

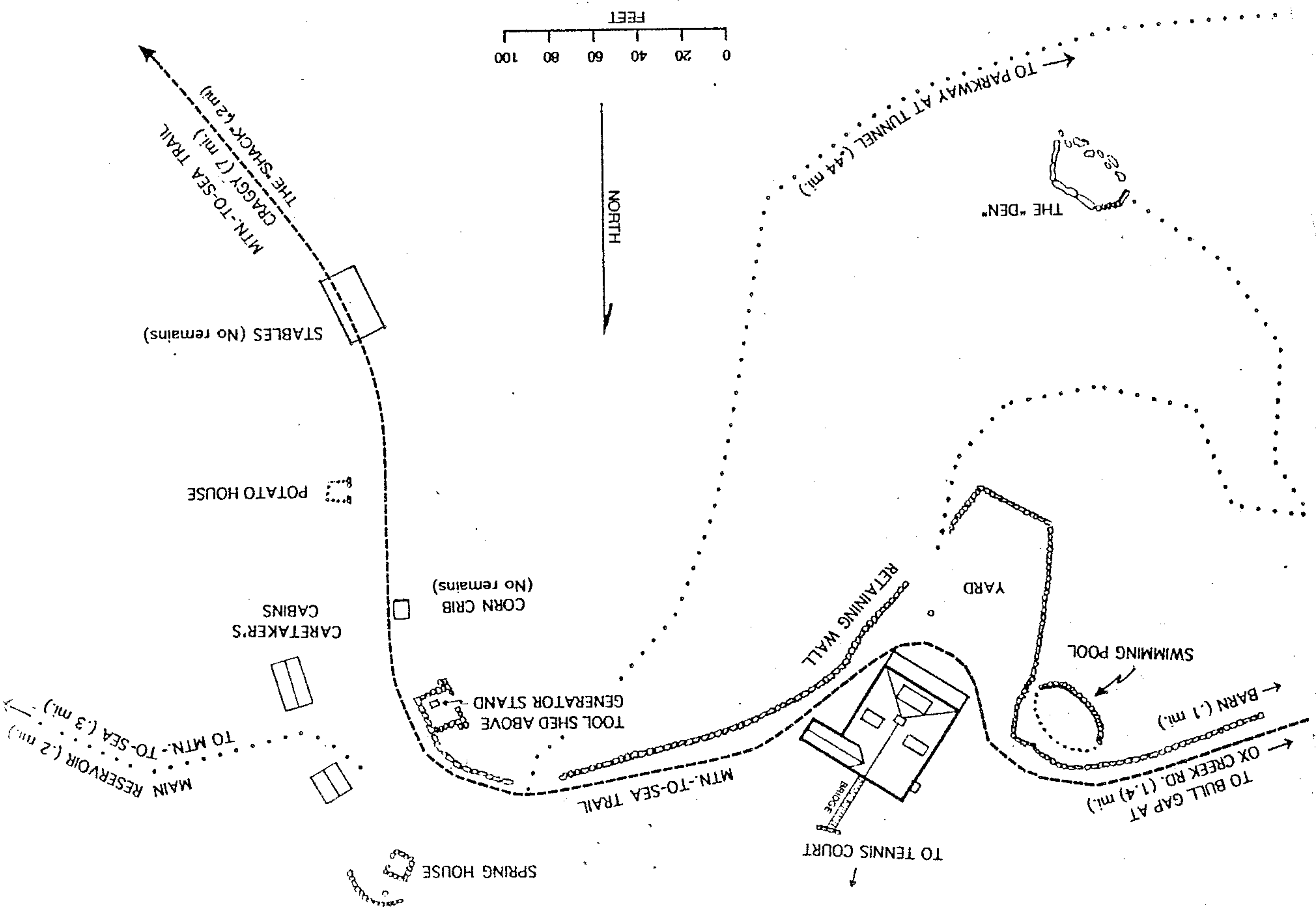
Rattlesnake Lodge

A Brief

History and Guidebook

Chase Ambler

Rattlesnake Lodge Asheville, N.C.



