a single cause. The two window openings have been restored and the brick panels below the windows replaced. Unfortunately the brick work was poorly done in both execution and type of mortar used. The brick faces have been badly smeared. Two vents have been placed on top of the stone foundation to provide ventilation under the floor.

### **Roof System**

The rafters are of regularly spaced rough sawn pine, butt nailed at the peak and cut to fit on the wood top plate resting on the brick wall. The rafters extend beyond the wall to form the framing for the fascia and soffit. The gable extensions are undoubtedly formed by the use of outriggers. The fascia and soffits are all one inch thick pine material with a pine bedmolding measuring  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 2" running around the perimeter just under the roof edge. The roofing material is unpainted sheet metal channel drain fastened through the surface with neoprene washer ring shank nails. The whole of the roof system was recently renovated and is in excellent condition.

### **East Front Door, D1**

The original segmental brick arch above the door and the remainder of the brick opening survives intact. The wooden beveled edge side jambs and arched header, transom and upper frame rail that divides the door from the transom survives. The north side interior trim casing, the arched header trim casing and half of the south side trim casing is extant.

The original wooden jamb has been modified to receive the smaller, existing door. A piece of 2 x 6 framing lumber has been nailed to the north jamb and a 2 x 4 was nailed to the header to close down the side of the original jamb opening. The existing door is actually a modified ca. 1825 door hung on a pair off pintle hinges. The hinges measure the  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " and the original hinge mortises measure the same  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ." The existing hinges are appropriate to the age of the school and could be two of the original three hinges used on the original door.

The sill appears to have been built up 2" or so from the original height. The materials below the top sill were too obscured from view to judge if the earlier sill still exists below.

The existing jambs, topsill, door and the transom are in good condition. The pieces of wood below the topsill are termite riddled and rotten. The paint finishes and surfaces of the jambs and the door are rough.

### **Window, W1, North of East Wall Door**

No material of the existing window in the east wall is original including the window opening. The roughly cut chisel marks around the bricks on the exterior, the cut coat rails on the interior

and the mismatched levels of the window stool and the chairrail are all indications of the later addition of the window. The overall condition of this window is good.

### **Window, W2, North Wall, East Position**

The window opening is an original location that was once enlarged to accommodate a door and recently restored back into a window. The original side jambs and the header jamb survive intact in their original locations. The original interior trim above the chairrail also survives intact. A new window sill, exterior brick wall panel below the window and interior wood paneling below the stool and chairrail has been installed.

The sash in the opening is probably original to the building. It matches in construction detail and size all features of the sash in W7 that is definitely original to the building. The sash in the existing opening, while they may be original to the building, certainly traveled from their original opening when the door was constructed into one of the newer window openings. Later, when the doors were removed and the window openings restored, the sash made the return trip to their earlier locations. The overall condition of the window is good.

The sill was not properly installed to allow for positive water flow, the sash needs to be restored and the interior dado wood located below the window is lacking in the obvious details of the existing original dado materials, notably the 1/8" bead. The new dado materials need to be removed, beaded and reinstalled.

### **Window, W3, North Wall, West Position**

The window opening is an original location that was once enlarged to accommodate a door and recently restored back into a window. The original west side and header jambs survive in their original locations. Like W2, the original interior trim above the chairrail also survives intact. A new exterior window sill, east side jamb, brick wall panel below the window and the wood paneling on the interior below the window have all been recently installed.

The lower sash in the opening is probably original to the building. It matches in construction detail and size all features of the sash in other openings that are definitely original to the building. The sash in the opening was also removed when the window was converted to a door. Then the sash were returned when the door was made into a window again. The upper sash is a newer replacement. The overall condition of the current window is good.

In order to restore the window opening properly, the entire sash and frame unit needs to be removed from the opening, the brick wall needs to be knit back together carefully and the frame and sash properly reinstalled. The sill should be constructed to allow for positive water flow away from the building. The interior dado wood located below the window is lacking in obvious details of the existing dado materials to either side, notably the 1/8" bead, and needs to be removed, beaded and reinstalled. A new upper sash unit to match in size and construction details needs to be built to replace the existing upper sash.

### **Window, W4, West Wall, North Position**

The window position is original to the structure, but no original material from the earliest construction remains. The frame and sash as well as the trim was all replaced with new materials. There was a brick header course above the first frame. The header course has been replaced with two rows of stretcher courses. The current level of the interior stool is lower than the original, cut down into the dado area. The overall condition of the window is good.

Remove the current frame, sash and trim. Carefully knit the brick wall back together and rebuild the header above the opening to match the window opening to the immediate south. Restore the dado and the chairrail on the interior along with the trim. Build a new frame and window sash matching the original in all details.

### **Window, W5, West Wall, South Position**

The window opening is original. At some point in time, the frame, sash and trim were completely removed. The exterior side of the opening was bricked up and no attempt was made to disguise the outline of the former opening. On the interior the trim was removed and the opening was plastered over above the chairrail. The chairrail and the dado below the window were left intact. The overall condition of the feature is good.

The brick opening should be cleared of the infill materials. A new frame, sash and trim should be installed that matches those of window W7. The brick opening should be restored and pointed.

