

UC Berkeley

Room One Thousand

Title

House 103

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3n91f3ms>

Journal

Room One Thousand, 2(2)

ISSN

2328-4161

Author

James-Chakraborty, Kathleen

Publication Date

2014

Copyright Information

Copyright 2014 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

Kathleen James-Chakraborty

House 103

My family often refers to houses by their street numbers. My mother spent World War II at her grandmother's at 1209 St. Paul Street in Baltimore; I grew up at 103 North Queen Street across the Chesapeake Bay in Chestertown. 1209 and 103 are family code for places occupied for decades. Even if one had never visited the address (my youngest sister was born after the death of the great-grandmother for whom she was named, and thus never occupied 1209), this shorthand remained meaningful.

Since the success of Maya Lin's Vietnam War Memorial, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the completion of Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum, and the aftermath of 9/11, the architecture of memory has become a fashionable topic. However, the way in which 103 continues to haunt me goes beyond memories I accumulated over the forty years that my family was associated with the address. For most of that period—and occasionally well beyond—other larger landscapes slotted themselves into topography of my dreams. First the spaces of the neighborhood, but later those of much of the rest of the world, could somehow be condensed to fit within the house as I remembered it. The upstairs hall was a narrow corridor running parallel to the street and had two bedrooms on each side: one pair faced the street with transoms above the doors; the other pair opened up to a single, wide stair. In my dreams

the corridor could expand to become Water Street a block away, which not only ended in a little inlet but alternatively ended in the stair wrapped around a newel post with a rope my mother had added for a banister. The same space could suddenly expand, when I was sleeping in a bedroom on either side of the Atlantic or the Pacific, into the scale of an urban boulevard.

To assume architecture can embody memories that have very little to do with the aesthetic quality of particular places, but rather with the events that have transpired within them, is a trite point of view. Many of us have walked down streets imagining the kinds of lives we could lead within their buildings, inventing memories of experiences we will in fact never have. And yet, there is something profound about the ways in which spaces, like favorite rock songs that provide the soundtracks for the lives of so many of us, are the stage sets for the ordinary and extraordinary. Moreover, across decades of inhabitation, these layer upon one another to provide memories, whether individual or communal, that have until recently been beyond the provenance of architectural history, but are by no means unfamiliar to those who build up emotional ties to particular places.

The importance to me of 103 would not surprise many members of my extended family. Each of my grandparents grew up in a dwelling inhabited by their families for generations between three and a half decades to more than two centuries. All but 1209 had left family hands by the time I was born, but the rectory a few blocks away in downtown Baltimore, as well as Overhills and Rockburn in its western suburbs all seemed familiar—even though I visited the interior of Overhills only as an adult, and have only seen Rockburn once and only from the outside. Perhaps as a result, my grandparents were peripatetic like me (downward mobility also certainly played a role); 103 provided my parents with a return to stability and respectability after the ravages of

the Depression in the case of my father and in my mother's case after her parents' divorce.

This attachment to place might also seem to foreshadow my career as an architectural historian. And yet much of my life as a student of buildings has been an emphatic rejection of the environment in which I grew up. As I knew by the time I started grade school, 103 was built between 1730 and 1735. The front two rooms on each of its two principal floors came first, the back two rooms later in the eighteenth century, and the kitchen wing was reconstructed following a fire as recently as World War II. It was thus a mostly genuine example of colonial architecture, the single most prized tradition in the history of American architecture, and certainly the one most cherished by both my extended family and the local elite, whether indigenous or blow-ins. (We ourselves were a mix; my mother had an ancestor who had moved from Scotland to Barbados to Chestertown but was descended from a son who, after acquiring a medical education in Edinburgh, had settled across the Bay in more prosperous Annapolis.) So I instead focused on modernism, a style that has had a minimal, and entirely unappreciated impact upon my childhood surroundings.

The fact that architecture mattered to many in Chestertown, just as it did to my parent's clans, undoubtedly had an impact on me. Much of the town's sense of itself (and, as I got older an increasingly large chunk of its economy), was tied to its impressive stock of eighteenth-century buildings. Most of them clustered close to the river and were visible from the kitchen of 103 in the winter. It was easy when walking around the block to be impressed by the houses on Water Street, many of them much larger and imposing than 103, between which the river could also be glimpsed. I spent my first six months in one of these Water Street dwellings, a nondescript Victorian long since shorn of any animating ornament, next to the bridge crossing the Chester River. The building's



Figure 1 Patrick Henry House, 103 N Queen Street, Chestertown, Maryland, 1730-35.

upper stories had been divided into apartments rented by the local college faculty, who quickly moved out if they started families. As a child I often paid calls on a colleague of my father's, a single woman who taught Shakespeare and inhabited my parents' former rooms for nearly a decade before buying a bungalow close to campus; my best friend, who had spent her infancy in one of these apartments, settled briefly on campus before moving into a turn of the century house on the white side of the former school for blacks, where we attended fifth grade before it became an elementary school.