PREFACE

The Rattlesnake Lodge site is northeast of Asheville, about 8 miles from Oteen on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The map on the inside cover gives complete directions for getting to the remains.

Many people who have frequented the area have inquired about the history of the lodge, which my grandfather built in early 1900. In order to clarify several misconceptions, I felt it important to pass on what I know, and to publish some of the pictures I have acquired from my father, Arthur Chase Ambler, Sr., and from his sister, Barbara Ambler Thorne.

As this is a simple photocopied booklet, the photographs are not the quality one would like, and I trust the reader will understand.

I encourage anyone with any knowledge or pictures about this area to contact me, in case there is a future edition.

Many thanks go to Barbara for all her help in gathering the pictures and the information.

A. Chase Ambler, Jr.
July, 1994

2nd Printing, June, 1995

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Asheville, NC

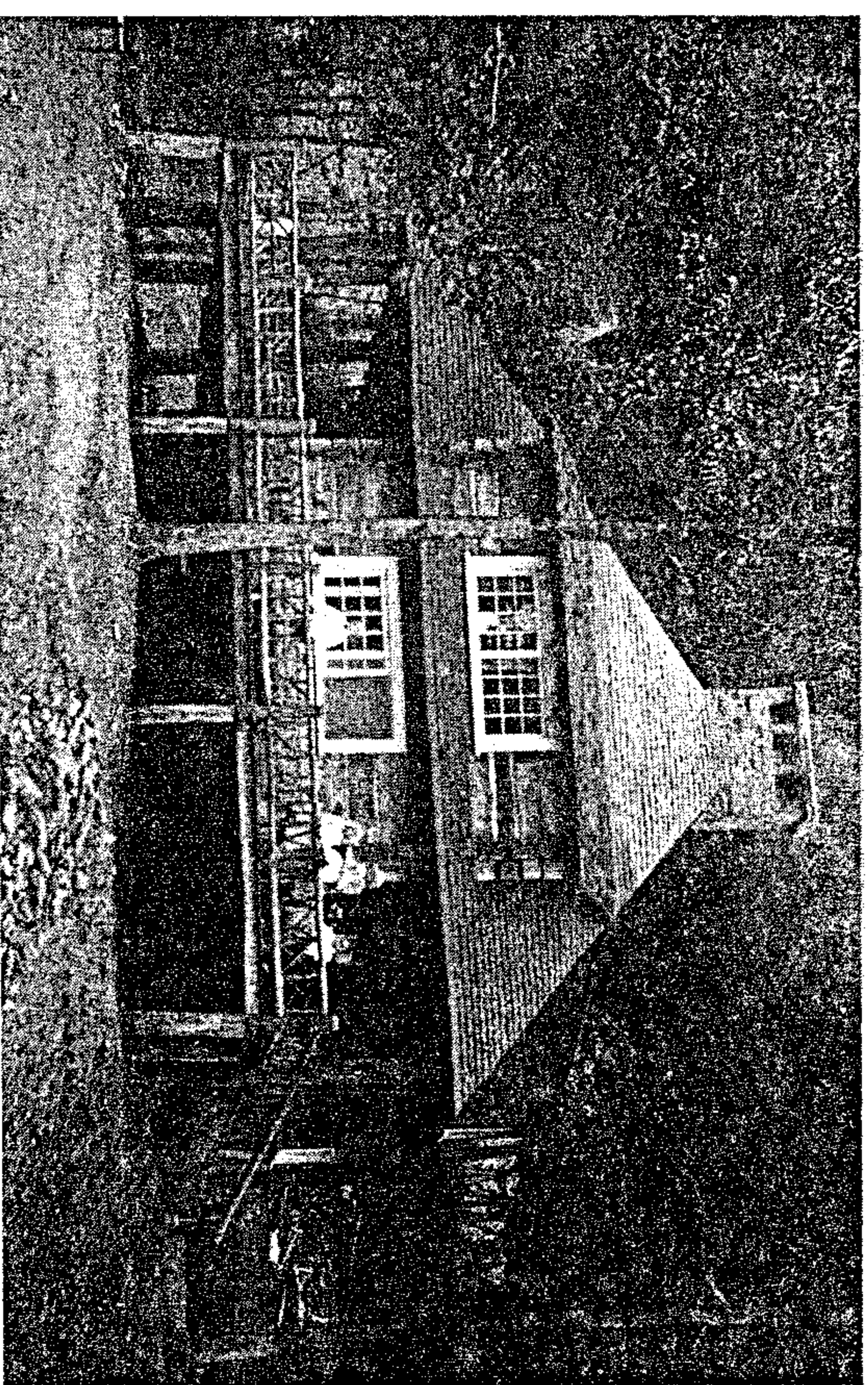
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Rattlesnake Lodge

