



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

State of New Hampshire, Department of Cultural Resources
19 Pillsbury Street, 2nd floor, Concord NH 03301-3570
Voice/ TDD ACCESS: RELAY NH 1-800-735-2964
<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr>

603-271-3483
603-271-3558
FAX 603-271-3433
preservation@nhdhr.state.nh.us

Wentworth-Coolidge Tour Outline

OUTLINE OF A TOUR OF THE WENTWORTH-COOLIDGE MANSION PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

JAMES L. GARVIN
SEPTEMBER 30, 1992

The Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion is one of the most interesting and historic, yet most unusual and puzzling, of the historic houses of New Hampshire. The architectural evolution of the house is only partly understood, and the underlying rationale for the eccentric overall design of the structure is still a mystery. No other house with the odd plan and proportioning of this dwelling survives from colonial North America.

While title to part of the Wentworth property has been traced back to 1663, no portion of the building now on the land has been found by inspection to date from the 1600s. The property apparently did not belong to Governor Benning Wentworth until after 1759, although he was living there well before that date. Rather, the land, with some buildings, was acquired from relatives and others by Major John Wentworth, Benning Wentworth's son, and remained in the son's hands until his premature death in 1759. In the following years, the governor acquired the property along with other assets that had belonged to his unmarried son.

While Major John Wentworth may have lived at Little Harbor before Benning Wentworth moved his household there about 1753, it is equally likely that the son lived with Governor Wentworth in Portsmouth. If so, the Little Harbor estate served mostly as one of the many country farms that well-to-do Portsmouth families maintained in the open country around the compact part of the town and in neighboring towns like Greenland and Newington. Such farms typically were occupied by tenants, who cultivated the lands and provided needed foodstuffs and provender for the people and horses at an in-town dwelling.

In the case of Benning Wentworth, we know that he rented two Portsmouth houses from his sister Sarah, the wife (and later the widow) of merchant Archibald Macpheadris. From 1729 until 1741, Wentworth rented a wooden dwelling that stood on Daniel Street directly across from Macpheadris' great brick mansion, now called the Macpheadris-Warner House. After 1741, when he was appointed royal governor and his sister had remarried and presumably moved to her new husband's house (the George Jaffrey Mansion) a few doors away, Wentworth moved across Daniel Street to rent the brick house himself. The governor remained in technical possession of the brick dwelling until 1759, when he presumably gained control of the property at Little Harbor upon his son's death.

During this period of more than seventeen years, Wentworth frequently requested that the provincial assembly or house of representatives buy the property from his sister as an official "province house" or governor's residence, but the assembly was never willing to appropriate sufficient funds to meet Sarah's asking price.

After years of futile pleading with the assembly to purchase the brick house, Wentworth finally announced in the spring of 1753 that he had "Provided a house to remove my furniture into, that the workmen may have no interruption from me" if the assembly decided to buy and remodel the Macpheadris house.

The assembly never did buy the brick house. Even though Wentworth continued to rent his sister's mansion for another six years, the governor seems to have lived most of the time at Little Harbor from 1753. Affidavits from servants who worked for the governor at Little Harbor show that Benning Wentworth and his son John were living there for some years before the son's death, although it is unclear whether the governor undertook many changes to the house until after he acquired title to the property. Beginning in 1759, after Major John Wentworth's death, the governor employed a joiner or finish carpenter named Neal to live in the house as a servant, presumably to carry out extensive alterations or additions. Neal remained at the house for at least five years.

The house as we see it today is composed of four main historic parts, with two additional wings added by the Coolidge family for guests or servants.

Three of the four historic sections of the house are best seen from the lawn southwest of the building. Part of this lawn was once a formal garden extending southwesterly to adjacent lots now separated from the property and occupied by the Fardelmann and Krasker houses. At the northwest end of the complex is a gable-roofed section that can easily be pictured as a free-standing house. Perhaps because of the lean-to additions at the rear of this section, which give the unit a resemblance to a "saltbox" house, this section was long said to be the oldest portion of the complex, dating from the 1600s.