In a small town less than thirty miles south of the Mason Dixon line, race mattered even more than architecture. Although 103 faced

out on a small and rather disreputable dwelling unit tacked onto the back of an office block, it fell on the white side of an invisible boundary located a scant block to the south (it also looked out over the backs of a second insalubrious apartment block, the cinema, a parking lot, and a barn). When we moved into 103 just before my first Christmas, its neighbor immediately to the north marked the edge of the not quite proper zone separating the historic free black neighborhood and the imposing pair of colonials whose living rooms reached up a half flight of stairs, ensuring that passersby could not stare straight through the scruffy box bush into living room windows as they could into our house. My parents originally rented only one side of the house; the other was still occupied by an elderly woman and her rather wild collection of two dozen odd cats, all of whom were much better than she at climbing the treacherous steps up to the second and third floors.

When I was two we bought 103 for the princely sum of fifteen thousand dollars. A year or two later our neighbor Miss Harley inherited a quarter of a million dollars, no small sum at the time. My father felt that she could now afford to live in much greater splendor, and therefore evicted her in good conscience. I remember paying calls on her and the cats, all ensconced in Victorian comfort around the corner. My earliest memories of her half of the house are of ventures into still walled-off unknowns: the front hall before the new flooring had been laid upon the joists; the room behind the hall that would be transformed into my father's book-lined study; the way out from the second half of the kitchen into what would be the other half of the garden. Equally mysterious was the pair of upstairs bedrooms: the front one was still accessed through two doors and I would eventually claim this room for my own; the back room, which was even more dilapidated than its twin on our side, became the guest bedroom.

These were the first in a series of architectural adventures that would eventually make me as much at home in Berlin and Calcutta as in any of the three bedrooms I eventually inhabited within the massive walls of

103. As I grew and my independence increased my attention expanded from hallways to streets, and from rooms to cities. I walked in my teens across Boston and Paris, in my twenties through Breslau and Bombay; by my thirties my haunts ranged from Brasilia to Shanghai.

It was in these attics, my mother explained with the same matter of fact tone she took in showing where the fireplaces had been before they were bricked over, that the slaves had undoubtedly lived. Proper historic investigation in archives, undertaken only in the twenty-first century when the house was purchased and renovated by the college where my parents had taught, revealed that the house had been built by a British member of parliament who dealt in indentured servants; so it is possible that the first occupants of the building were all white, but it seems likely that at some point in the roughly one hundred and thirty years that separated the completion of the front rooms from the Emancipation Proclamation that slaves dwelt in the house. It would have suited our taste for romanticism to imagine Harriet Tubman leading one of her bands of escapees into 103 to cower over night in its few original closets (adding closets was one of my mother's seemingly constant projects), which never ceased to yield some surprising treasure to us on a rainy day, but even we knew that they would have passed through the swamps upriver of town, avoiding the bridge in favor of a ride in a more secretive small boat.

Over time the way we inhabited 103 changed. My early memories are mostly of the pair of upstairs bedrooms, the one in front that I initially shared with my younger sister, and the one belonging to my parents behind it through which I had to walk to get to the bathroom. I also remember my mother making bread in the small, dark kitchen downstairs, and of enjoying juice and cookies in the back yard while my father sipped his cocktail. Furtive activities imprinted themselves most deeply on what was probably my three-year-old consciousness. I can remember clambering up the netting to escape my large crib, which

was tucked into the alcove between the front wall of the house and the fireplace, the same alcove that later became my sister's closet, as well as crawling under the gate that was supposed to protect me and my younger siblings from falling down the stairs. I also recall the sense of new universes unfolding when we began to inhabit that side of the attic, considered so remote from the rest of the house that when it evolved from shared playroom into my bedroom just before I began first grade, my grandmother gave me her old chamber pot, just in case.