### **Window, W6, South Wall, West Position**

The opening is original as are most of the components. The sill, jambs, header, upper sash (repaired), interior trim, stool and dado are all original survivors. The overall condition of the window is very good.

The lower sash needs to be replaced with a copy of an original such as the one in window W7. All the other surfaces of the wood components of W6 need to be refinished.

### **Window, W7, South Wall, East Position**

Of all the window openings, window W7 appears to have the most integrity. All major parts of the window components show no signs of disturbance, repair or replacement except for three small items:

1. The side parting beads are new. There are no coats of paint on them.
2. The original shutter hardware was removed.
3. The interior window beads have been replaced.

### **Windows, General Notes**

1. No locking or hold-open hardware was found, no marks were found to verify their existence.

2. There is a piece of wood added on the interior trim at the header piece to accommodate later roller blinds. These strips should be removed from all the windows.
3. Wavy float glass was used in all sash. Old wavy glass should be reused to restore all broken, missing or replaced glass that has new glass in place of old rippled glass.
4. Install spring roller blinds with heavy vinyl impregnated cloth, tassels and the heavy roller.

### **Chairrail and Dado**

The chairrail is roughly 34" above the finished floor height. The top rail projects from the wall about 2" out from the plaster wall and is a square cornered 1 1/8" piece of wood stock. The dado was originally applied after the floor was installed and rises from the floor to the underside of the chairrail. The dado consists of tongue and grooved boards ranging from 6 to 7 1/2" wide. The boards have a 1/8" bead along the tongue edge and stand vertically. Nailed to the face of the dado immediately under the chairrail was a piece of the cyma ogee molding. It was the same size and profile of molding used around the windows and the door as trim. The condition of the chairrail and dado is good.

The chairrail at windows W1 and W4 along with the interior window stools and apron moldings need to be restored. The dado at windows W2 and W3 has been replaced with inappropriately manufactured wood pieces. The 1/8" bead needs to be added to the vertical panels. There is no clear evidence that a baseboard ever existed. No ghosts or paint lines exist on the remaining dado. The floor has been entirely replaced removing any evidence that may have existed concerning the presence of baseboard. It is possible and probable that no baseboard existed. It would be appropriate to assume that the floor was laid first and then the dado material was scribed tight to the floor with no gaps revealed.

### **Baseboard**

There is no clear evidence that a baseboard ever existed. No ghosts or paint lines exist on the remaining dado. The floor has been entirely replaced, removing any evidence that may have existed concerning the presence of baseboard. It is possible and probable that no baseboard existed. It would be appropriate to assume that the floor was laid first and then the dado material was scribed tight to the floor with no gaps revealed.

### **Floor**

A recently installed replacement floor was put down over a new framing system. None of the original flooring material remains. The new floor consists of 3/4" thick by 4" wide yellow pine, leaf grain. All the flooring is a standard width and blind nailed. The condition of the floor is excellent.

It is recommended that the floor be left as is and unfinished. There is no way to tell if the floor was random width or standard width boards. The boards could have been nailed from the surface and could have been stained dark and varnished. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century floor-

ing was generally of a standard width, was mostly surfaced nailed and could have been left finished or unfinished.

### **Plaster Walls and Ceiling**

The plaster walls rise from the chairrail to the ceiling. The plaster is applied directly onto the brick walls. There was a scratch coat, a brown coat and a white coat.

The ceiling plaster was applied to and over sawn wooden lathing nailed to the undersides of the scissors joists located well below and rafters. A rough scratch coat, a brown coat and a white finish coat was applied to the lathing.

The plaster on the walls and the ceiling is largely original and salvageable. It for the most part appears to be tight to the brick walls and the ceiling lath though in many areas the surface is rough and pock marked.

Following is a list of recommendations for repair of the plaster:

1. Scrape, sand and peel all paint off the white coat. The white coat will be largely lost due to this operation.
2. Renew the lath in all the holes punched into the ceiling.
3. As patching proceeds, apply a brushed on coat of Plaster Weld diluted 50% with water. Allow the Plaster Weld to become tacky to the touch before patching the plaster.
4. Brick and mortar-in a few small holes to the interior surface of the brick walls. Apply scratch and brown coats to all bare brick areas.
5. Skim coat all plaster walls and ceiling to renew surfaces.
6. Cut out all cracks, Plaster Weld the edges of the cut out cracks and re-white coat all the cracked areas.

**CAUTION:** Do not remove the four eyelet hooks, two on either side of the peak of the ceiling a few feet east of the west gable end and chimney. These eyelet hooks are original and were used to support the metal stove pipe flue from the wood stove to the chimney as it ran horizontally a few feet below the ceiling. Wire was used to secure the metal stove pipe flue to the hooks.

Do not remove or cover the liquid slate surface on the west wall.

### **Coat Rails and Cast Iron Hooks**

On either side of the central east front door, D1, was a pair of parallel wooden coat rails with cast iron coat hooks. Each rail was 1" thick and 4" wide with a 1/8" bead at both long edges. The coat rails were fastened to the walls with cut nails driven into wooden blocks laid into the brick work.

