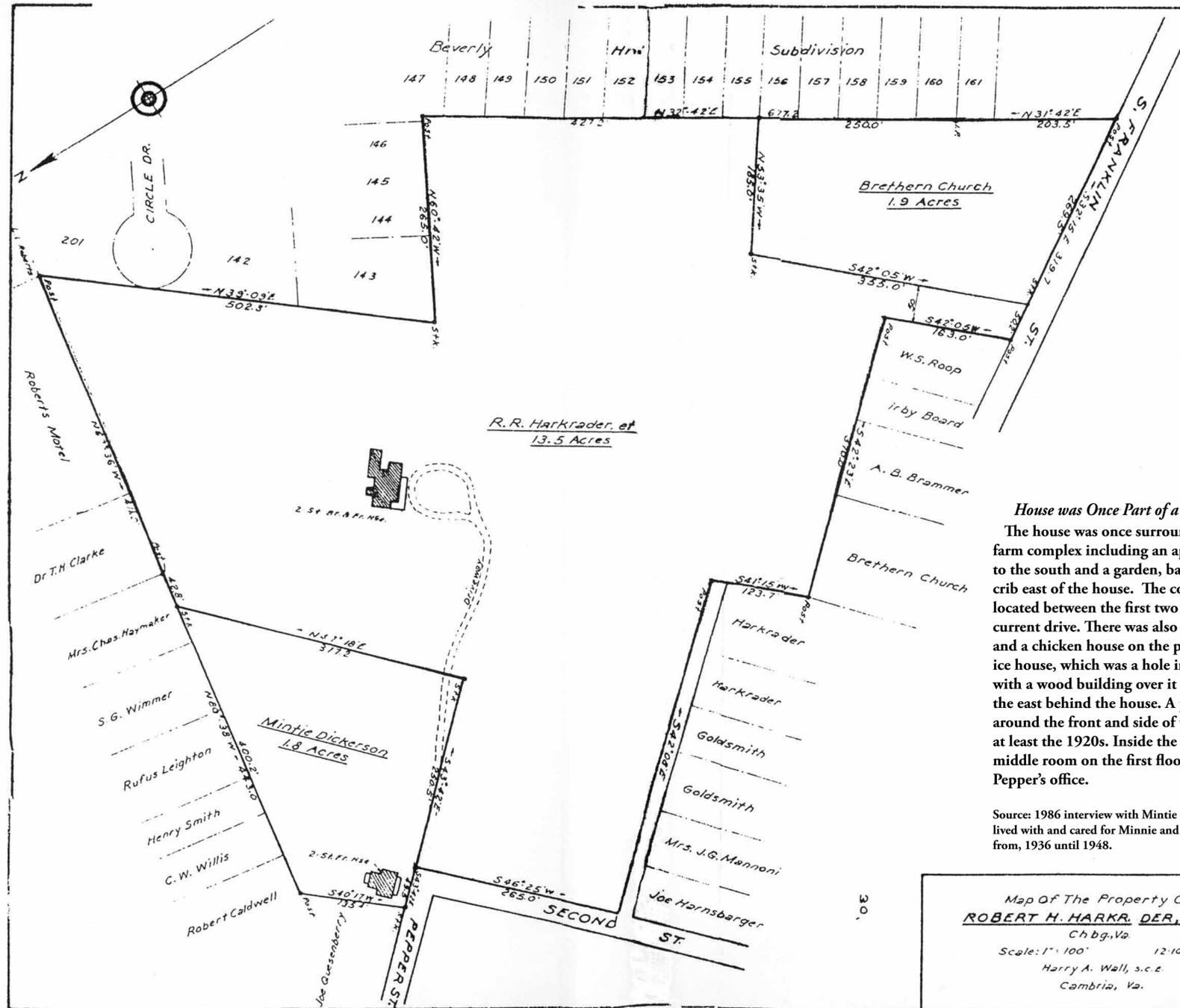


Montgomery Museum House History

1852 Christiansburg Presbyterian Church Manse



House was Once Part of a Small Farm
The house was once surrounded by a full farm complex including an apple orchard to the south and a garden, barn and corn crib east of the house. The coal house was located between the first two trees along the current drive. There was also a smokehouse and a chicken house on the property. The ice house, which was a hole in the ground with a wood building over it was located to the east behind the house. A porch wrapped around the front and side of the house by at least the 1920s. Inside the house, the middle room on the first floor served as Dr. Pepper's office.

Source: 1986 interview with Mintie Dickerson, who lived with and cared for Minnie and J. William Pepper from, 1936 until 1948.

- 1755 - Land was part of John Craig's 200-acre Hans Meadows estate.
- 1827 - Presbyterian Church was organized with a congregation of forty-one members and in 1828, a brick church was constructed at the corner of First and Franklin Streets.
- 1845 - Craig family sold a four-acre tract "for the purpose of erectng thereon a house for the residence of the Pastor in charge of the Presbyterian Congregation."
- 1852 - Georgian-style brick house was constructed as the church manse using Flemish and American bonds and decorative molded brick cornice. Reverend Nicholas Chevalier, who became the first full time minister of Christiansburg Presbyterian Church in 1839, was its first occupant.
- 1853 - New Presbyterian Church building, which is still used by the congregation, was erected at 107 West Main Street.
- 1858 - Congregation decided that the manse property "did not answer the purpose for which it was intended." It was sold to Charles B. Gardner, guardian of Mary Taylor Craig.
- 1873 - Dr. William R. Pepper (1813-1900) purchased the house from Miss Craig, although the Pepper family had been residing there prior to the sale. Dr. Pepper and his first wife Ann Taylor had two children, John William Pepper (1872-1948) and Minnie Pepper (1863-1937).

- 1901 - Minnie Pepper received ownership of the house via her father's will. Miss Pepper was a 1876 graduate of the Montgomery Female Academy and was a private school teacher in North Carolina. Her brother J. William Pepper was State Marshall during Cleveland's presidency and was later a probation officer. When he returned to Christiansburg, he and partner Lilburn Dunlap opened the Pepper-Dunlap auto dealership in 1920. With Arthur Gardner, he owned a dairy located near the house.
- 1948 - House passed into the ownership of the Harkrader family and was used as their family home and as a rental property.
- 1970s - House was occupied by a Virginia Tech fraternity group.
- 1983 - The Montgomery Museum purchased the house from the Harkrader family.

Sources:
Mintie Dickerson, 1986 interview
Roy Kanode, *Christiansburg, Virginia: Small Town America at its Finest*, 2005
Mountainside Magazine, Volume 2, Number 2
Photographs courtesy of Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Pre-Rehab Photos, 1986 - Plat Map, 1956