

**HISTORIC RESOURCE:  
829 PARK STREET  
PIRU, CA**

February 5, 2007

Prepared for:

David N. Hill  
829 Park Street  
Piru, CA 93040

Prepared by:



County of Ventura  
Board of Supervisors  
**Exhibit 3 - Historic Resources  
Mitigation Report dated 2/5/07**



## 1. Introduction

This Mitigation Report was prepared for the County of Ventura Cultural Heritage Board in connection with the removal of an outbuilding to another location on the grounds of the David C. Cook Mansion, a Ventura County Cultural Heritage Landmark, located at 829 N. Park Street, Piru. The mitigation includes a Historic Resources Survey encompassing the main house, exterior and interior, outbuildings, and the grounds, encompassing the Cook through Newhall periods of property ownership. The following information was collected and the report completed between November 2006 and February 2007, and compiled into this report.

This report was prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates of Santa Paula, California, Judy Triem, Historian; and Mitch Stone, Preservation Planner, for David N. Hill, property owner. The conclusions contained herein represent the professional opinions of San Buenaventura Research Associates, and are based on the factual data available at the time of its preparation, the application of the appropriate local, state and federal regulations, and best professional practices.

## 2. Historical Background of Property Ownership

### *David C. Cook (1887-1900)*

Born on August 28, 1850 in Wheaton, Illinois, David Caleb Cook was the son of Ezra Sprague Cook and Pamala Milks Cook. His father had been a Methodist minister in East Worcester, New York, but gave it up to buy a woolen mill. When the mill failed, the family moved to Wheaton, Illinois and took up farming. Eventually, David's father sold the farm and went into the printing business, opening a shop in downtown Chicago, where he specialized in printing bank supplies.

As a young boy, David worked in his father's company and eventually set up his own mail order business specializing in sewing machine parts. The Chicago fire of 1871 put a brief end to his business, but he quickly rebuilt. It was during this time that Cook began his missionary work, helping to establish Sunday Schools in the poor areas of Chicago. Finding that Sunday School materials were expensive and unimaginative, he decided to write his own materials and publish them using his knowledge of the printing business. He was immediately successful and decided to sell his sewing machine business to become a Sunday School materials publisher full time. In 1874 he married Marguerite Murat and they made their home in Lake View, where Cook set up the David C. Cook Publishing Company. His first magazine "Our Sunday School Gem" was published in 1875. His wife became secretary of the company and was a writer and editor of many of the publications.

Cook also served as superintendent of several Sunday Schools, in part, to observe the children's reactions to his publications. He also lectured at temperance meetings. By the early 1880s, the company had outgrown the three-story wood frame building and moved their headquarters to Elgin, Illinois in 1882, taking over a former woolen mill and converting it to a publishing house. By the end of 1883, the Cook Publishing Company was the second largest industrial employer in the city with presses running day and night. The Cook family relocated to Elgin with their two boys, George E. (born 1875) and David Carl (born 1880) and moved into a large two-and-a-half story Victorian residence on Gifford Street. This house in later years was enlarged and converted to a home for seniors.

By 1887 Cook's hard work and rapid rise in the business world apparently left him emotionally drained and on the edge of a nervous breakdown. The family decided to make a temporary move to California and chose Ventura County as a place to recuperate.

In April of 1887, Cook purchased the 13,300 acre Rancho Temescal from the del Valle family, owners of Rancho Camulos. He had frequently spent winters in the state and apparently owned a house in Los Angeles as well as

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a summer house in Sagatuck, Michigan. He was familiar with Rancho Camulos from Helen Hunt Jackson's novel *Ramona*, published in 1883. He also acquired an 89 acre portion of land belonging to Camulos Ranch, where the two ranches joined. It was this acreage that became the town site of Piru.

Cook laid out the townsite of Piru in 1888 and built a depot for the Southern Pacific Railroad and a spur line. He donated land and half the money for the construction of the Methodist Church. A large residence was built for the Cook family in 1890. Apparently an earlier house was built for the family, located just south and west of the new mansion, on Park Street. According to undocumented sources, after the completion of the mansion, the earlier house was then moved from Park to Main and Center streets and converted into the Piru Hotel. A second story was added to the hotel in 1899. The Cooks travelled frequently between their homes in Elgin and Piru, possibly seasonally. Newspaper articles from the period stated that the Cooks were "wintering" in Piru.

No time was wasted in developing Cook's agricultural acreage. Shortly after his purchase of the property, Cook advertised for help to clear the ranch for planting, and in the spring of 1888 he outlined his plan for tree plantings. Cook's goal was to develop his ranch by raising different varieties of fruit. Calling his operation the Piru Fruit Rancho, he divided the property into five sections in Piru Canyon and hired numerous workers to plant and oversee the vast operation. He had twelve miles of irrigation ditches built along with housing for the workers, implement sheds and packing houses.

In September, 1891 the *Los Angeles Times* published an article on Ventura County agricultural progress that included David C. Cook's ranch. At that time, approximately 1,500 acres were planted in trees and vineyards, including 600 acres of figs; 300 acres of oranges and lemons; 150 acres of apricots; 75 acres of olives; 20 acres of pomegranates; 5,000 walnut trees and 125 acres of raisin grapes. He also planted 50 acres of Eucalyptus trees on the steep hillsides.

About his family house the newspaper stated: "He has the finest residence in Ventura County, with every convenience. A large brownstone tower, as it stands on the hillside, gives the house an imposing appearance. An immense conservatory contains an immense collection of rare and costly plants." (*Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 5, 1891, pg. 7.)

In 1898 Cook was developing gold mines as well as oil wells on his ranch assisted by his oldest son George, whom he put in charge of the development according to a *Los Angeles Times* article dated Dec. 17, 1898. The following year, George Cook began hydraulic gold mining on the ranch, without notable success.

With his health improved and the discovery of potential mineral deposits on the ranch, Cook decided in 1900 to sell the property to a group of Los Angeles oil capitalists for \$500,000, and to return full time to his publishing business. He used some of the proceeds from the sale to build a new plant. By 1901, the business moved again to the new larger site in Elgin as the publishing company became known world-wide. Today it remains one of the world's largest religious publication houses.

The new owners of Rancho Temescal incorporated as the Piru Oil and Land Company and they, in turn, auctioned off land in the Town of Piru, orchard land, and the mansion which they advertised for \$45,000 "surrounded by a beautiful 15 acre park... This property will make a most attractive summer home or sanitarium." (*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 3, 1902, pg. B6).

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### *A Succession of Renters and Owners (1900-1912)*

The house and 17.43 acres of surrounding land purchased from David C. Cook in 1900 by the Piru Oil and Land Company was sold in 1904 to Max Kuehnrich of Los Angeles (Grant Deed Book 101, p. 39, 3/21/1904). At the time it was sold, it was being rented by W. H. Fleet and his wife. Fleet was superintendent of the Piru Fruit Rancho under Cook and continued in the position after the property was sold. In 1906 Max Kuehnrich sold the property to Ellen B. and Charles Carruth of Los Angeles (Book 105, pg. 382, 2/9/1906). One year later in September 1907, the Carruths sold the property to William and Addie Ramsay of the County of Los Angeles (Book 113, pg. 317, 9/17/1907). In 1912 William and Addie Ramsay sold the property to Hugh Warring (Book 136, p. 306, 11/11/1912).

### *Warring Family (1912-1967)*

Hugh Warring came to Ventura County in 1869 with his parents Benjamin and Dorcas Missouri Warring, who homesteaded 160 acres of land near Piru, in what was called the Buckhorn District. Born in 1857 in San Jose, Hugh Warring was twelve years old when his family came to the Santa Clara Valley. He grew up on the Buckhorn Ranch. Hugh Warring eventually purchased his own fifty acre ranch adjacent to his parents, where he lived with his wife Alice, whom he married in 1881. The couple had four children: Edwin C. (born 5/28/1882) Floyd S. (born 4/10/86), Alfred A. (birth unknown) and Lester J. (born 2/7/1891). His first wife Alice died in 1896, and in 1903, Hugh married Orie J. Eaton. They had two children, Benjamin F. (born 2/27/09) and Chester Arnold (born 2/7/14). Orie is listed in the 1900 U.S. Census as the housekeeper for Hugh Warring, so she apparently served the family in that capacity prior to their marriage in 1903.

Benjamin Warring died in 1903, leaving Hugh Warring to inherit 120 acres of the family's property. In 1912 Hugh Warring purchased 395 acres of the Piru Fruit Rancho originally owned by David C. Cook from the Piru Oil and Land Company. He acquired the mansion in the same year, from William and Addie Ramsay, in a separate transaction. Apparently around 1912 Hugh Warring and his wife Orie and son Benjamin moved into the mansion. The four other sons by his first wife were probably not living at home by 1912, since they were all in their twenties by that time. Warring's last son, Chester, was born in the mansion in 1914.

In 1924 Warring acquired 500 additional acres from the Piru Oil and Land Company, the last of Cook's acreage to be sold out of the original approximately 14,000 acres. After acquiring the land, Warring developed both the Buckhorn Ranch and the Piru Fruit Rancho in citrus and walnuts. Warring adopted the Piru Fruit Rancho name, and the image of the mansion was used on one of the Sunkist brand labels for the Piru Citrus Association.

Hugh Warring served on the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and on the boards of the Ventura County Co-operative Association and the Piru Citrus Association. He also served on the board of trustees of the Fillmore Union High School. Warring was among the first to grow citrus in the area, and was instrumental in building the packing house for the Piru Citrus Association.

Warring lived in the house until his death on October 15, 1939. His wife Orie remained in the house by herself, and with a caretaker in her later years. Her son Chester and his wife Honor and their two children, Dick and Susie, moved back to the mansion to care for Orie around 1952. Chester Warring managed the Warring Water Company in Piru. Orie Warring died on March 20, 1954 at the age of eighty-three.

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In 1963 the Warring Trust was divided among the many family members, with Chester Warring receiving the Buckhorn Ranch and the daughters of Floyd Warring, Alice Giddings and Frances Talbot, inheriting the mansion. Chester Warring and his wife Honor had moved to Ventura the previous year. On a trip to visit the Buckhorn Ranch in 1964, both Chester and Honor were killed in a tragic automobile accident. The mansion was rented for a few years to Tom and Marilyn Nielsen and their three children. Tom Nielsen had come from Northern California to work on the new Valencia development in what is now Santa Clarita. In 1968 the property was sold to Scott and Ruth Newhall.

### *Newhall Family (1968-2003)*

Scott Newhall was born in 1914 in California, the great-grandson of Henry Mayo Newhall. Henry Mayo Newhall earned a fortune as both an auctioneer in San Francisco and in railroad development in the 1860s, successes which permitted him to purchase six ranchos between 1872 and 1875. One of those ranchos was the 42,216 acres of Rancho San Francisco, purchased in 1875, one year before Southern Pacific Railroad connecting San Francisco to Los Angeles came through the rancho, leading to the founding of the town of Newhall in 1878. Newhall also began development of the Rancho San Francisco, experimenting with several crops. The year following Newhall's death in 1882, his sons incorporated as the Newhall Land and Farming Company. The area around Newhall at the eastern end of the ranch was too windy for farming, so in 1912 Orchard Camp was developed inland, primarily in Ventura County, where large tracts of citrus and eventually walnut trees were planted.

With the construction of Interstate 5 in the 1960s, the Newhall Land and Farming Company became a development enterprise. The area that once raised cattle began converting to housing tracts. In 1960 Scott and his wife Ruth Newhall came south to take over the *Newhall Signal*, which they purchased. Scott Newhall had begun working as a photographer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* thirty years earlier, eventually working his way up to become editor. His wife Ruth, whom he married during his sophomore year at Berkeley, also worked for the *Chronicle*.

Scott was also a board member of the Newhall Land and Farming Company whose assets in 1960 included a 45,000 acre ranch surrounding Newhall and Saugus. It was during this time that the board decided to plan a community on the land rather than sell it piecemeal. Scott Newhall named the new community Valencia.

Ruth Waldo Newhall was born in Berkeley and grew up in the community, attending the University of California and serving as vice-president of the student body. She majored in art and philosophy. Upon graduation in 1931, she worked as a teaching assistant for two years. She met her future husband when he was a sophomore, also majoring in art, and the two married in 1933. Ruth joined Scott at the *San Francisco Chronicle* and worked as a secretary to editor Chester Rowell, and later for famed columnist Herb Caen, before working as a reporter on the city desk and in the editorial writers department. She also taught journalism at Mills College and UC Berkeley. Four children were born to the Newhalls: Skip, twins Jon and Tony, and Penny, who died in a truck accident in 1955.

After their move to Piru in 1968, both Scott and Ruth continued working at the *Newhall Signal*, with Ruth serving as editor from 1970-79 and from 1985-88. In 1988 the Newhalls sold the *Signal* and started the *Santa Clarita Valley Citizen* newspaper. Ruth Newhall was the author of several history books including *The Newhall Ranch the Story of the Newhall Land and Farming Company*; *The Folger Way: Coffee Pioneering since 1850*; and

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the *Spreckels Sugar Company*. In 1992 Newhall updated her 1958 book and called it *A California Legend: the Newhall Land and Farming Company*.

Ruth Newhall was involved in both the Santa Clarita and Piru communities including the Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Health Foundation, the Boys and Girls Club and the College of the Canyons Foundation. In Piru the Newhalls graciously hosted tours of their home to raise funds for various organizations and the Piru community and opened their swimming pool to local residents during the summer months. Ruth Newhall always welcomed architecture students to tour the home.

Scott Newhall died in 1992. Ruth Newhall died in 2003 at the age of ninety-three.

### 3. Physical Description of Property

#### *Overview*

In 1890 David C. Cook had a large residence built on a sloping mesa next to the mountains and above the town of Piru. He surrounded it with a variety of exotic plants, trees and orchards. For the next 90 years the house remained virtually unchanged except for the early demolition of the attached conservatory. In 1981, while the house was undergoing restoration by the Newhall family, it caught fire and burned to the ground. During 1981-83, the Newhalls reconstructed a virtual replica of the original house, both inside and out. Deviations from the original design of the house made during the reconstruction are discussed below, under the Newhall Period.

The description of the property is broken down by time period such that changes to the property over time can be discussed when known. Historic photographs, USGS maps and aerial photographs, as well as early descriptions of the property found in magazines and newspaper articles were used to document changes which have occurred.