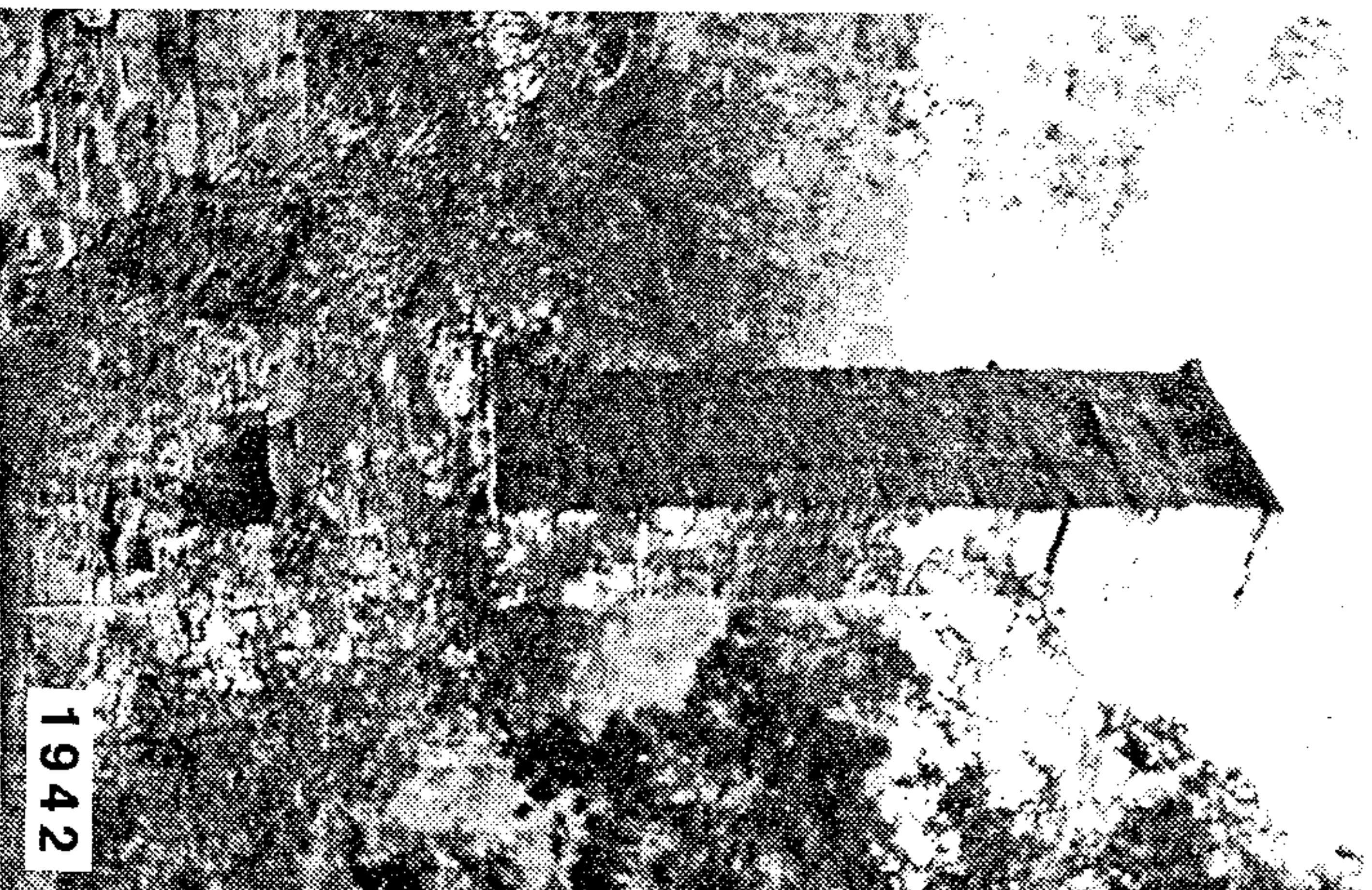


The lodge was built in 1903 and 1904 to be a summer home for Dr. Chase P. Ambler and his family, and it served as this until it was sold in November of 1920. The children and their mother went to the lodge when school was closed for the summer, and returned to Asheville just before school opened in the fall. Dr. Ambler, who had a medical practice in Asheville, would always come up on the weekends and usually on Wednesdays. He also spent many of his vacations there, and frequented the lodge during winter and spring. He especially spent a lot of time there during the first several years, when the out-buildings and the trails were being built.

The above picture shows the lodge in 1904, before the kitchen and back wing were added. The picture on the cover shows the addition of the chimney and the kitchen. The center page shows the addition of back wing containing the bathroom and bedrooms above. Today, there is still some foundation showing the rock wall supporting the cement floor of the shower room. This remaining corner is almost on the existing trail, and can easily be seen when there are no weeds. The remains of the main chimney and the kitchen chimney can also be seen. (As well as bed springs, if you hunt.)

The lodge had a separate dining room, between the front living room and the kitchen. Meals were eaten there with the whole family together. The cook was Kate Donovan, affectionately known as Diis. (Her sister was the author's "nanny".) Kate had her own room in the lodge during the summers. The kitchen housed the hot water heater, which was heated by a wood stove.

There were three large fireplaces on the main floor: One served the living room, one the dining room and one a bedroom. All three used the same chimney, and the two behind the main living room were at an angle, as can be seen in this photo taken about 1942, when the author visited the site with his father. Shown is the fireplace that was in the corner of the dining room. The rocks in the left foreground are the remains of the kitchen chimney, which was not standing at the time this picture was taken. The living room mantle was a large stone, two feet by about ten feet. Although Dr. Ambler once wrote that there were also two fireplaces on the second floor, there is no other evidence to this, especially when examining this picture.