By that time, we occupied all of the house except the other half of the attic, which would eventually become my brother's room, and the crawl space behind it, which remained the preserve of family letters and of the bats that occasionally filtered in during summer into the upstairs hall or, worse yet, the bedrooms. This precipitated a regular ritual: My mother would summon my father, who would call our neighbor two houses down the street (much later, after the deaths of my father and his wife, this neighbor would become my step-father). Dad would vanish to 109 where both men would fortify themselves with a stiff drink, crab nets, and tennis rackets; by the time they returned my mother had invariably chased the errant creature out a window or the back door with a broom (the procedure was exactly reversed if the bat was at 109).

The most important additions, from the point of view of my daily life, were downstairs. The use of the front hall remained problematic, except at Christmas, when it held the tree and many of the presents. There was a big Victorian bookcase surmounted by a bronze study of the stuffed elephants in the main hall of the American Museum of Natural History, an odd survival of my great-grandfather's bankruptcy at the end of the 1920s (it had repeatedly failed to sell), which thumped reassuringly against the wall whenever anyone ran down the stair on that side of the house. At one point the hall also held six bicycles, but although it was basically the size of the living room, it had little other function.

Behind the front hall were my father's study and the expanded kitchen that lay at the heart of daily life. Like the dining room, the study was one tall step above the level of the front rooms. This was, because it had been built later, over a basement rather than a crawl space. Getting there was another adventure, which entailed opening a metal covering, climbing down stairs that were little better than a ladder, and groping in the dark for the light switch. It was invariably damp as well as dim, as if the moisture rose directly out of the dirt floor; if one forgot to turn the light off afterwards the glow became perceptible in the evening through the chinks in the dining room floor boards, entailing another trip outside and downstairs, inevitably in the rain as well as the dark. The second stage of the house, consisting of two rooms on each of the first two floors, was considerably grander in its detailing than the front rooms, although the rooms were no larger, nor the ceilings higher. The study had wood paneling; the dining room, built at the same time, had a dentil molding and elaborate brackets supported the mantel. More importantly for my purposes, the study held the stereo my father bought when I was about nine to replace a series of earlier record players. It was here that I spent a good chunk of my adolescence, listening to everything from the Beatles and Baez to Schubert and Springsteen. To this day hearing the first few chords of almost any track from Rubber Soul or Darkness on the Edge of Town puts me back into one of the paired yellow wing chairs nestled into its corners, curled up with a book or chatting to my sister.

But the most immediate result of the expansion of our occupation of the house was the possibility it opened up for indoor chases. The original staircases were on the side of the house we had recently acquired, but when the house had been split in half in the 1910s, a second pair had been added against the opposite wall. These largely cut off access to the one good closet, which, when we finally did leave, yielded an enormous amount of porcelain and bric-a-brac which we



Figure 2 The author and her sister on the front stoop, 1964 or early 1965.

had been entirely unaware of as children, but which now decorate our houses, as my mother held on only to what she had used on at least an annual basis. In tandem with the unification of the kitchen, the pair of stairs leading to the two upper stories meant that one could make a circuit around the first floor, a loop through the upstairs hall if one avoided the dead-ends of the bedrooms, or another loop through the attic bedrooms, which were connected by a door, not to mention ultimately escape through two kitchen doors and the three gates leading out of the back yard.

Sewing 103 back into a single unit (and thus eliminating 105) hardly put an end to the sense that we inhabited a construction site. By the time I was twelve, each of the ceilings had been replaced with sheetrock. This was viewed as a miraculous new alternative to the plaster on wooden lathe that had an unfortunate tendency to come unstuck and fall onto your bed in the middle of the night. The walls, however, remained original, with the dining room and my parents' bedroom atop of it containing a substance that mysteriously repelled any paint that was applied to them. My mother would periodically attempt to refresh the dining room, but she gave up hope in her room, where the paint peeled continuously for three solid decades. Then there was the dramatic moment during my college years when it was discovered that the way in which the basement level of the originally exterior wall between

" Witnessing the way in which 103 was transformed over the years made me highly conscious of the degree to which the process of maintaining a building inevitably changes it, and these alterations are often the aspects of a building that appear oldest, even as they erase the actual traces of its history. "

the front and back eighteenth-century parts had been punctured for the central heating system, installed in the decade before we moved in, threatened the stability of the whole structure. Along the way to correcting this, my mother upgraded the living room, adding crown moldings that looked as if they might be original but were in fact much more elegant than anything the builders of the front rooms had been willing to

countenance and rather drew attention away from the historic paneling that separated the living room from the hall. The back roof needed constant work too, and something from the bathrooms located off the back bedrooms occasionally flooded into the kitchen, thus requiring

repairs to the kitchen ceiling as well. We tried to ignore the state of the brickwork, which was so soft that it would often crumble to sand if you ran your finger along either it or the mortar, into which whole oyster shells were thankfully often embedded.