#### *Architect*

The designer of the David C. Cook Mansion has never been documented. However, noted architectural historian and author Dr. David Gebhard believed that the Newsom Brothers, prominent San Francisco architects of the 1880s and 1890s, who also maintained an office in Los Angeles, designed the house. In a catalog published for a 1979 exhibit of the Newsom Brother's work exhibited at the Oakland Museum and the UCSB Art Museum, Gebhard writes:

While the contemporary and later literature on David C. Cook and Piru City is plentiful, no mention is made of the name of the architect for the mansion or for the small hotel and church in the town below. But a perusal of the mansion can leave little doubt that this is a Newsom product; no other California architect, so far known, ever produced a design such as this. The plan is a characteristic Newsom central hall scheme with a platform staircase. The interior elaboration and the individual details are as rich as in the William Carson Dwelling in Eureka. The dominant feature of the dwelling and that which most openly establishes its castle image, is the three-story sandstone and pressed metal corner tower with its crenelated parapet. (Gebhard, 1979: 30.)

The Newsom Brothers main office was in San Francisco, but with the 1880s building boom in southern California brought on by the railroads, the Newsom Brothers established an office in Los Angeles. Joseph Newsom

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lived in Los Angeles for several years and built a house in the city. The firm designed several hotels for new towns that sprung up during the boom, including one still remaining in San Dimas. They also designed numerous residences from small speculative cottages to large speculative homes, as well as individual commissions. Joseph Newsom's clients in Southern California included wealthy businessmen as well as many town developers, particularly in the new towns of San Dimas, Burbank, Glendale and Upland. David C. Cook owned a house in Los Angeles and did a certain amount of business as well as performing Methodist Missionary work in Los Angeles even before he built the mansion in Piru. It is conceivable that Cook met Joseph Newsom in Los Angeles during this time. It is also quite possible that Cook, through his extensive business, personal and church contacts, met someone who had a house or commercial building designed by the Newsoms.

*Main Residence*

As constructed, the Queen Anne style residence contained approximately 6,000 square feet, not including the third floor attic and basement. The square footage of the unfinished attic was 2,433 and the basement was 2,147. [Figures 1-2, Architectural floor plans, 1890]

Cook Period: 1890-1900

**Front (southern) Elevation.** The main asymmetrical southern elevation of the three-story residence featured a prominent three-story corner Sespe brownstone and pressed metal tower with a crenelated parapet. At the opposite corner of the front of the house was a two-story tower (second and third floors) with a conical roof. A third two-story conical roofed tower was located on the rear northeast corner. The complex irregular roof shape featured a main tall truncated hipped roof, with intersecting hips and gables. [Historic Photo #1, 1891]

The wrap-around front porch was supported by circular columns with Corinthian capitals and Sespe stone bases. A simple iron railing ran across the top of the Sespe stone foundation. The porch was covered with a hip roof and the frieze had classical dental moulding. The double front doors each contained a round arched window. Above the double doors was a stained glass window.

Above the porch area the front two-story gable extended from the tall hipped roof. Under the gable peak was elaborate floral scrollwork incorporating the letter "C" for Cook. This scrollwork was repeated around the small double window and again on the frieze around the two-story tower. The second floor featured a horseshoe arched window with stained glass. The first floor contained a slanted bay with a large segmented arched stained glass window.

A two-story hip-roof extension, behind the gable, featured a recessed balcony enclosed by an elaborate curved "C". The round corner tower contained round arched windows with stained glass in the upper portion.

**Side (western) Elevation.** When constructed, the house featured a 40 by 60 foot one and two-story hipped roof conservatory attached to this side of the house. The first floor contained repeated arched windows with multi-panes on all sides. The hipped roof second story was setback and had small arched windows on all sides. The conservatory was open on the interior and supported by wood posts set on an earthen floor. [Historic Photos #2, 1895; #3, 1910, #4, 1915]

The double door contained tall narrow windows topped with circular stained glass windows. Cut out floral designs were featured in panels adjacent to the front doors.

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The second floor contained a segmented arched window, a narrow single window, and a pair of double hung windows. The pair of windows contained stained glass in the upper half with a decorative shelf detail and brackets above. Above this window was a gabled dormer window flanked by rounded columns covered with shingles and a crenelated top.

**Side (eastern) Elevation.** An exterior Sespe stone and brick chimney was located on the eastern side of the house flanked by stained glass windows on the second story and semicircular windows on the third floor. A stained glass window pierces the chimney on the first floor. The elaborate chimney was capped in pressed metal and featured decorative brick in the upper portion. A second smaller brick fireplace punctuated the roof between the large exterior fireplace and the two-story tower. [Historic Photo #5, 1915]

The first and second stories were separated by a wide shingle belt-course. On the first floor was a large bay window with a pedimented roof. The open porch ran alongside the house continuing the double iron railing.

**Rear (northern) Elevation.** The rear of the house contained a two-story hipped roof wing. The second floor of the wing had a row of four connecting windows with a single window on the first floor. The main portion had a row of three double-hung wood windows under a hipped roof porch supported by simple posts and wood spindle frieze. A gabled dormer window punctuated the third floor roof line and contained one rectangular wood window. A concrete walkway/patio surrounded the house at the rear and sides. [Photograph #3, Hardison, 1980]

The house was covered with wide horizontal wood siding. A variety of shingle patterns were used throughout as surface ornamentation. Elaborate plaster or wood detail in floral or classical designs could be found throughout the exterior under the gable peaks, or on the tower as well as door and window surrounds. The foundation was Sespe brownstone.

**Interior.** The interior of the house was even more highly decorated than the exterior, featuring wood wainscoting, elaborate plaster ceiling mouldings, and geometrically designed tile floors. The first floor had a large main entry hall and elaborately carved wooden platform staircase. The spindle and spool design was found in the overhead entries to the parlor and library and as part of a carved wood oval feature adjacent to the staircase below the 12 foot ceilings. The walls in the hallway were covered with flocked wallpaper. The raised decorative frieze incorporated both plant and animal motifs. Elaborate carved fireplaces were located in almost every room. The majority of wood throughout the house was redwood. Leaded stained glass windows were found throughout the house.

### Warring Period: 1912-1967

The conservatory was removed by the Warring family sometime prior to 1925. The round arched window openings from the conservatory were then used to create a hipped roof porch along the side of the house. The porch may have been screened-in. [Historic Photo #6, 1925]

### Newhall Period: 1968 - 2003

From the time the Newhalls bought the house in 1968, until it was destroyed by fire in February, 1981, few changes were made to the mansion. After the fire, only the Sespe stone foundation, tower and brick chimneys remained. The Newhalls hired the architectural firm of Flood, Meyer, Sutton & Associates in Santa Monica to

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draw up plans to reconstruct the house very much as it originally appeared. [Figures 3-4, Architectural floor plans, 1981][Photos #1-3, Hardison, 1980]

Several changes were made during the reconstruction to the rear (northern) elevation. The kitchen area was enlarged and a breakfast room and laundry room were added, creating a different footprint from the original. An exterior wrought iron spiral stairway was added. A second floor office was added at the rear, and an open deck was built adjacent to the office on the second floor with a wrought iron railing to match the front porch railing. The third floor gabled dormer window was enlarged and a segmented arched multi-paned window replaced what had been a small rectangular window.

Changes to roof elements included the addition of metal cresting on top of the truncated roof. The crest originally featured narrow a band of small horizontal vents. The corner conical shaped tower originally featured a simple wood finial. This was replaced by a Phoenix statue. The conical roof at the rear corner of the house originally appeared to have no finial. During the 1981-83 reconstruction, a crenelated finial was added. The roof today is slate, which may have been salvaged from St. Anne's School in Los Angeles, when it was demolished. The tower was rebuilt and new sandstone was quarried from Sespe Creek to add to the existing sandstone to complete the reconstruction. The cornice of the corner stone tower is copper.

The decorative wrought iron porch railing may have been added by the Newhalls prior to the fire. It contains a sea horse motif as part of the intricate design and wraps around the north side of the house. The etched glass mermaid design was added to the pair of front doors along with the initials "ISN." On the lower portion of each door are elaborate raised panels with a center panel featuring the sea horse design. Nautical themes, many of which were incorporated into the house after the fire, were favored by Scott Newhall, who had been an avid sailor in his youth. ISN stands for Irrawaddy Steam Navigation Company, a fictitious company that Newhall invented for fun, creating a letterhead for the company on which he sent his annual Christmas cards.

On the interior, one of the second floor bedrooms indicated on the original floor plan was converted into a large master bathroom. In addition, bathrooms were added to all of the bedrooms. Also, the front hallway wainscot was upgraded from the original chair-rail and batten design to solid wood paneling. The Newhalls added a variety of wood veneers to walls and ceilings, as well as an elaborate plaster frieze in the parlor and plaster rosettes around the ceiling chandeliers. [Photos #4-6, Hardison, 1980][Photos #7-8, Harris, 1990]

During the fire, the floor tiles fell through the floor to the basement and were salvaged for use in the reconstruction. Missing or broken pieces were replaced as close to the original as possible.

Photographic documentation indicates that the parlor mantelpiece was enlarged from the original design and made taller. The redesigned living room fireplace was featured in the issue of *Fine Homebuilding* from March 2001. The article states:

This spindle mantelpiece abandoned classical rules. The tops of the baluster columns are Ionic, yet the capitals contain Egyptian palms. Above each capital and in the position of a central tablet is a spindle-work screen. The screens and curvilinear arch in the top stage add a Gothic touch.

Also featured was the mantelpiece in the front upstairs bedroom, called the Chinese Room by the Newhalls. The article describes the fireplace:

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Asian ornamentation includes flowering ivy in the pilasters, maple in the entablature and fretwork throughout both. Upturned ends on the mantel shelf epitomize the style. A second look, however, shows the Anglo-Japanese composition's baroque foundations, with pilasters, capitals and end blocks showing how classical forms can be adorned with almost any decoration. Overmantel mirrors and multiple shelves are also typical of Victorian design.

### *Outbuildings*

Cook Period: 1887-1900. An early photo dated circa 1900 shows a small building adjacent to the mansion to the east. It is uncertain if this was a small residence or outbuilding, which is no longer extant. [Historic Photo #7, 1925]

Originally four outbuildings were located behind the mansion and to the east side. One of these may have been a carriage house that was later converted to a garage. Footprints of these buildings exist on the Assessor's Residential Building Record recorded in 1953. No photos have been located of these buildings or dates provided. It is uncertain when they were constructed. The first, directly behind the house, was a garage/carport measuring 18 feet by 20 feet of frame construction with tongue and groove wood siding and a shed roof combined with corrugated iron siding and a gable roof. The attached carport measured 18 feet by 10 feet. The second building, located at the rear eastern corner of the house, was a garage measuring 20 feet by 20 feet of frame construction with shingle siding and a shed roof of corrugated iron and concrete foundation. The third building was an 8 foot by 10 foot shed with tongue and groove wood siding and a composition roof and wood foundation. It is conceivable that the garages and shed were built during the Warring period, but without photographs or building permit records, this is speculation. The fourth structure was a circular-plan wood outhouse. This building appears to have originally been located behind the house and dates to 1890.

Cook had a water system built using wood flumes that brought the water from Piru Creek to a reservoir above the house. This reservoir was round and had a wood cover. It still is located above the property, but the wood cover is no longer extant. The reservoir is not located on the present Hill property.

Warring Period: 1912-1967. The Warrings built a second house in 1935 on the property, which was occupied by Floyd Warring, Hugh Warring's son. It was designed by Santa Paula architect Roy C. Wilson. This house is now on a separate assessor parcel. The subdivision date is unknown.

Newhall Period: 1968-2003. The two garages and the shed were demolished by the Newhalls at an unknown date, but probably shortly after they purchased the house in 1968 and began making improvements. The Newhalls retained the circular outhouse.

The Newhalls constructed several new buildings including a pool house, swimming pool, pump house and garden shed. The pool house, containing 274 square feet, was constructed in 1970 and also housed the dressing rooms and pool heater. It has a hipped roof with a raised rectangular vent in the center and is flanked by shed roof wings. The building is divided into three sections, each with its own door. Half round arched multi-paned diamond shaped windows are located under the eaves of the hipped roof section. Siding is a combination of shingles on the upper half and wide horizontal wood on the lower half. The foundation is concrete. The swimming pool, measuring 17 by 38 feet, was built in 1970. [Photo #13, Triem]

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The pump house was built in 1982 and contains 420 square feet. It has a flat roof and is wood frame construction with horizontal wood siding. The roof is flat and foundation is concrete. A horseshoe arched window with diamond panes is flanked by a small diamond pane segmented arched window on each side. The entrance has a shed roof supported by an ornamental iron post, and contains two separate wooden doors with glass panes. [Photo #14, Triem]

The garden shed, built in 1970, measures 15 feet by 17 feet and has a flat roof. The building is of wood frame construction and is covered with wood shingle siding on the upper half and Sespe brownstone on the lower half. The entrance is recessed with a pair of paneled doors flanked by a pair of segmented arched double windows on either side. The eastern elevation contains two sets of three each segmented arched windows with diamond panes. [Photo #15, Triem]

The small circular outhouse, constructed in 1890, has a conical roof, covered with slate shingles of various patterns and topped with a finial. The entrance door is wood with leaded glass and there are two wood windows with gothic wood panes. The building is covered with vertical boards with the upper third covered with wood shingles of varying patterns and the lower third covered with brick. The outhouse and other outbuildings survived the fire. A new roof was added as well as the new finial after the fire. [Photo #16, Triem]

### *Landscape Features*

Over its 116 year history, the landscape surrounding the mansion has gone through numerous changes with each of the property's three long-term owners. The landscape features include various kinds of trees, shrubs, orchards, stone and concrete walls, fountains and roadways.

Cook Period: 1887-1900. David Cook selected a site for the mansion that was just above the town on a sloping mesa adjacent to the rugged mountains. He surrounded the house with a variety of trees. Against the mountain he planted rows of Eucalyptus trees. In back of the house were a variety of trees including California Pepper, olive, fig, and pomegranate. In front of the house was a circular fountain with a large variety of trees placed randomly all the way down the hill to Park Street. Historic photos show the plantings to include palms (lining the dirt driveway), citrus, cypress, yuccas, and pines. On either side of the main house and grounds were what appear from the photos to be a variety of scattered fruit trees. [Historic Photo #8, 1900]

The main road into the property was Park Street which crossed in front of the property and made a loop back to Main Street. Portions of Park Street were lined with trees. Several narrow dirt driveways appear to be leading up to the mansion that are not clearly defined from period photos because of the numerous trees. A photograph taken around 1910 when the property was owned by William Ramsay shows a narrow dirt driveway lined with palms on the west side and a variety of other trees on the east side leading up from what is Park Street to the front of the Mansion. [Historic Photo #9, 1910] The 1900 USGS Map for Piru shows Park Street looping around to connect with Main Street. It also shows a loop drive that leads up to the house and crosses in front and returns back to Park Street. [Figure 5]

During the Cook period, the approximately 17 acre grounds surrounding the house included experimental orchards and random plantings of both exotic and native trees and shrubs. Narrow dirt driveways for horse and buggies lead up to the house from Park Street. A circular fountain was located in front of the house as well as hitching posts. The fountain may actually have been built as a horse trough.