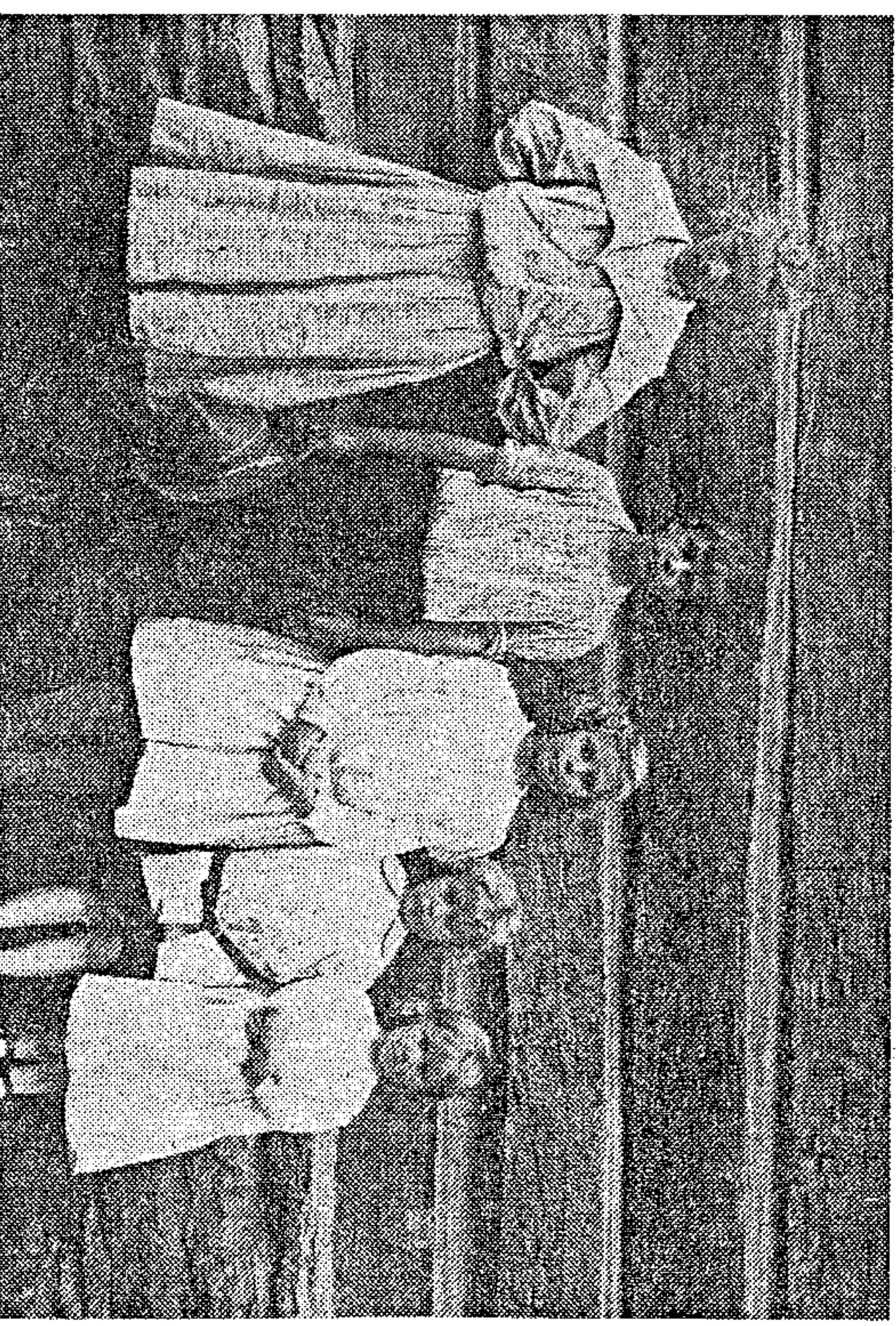
1942

Over the living room in the front of the lodge was a large guest bedroom, which contained bunk beds. Normally, visitors would stay in this room, especially during the summer when the children were at the lodge. The furniture in the lodge, including cupboards, tables, chairs and bedsteads, was built at the lodge from wood taken off the property. Mattresses, springs and cooking utensils were obtained in Asheville.

A footbridge, as shown on the cover, extended from the second floor to the bank, towards the terraced gardens and tennis court. The main "road" through the property went under this bridge, between the lodge and the bank. There were also some outside steps, meeting the bridge at the top of the bank.

