

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 25, 2005

Original Building of Auburn Heights, 1896–97: The original house called Auburn Heights, begun in the summer of 1896, was copied from a house then standing at Pennsylvania Avenue and Clayton Street in Wilmington. Plans were obtained from a New York source, but the only remnants of these plans are the four exterior elevations. Upon completion in 1897, the family of five Marshalls, and probably at least one servant, moved in. Israel Marshall could walk out the kitchen door, across the yard and through an apple orchard to his office at the paper mill, only about 100 yards away. There was very little in the way of trees or shrubbery in the lawn, but final grading and planting was done before 1897 was over. Except for the surrounding trees and a different exterior window trim (there were no storm windows), the front of the house looked very much as it does today. The only changes over time that show from the front elevation are a double second-floor window instead of the original single (altered in 1937) and the spiral staircase (built in 1988) in the porte co-chere. The house was wired for electricity from the beginning, just as it had central steam heat. Direct current, generated at the paper mill, was wired across the yard to the big house.

There was no barn or carriage house on the property until 1902. The barn along the mill race next to the paper mill, some 200 yards distant, had to suffice. Marshall Brothers Paper Company owned about 12 dwelling units in seven houses close to the mill and to Auburn Heights. The Garrett Snuff empire, ½ mile downstream, was about to be acquired by a subsidiary of the American Tobacco Company and was nearing the climax of its local snuff production, but Dennison's country store and in Republican administrations the post office were still located in a house next to Marshall Brothers. This is how it was before 1900.