## Historic Resources Mitigation Report Cook Mansion, 829 Park Street, Piru

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Cook was experimenting with numerous trees and shrubs to determine which would grow well in his new California environment. A list of trees taken from various articles includes: orange, apricot, English walnut, olive, raisin grapes, chestnuts, almonds, apples, pomegranates, and Japanese persimmons. This list actually includes trees which were grown in Piru Canyon, but no doubt some of these same trees were grown in the orchards near the mansion as well.

Descriptions from newspapers and magazines during the 1890s provide a very general and somewhat flowery description of the property.

As the train speeds up or down the sparsely settled valley of the Santa Clara River, the most conspicuous feature of the landscape is Mr. Cook's elegant new home, set well back upon a high bench frowned over by stupendous [sic] northern cliffs of yellowish sandstone. There is a beautiful blending of stone and wood in the construction of this building that is infinitely pleasing to the artistic eye. The great conservatory, forty by sixty feet in dimensions, faces a broad sweep of garden grass and flowers which only terminates at the verge of the almost perpendicular bench. This unexpected bit of Nob Hill in such wild surroundings creates universal wonder and comment among the passengers on the train... (Ventura Star, 7/21/1891)

Written upon Cook's death in 1929 is this description of the mansion and grounds:

He built a home for his family on a terrace overlooking the great orchard project. Back of it rose the rugged mountains. On either side of it was flanked by the semi-tropical growth of the region, the stiff foliage of palms and yuccas beautifully mingled with the feathery leaves and brilliant berries of the pepper tree, and flowers, flowers everywhere. The "garden" was ten acres in extent! (David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1929: 89)

Warring Period: 1912 to 1967. Hugh Warring was a rancher and raising citrus was uppermost on his mind. The Warrings removed the fruit orchards and planted citrus in their place. During this time citrus was becoming the major economic crop in the Santa Clara Valley. They also removed the majority of trees directly in front of the house. They put in a lawn, leaving a few palms and pine trees and retained the circular fountain planting a small hedge around its perimeter. Shrubs were planted near the front of the house. [Historic Photos: #10-12, 1937]

Other landscape features added included a low concrete wall that delineated the driveway with a concrete post and cap at the lower end of the lawn area.

In 1935 when the second house was built below the mansion, Park Street ceased to be used as a through street to Main Street and was eventually abandoned in 1978. The 1952 Piru USGS Quad map shows the road configuration with Park Street ending at the second residence. [Figure 6]

Newhall Period: 1968 to 2003.

When Scott and Ruth Newhall purchased the mansion, they retained the front lawn and added a few more trees to the front yard area. Just below the lawn area, was an orange orchard. It is uncertain when the orchard was planted, but based on photographic evidence, it was after 1937. [Photo #1, Hardison, 1980]

## Historic Resources Mitigation Report Cook Mansion, 829 Park Street, Piru

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The Newhalls added two ornate Victorian cast iron ornamental street lamps on the driveway leading up to the house and created an oval paved driveway. They also added two additional small fountains and statuary. They altered the circular front fountain by adding Sespe brownstone to the sides. They removed the three-tiered simple portion of the fountain and replaced it with an elaborate two-tiered fountain.

They also built a tile deck around the new swimming pool with raised platforms for some of their statues and built a Sespe brownstone wall with a fountain at the rear of the house.

David Newhall Hill Period: 2003 to present. Under the ownership of David N. Hill, great-great grandson of Henry Mayo Newhall, various changes have been made to the property. On the front of the mansion, two windows under the third floor front gable and one tower window were replaced with glass blocks. A metal sculpture was added at the crest of the roof. On the interior, new tiles were added in a small section of the floor at the entry to the living room. The lincrusta wall covering under the main stairway was replaced with small tiles.

On the outside, the outhouse was moved from behind the house to the southeastern corner of the house. A new door was added as well as brick around the foundation. The swimming pool (1970) was filled in when it sustained damage in 2005. The pump house building (1982) is presently being altered into a two-car garage. A residence built circa 1925 and garage was moved onto the site in 2004, and a new foundation has just been completed.

Landscape changes include the removal of portions of the citrus orchard in front of the house and the removal of palm trees and shrubs directly in front of the house. Most of the Eucalyptus trees on the hill behind the house were removed. A new gravel road was added coming up from Park Street to the front of the house, and the original paved road that came up from Park Street on the west side of the house was removed. The wrought iron lamps were moved from the abandoned road to the new road.

#### 4. Conclusions

The following is a summary of what remains today and the approximate dates when known.

The present irregular shaped lot (APN 056-0-030-140) contains 9.03 acres. The stone house built in 1935 is now on a separate parcel (APN 056-0-030-150) at the eastern edge of the property and owned by David N. Hill.

The main residence was completed in November 1890 and destroyed in a fire in February 1981. It was reconstructed on the original site beginning in 1981 and completed in 1983 using much of the original Sespe brown stone foundation and tower. The house was a nearly faithful reconstruction except for the rear (northern) elevation and several exterior and interior details. [Photos #9-12, Triem]

Outbuildings remaining today are the garden shed (1970); pump house (1982, presently being altered into a two-car garage), dressing rooms/pool house (1970), and outhouse (1890). The swimming pool was filled in in 2005. In addition, a residence built circa 1925 and garage were moved onto the site in 2004. It had been located on the Newhall Land and Farming Company Ranch near Highway 126 and San Martinez Grande Canyon Road and served as a company employee residence. [Photos #13-16, Triem]

## Historic Resources Mitigation Report Cook Mansion, 829 Park Street, Piru

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Landscape features remaining today are the trees located directly behind the house: California peppers, olives, figs, pomegranate, silk oak, and palms. Some of these probably date from the Cook era. The citrus orchard below the house was planted sometime after 1937. A portion of it was recently removed. The circular fountain in front of the house remains and may be the original fountain from the Cook era. However, it was extensively altered by the Newhalls when they added Sespe brownstone to the sides of the base of the fountain and tile on the inside and installed a new two-tier section. The remaining small fountains were added by the Newhalls at unknown dates. One of these fountains is located behind the house and the other on the north side of the house near the garden shed.

The roads onto and within the property include Park Street and portions of the original loop road which existed when Cook owned the property. The road that led up to the house on the south and west side has been removed and a secondary gravel road now leads directly up to the front of the house from Park Street connecting to the original loop road near the house.

### *National Register Eligibility*

It appears that the Cook Mansion may be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A because of its association with the founding of Piru by David C. Cook. It may also be eligible under Criterion B because of the significance of David C. Cook who, as town founder, also brought the railroad to Piru, built the first church, and established a major agricultural presence on his Piru Fruit Rancho. The Cook Mansion may also be eligible for listing under Criterion C as the most elaborate Queen Anne residence in Ventura County. Its design is attributed to Samuel and Joseph Cather Newsom, two of the most prominent architects of the period.

The minimum age criterion for the National Register of Historic Places is 50 years. Properties less than 50 years old may be eligible for listing on the NRHP if they can be regarded as "exceptional," as defined by the NRHP procedures, or in terms of the CRHR, "if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance."

The National Register also includes a special category for reconstructed buildings. Reconstruction is defined as rebuilding the exact form and detail of a vanished building as it appeared at a specific period of time.

Criterion E (Reconstructed Properties) states that "A reconstructed property is eligible when it is accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived. All three of these considerations must be met for a building to be eligible." (U.S. Department of the Interior)

Suitable environment means that the reconstruction must be located on the original site and must not be misrepresented as an authentic historic property. The Cook Mansion is located on its original site and has a plaque denoting that the building was reconstructed between 1981 and 1983.

The requirement for a restoration master plan does not appear to apply in this case because the building in question is not an essential component in a historic district and the reconstruction is not part of an overall restoration plan for an entire district. The Cook Mansion is the last surviving property of a type directly associated with David C. Cook. Other extant buildings in Piru built by Cook include the hotel, employee residences, and church, but none of these properties have the close association with Cook represented by his own residence.

**Historic Resources Mitigation Report**  
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The reconstruction also must be based upon sound architectural and historic data. Architectural plans for the reconstruction were produced by the Santa Monica firm of Flood, Meyer, Sutton & Associates based, in part, on the scaled floor plans for the 1890 residence completed by architect Philip Hardison in 1980. These plans were based on complete measurements of the house as well as historic photographs. The house was designed to be a close replica matching the plan and details of the original building. However, some changes were made, especially at the rear of the house. These changes appear to have been made in accordance to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*.

This property appears to qualify for listing on the National Register as a reconstructed property. However, a definitive determination of eligibility would be made by the Keeper of the National Register, based upon a complete nomination.

**Historic Resources Mitigation Report  
Cook Mansion, 829 Park Street, Piru**

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*Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 5, 1891, pg. 7. Description of Cook Ranch.

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Telephone Communication with Susie Warring Pennington, 1/16/07.

Telephone Communication with George Real, Piru resident, 1/17/07.

### *Maps*

Map of Piru, surveyed March 1888 for David C. Cook by Ed. T. Hare, Civil Engineer and Surveyor, San Buenaventura.

USGS maps, Piru quad, surveyed in 1900, Edition of 1921, edition of 1952.

### *Architectural Plans*

First and second floor plans of David C. Cook Mansion, 1890, drawn from measurements by Philip Hardison, architect, 1980.

First, second, third floor and basement reconstruction plans by Flood, Meyer, Sutton & Associates, Santa Monica, 1981.

### *Photographs*

Historic photograph, D.C. Cook house and grounds, circa 1891, published in *Memoirs: David C. Cook, the Friend of the Sunday School*. Elgin: D.C. Cook Publishing Co., 1929.

Historic photograph, Inside conservatory, D.C. Cook house, no date given, located at Ventura County Museum of History and Art Library (VCMHA), #25.719-93, circa 1895, showing two women seated (one Mrs. Cook?) and types of vegetation growing.

Historic photograph, View from hill above Mansion, located in *Out West Magazine*, November, 1900. Shows vegetation grown at time sold by Cook to Piru Oil and Land Company.

Historic photograph, mansion and full view of conservatory, circa 1910, collection of David N. Hill.

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Historic photographic postcard, "Drive-way to Ramsay Home, Piru, Cal." Shows dirt drive leading up to front porch. Large bay window is at end of road. Craig Held collection, circa 1910.

Historic photograph, Cook residence, no date given, located at VCMHA Library, #3575, circa 1915. Shows road that came in from Park Street and hitching post next to front steps.

Historic photograph, Cook residence with close-up of conservatory, date unknown, located at VCMHA Library, #18414, Lechler Collection, circa 1915.

Historic photograph, Cook mansion showing conservatory removed, Phil Hardison slide collection, original location unknown, circa 1925.

Historic photograph, Cook Mansion, Piru, showing removal of vegetation in front of house and outbuilding, Phil Hardison slide collection, original location unknown, circa 1925.

Historic photograph, Cook Mansion, showing fountain and grounds (2); main residence and fountain (1), 1937, Peggy Lechler Collection.

Photograph, front view of mansion from driveway, Phil Hardison, photographer, 1980.

Photograph, side (western) elevation of mansion and swimming pool, Phil Hardison, photographer, 1980.

Photograph, rear view of mansion, Phil Hardison, photographer, 1980.

Photograph, library interior, facing west, Phil Hardison, photographer, 1980.

Photograph, library interior, facing north, Phil Hardison, photographer, 1980.

Photograph, parlor interior, facing west, Phil Hardison, photographer, 1980.

Photograph, parlor interior, facing north, Mark Harris, photographer, 1990.

Photograph, Library interior, facing northwest, Mark Harris, photographer, 1990.

Photograph, main residence, front elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

Photograph, main residence, side (western) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

Photograph, main residence, rear elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

Photograph, main residence, side (eastern) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

Photograph, pool house, front (eastern) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

Photograph, pump house, front, (southern) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

Photograph, garden shed, front (western) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

Photograph, outhouse, front (western) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer, January 2007.

