

ALEXANDRIA HOUSES

1750~1830

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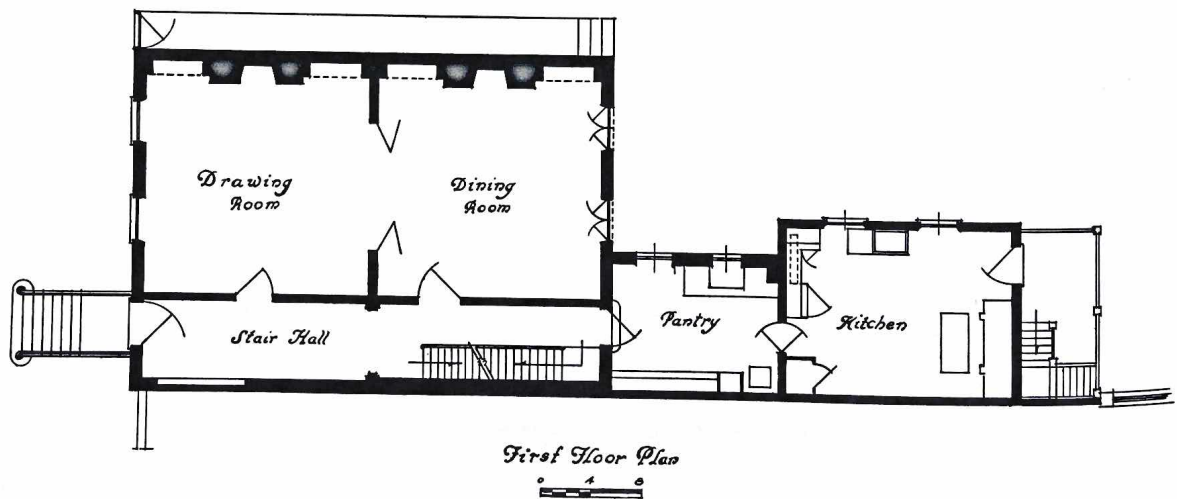
THE SNOWDEN HOUSE

Circa 1790

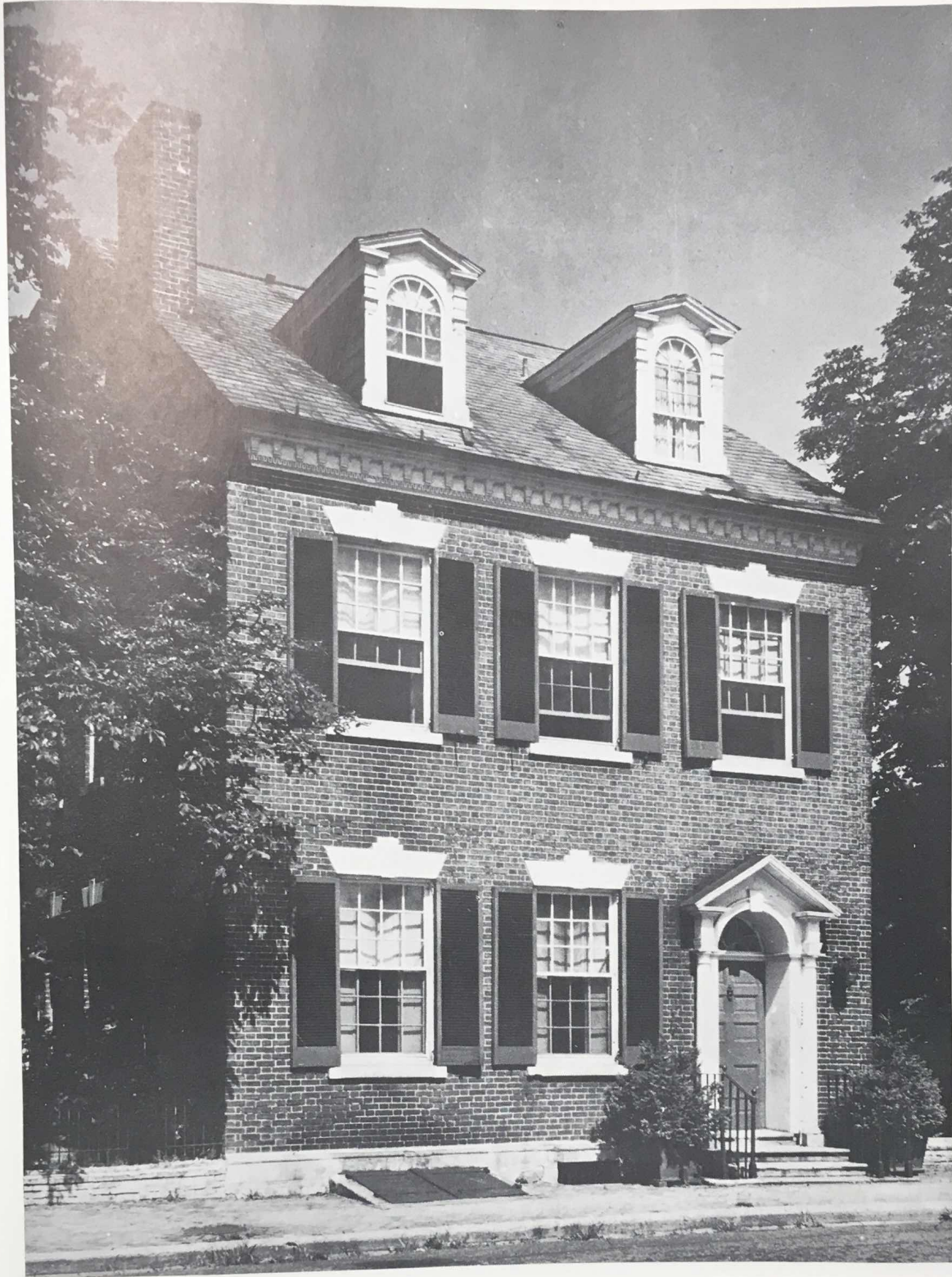
611 South Lee Street

Known as the Snowden House after the family which occupied it for ninety-seven years of its long existence, this fine Georgian structure was built long before their ownership. It is not known which of the Alexanders built the house, but John Alexander gave the property to his son, William Thornton Alexander, who sold it to Thomas Vowell on August 29, 1798. It later came into the possession of the Snowdens.

The massive and dignified doorway is surmounted by a pediment, and the facade cornice is unusual and of fine workmanship. Although the original mantels have been replaced, the other details of the interior trim attest to the original elegance of the structure. The kitchen was once completely separated from the house and was later joined by a brick "bridge" between the two buildings, as illustrated on page 114. That the kitchens were very frequently separate outbuildings is indicated by the fact that often when this dependency was joined to the main house the ell fell directly behind the dining room or parlor, rather than to the rear of the hall—thus forcing a servant going from the rear of the house to pass through the dining room, or parlor, in order to reach the front door. The garden of the Snowden House is lovely and it once had an unusually fine view up and down the Potomac.



Typical first floor plan of the ell type house



Photograph: Library of Congress

Early builders paid much attention to fenestration and detail as is beautifully indicated in this residence of Justice and Mrs. Hugo Black.



Photograph: Library of Congress

The Garden Side

The ell, originally a separate dependency, has been rounded where it joins the main structure in order not to obstruct a window.