Evidence confirms that this was once a free-standing building, but the structure bears no evidence of dating from the 1600s or, in fact, of having started its history as a house. Rather, this unit appears to have been a warehouse or shop building, later converted to the kitchen portion of the expanded complex. The frame shows no evidence of having

had a chimney within it (the present chimney lying within an adjacent building frame), and its regular framing, seen most easily in the posts that project into the large room on the second story, is now recognized as being characteristic of shop buildings in eighteenth-century Portsmouth. Further evidence of a non-domestic origin for this unit is seen in the floors, in which the boards are pinned to the joists with wooden treenails instead of being nailed with the usual wrought iron clasp or finish nails. Rather than being planed in the usual manner, these floor boards were hewn smooth with an adze, creating a rippled effect, best seen on the second floor and in the attic.

The fact that this unit was once free-standing is proven by an examination of its rear roof, now hidden in part under the connecting roof of the adjoining frame. In the attic of the structure there is a hole in the sheathing, through which one can see the formerly exposed outer surface of the roof. This surface is still covered with early wooden shingles, which were first painted red, and then gray. This color evidence was used in deciding to use red paint for the new wood shingled roof of the entire mansion.

The next unit of the assembled house was also originally a free-standing frame. This is the connecting link that ties the first portion to the odd, high third unit with its dramatic but peculiar shed roof. The second frame encloses the chimney that serves the kitchen, dining room, and the rooms above.

Some hint that this was a free-standing frame is provided by the unusual exposed wall braces that can be seen within the structure on the second floor, where it abuts the first frame. But even more convincing evidence is visible in the attic adjacent to the shingled roof of the first unit. Here, the second frame retains its gabled end, complete with a cased attic window opening and with some of the original yellow-painted clapboards. It is clear that the first and second units were once free-standing buildings, and that the two frames were brought together to form a T-shaped assemblage, and then were linked by an extension of the roof of the second frame to cover the valley that would have been created between the two. At the same time, probably, the low "lean-to" additions would have been added to the rear of the frame of the first unit, providing low rooms on the first floor for a buttery (on the southwest) and a stewing kitchen (on the northeast); for more about the stewing kitchen, see below.

The third frame of the assemblage is represented by the square unit at the southeast end of this row of frames. This portion is topped by a westward-facing gable that intersects the vertical face of a wall with a shed or lean-to roof at its top and with a tall chimney that rises from this shed roof.

There is presently no reason to think that this third unit was originally a free-standing frame, but this part of the house has been subjected to insufficient study to be sure just what it represents structurally. This is the part of the house with the two most elaborated small chambers—the parlor on the first floor and the best bedchamber on the second floor.

What we do know is that the gabled roof above the second-floor bedchamber is not original. The attic floor beneath this roof was originally a flat deck covered with a “composition” (as it was called) of pine tar and gravel. A residue of this substance remains on the attic floor boards, and the smell of tar can easily be detected on warm days. Clearly, this flat roof was once a kind of observatory that provided a unique vantage point from which the large formal garden below could have been enjoyed, and from which the lower part of the Back Channel toward Blunt’s Island and the Rye shore could have been surveyed.

This deck is the earliest known example of a flat roof in northern New England. If we can assume that it existed by 1760, it was forty years earlier than the next known attempts at this kind of roofing in Portsmouth, seen about 1800 in some of the brick buildings around Market Square in the center of town. The example at the Wentworth house must have lasted for some time, because the white paint on the outer face of the exterior door that opens upon the former deck from the lean-to is nearly weathered away due to exposure to the sun and rain. The later attempts at composition roofing in the center of Portsmouth failed after about twenty years, so perhaps the Wentworth roof also lasted for nearly two decades before beginning to allow water to leak into the elaborate bedchamber below it. We know that later Portsmouth composition roofs were applied by boat builders. Such craftsmen would have been familiar with pine tar, a common preservative and waterproofing material much used in shipyards and as a protection for cordage (the heavy hemp ropes and cables used on ships).