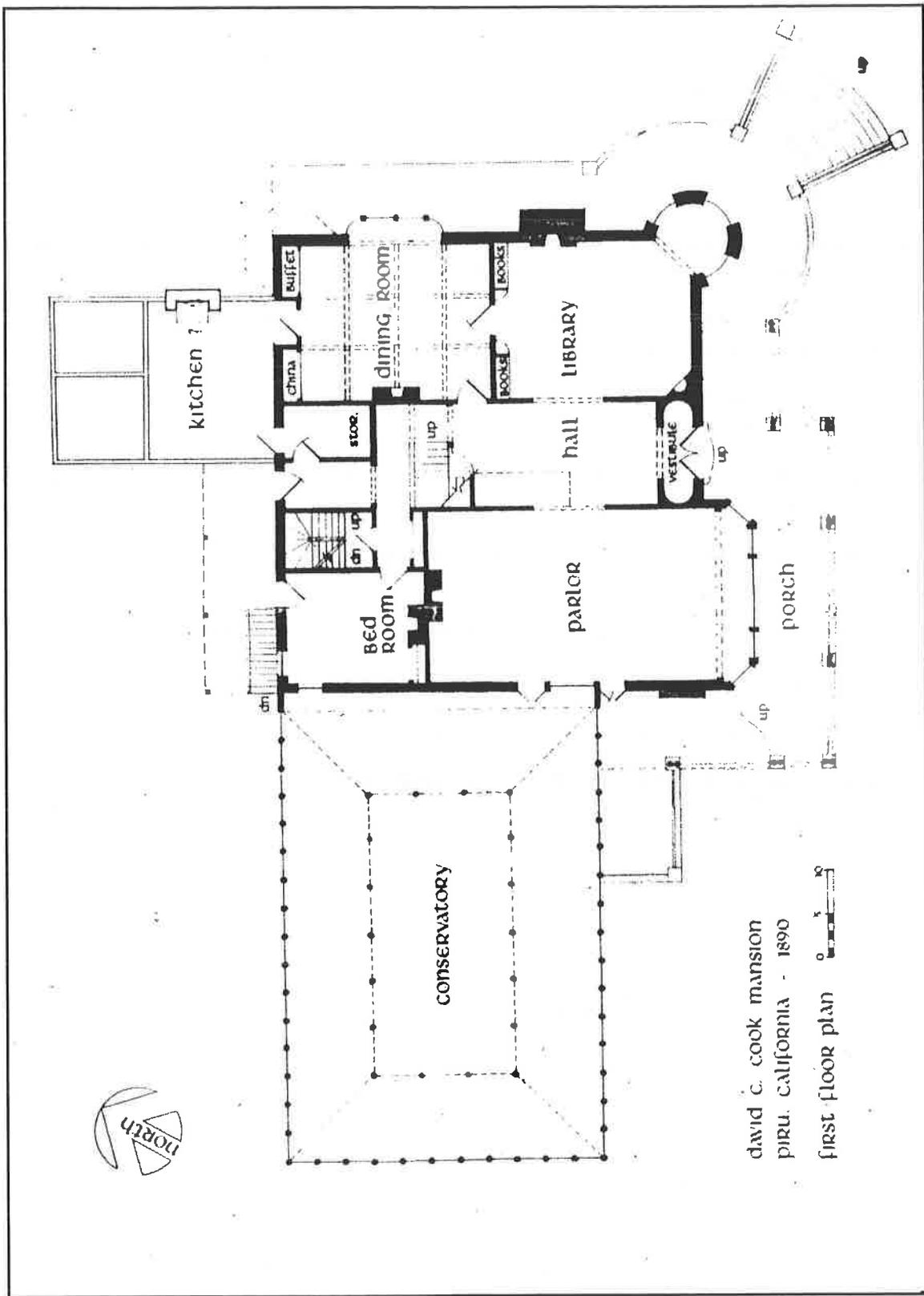


Figure 1. David C. Cook mansion, first floor plan, 1890, drawn by Phil Hardison [1980]

Figure 2. David C. Cook mansion, second floor plan, 1890, drawn by Phil Hardison [1980]

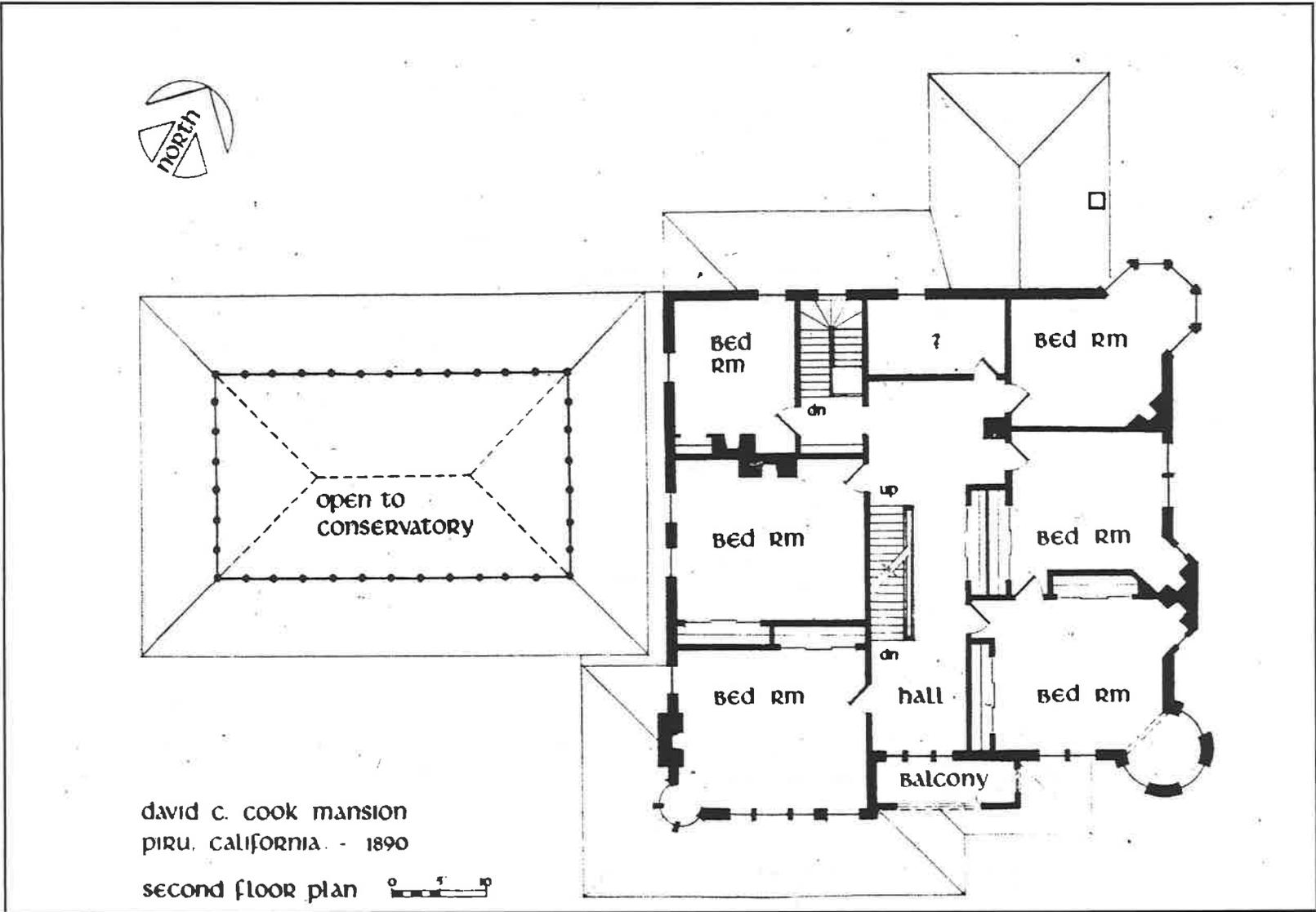
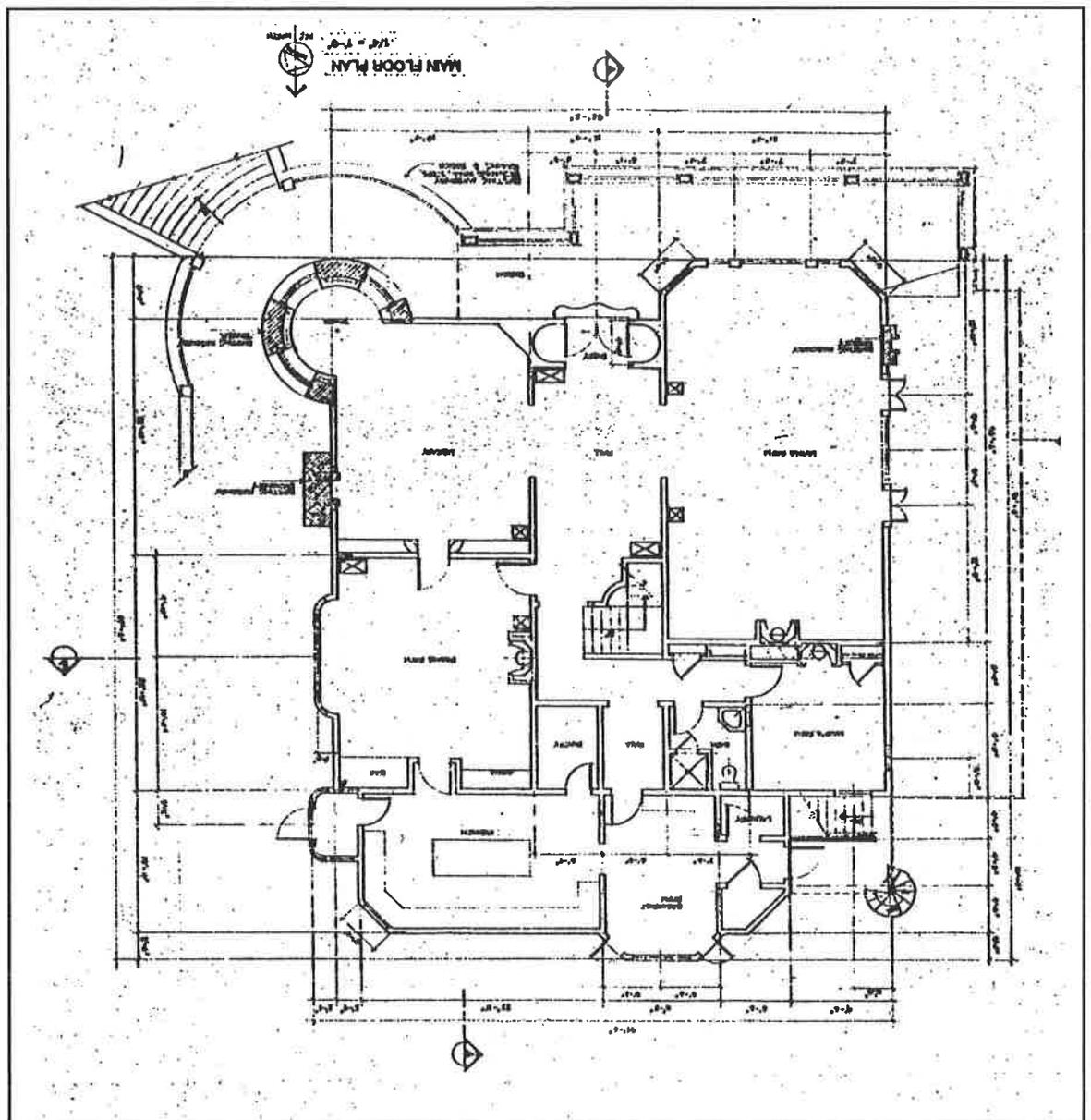


Figure 3. David C. Cook mansion, first floor plan, drawn by Flood, Meyer, Sutton, & Associates [1981]



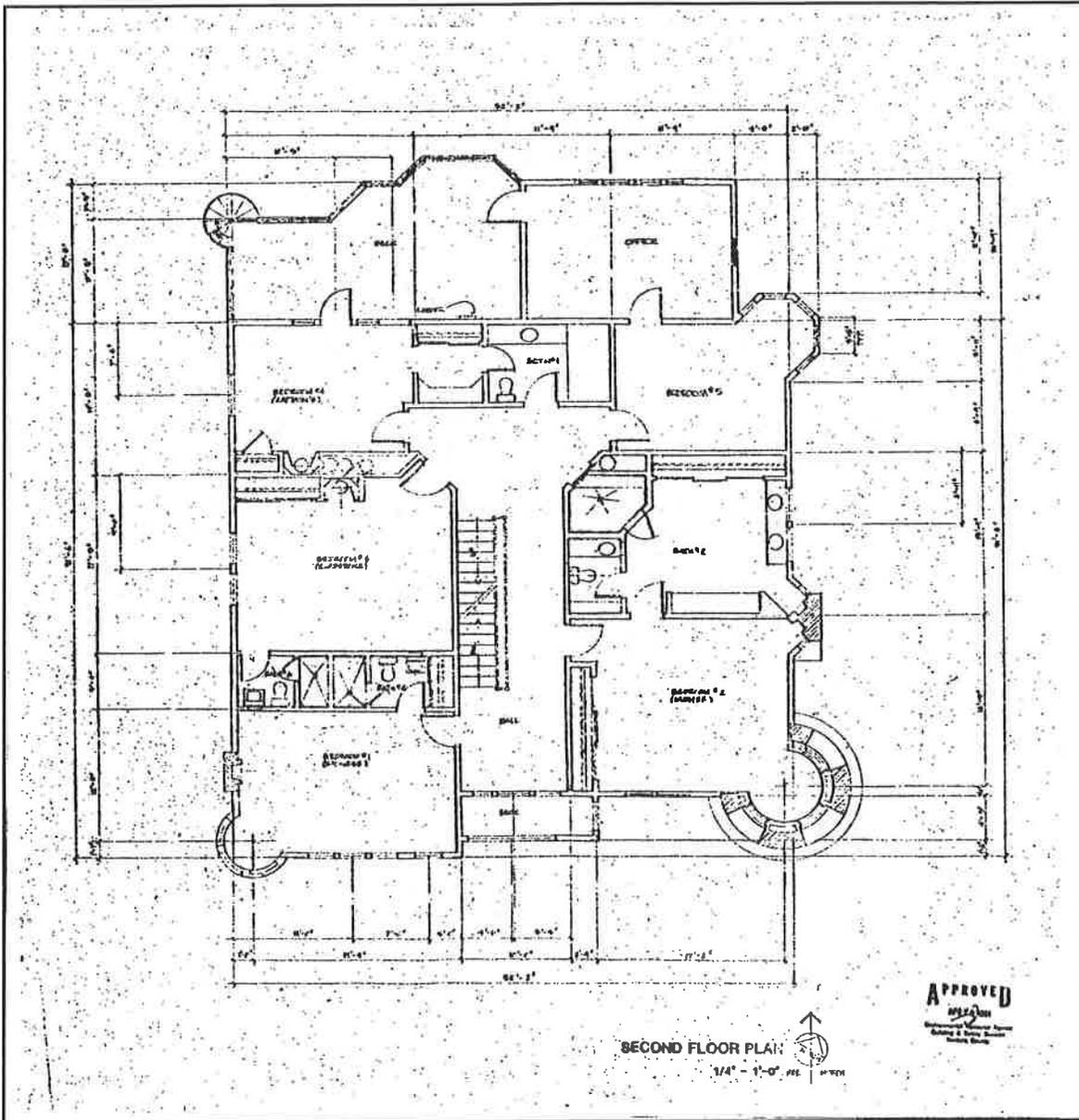


Figure 4. David C. Cook mansion, second floor plan, drawn by Flood, Meyer, Sutton & Associates [1981]