There are two remnants of cast iron coat hooks, both are missing the upper larger hook, both are different from each other and one is nailed to the rails while the other is screwed. There are a lot of circular swirl marks on the rails indicative of the single screw wire coat hooks used later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are also hundreds of nail holes throughout the length of all four boards

The rails are all loose, full of holes and overcoated with multiple paint and paper layers. The north side pair of rails has been cut to accommodate window, W1. The rails are solid enough to salvage. There are no extant cast iron coat hooks that are totally intact or that can be irrefutably declared as original. However, the cast coat hook base with the screw in the base is as close a model for the period hook as any.

To repair the coat rail and hooks, the following list may be followed:

1. Remove remaining rails, remove all nails, hooks, paint and paper. Save the two cast iron coat hook bases. Mark or tag the one attached with screws. A careful cleaning of the boards may allow for the detection of a regular spacing pattern of the original hooks..
2. Remove the nailing blocks from the brick walls and reset in new mortar.
3. Restore the missing lengths of the north end rails.
4. Reinstall the original boards back in their original locations.
5. Locate and install new hooks.
6. Construct and install a 4" wide by 4 foot long and double edge 1/8" beaded coat rail centered on the west wall. The ghost marks for its existence are evident on the wall behind where the teacher's desk would have been located.

## **Platform**

A 9" high stepped platform across the entire width of the west wall projecting out into the room from the west wall 6 feet is evident from the ghost line left on the original dado paneling along the south wall near the west end, along the entire west wall and on the north wall near the west end. The ghost line traces back to the earliest finishes and is now a ridge on which dust has collected that allows one to view its location. The paint was put on the dado after the platform was built. There is little difference in the condition of the paint above or below the stepped platform level. Nothing other than the perimeter ghost line of the platform exists.

It is recommended that the platform be reconstructed.

## **Heating**

Well above head height, centered in the back of the west wall is a cantilevered brick chimney that corbels out from the walls and rises up through the peak of the roof. A clay fired stove pipe thimble lines the brick opening where the pipe enters the chimney.

There was some type of coal stove, that, according to oral informants, was probably located in the central east/west axis of the building and just west of the center (closer to the teacher) of the north/south axis of the building. The stove pipe rose straight up from the stove to a few feet from the plaster ceiling where it elbowed almost 90 degrees and very slightly rose while it ran over to the chimney several feet to the west. The long horizontal length of the stove pipe was supported by wire strung from eyehook to eyehook under the stove pipe.

The chimney top has been removed and roofed over. No stove, stove pipe or wire now exists.

### **Historic Heating Recommendations**

1. Interview living oral historians about the type of coal stove that may have existed in the room, the size of the stove pipe (7" diameter ?) and the location of the stove.
2. Restore the chimney up through the roof and line the chimney for safety. Keep the clay liner below the top course of brick so it is not visible.
3. Procure a stove and stove pipe that is as close as can be determined to the original as possible.

### **Modern Heating Recommendations**

To maintain the building with an even heat in the winter yet provide a system that will not be intrusive:

1. Install either Flexwatt or Flexel electrical radiant heating. The system must be installed under the ceiling plaster which would necessitate the loss of some original plaster. The plaster can be renewed once the heating system is installed.
2. Insulate above the ceiling with 9 inches of faced fiberglass batts neatly and snuggly fit to all framing members.
3. Install the computer control box on the east wall between the two parallel chairrails set into the brick walls. The control box can be hidden by draping a light lacy shawl over the box from one of the coat hooks.

## Conclusion

Four Locks School provides an excellent opportunity for restoration and rehabilitation as an old-time school and interpretive center for the Four Locks School area of the C & O Canal.

The school should be furnished as it was throughout most of its history with rows of desks with attached seats of cast iron and wood. The platform should be replaced and a teacher's desk located. The teacher's desk might be a large table with a drawer, a standard desk from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, or an earlier table with a slanted lift up top.

The round stove was, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a coal burning appliance, although a wood-burning stove could also be appropriate for the earlier period of the school's history. The school never had electrical lighting, or apparently any type of artificial illumination. The school should be portrayed with only natural lighting to illustrate the typical conditions of a 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century school room. The affect will be significant on dark, overcast days.

It is further recommended that historic paint colors be used in light drab or cream hue. The use of calcimine or an oil stain-type of paint is recommended applied with vertical brush strokes to create the translucent quality of early paints.

An important part of the historic site is the school yard. On the ground surrounding the school were play areas, play equipment, privies, sheds and pathways. As much as possible, these elements should be reconstructed or recreated.

We recommend that older residents of the Four Locks area be questioned about their recollections and a search be made for any other photographs of the building other than the three known historic views.

In addition to the desks and stove, the success of portraying the past in large part depends in details. Such details would include a picture of George Washington, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century map of the United States, blackboards of slate or preferably "liquid slate," erasers of wooden blocks to which scraps of carpet have been tacked, a coal bucket, linseed oil for the floors, individual slates and slate pencils for the students, old readers and other texts, cast iron hooks for the coat rail and perhaps some vintage clothing to hang on them.

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