The unwelcome intrusiveness—and for my parents', expense—of all of this construction made me leery of home ownership; I've been a renter most of my adult life. But it also imbued me with more than a little skepticism about both historic preservation and the romanticism about the past that supports tourist industries. Chestertown's stock of "colonial" architecture has been expanding at a steady clip for decades; postmodernism only reinforced established custom. In the 1970s a "Southern Colonial" wing was added to the mid-nineteenth-century courthouse, nearly dwarfing the original; there was nothing ironic in the least about its giant Doric portico. Witnessing the way in which 103 was transformed over the years made me highly conscious of the degree to which the process of maintaining a building inevitably changes it, and these alterations are often the aspects of a building that appear oldest, even as they erase the actual traces of its history.

In our neighborhood, the propensity for the colonial resulted in the gradual purging of Victorian accretions; 103 was no exception. When we moved in, each half of the house had a small entrance porch. I don't remember these at all but I am familiar with their appearance from a neighbor's sketch, one of a series of local views that were sold in the shops around the corner on High Street as note cards. My mother says that they were rotting, which I am sure is true. In any case a good porch should sit high above the street, giving one a perch from which to look down upon the happenings on the sidewalk with real authority, as all the elderly ladies on the block certainly knew. It should stretch across at least the front of the house and, better yet, wrap around the side, as did the one belonging to the boarding house four houses down, until it too

fell victim to the elevation of social status that comes from revealing a house's eighteenth-century lineaments.

One of our front doors reverted to being a living room window, with a sill deep enough to sit on, since the strength of the exterior walls derived from their thickness rather than the care with which they had been built. In front of the other front door, my mother put a small brick platform, two steps higher than the sidewalk. Too small for a chair, and lacking a protective overhang, the small platform nonetheless provided a place to sit between the untidy mix of box and ivy that provided our only layer of protection from eyelevel encounters with our neighbors walking home from shopping excursions downtown.

Other alterations were more minor. For instance, my mother doubled the size of the study's back window, giving a view out from the long desk, at which my father almost never sat (he preferred a wing chair since he read much more than he wrote), out over our doings in the garden, about which, however, he cared less than she did. The presence for many years of our rabbits right underneath the window may have been a further discouragement. She also added closets and bookcases. These included a long row of closets along most of the length of the upstairs hall accessed by sliding doors, plus a bookcase where the second door to the larger of the two front bedrooms had once been, plus closets in both front bedrooms and an ample bookcase in the larger of the two. The first made an excellent hiding place during hide and seek; the last two were built only after I had outgrown such games.

Many changes in the character of 103, restored to being a single family unit for what was the first time in over a century, resulted from the diminution in the social status of its inhabitants that mirrored the fall in the prosperity of the town. For much of the eighteenth century, Chestertown was Maryland's second or third largest town, with a relatively busy small harbor from which tobacco was shipped

to London and everything from foxhounds to furniture was imported. It was also a stop on the main route from Virginia to Philadelphia; George Washington was reputed to have spent the night a block and a half away, and many of the other Virginians associated with American Independence passed through the town. Following the American Revolution, however, land opened up to the west and the route across the Appalachians through the Cumberland Gap became far more important. The entire Eastern Shore began a slow decline; to the degree it was ever arrested this occurred further south in towns like Salisbury and Crisfield, which became centers for the canning of vegetables and crabs respectively, or Easton, which by the 1920s was attracting wealthy New Yorkers (in my childhood St. Michaels, currently the most fashionable Eastern Shore community, was still a fishing town, in which not all houses yet had indoor plumbing).