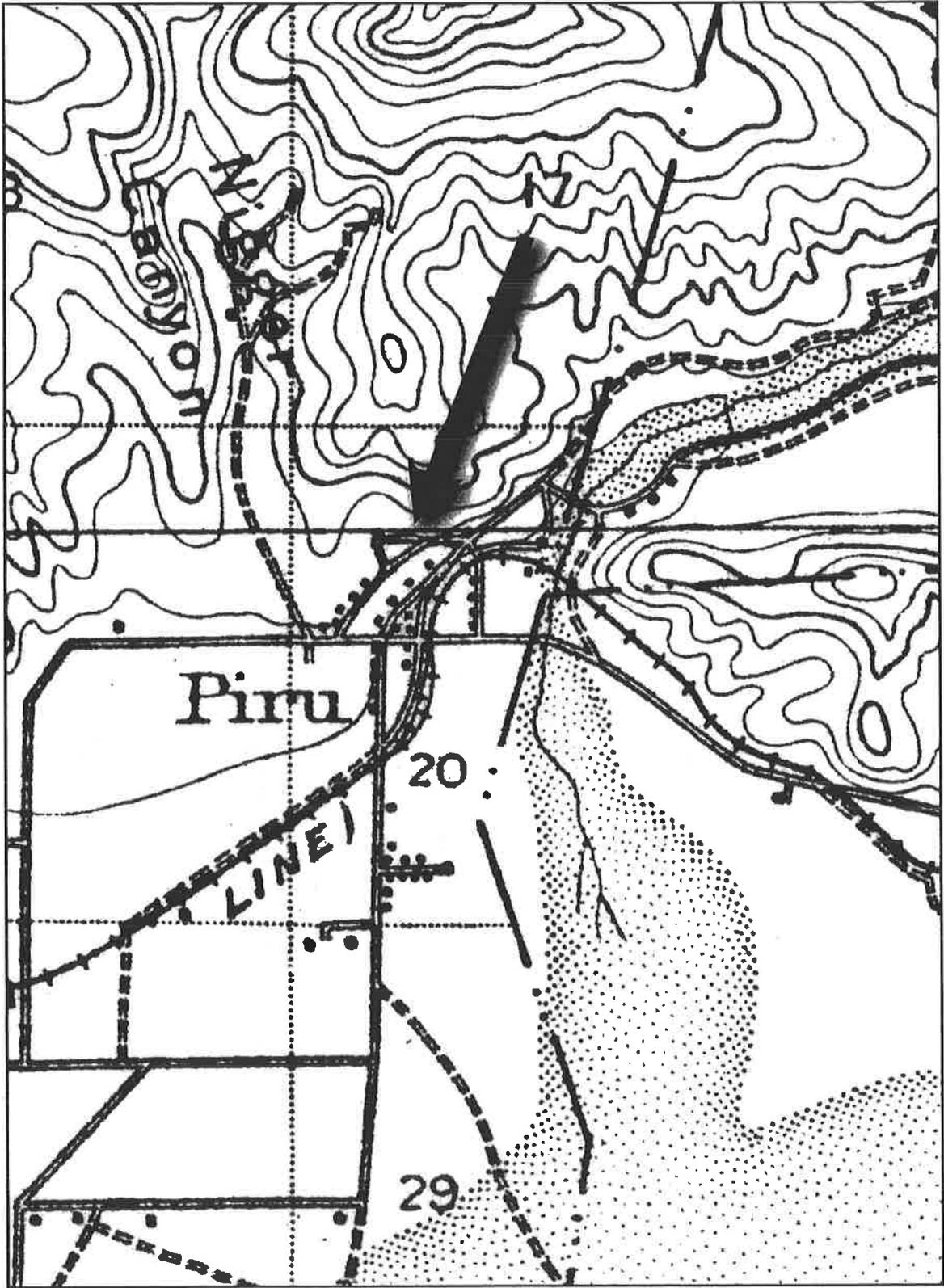


Figure 5. USGS Map, Piru Quadrangle, surveyed 1900, edition of 1921, showing loop drive.

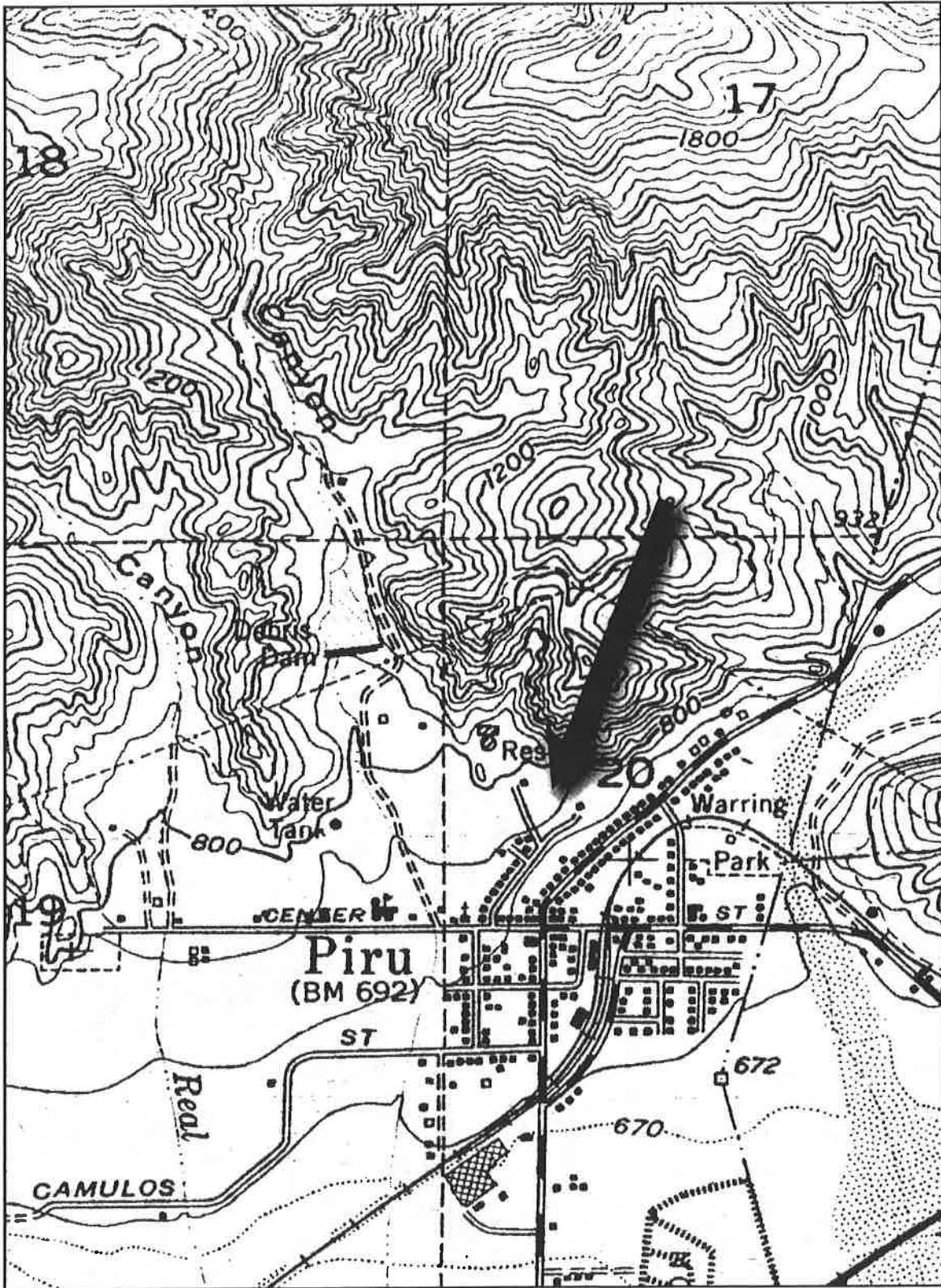


Figure 6. USGS quadrangle, Piru, 1952, shows configuration of road with original loop road removed.



Photo 3. Rear view of mansion, pre-fire, Phil Hardison, photographer [1980]

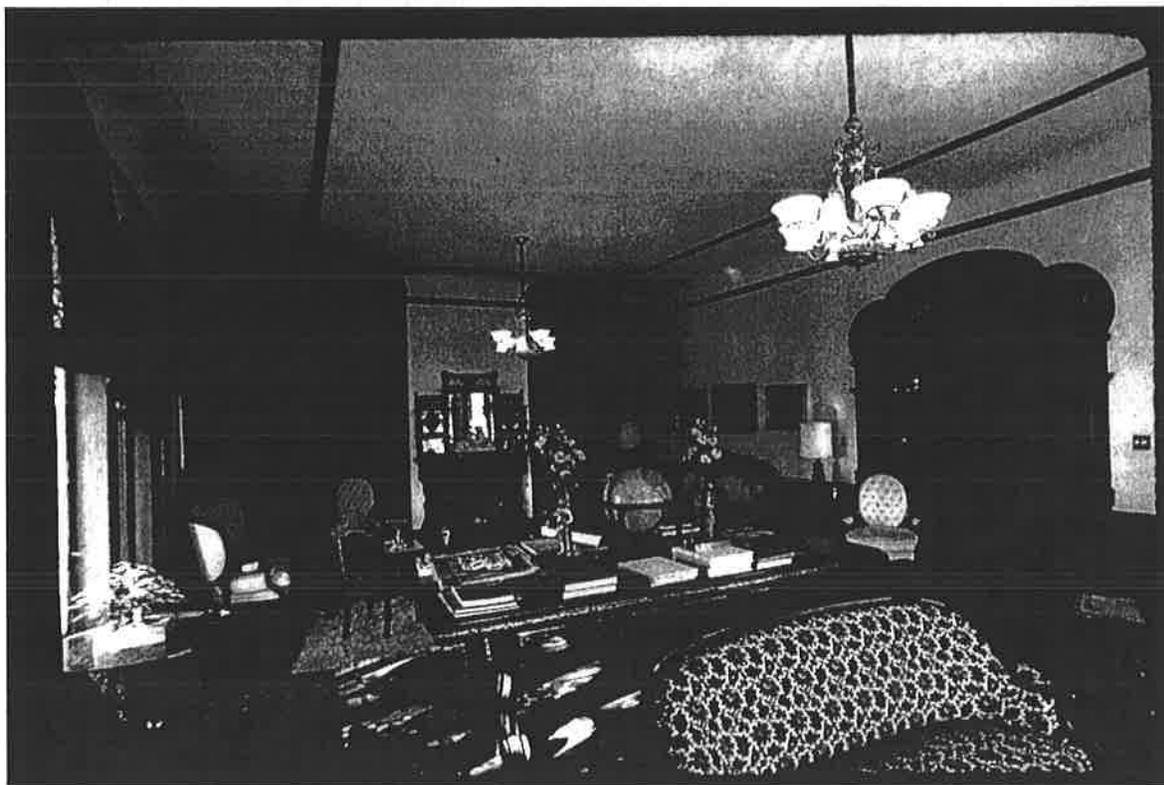


Photo 4. Interior parlor, pre-fire, Phil Hardison, photographer [1980]

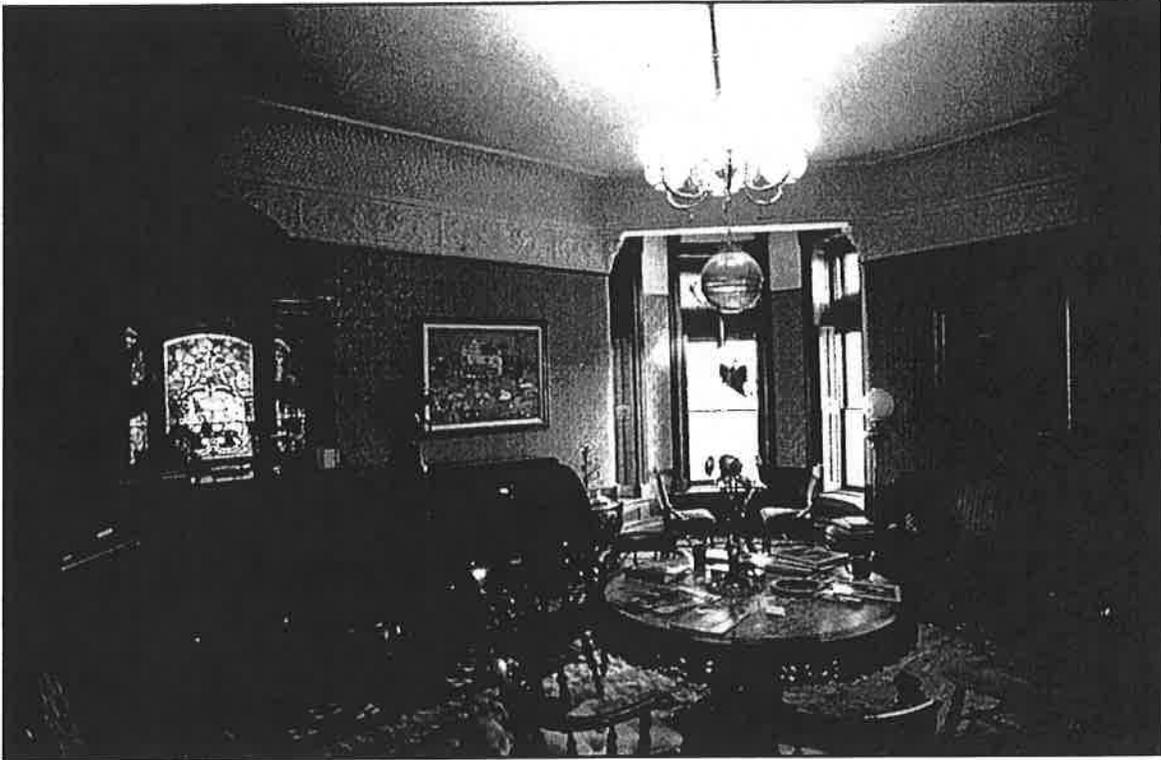


Photo 5. Interior library, facing east, pre-fire, Phil Hardison, photographer [1980]

