

Rock Ledge House

DINING ROOM

The boarders, the Chambers family, and three gardeners employed by Mr. Chambers ate together at the dining table. When boarders were in the house, a domestic servant was hired to assist Mrs. Chambers with meal preparation, the laundry and housekeeping required in the summer season. The double doors could be closed at anytime the Chambers' wanted privacy, and the passageway under the stairs allowed access to the bedrooms upstairs for delivery of fresh water each morning or when the linens were changed. The painted trim and wallpaper throughout the house were reproduced from samples found during restoration. The decoration in the Chambers bedroom, therefore, is as it was when Mary was born or Elsie slept in there. The middle room may have served as an office for Mr. Chambers or a reception area for arriving boarders.

FAMILY or BACK PARLOR

Victorians were very keen to separate family areas in the home from the more formal and public areas. The Chambers' could retreat to the family or back parlor when the house was full of boarders to read, sew, do needlework, or to play board or card games. During the winter, especially, the family would spend the long evenings in here together until time for bed. Since there is no heat upstairs, the children would only use the rooms to sleep and come quickly downstairs in the morning where, hopefully, there was already a fire in the cook stove and warming embers in the fireplaces.

FORMAL OR FRONT PARLOR

Victorians were proud to display their best furniture and bric-a-brac in the formal parlor. Although the boarders probably had access to this area all the time, the family would only use it on very special occasions, such as holidays or when they entertained neighbors, friends or family. The portiers were a stylish way to provide separation between the two parlors. Mrs. Chambers probably hosted meetings of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in here and would play hymns on the organ as the women sang.

THE FRONT DOOR

The upstairs is not open today. There are three bedrooms upstairs, which are furnished for boarders, plus a fourth, smaller room, which may have been used by their domestic servant, Mary Horton. Consumptives traveled to Colorado Springs during the season - in the summer months - and boarded in homes as well as hotels and sanitariums to take the climate cure. Since the rooms were intended to produce income for the family, none was ever assigned as Ben's or Eleanor's or Mary's room. When boarders were in the house, the children slept outside in a tent.