The fourth surviving original portion of the house is the long, low, so-called Council Chamber wing, which extends at right angles from the third frame and nearly reaches the seawall northeast of the house. Like the first and second units, this fourth unit was once a free-standing frame; this was discovered when its exterior gable-end sheathing was observed during replacement of plaster over the doorway leading from the entry to the Council Chamber.

The house is said to have had many other rooms originally attached to it, and the James Grant survey map of 1774 does seem to show other portions connected to what survives today. One drawing of 1878 by Arthur Little shows a small stable or carriage house attached to the house beyond the Council Chamber wing, in approximately the position where a Coolidge guest suite now extends to the water. The accuracy of the Grant survey map must be questioned, however. A more detailed plan of the estate, probably drawn by cartographer John Groves Hales (discussed below) shows the outline of the house essentially as it survives today, with the exception of a now missing addition beyond the Council Chamber wing.

Old tales about the dwelling, often repeated in print, state that the assemblage once had fifty-two rooms, but that “a part of the house” was removed around the mid-1800s, leaving forty-five chambers. The same legends state that “a troop of horses” could be accommodated in the cellars of the house, but no portion of the existing cellars is large or high enough for horses—not to mention the improbability that anyone would stable horses in a dark and damp cellar directly beneath a dwelling. This tale may have arisen

from the former stable or carriage house shown in Arthur Little's drawing, or may reflect some long-removed portion of the complex—perhaps a larger stable.

It should be noted that old photographs show one or more barn-like buildings attached to the northwestern end of the house, approximately where the present driveway encircles a group of cedar trees. A large boathouse also stood southeast of the house, near the large anchor, until the State of New Hampshire removed it about 1970.

The house has three odd “outshots” or small gable-roofed additions, enclosing one room on each floor. Two of these are two stories high; the third is one story. At least two of the three provide exterior entrance doors, and so are equivalent to the “porches” sometimes seen on eighteenth-century houses, usually at the main entrance. Two of these outshots also have rooms in the second story (though at a lower level than the main second-story floor elevation), and the original functions of these small rooms remain puzzling. Their nearest equivalents seem to be projecting “closets” sometimes found as extensions on London houses of the early 1700s. No other house in northern New England has such additions, except for a few dwellings with two-story “porches” at their main entrance doors.

It should be noted that the original road to the estate passed down the present Little Harbor Road nearly to the water, then turned left and proceeded along the water, near the seawall, approaching the house from the south between seawall and formal garden. The first glimpse of the house, then, would have been of the opposite end from the portion first seen today as a visitor approaches from the public parking lot above the dwelling. The high, shed-roofed third unit and the low Council Chamber wing would have been among the most visible portions of the building, and the main public entrance would have been the grade-level doorway that leads directly into the entry or vestibule outside the Council Chamber.

As today's visitor passes through the interior of the house in the opposite direction, moving from the northwest kitchen portion to the Council Chamber wing, the rooms become increasingly elaborate and formal. Starting at the present-day public entrance at the northeast, one enters the first porch or outshot. Inside, leading into the main house, is an ancient-looking battened door, made of two thicknesses of planks nailed together with rose-headed, hand-forged nails, and arranged to be self-closing with the help of a sheave and weight. This type of door was often used in the 1600s, and probably led to the inaccurate story that this portion of the house was more ancient than the rest. The same kind of door, however, undoubtedly persisted for warehouses and other buildings where strength and security in a door were more important than architectural design. This door may be another relic from the original non-domestic function of the first framed section of the assemblage that is today's mansion.

Beyond this door is a single large room that has been subdivided by partitions of vertical sheathing boards, moulded with the same planes that were used to fashion true paneling elsewhere in the building. These partitions create a stairhall, main kitchen, and two antechambers that may have served as servants' bedchambers or as pantries. Inventories

taken of the estates of Michael Wentworth (1797) and Martha Wentworth (1807) are not sufficiently detailed to indicate the separate uses of these rooms, except, generally, for kitchen-related purposes.

