

Attic

The attic spans the third floor space of the main block. The rafter system in the two sections is nearly identical, providing evidence that the two sections were constructed within a few years of one another. The attic has an overall dimension of 50'x27', although it is divided by the brick north end wall of the center section. The two end chimney have been reduced below the roofline, although the center chimney is still in use (Photo 28). See Figure 4 for a floorplan of the attic.

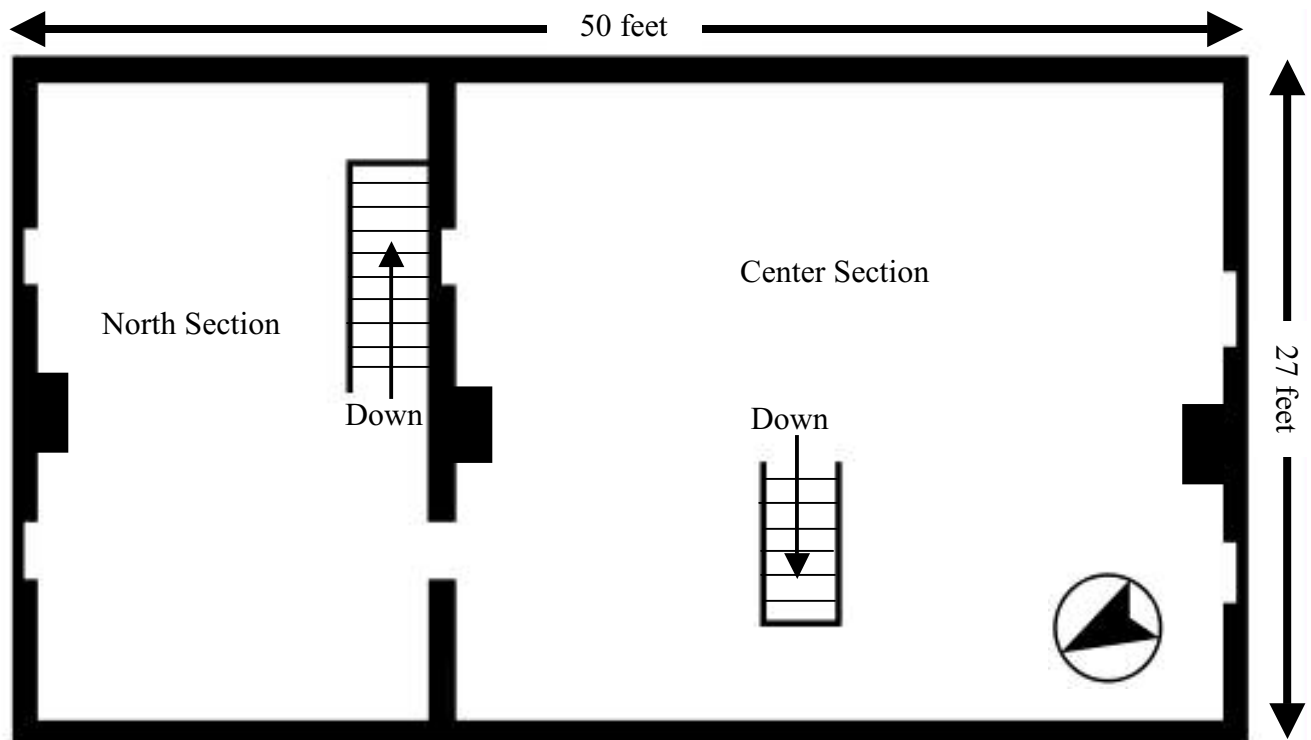


Figure 4. Floorplan of attic.

The rafters are attached at the ridge with a technique called the “tongue and fork” joint, an eighteenth century means of construction. Rather than having a ridge board, the upper ends of the rafters are pegged together (see Figure 5). The center section has thirteen rafters, while the north section has seven. Most rafters are braced by collar beams; two of the collar beams have been removed from the center section. This rafter and collar beam system is joined with square pegs. In the latter nineteenth century, possibly when a slate roof was installed, a set of posts was installed to support the joint



Photo 28. Chimney, south end of main block.

between the rafters and the collar beams. These posts are nailed to the joists, not pegged.

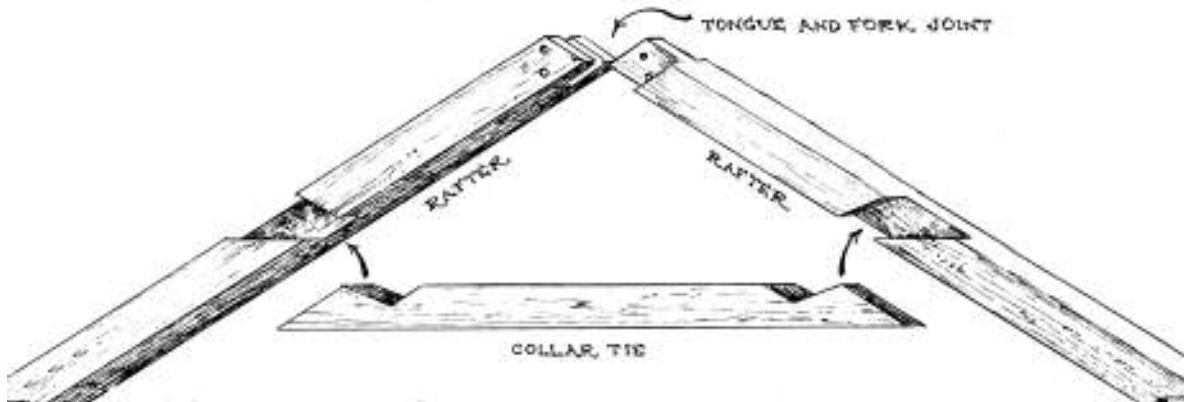


Figure 5. Typical “tongue and fork” rafter system, adapted from C. Keith Wilbur, *Homebuilding and Woodworking in Colonial America* (Old Saybrook CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 1992), p. 36.

The attic has three gable walls: the two brick gables of the center section and the stone wall of the north section. An examination of the north gable of the center section provides several clues that it was originally an exterior element. The north side of the wall has exterior mortar between the brick and a semi-circular datestone area. An iron tie rod has an S-shaped iron head and is located below the location of the datestone (Photo 30); the datestone is missing. The garret windows on the end walls are 4-light units hinged on one jamb. The attic windows on the two end walls of the center section are not aligned, although the attic windows in the north section are aligned with those of the north wall of the center section. Although the attic windows are quite old, they do not appear to be original to the sections.



Photo 29. Interior of attic, center section.

The attic flooring in the center section consists of wide tongue and grooved planks with a butt joint aligned with the stairwell. In the north section, the flooring is slightly narrower tongue and grooved planks, but the joints are staggered throughout the flooring rather than having a butt joint down the center of the room. Two separate staircases lead down to the second floor, and each stair is part of a stair system that continues to the basement.



Photo 30. Datestone area, north wall of center section, visible in attic of north section. Note exterior pointing of brick.