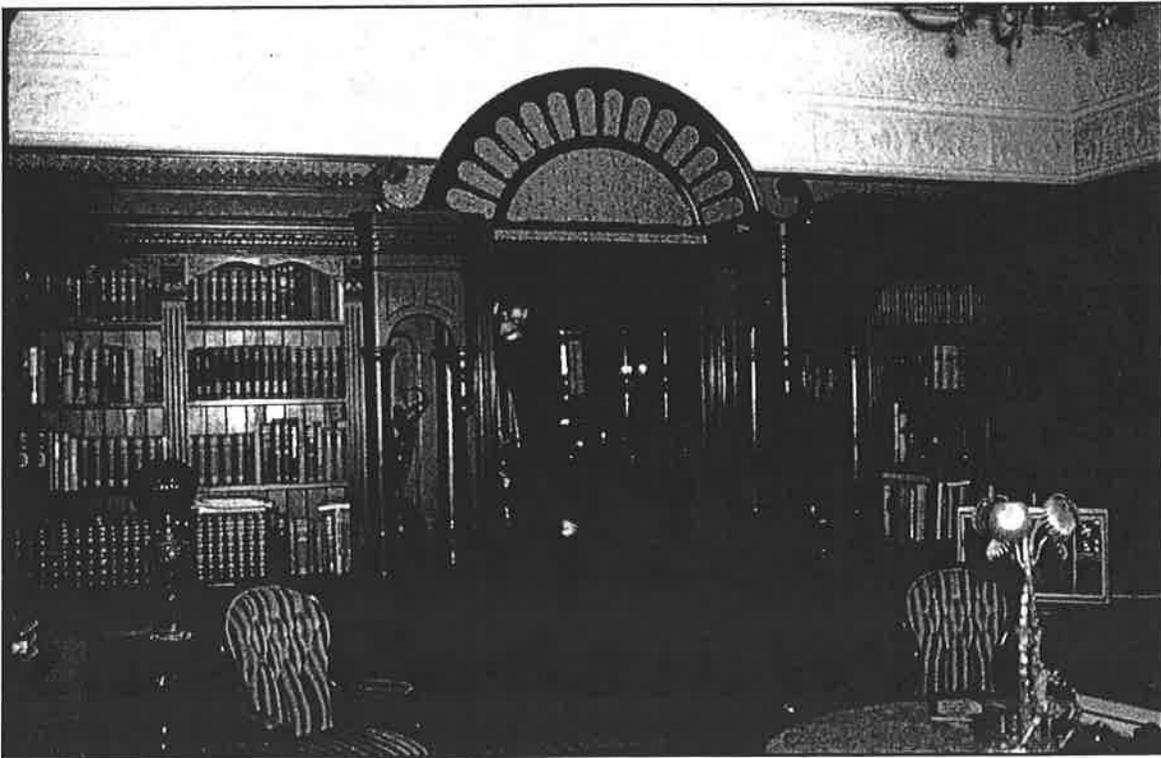


Photo 6. Interior library, facing north, pre-fire, Phil Hardison, photographer [1980]



Photo 7. Interior parlor, facing north, post-fire, Mark Harris, photographer [ca 1990]



Photo 8. Interior library, facing north, post-fire, Mark Harris, photographer [ca 1990]

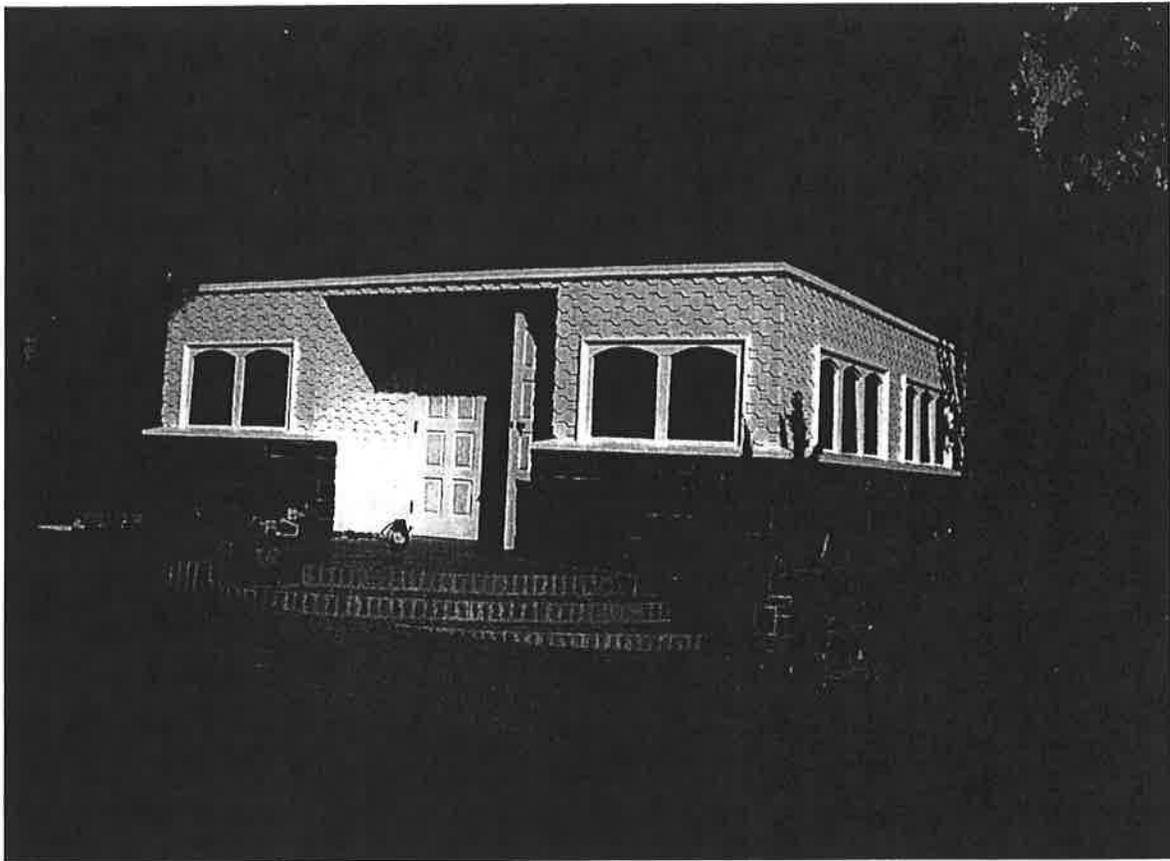


Photo 15. Garden shed, western elevation, Judy Triem, photographer [31 January 2007]

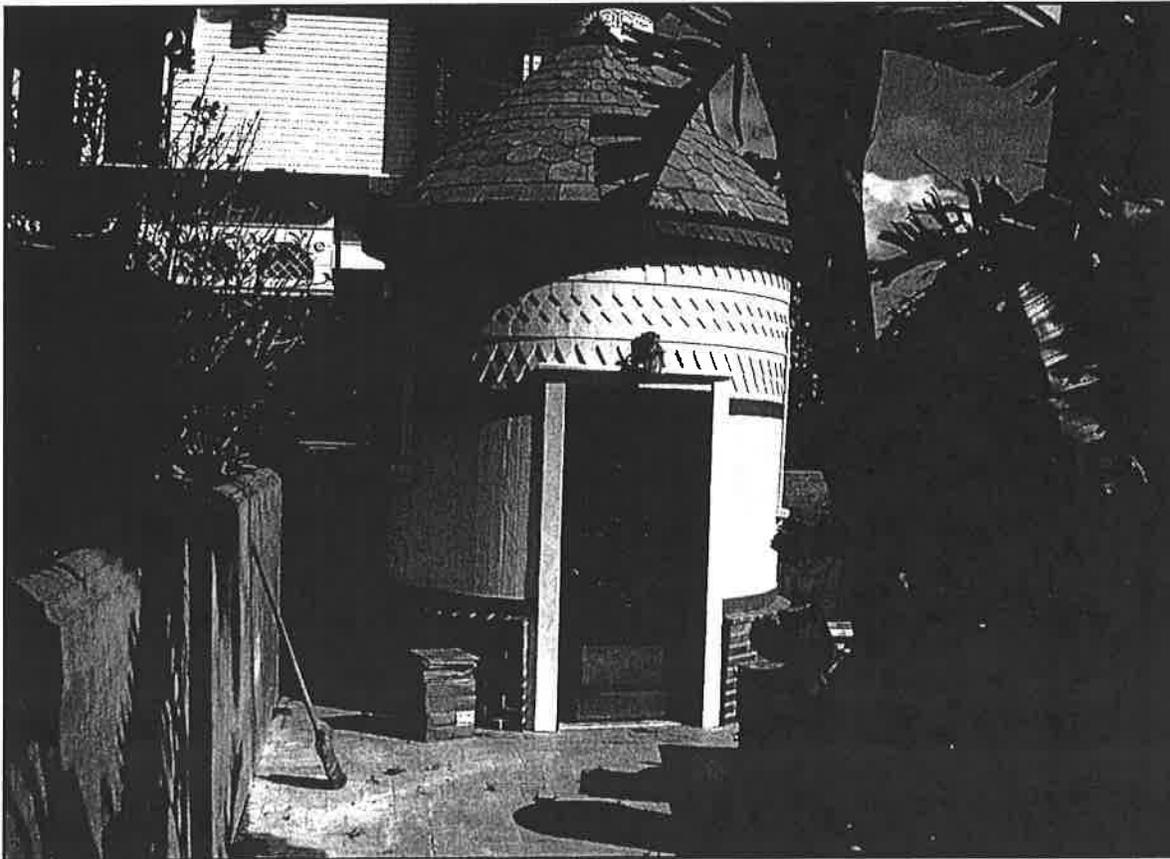
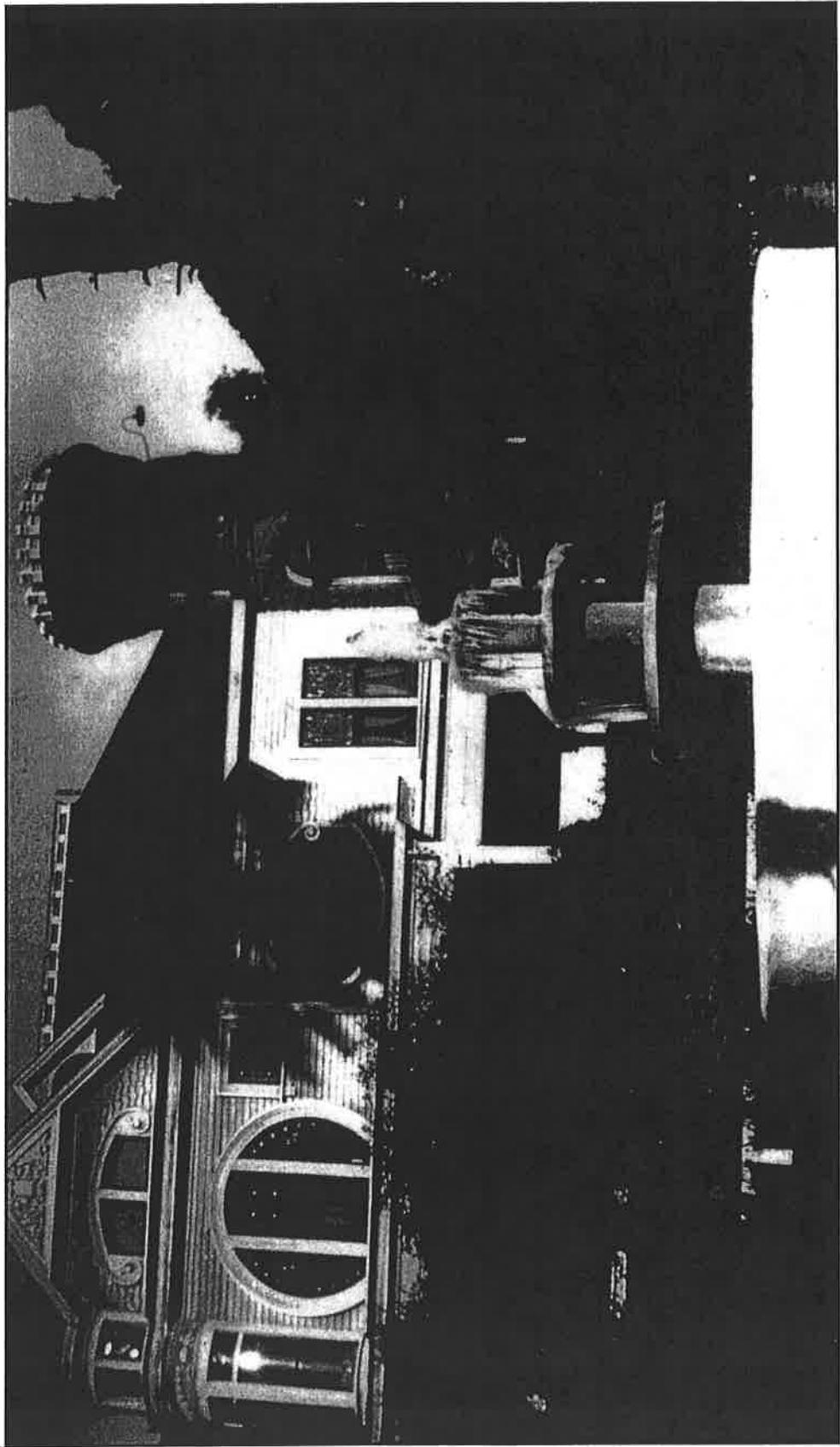


Photo 16. Outhouse, western elevation, Judy Triem, photographer [31 January 2007]



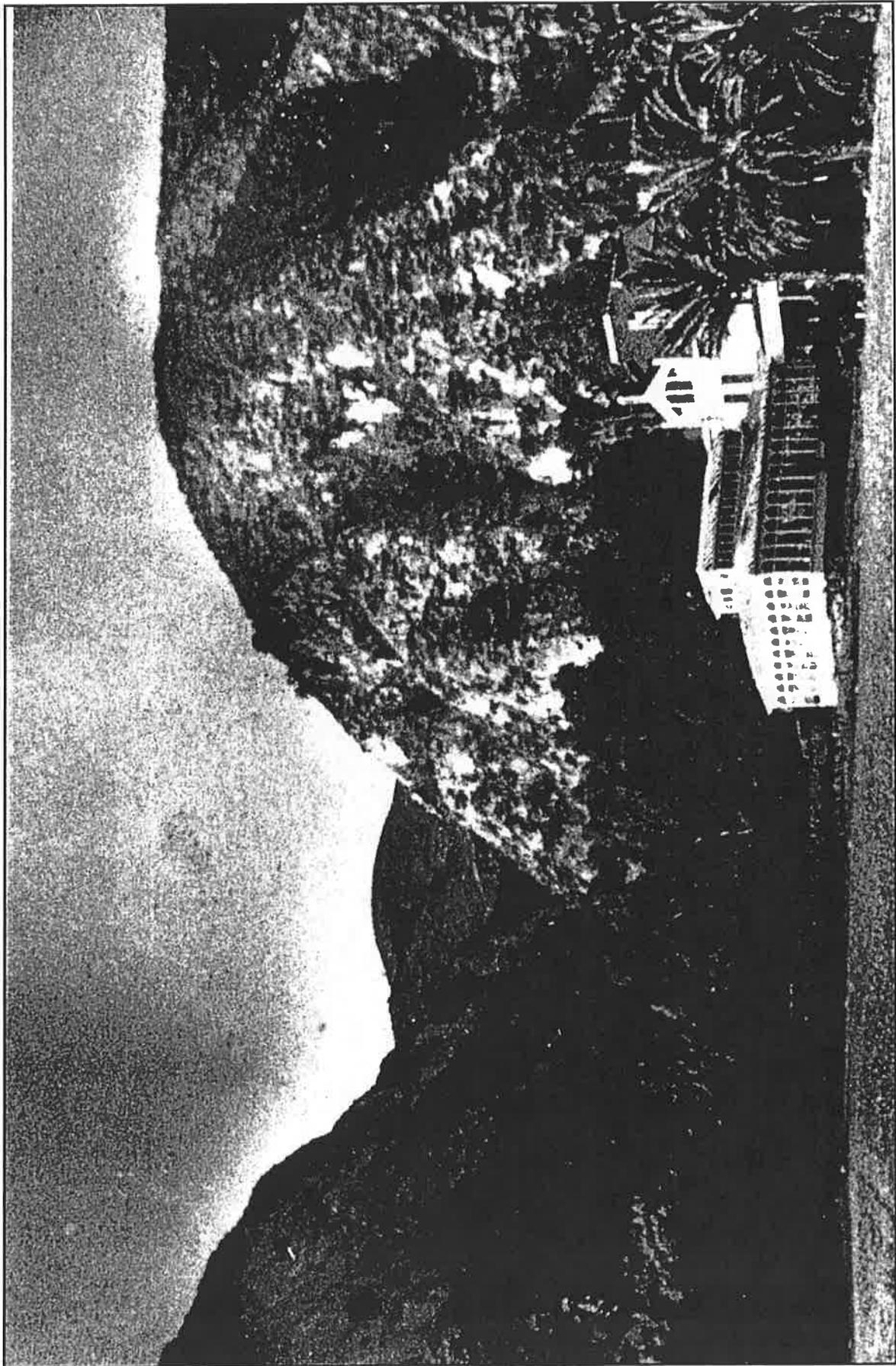
Photo 3. Historic photo: inside conservatory, VCMHA Collection [circa 1895]