Facing into the main room, but placed beyond its structural limits, is a large cooking fireplace with a crane. This fireplace is unusual in not having its ovens within or immediately adjacent to the hearth. Instead, the cooking chimney has two ovens placed behind the fireplace, with their mouths opening at right angles from the fireplace into the hall that extends toward the so-called dining room, and into the stewing kitchen on the opposite side of the chimney.

The kitchen is unusual in having an oak table that is built around a central post that rises to the ceiling, and in retaining what appears to be a dish rack to the left of the fireplace, near the pass-through door that connects with the stewing kitchen beyond. The kitchen is furnished simply, with a variety of utilitarian objects that suggest its use, but the room does not have the full array of cooking vessels and pewter and copper wares described in the 1797 and 1807 inventories for this part of the house.

Moving from the kitchen past the massive chimney and toward the room now furnished as a dining room, one passes a low, brick-floored room on the right. This room appears to have served as a buttery, or milk-processing room. Its low, partially subterranean elevation and its inside-shuttered windows (the only ones in the house) are common features in butteries, where earthenware pans of milk were placed to cool and allow the cream to separate. We may assume that this room, located conveniently close to the main kitchen, once held a butter churn and other dairying implements.

The first formal room encountered in this route through the house is now furnished in the Federal style and represents a dining room of the late 1700s or early 1800s, the period of Michael and Martha Wentworth's ownership of the house. The room itself is unusual in having its fireplace wall paneled and its fireplace flanked by formal, fluted pilasters, and surrounded by a marble enframement and a bold bolection moulding, yet having a weight-driven clock jack to turn a spit at its fireplace, indicating (unless the jack was added in modern times) that roasting was done at this hearth as well as in the main kitchen.

The room is furnished with a set of mahogany chairs originally made in 1806 by Portsmouth cabinetmaker Langley Boardman for the Durham merchant and storekeeper George Frost. These are among a small number of chairs documented by a bill of sale as the work of this craftsman, who was Portsmouth's leading furniture maker from 1798.

The room also has an unusual small sideboard with elaborate hardwood veneers and beautifully-executed neoclassical painting. Although this piece is apparently unique, it was left in the house by the Coolidge family and has been thought to have a Portsmouth origin.

Hanging on the southwest wall of the room, between two windows, is an original 1812 plan of the estate, with a key identifying former gardens, outbuildings, pastures, and orchards. As noted above, this plan depicts the outline of the house approximately as it is seen today, with the exception of an addition, probably a stable, at the end of the Council Chamber wing. This is by far the most accurate and complete map of the property at an early period, and is thought to have been drawn by the English cartographer John Groves Hales, who also did a large-scale map of Portsmouth in 1813 and maps of other New England towns, including Boston. Hales lived in Portsmouth for a time around 1812, and was occasionally employed by owners of private estates to produce plans like this one.

Also in the room is a Sheraton-style mahogany card table with acanthus-leaf tops carved into the upper portions of its legs. This table is of a type that is often associated with Boston and Salem, Massachusetts, but probably was also made in large numbers in Portsmouth.

Adjacent to the dining room, but at a lower level in one of the lean-to additions to the first house frame, is a small cooking room. Recent research has disclosed the fact that this room is a rare survivor of the “potager” or stewing kitchen, a type of kitchen strongly associated with French cuisine in the 1700s but also fairly widely represented in English and ambitious American households. French cooking of the seventeenth century pioneered in the use of slowly-simmered sauces of various types, and the stewing kitchen allowed greater control over slow simmering, with better fuel economy, than was possible over an open fire in the traditional English or New England fireplace.

This type of kitchen operated by the suspension of iron baskets of charcoal in each of the cone-shaped cooking holes of the “stove” or brick counter. Above these baskets were placed cast iron or copper pots or vessels holding sauces or other foods. Because the stewing holes have no separate flue to carry away the poisonous fumes of the burning charcoal, this type of kitchen always had windows, like those seen here, that were opened whenever charcoal was being burned, summer or winter. This room also has a second large brick oven for baking, and is connected with the main kitchen by a sliding pass-through door.