Recent research has established that 103's most distinguished inhabitants were the Chambers family. It was they who doubled the size of the house. The son of the original buyer, Ezekiel was the hero of the Battle of Caulk's Field, a minor skirmish in the War of 1812, fought just downriver from Chestertown, that had the distinction of being one of the few American victories in that conflict. Probably as a result of the fame this accorded him, which culminated in election to the Senate and an honorary degree from Yale, he moved early in the eighteenth century from 103 a block to the south of Widehall, already one of the town's most distinguished eighteenth-century mansions, although it would acquire its giant Ionic colonnade facing the river only in the early twentieth-century. Following his departure, the house became a rental property. The land on either side was eventually sold off for a pair of vaguely Italianate mid-Victorian houses with ample front porches and side verandahs, and 103 was divided into two units. Located a scant six feet on either side from 103, the new Victorian neighbors quite

crimped its attractiveness. An elderly rather deaf couple occupied one and a bachelor who worked as a surveyor by day and ran a bar uptown by night lived in the other. Deprived for years of a television, we used to stand on the picnic table to watch our adopted grandmother's soaps and the news; when she and my father both tuned in to the Metropolitan Opera's Saturday afternoon broadcasts, you could listen in the backyard to the stereo.

It remains hard for me to believe that 103 was ever very elegant, even before it was hemmed in by its neighbors. Certainly earlier residents and their servants threw a great deal of the trash out of the kitchen door into the backyard. Digging there, as children do even where the grass was supposed to be growing, we often uncovered shards of Chinese blue and white pottery. Once I even found a glass inkwell. No one thought anything of it at the time; it would be another decade before a wealthy blow-in transformed what had been the slightly tawdry paper store (whose proprietor always informed your parents if you spent more than your milk money on candy or if older boys were poking around in the wrong magazines), into an elegant inn after mounting a proper dig behind it.

By that time Chestertown was changing. Attracting more tourists compensated slightly for the closing of the pickle factory at the other end of High Street, but benefited a very different group of people. My lifelong letter abhorrence of tourism as an industry, which, of course, needs to be offset against the fact that after having spent most of my first sixteen years in the same place I became an inveterate traveler, can certainly be traced back to growing up in 103. My first publication, a letter to the New York Times that appeared when I was in college, was critical of tourism as a means of economic development; in my experience only blow-ins profited, but I also resented the intrusion upon our privacy, and the inveterate snobbery, of those who came to

peer into our windows and poke into our lives. Of course our neighbors already did this, but we knew them; the balance of information was usually pretty even. It could even tip into our favor as with the slightly deaf substitute grandparents in 107. Sitting in the study in 103, I immediately knew not only when their phone rang, but also, often, if the caller was male or female. "Hello, baby doll," was the way Grandpa greeted absolutely all women; "Hey butch," most of the men he knew.

Most of the eighteenth-century houses in the neighborhood were at least occasionally open to the public, particularly for the annual Candlelight Tour sponsored by the historical society, whose headquarters were around the corner. My mother sometimes helped neighbors out when they opened theirs up, but we remained closed to those we didn't know or who were at least friends of friends. Then the situation was entirely different. When I was really small, a boat called *The Port Welcome* would steam over from Baltimore once a year and deposit members of the garden club to which my grandmother had belonged. This involved an exciting stroll down to the dock, as well as trying to behave during the proper lunch or tea accorded the particular friends of my grandmother (she died when I was two), seeing them off again as the boat slipped down the river.

The arrival of *The Port Welcome* and its influx of proper Baltimore ladies of a certain age was known, at least to my mother, weeks in advance, but a knock on the front door could always yield a surprise, particularly on weekend afternoons. A formidable great-aunt and her husband could appear on the doorstep unannounced expecting tea or cocktails. More frightening by far, if an even more formidable, if not nearly as tall, great-great aunt appeared, my father would flee with Aunt Dorothy's husband to show off the latest buildings at the college, while the rest of us were subjected to lectures on which of our ancestors had died on their knees in prayer. A former student of my father's from a

decade or two ago, might be back either to seek advice or to show off his or her success. Occasionally it was a poor, usually black, neighbor, often literally hat in hand, wanting to ask my father's advice.

Announced guests, who were as likely to be speakers at the college or candidates for jobs in the English department, often stayed the night, and there was almost always at least one aunt at Thanksgiving and Christmas. The guest room, painted blue and with a suite of faintly French painted furniture (almost the only things in the house that matched) that had belonged to my grandmother always had a slightly special air about it, even if I regularly trooped through to take a shower. The bathroom off my parent's bedroom had only a claw-footed bath, in which my sisters, my mother, and I could linger for what seemed to be hours. Baths were not particularly private; we took turns perched on the washing machine catching up with my mother while she soaked; and when we returned for summers and holidays from boarding school and college my sisters and I usually kept one another company.