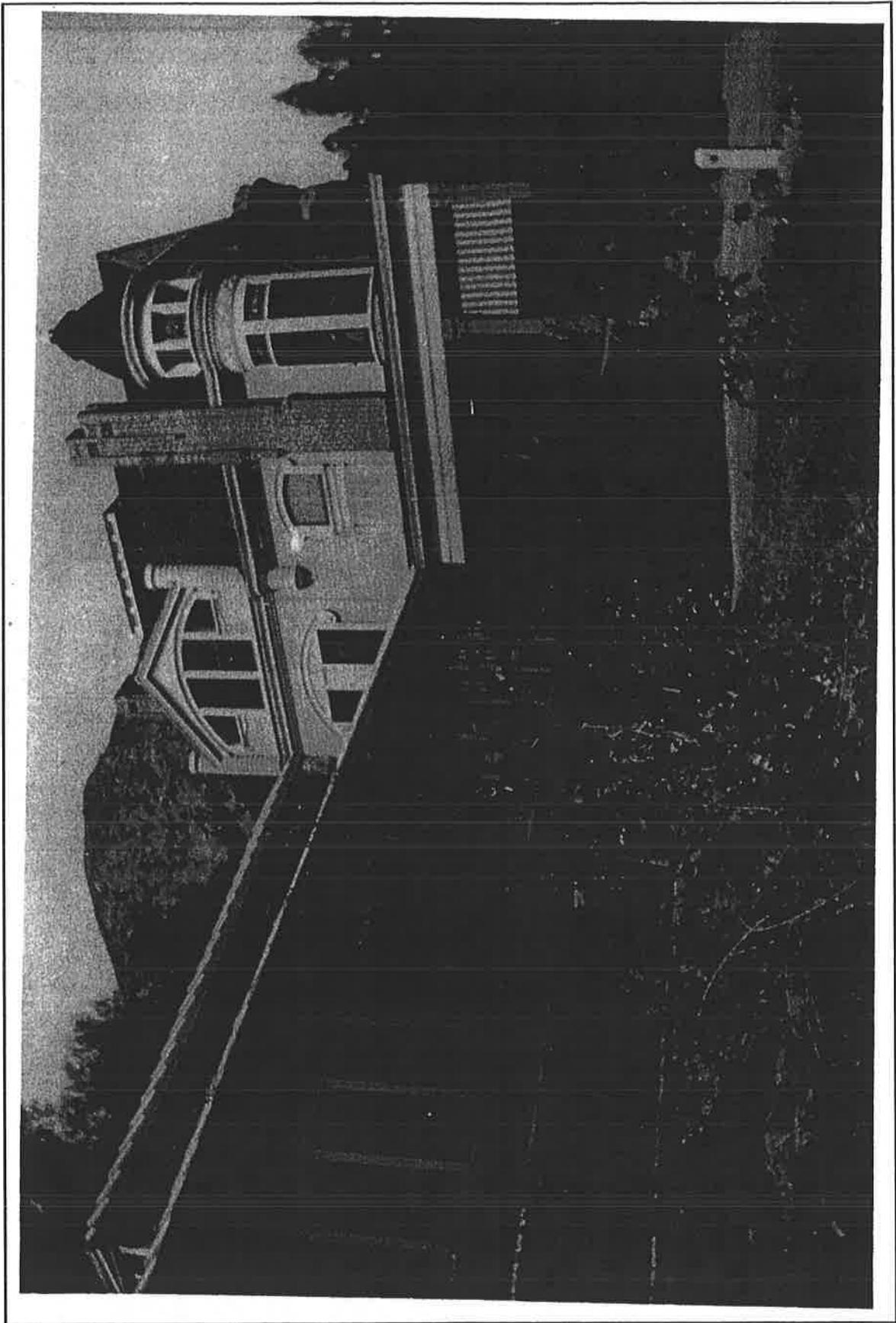
Historic Photo 11. Cook mansion, front lawn area, Peggy Lechler collection [1937]



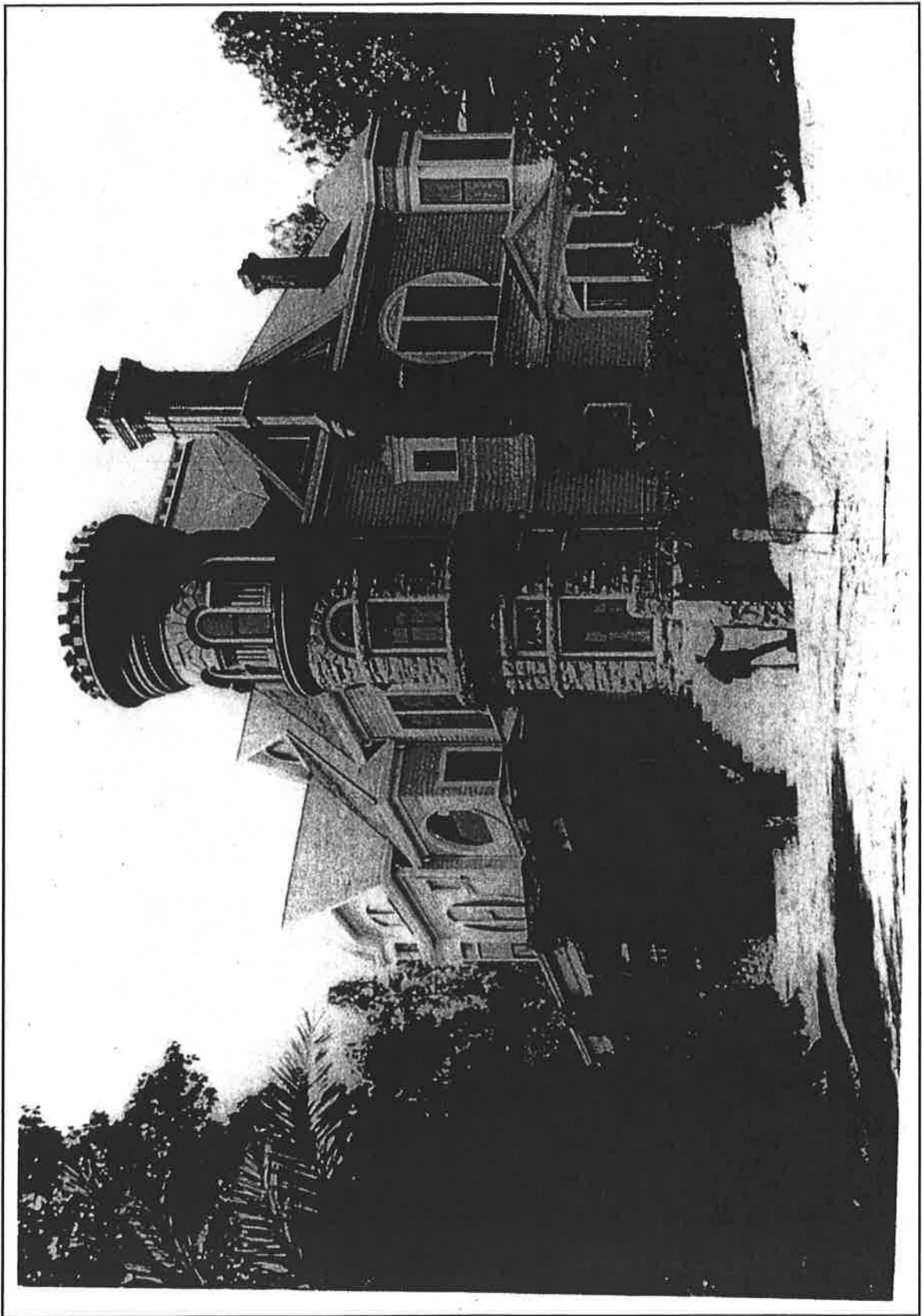
Historic Photo 1: D.C. Cook house & grounds. Source: *Memoirs of David C. Cook* [circa 1891]



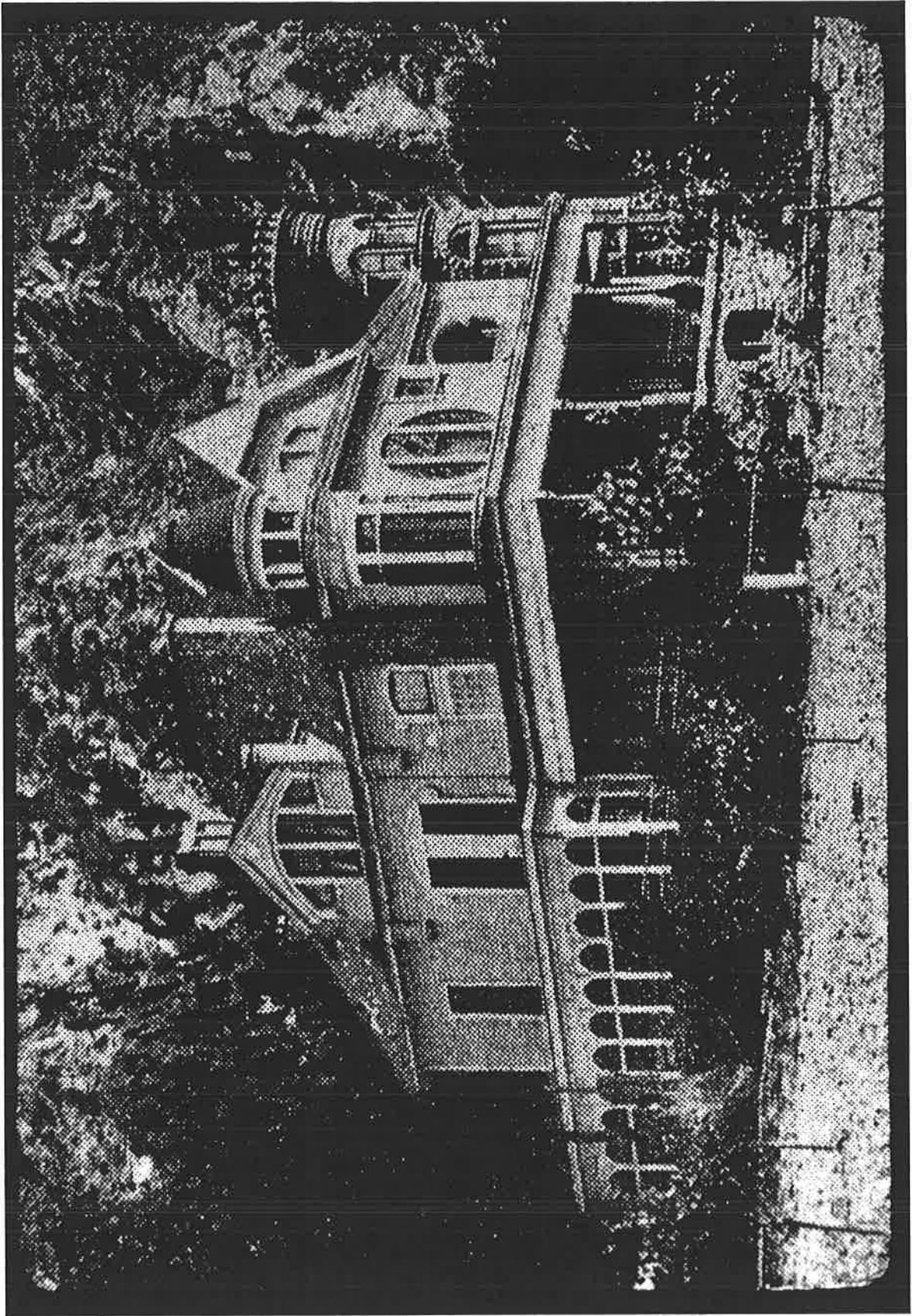
Historic Photo 2: View of mansion and conservatory, David N. Hill collection [circa 1910]



Historic Photo 4. Cook mansion and conservatory, Lechler collection, VCMHA [ca 1915]