The stewing kitchen may be the only survivor of its type in New England. The likely reason for its construction at the Wentworth house is that Wentworth employed a local tavern-keeper named John King to travel from Portsmouth two or three times a week to shave him, dress his hair, and cook special meals at the house. In 1773, King shot a sheriff’s deputy who had come to his tavern to arrest him for debt, and fled from Portsmouth. A newspaper notice published at the time described King a “a Frenchman born, dark complexion, thick-sett, about Five feet six or seven Inches high, wears his own Hair, and talks broken English.” Thus, it appears that Wentworth’s possession of a stewing kitchen was probably the result of his having employed a chef who was trained in the French manner of cooking.

Beyond the dining room are two long, narrow spaces, one of them a stairhall. The room on the northeast is furnished with memorabilia lent or donated by members of the

Coolidge family. These items include ship models, paintings and photographs of the house, family photographs, and various souvenir items intended to memorialize the life and personality of J. Templeman Coolidge (1856-1945), who in 1886 purchased the old Wentworth house from a member of the Cushing family and proceeded over the next fifty years to restore the house and beautify the grounds. The Coolidge family were lovers of the sea, and most were also talented artists and photographers. The paintings and photographs in this room portray their varied interests.

Also in the room is a “dummy board”—a figure of a woman painted on a silhouette made from wooden boards. These enigmatic figures are known to have been painted in both England and New England, mostly during the eighteenth century. Their purpose is not fully known, although some feel that they were used to frighten intruders who might peer through a window. Sometimes, they seem to have represented figures from poetry or literature—especially “Phyllis,” an idealized country maiden or faithful serving maid.

The narrow closet to the left of the fireplace of this room lies over the great fireplace in the adjoining Council Chamber. This closet is lighted by a small window that picks up some illumination from the entry beyond the chimney. A myth surrounding the house suggests that this window was used to identify visitors to the dwelling and to help the family avoid unwelcome guests. In reality, this is one of several small windows that convey a bit of light into otherwise dark areas within the core of the dwelling—an important aid at a time when the only available artificial light would have been a candle, wax taper, or burning splint.

Beyond the stairhall that adjoins the “Coolidge” room is the best parlor of the house, now sparsely furnished with a number of William and Mary style chairs. The banister-back chair in this group bears a brass plaque identifying it as having come from this house.

This room is distinguished not only for its pilastered chimney breast and marble fireplace enframing, but also for its bold pine paneling, surrounded and raised above the enframing of stiles and rails by heavy bolection mouldings. These mouldings give the room a baroque quality that seems much earlier than the date of Wentworth’s arrival at the house in 1753; in fact, these mouldings are similar in profile to those of the Macphedris-Warner House of 1716/17, where Wentworth lived for more than seventeen years before resigning himself to his retreat at the Little Harbor farm. Although the finish of this room, and of the Council Chamber below, is old-fashioned, it seems likely that this detail was a deliberate choice on Wentworth’s part in the 1750s or 1760s, perhaps in an attempt to recreate the feeling of the older house he had occupied for so long.

Above the fireplace, to the left, is a pulley that represents a remnant of a system of bells and bell-pulls that were once installed throughout the house to summon servants. The bells activated by the pulls and wires were probably located in the kitchen area where servants would normally have been on duty. Bell wires and hardware have been found within the walls of the house.

The flocked wallpaper that decorates this room is a rare survivor from the mid-eighteenth century. It has been conserved in areas where it had begun to deteriorate. During the removal of the wallpaper panel in the south corner of the room for conservation, remnants of a corner beaufait were found in the underlying wall plaster. The floor below this corner has joints that suggest that this was a square unit; similar cuts in the opposite corner show that a balancing beaufait once stood here as well. These features, unique to the house, are echoed by others in the “Council Chamber” and “billiard room” in the lower wing of the house (discussed below). They are mentioned in the 1797 inventory of the house under the entry, “China & Glass on the corner boards.” We do not know when these corner boards were removed, but the wallpaper completely covers their upper “splash boards,” above the room’s chair rail. This suggests that this wallpaper may originally have been hung in another room (possibly the Council Chamber) and was not placed here until after 1797.