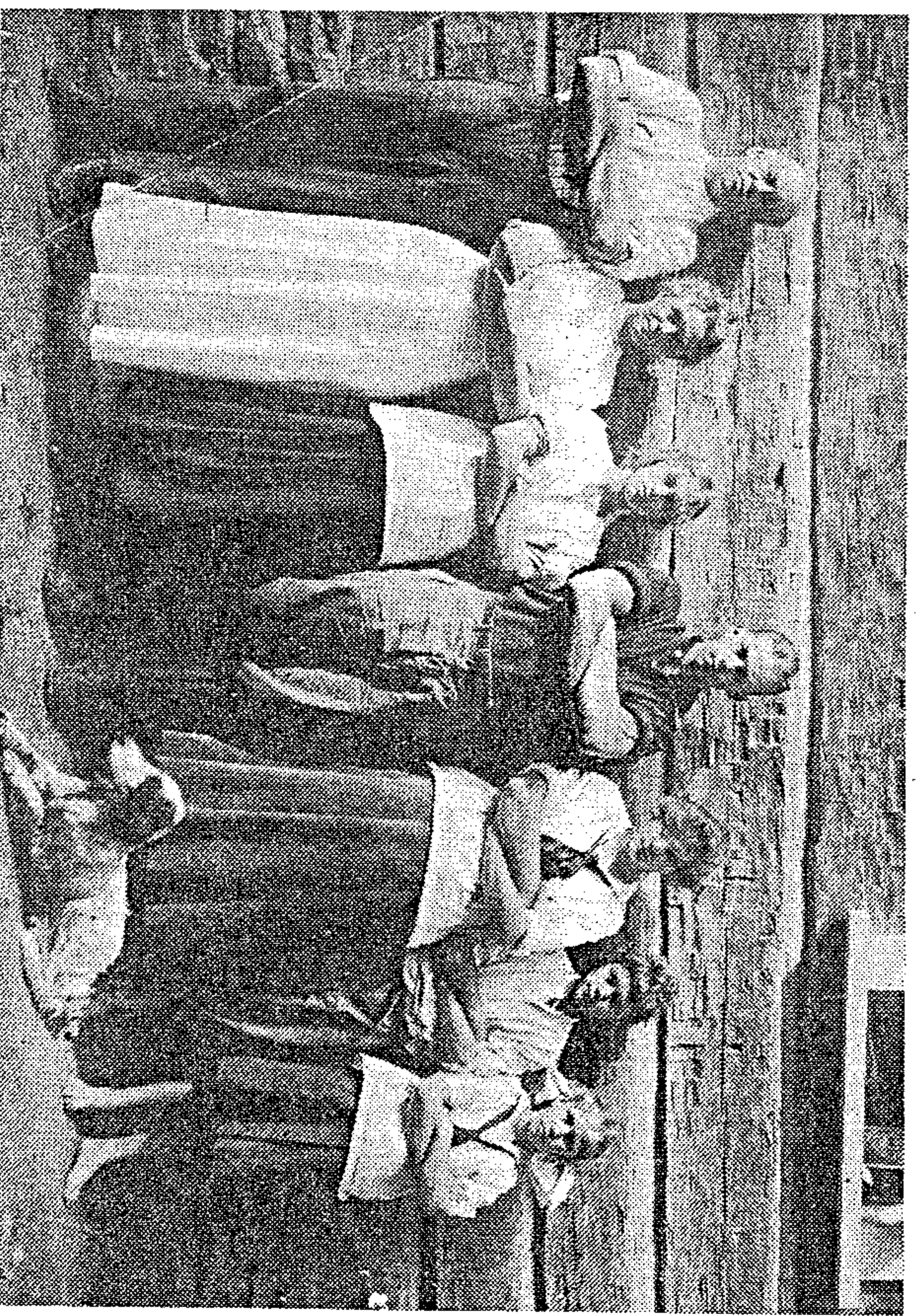
The lodge had a back "porch," which was really part of the house and contained the stairs to the second floor and the bedrooms. The two side porches were covered, and the one towards Bull Gap served as a small "wood shop" for Dr. Ambler's woodworking and carvings. The author still has his tool chest, which was stored on this porch. The front porch was the normal gathering place for family and friends. It was wide and had no roof, yet it was still shielded from the southwest sun by the trees.

All the logs in the lodge, and all other out-buildings, were hand hewn chestnut. The doors in the lodge were chestnut plank. The lodge burned from some unknown cause, believed to be lightning, about 1926.



1906

The Ambler family, 1906 and 1913. Below, Dr. Chase P. Ambler, 1865-1932, Harriet Vernon Ambler, 1866-1918, Mary Vernon 1893-1923, Arthur Chase 1895-1968, Dorothy 1899-1974, John Vernon 1901-1993, and Barbara Pow 1903-. Family pictures were taken every year for 17 years, at the same place on the east side of the lodge. Arthur and John also became physicians, in Asheville and Denver, respectively.



1913