Entertaining was also important. Sunday dinner was the main meal of the week, especially in the winter, and served as rather a dry run for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. I was probably in my mid-teens before I appeared at the table on a Sunday afternoon during the winter in a school dress, much less pants; we dressed up for holiday dinners for decades more. On the really big occasions the vegetables would be served from silver dishes, even during the week we ate from bone china with flatware. Otherwise, we would catch breakfast or a quick lunch in the kitchen, which had no table (for many years a large freezer, which stored the results of my mother's vegetable garden, located across the river, served as its centerpiece). Everything else came from the A&P, which once had a special on stainless steel, where you got one piece for each however many dollars your voracious family spent on groceries. And then there were parties. When I was really little, these were dinner

parties with no more than six invited guests; my sister and I would dress up and serve the hors d'oeuvres before being ushered upstairs to bed. Later there were much bigger affairs. All the English majors would come, meaning as my mother bought equal quantities of beer and soda, that we would have soda, otherwise entirely off limits, for days.

Best of all was the celebration of my grandfather's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary to my step-grandmother. For this we set up a second dinner table in the front hall. A cousin came from Washington in a limousine with a Jeroboam of champagne.

I left 103 for boarding school at the age of sixteen and returned only infrequently once I got my first teaching job halfway across the country fourteen years later. Although I have been back once to show 103 to my son, I last stayed there at the time of my marriage. My husband had already visited 103 earlier that year, when my siblings and I were dividing up the furniture, art, and silver that my mother had decided not to keep when she moved to a smaller house in the country which she shared with my second stepfather (she had already been widowed twice). Our wedding took place out there, where the living room, kitchen, and garden were all larger, and for one last time the house was full of Jameses and their guests, including an aging Indian communist who voiced his firm approval of finally getting his tea in America in a proper porcelain cup and saucer.

Shortly afterwards the house was bought by a new hire in American Studies. It was subsequently acquired with funding from a distant cousin whose daughter had been a student of my father's to house visiting scholars completing books on American history. Renamed by the donor for Patrick Henry, whose son had been an ancestor's first husband, it became the subject of the thorough restoration my parents could never afford, as well as of serious scholarly research. History replaced memory in setting out the details of its story. The meticulous preservation effort

also yielded a dunning letter from an eighteenth-century Philadelphia printer close to the paper dolls I had stuffed through the same chinks in the attic floorboards, as well as the monopoly money various siblings and friends had similarly disposed of during epic games that could go on for days.

By that time I was living in Dublin, whose red brick terraces felt more than oddly familiar, even if thankfully they were not inhabited by retired blow-ins, but by people assumed, at least before the collapse of the Celtic Tiger, to have a vital stake in the place where they were living, having likely come from no further than County Clare. I could turn the corner from the postage-stamp image of a bungalow in which we were temporarily parked and find in the remnants of an eighteenth-century village, swallowed up by the city's expansion following the construction of its first commuter rail line, houses that sat as uncomfortably close to the street as, and boasted windows of similar proportions to, 103, although even the doorframes evinced an architectural sophistication 103 entirely lacked. Moreover, one could glimpse the water from some of their upper rooms, as I could during winter from my attic aerie, albeit now the expanse of Dublin Bay framed in the distance by the heights of Howth, bestowed with an amplitude of both breadth and depth entirely absent in 103's environs. It was nonetheless easy to imagine awakening in a double windowed front bedroom, longer than it was deep, and hearing the recognizable voices of one's neighbors down below. Although the Dublin floorboards were likely to be harder and narrower than 103's pine ones, many of them more than a foot wide, I have yet to see anywhere in Ireland tongue and groove paneling like that running across the back of the green bedroom into which I moved as a teen, swapping the attic with a younger sister. The sense of an eighteenth-century golden age badly compromised by the way in which the help were treated is also similar, although in Chestertown the term for it is

Colonial and in Dublin Georgian, and in Ireland the exploited were indigenous rather than enslaved. Dublin was and remains a great deal grander than anything to which Chestertown ever aspired; it sometimes seems that I have grown up to it, casting aside 103's excessively rude and redundant walls for the mature assurance of middle age.

[Endnotes]

1 <http://www.washcoll.edu/centers/starr/the-patrick-henry-fellows-residence-a-short-history.php>, consulted 1 September 2013.

2 Michael Owen Bourne and Eugene Hall Johnstone, *Historic Houses of Kent County: An Architectural History* (Chestertown, The Historical Society of Kent County, Inc., 1998), 112-14.

[Chapter figure part of "Souvenir Nostalgia Photo Series." Photograph by Andrew Manuel. 2014.]