In the parlor now stands a harpsichord that was once thought to have belonged to Benning Wentworth. It was offered for sale as part of the furnishings of the house in 1806, when an auction notice referred to it as a “grand Harpsichord, of the finest tone, by Longham and Broderip, cost 75 guineas.” Research by Louis Pichierri for his *Music in New Hampshire* discloses that this instrument dates between 1779 and 1785; thus, it must have belonged not to Benning Wentworth (who died in 1770), but to Michael Wentworth, who married Benning’s widow shortly after the governor’s death and whose love of music was legendary.

Beyond the parlor, at a lower level reached by a short flight of stairs descending into an entry, is the so-called Council Chamber. It has long been believed that this imposing room was used for meetings of the governor and his council, which served as the upper chamber of the colonial legislature. While the council may have met at Little Harbor on occasion, the Province of New Hampshire normally conducted council meetings in rented rooms in taverns until 1762; after this date, the council had its own chamber in the new state house that stood in present-day Market Square in Portsmouth. Thus, the so-called Council Chamber at Little Harbor may have served primarily as a grand parlor or as a place for social events. The room adjoining, traditionally called the “billiard room” (even though neither probate inventory suggests that the house had a billiard table) may also have served primarily as an accommodation for entertainment. The small antechambers off this room, traditionally called “card rooms,” closely resemble the ladies’ and gentlemen’s dressing rooms that were often found adjacent to ballrooms in eighteenth-century taverns. The so-called billiard room may therefore have served as a small dancing room, and the entire wing, lower than the main house and easily segregated from it, could have functioned as a quasi-public suite of entertainment rooms.

The great mantelpiece that dominates the Council Chamber has all the hallmarks of the work of Ebenezer Dearing, a local carver who later embellished the interiors of the Moffatt-Ladd and Governor John Langdon houses in Portsmouth. The mantelpiece is a copy in pine of the marble chimneypiece in the stone hall at Houghton, in Norfolk, England, designed by the great British architect William Kent about 1725. The medium by which Kent’s design for Houghton came to Portsmouth was a book—either Kent’s

own folio, *The Designs of Inigo Jones* (1727) or Edward Hoppus' *The Gentleman's and Builder's Repository, or, Architecture Displayed* (1738 and later editions). Hoppus' book was a less expensive volume that contained many plates plagiarized from Kent's earlier book.

This room also contains two reproduced beaufaits, copied from the single surviving original in the room beyond. The two reproduced cupboards were installed in 1966 on the basis of evidence that they had formerly existed in the corners of this room. Thus, it is clear that this house had at least five of such "corner boards," of which no other examples of comparable style are known in New England.

On one of the "corner boards" in the Council Chamber is a small punch bowl of polychrome Chinese export porcelain. Said to have belonged to Benning Wentworth, this piece was illustrated in an article by Stephen Decatur of Kittery, "The Three Periods of Oriental Lowestoft," in the *American Collector* magazine of August 1938. The bowl dropped out of sight for nearly fifty years, until it was noted by Nancy Sandberg of the Wentworth-Coolidge Commission in 1986 in a pending auction in Eliot, Maine, and purchased by the Commission. According to research by Nancy Sandberg, the bowl was probably sold at an auction of the contents of the Wentworth house in 1806 and acquired by Capt. William Rice of Portsmouth. Rice's daughter, Sarah Parker Rice Goodwin, wrote in 1896 that "China dishes, soup plates, bowl, platters + tea cup and saucers, also a silver mounted gun from the house of Gov. Benning Wentworth at Little Harbor [were] Bought by my father before I was born."