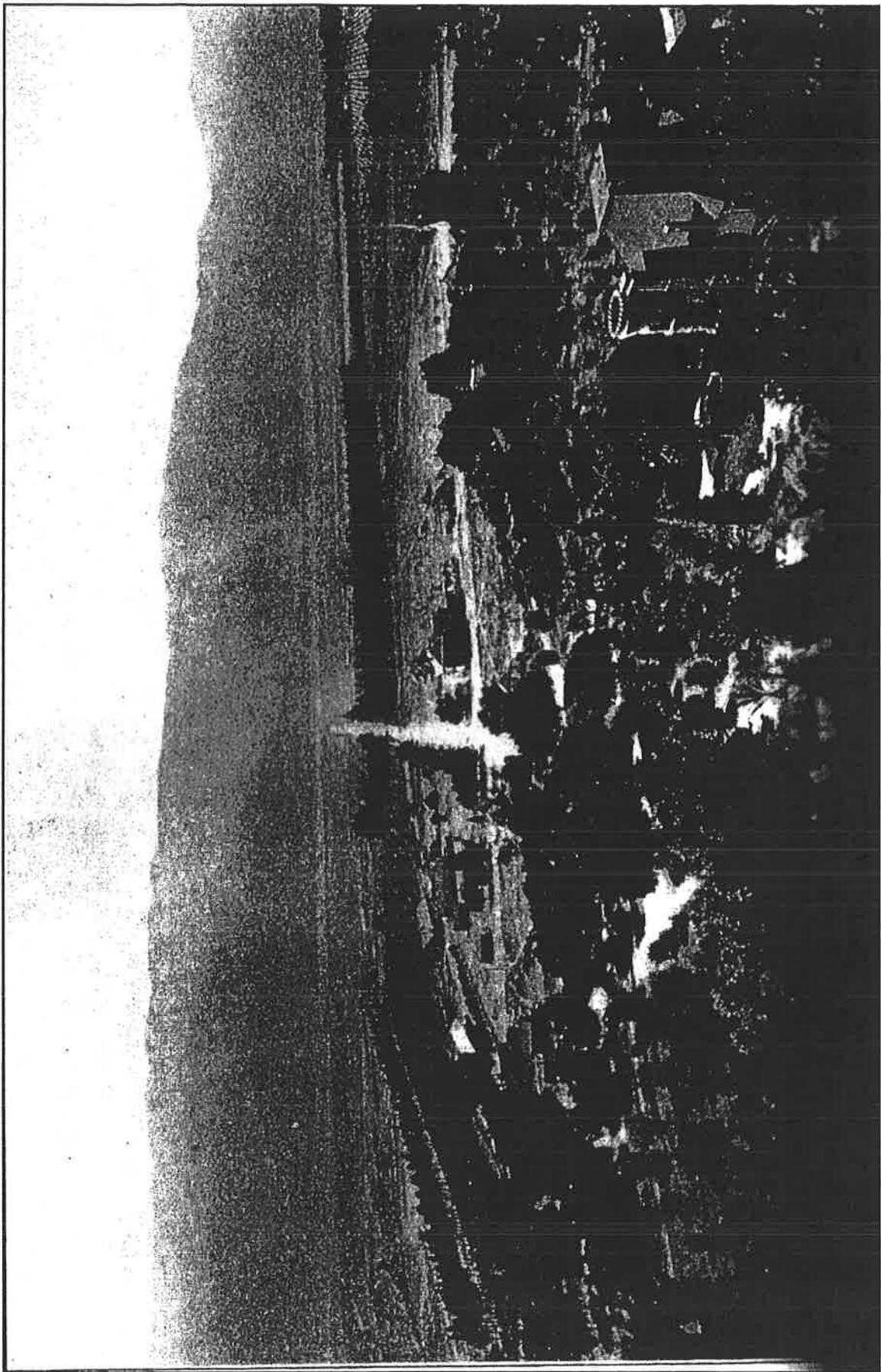
Historic Photo 5. Cook mansion, VCMHA Library [ca 1915]



Historic Photo 6: Cook mansion, conservatory removed, Phil Hardison collection [ca 1925]



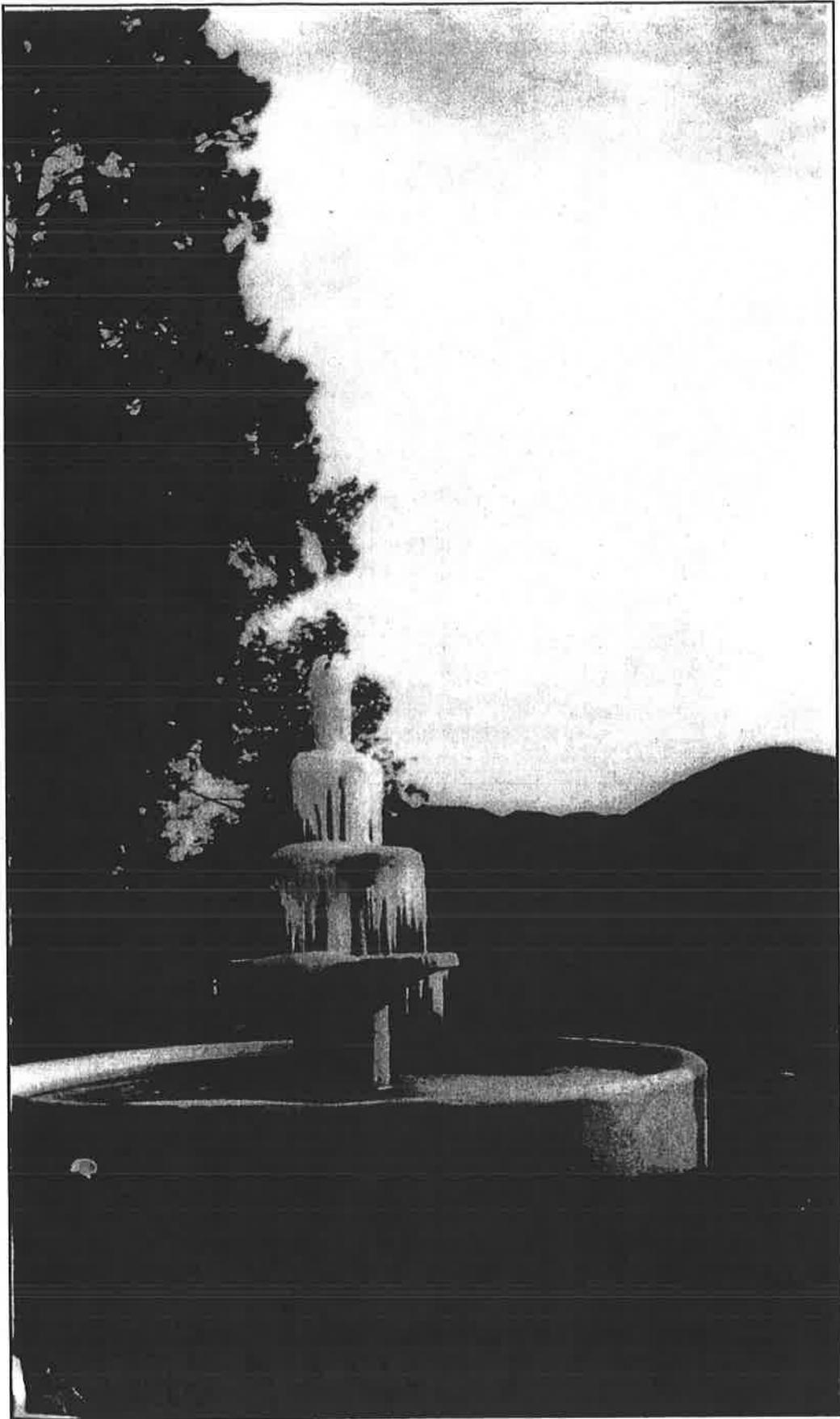
Historic Photo 7: Cook Mansion, Phil Hardison collection [ca 1925]



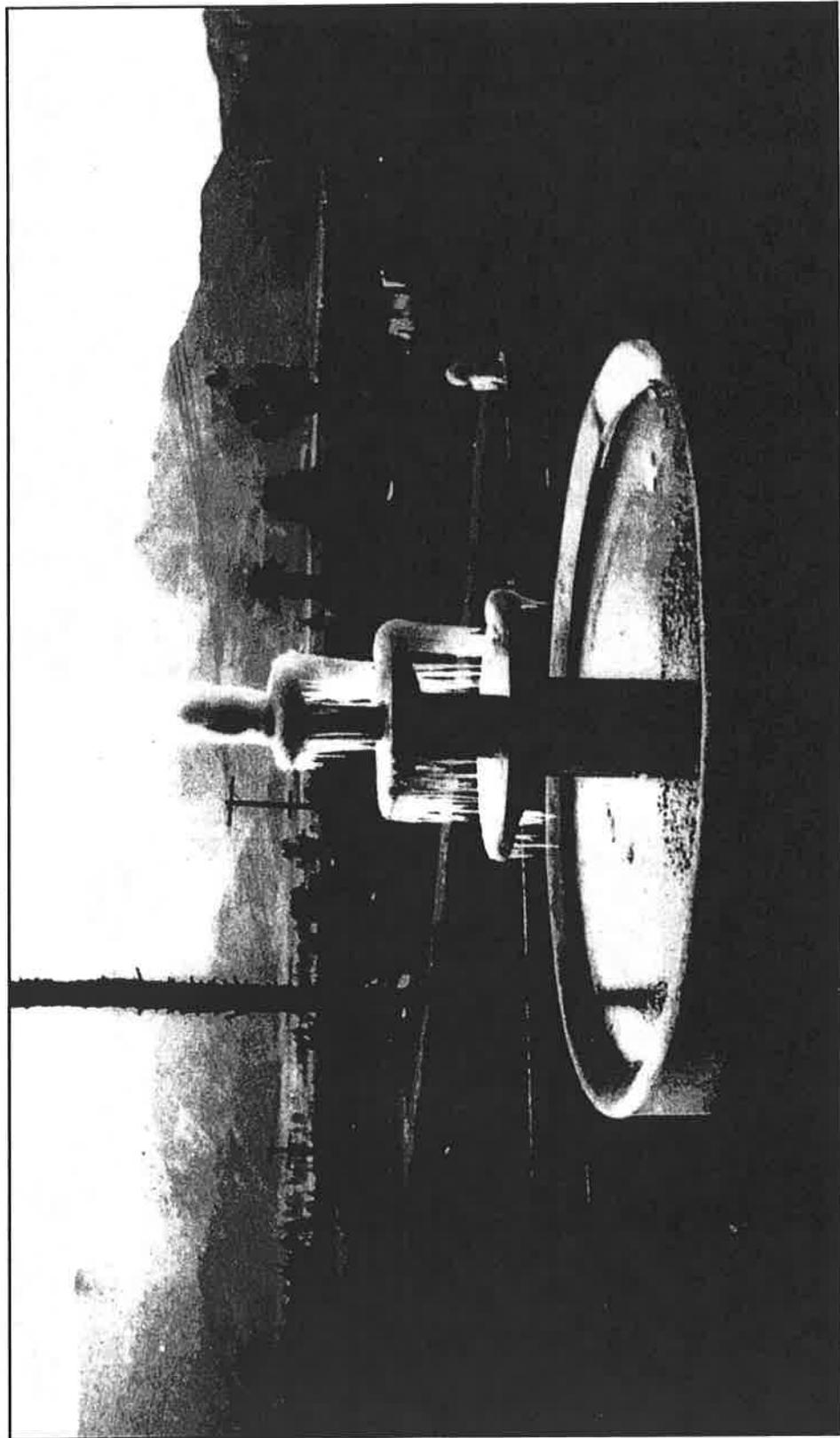
Historic Photo 8: View from hill above mansion, *Out West Magazine* [1900]



Historic Photo 9: Drive-way to Ramsay Home, postcard [ca 1910]



Historic Photo 10. Cook mansion, front lawn area, facing east, Peggy Lechler collection [1937]



Historic photo 12. Cook mansion, front lawn area, view to south, Peggy Lechler collection [1937]



Photo 1. Entry drive to Cook mansion, pre-fire, Phil Hardison photographer [1980]



Photo 2. Side (Western) elevation, pre-fire, Phil Hardison, photographer [1980]

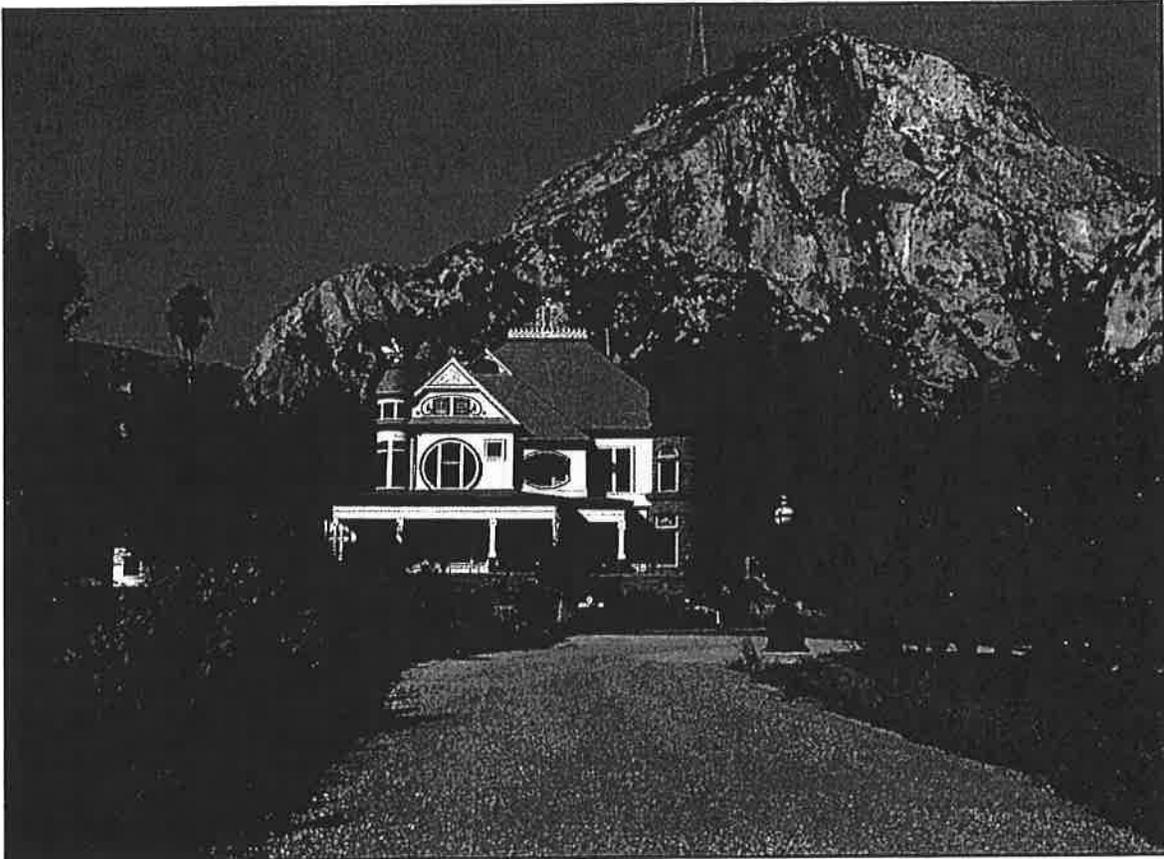


Photo 9. Cook mansion, front elevation, Judy Triem, photographer [January 31, 2007]



Photo 10. Side (western) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer [January 31, 2007]



Photo 11. Rear (northern) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer [January 31, 2007]



Photo 12. Side (eastern) elevation, Judy Triem, photographer [January 31, 2007]