With the punch bowl are two twist-stem wine glasses and a plate. The latter, of polychrome Chinese export porcelain, is said to be from a dinner set that belonged to Governor John Wentworth, the last royal governor and Benning Wentworth's nephew. This plate has an unusual pattern bearing sheep in place of the decorative peacocks or other colorful birds that often ornament such porcelain. Other pieces from the same set are in the New Hampshire Historical Society and private ownership.

The portrait of Benning Wentworth in this room is a copy done in 1988 by Robert Alexander Anderson of Lexington, Massachusetts, from the original of 1760 by Joseph Blackburn, now at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord. The original portrait, together with a similar one of Benning's father, John, and a bust-length portrait of Benning's son John, are thought to have hung in this room until all the household goods were dispersed in the early nineteenth century.

The two mahogany tables in this room are reproductions of an original Portsmouth table in the collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society. They were reproduced in 1983 by cabinetmaker Allan T. Breed of South Berwick (now of York), Maine. The set of twelve Queen Anne side chairs were copied in 1983 by Mr. Breed from original chairs, probably Portsmouth-made, preserved in the Sayward House at York, Maine. The red damask window curtains were fabricated in 1983 from eighteenth-century prototypes by Nancy Sandberg of Durham, New Hampshire. The choice of fabric for the curtains and slip seats of the chairs was based upon indications from the inventories of 1797 and 1807.

The room beyond the Council Chamber is largely unfurnished. The room retains faded wallpaper, originally strongly red in tone to match the mulberry color of the woodwork, which was probably installed here in the late 1700s. Sections of this deteriorated paper have been removed for conservation and for possible reproduction.

Hanging on the wall of this room is a copy of an original portrait by Van Dyke of Sir Thomas Wentworth, the first Earl of Strafford, on loan from the Portsmouth Athenaeum. Strafford was loyal to King Charles I, and was condemned to death by the King's enemies in the House of Commons. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London on a charge of treason, and was executed on May 12, 1641. This portrait is said to depict Strafford in his last hours, dictating his final words to a secretary.

Beyond this red room is a guest suite added by J. Templeman Coolidge during the 1920s in the area once occupied by a stable or carriage house. Some of the woodwork in this wing is reproduced; other features may have been salvaged from old Portsmouth houses. Here is temporarily displayed the original exterior door to the Council Chamber wing. This was stripped of paint in 1988 and found to be in such deteriorated condition that it was replaced by a reproduction. The door retains its massive wood-cased "stock lock," and a tarnished brass knocker.

Passing up the narrow rear staircase to the attic above the Council Chamber, one sees two small chambers that are directly above the dressing rooms on the first floor and are lighted by the upper portions of the windows of these lower rooms. The massive steel truss in this attic was added circa 1984-5 to supplement older wooden and iron tie rods that had failed to prevent the great summer beam in the room below from sagging noticeably.

Passing out of the attic, past the chimney that rises from the rooms below, one emerges into a tiny antechamber that the Coolidges had converted into a bathroom. Beyond is the second story of the small outshot that provides the entry serving the Council Chamber wing.

Dominating this part of the house is the most formal bedchamber in the mansion. This room is hung with a yellow flocked wallpaper like that in the parlor below, except that this paper is in far worse condition and was over-painted at some time. A few panels of this bedchamber paper have been removed for conservation and study, disclosing the fact that this layer was underlain by a similar "damask" paper with a strong blue coloration, in keeping with an early (and now reproduced) woodwork color in the room. Members of the Wentworth-Coolidge Commission experimented for several years with the reproduction of flocked wallpaper, working to reproduce the yellow paper of this room in its original strong colors and flocked texture.

It has also been noted that underlying even the blue wallpaper is a wall surface with a skim coat of white gypsum plaster (plaster of Paris). Unusual in the eighteenth century,

this gypsum plaster may have been intended to be exposed, giving the walls an unusual marble-like whiteness in the period before any papers were hung here.

This room has been furnished with a mixture of reproduced and antique articles that accord with the inventories of 1797 and 1807 and are intended to suggest the appearance of the governor's bedchamber. In keeping with both inventories, and with the color of the second (and current) layer of wallpaper, the room has been hung with yellow damask that closely matches samples from the house now preserved at the New Hampshire Historical Society.

The bedstead is a reproduction, made in 1986 by local cabinetmaker Allan T. Breed. It is patterned after a mid-eighteenth-century example from Massachusetts, since no documented New Hampshire bedstead of this period has been identified. The bedstead is hung with curtains made by Nancy Sandberg of Durham after the pattern of a mid-eighteenth-century set of hangings, now owned by the New Hampshire Historical Society, from the Coffin House in Dover, New Hampshire. The window curtains, the cover for the reproduced dressing table, and the covers for the slip seats of the pair of Chippendale chairs match the fabric of the bed curtains.

The pair of Chippendale sidechairs reflects an unusually simple pattern that was common in Portsmouth during the 1700s. These two chairs were acquired from descendants of the Frost family of Durham, New Hampshire. A chair similar to these, but with arms, is said to have belonged to Benning Wentworth, and certainly belonged to his second cousin, Judge John Wentworth of Somersworth; it is now owned by the State of New Hampshire and kept in the State House in Concord.

Beyond the bedchamber and northeast of the stairhall is a long, narrow room that mirrors the Coolidge Room below it on the first floor. The second-floor chamber is said to have been the favorite study of American historian Francis Parkman (1823-1893), whose daughter was the first wife of J. Templeman Coolidge. Parkman spent a few weeks each summer at the Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion, especially enjoying the view from this room toward Leach's Island. It is said that Parkman bought the island for his daughter.

In the room are books written by Parkman, together with a fringed buckskin jacket that he wore on the Oregon Trail in 1846, later recounting his adventures with the western Indians in his book, *The Oregon Trail*. Parkman devoted most of his professional life, which was haunted by ill health, to the writing of the great saga of the French empire in North America and its eventual conquest by the British.

Hanging in this room is a small portrait of Joanna Cotton Brooks (1772-1841), attributed to the artist Charles Loring Elliot. Joanna Cotton Brooks was a grandmother of historian Francis Parkman.

Beyond the Parkman Room is a square bedchamber. Its most notable furnishings are a painted dressing table and matching washstand documented as the work of the

Portsmouth cabinetmaking partnership of Jonathan Judkins and William Senter. The set was made for merchant Jacob Wendell in 1815.

Also in this room is a late Sheraton-style bedstead of a type often associated with Salem, Massachusetts, in the period before 1830.

Beyond this room, in the passageway to the left of the fireplace, a door is hinged against the flank of the chimney that rises from the kitchen below. This door seals off a smoke chamber, a feature that was not uncommon in Portsmouth houses of the 1700s and early 1800s. Meats or fish were hung from iron bars in such chambers and slowly smoked either over a smoldering fire built within the chamber, or in the smoke that might find its way into the enclosure through a hole in the adjoining chimney flue. A second hole, near the top, allowed the smoke to escape up the chimney. Smoke chambers are usually found on the second floor or in the attic of houses, most often connected to, or part of, the kitchen chimneys.

The room beyond, at the far northwestern end of the house, clearly displays the braces of its frame where it is connected to the adjoining structural unit. This room is the second floor of the building element that contains the kitchen, and reveals in its framing and details the fact that it started its existence as a shop or warehouse. The room is currently being used as a workshop for the project to reproduce the flocked wallpaper found in the parlor and parlor chamber.

From the third floor or garret of the middle portions of the house, reached from a stairway off the middle bedroom, one can enjoy distant views of the surrounding harbor and islands. Here is found the door (once flanked by windows) that led onto the deck overlooking Wentworth's gardens; the deck is now an attic floor. Above this door, in the highest portion of the house, beneath the curious shed roof, is an old and long-disused water cistern that supplied water, under some pressure from gravity, to the plumbing system of the house before modern pressurized piping was installed. We do not presently know the source of this water, but it was probably drawn from one of several wells that once served the house, and may have been pumped to the elevated cistern by a windmill, a common arrangement in country estates of the late 1800s.