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A NOTE CONCERNING THE YORK COUNTY TOBACCO
WAREHOUSES BEFORE 1800

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By: Joseph C. Robert - 1937

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A NOTE CONCERNING
THE YORK COUNTY TOBACCO WAREHOUSES
BEFORE 1800

by

Joseph C. Robert
Seasonal Ranger-Historian

Colonial National Historical Park
Yorktown, Virginia
1937

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Prefatory Note

This brief essay is based on an examination of the Order Books in the York County Clerk's Office. The Order Books for some of the years are missing (1754-1759; 1763-1765). For the earlier part of the period under survey reliance was placed on notes in Gardner's brief index to various items in the York County Records, 1691-1745. For the later period the volumes were thumbed through page by page or, where the indexes seemed to have been prepared with some care, examined only on the most promising pages. For convenience the notes citing the source material have been included in the body of the essay. The volumes in the Clerk's Office are labeled some by number, some by date. For purposes of identification the same scheme is used in the parenthetical citations. The abbreviations used are as follows:

- OW - Orders and Wills, York County Clerk's Office.
- W&I - Wills and Inventories, York County Clerk's Office.
- J&O - Judgments and Orders, " " " "
- OB - Order Books, York County Clerk's Office.
- H - Hearing, Statutes at Large.

J.C.H.
Yorktown,
September 25, 1937

York County Warehouses in General

Almost coincident with the founding of the first settlements in the Yorktown area, the planters of the neighborhood benefitted from a public warehouse. An act passed by the colonial assembly in 1632/3 provided for the establishment of five stores or warehouses, one of them to be at "Kiskyake" (H,I,205). In less than a year the act was re-phrased, and the number of warehouses increased to seven: "And the seventh store to be in Charles river, for the inhabitants of Kiskyake, Yorke, and the places adioyninge"(H,I,211).

An act proposed in 1680 for the purchase in each county of 50 acres to be laid out for a town and storehouses contained the statement: "In Yorke county on Mr. Reeds land where the Ship Honora store was, including the low beach for land, wharves, &c. and the old field where Webber dwelt for cohabitation"(H,II,472). The familiar act of 1691, which established the port on "Mr. Benjamin Reeds land"(H,III,59) was probably the finished version

of the earlier idea.

In 1712 an act confirmed the legality of the "public rolling-houses" already built (H, IV, 52-56). Citing authority given him by the Assembly in 1715, Lieutenant Governor Spotswood in a letter written to the York County Court and considered by that body Dec. 21, 1713 announced that he was appointing commissioners to meet with those designated by the county courts. At the meeting the purpose of which was to erect store houses, the commissioners were not to regard county boundaries, but only the ease and convenience of the people. At each place designated there was to be built, according to Spotswood, "the storehouse as shall be directed by ye Commissrs & Justices aforesd together with a good wharf at ye Landing adjoining thereto..." (OW, XIV, 296-297). For the meeting, which was scheduled for Williamsburg on January 28, 1713/4, the York County Court appointed as delegates Lawrence Smith and Joseph Walker (OW, XIV, 294).

As a result of the deliberations in Williamsburg four points for warehouses to be used for the storage of tobacco and other

*Hening, in 1820, explained the name "rolling-house" as follows: "Rolling-houses (now called ware-houses) were at first so denominated, from the mode of rolling the tobacco to market, which was exclusively the manner of transporting it, in the infancy of our country, before waggons were introduced, or the navigation of the rivers above tide waters improved; and which continues to be practised, in a great degree, to the present day." (H, IV, 52, n).

merchandise were established in York County: Yorktown, Skimeno, Queens Creek [Capitol Landing?], and "Charles River or Rows Store houses". On February 15, 1713/4 the York County Court set the annual rent for the various store houses & thereupon William Buckner Gentle undertook to build the Store houses & wharf at Yorktown & gave bond for his performance accordingly - James Bates undertook to build the Store houses & wharf on his land at Skimeno and gave bond for his performance accordingly - & William Row undertook to build the Storehouses & wharf upon his land on Charles River & gave bond for his performance accordingly..." The proprietors of the land on Queens Creek designated for warehouses refused to build (Ow, XIV, 302). For the Queens Creek warehouses apparently the county court took advantage of the act of 1712 (H, IV, 34) which allowed the county to condemn the necessary land and to build the warehouses at county expense. Public supervisory officials, or "agents" were appointed for the four warehouses by the York County Court November 15, 1714 (Ow, XIV, 356-367; see also Ow, XIV, 395, 472, 477; IV, 28, 51-52).

By the act of 1730, which gave full form to the inspection system, public warehouses were established at (1) "Ross storehouse, in the County of York"; (2) "Colledge, and Capitol landings, upon

Mr. Holloway's land* [College Landing was in James City County], and (5) "At the town of York, where the agents house was"(H,IV, 266-267). Note that of all the York County warehouse points indicated in 1714 only Skimeno (Skimeno) is omitted. Under the act of 1730 not one of the warehouses supported an independent set of inspectors, but in 1732 it was provided by law that of the warehouses just designated only "Capitol landing and College landing, in Williamsburg" were to be under the same inspectors (H,IV,332).

In the period from 1730 through 1774 York, Roes, and Capitol Landing were the three official points of inspection in York County (See H,IV,355,583;V,143;VI,174;VIII,79). These forty-odd years were the grand era in Yorktown's commercial history. In the war period, 1775-1782, apparently Yorktown was discontinued as an inspection point; at least no record is found in the order books for those years. Both Roes and Capitol Landing continued to be used (See order books for that period and Hening IX,154,489; X,475-476).

In 1783 the inspection at Yorktown was re-established; Roes and Capitol Landing discontinued. At no time after 1783 does there appear to have been any rival official point of inspection in York County.

Yorktown Warehouses

The words of the act of 1730, already cited, undoubtedly mean that the new inspection point was at the same location as the old rolling-house established in 1714. For about two years after 1730 the York warehouse was operated by inspectors who divided their time between this and one other warehouse, that "at Gloucester town, upon Capt. Hannar's land" (H, IV, 267). At the end of that time, however, the York warehouse had a set of inspectors of its own (H, IV, 332).

In December 1744 the hogsheds at York warehouse (or warehouses), and presumably the building itself were seriously damaged "by the overflowing of the tide" (H, V, 265-271). The record of this unfortunate event proves conclusively that the proprietor of the York warehouse built the structure below the bluff, and on the water's edge. John Buckner, the proprietor, was negligent about making repairs, a tardiness which caused the inspectors to register a complaint against him with the county court on August 19, 1745 (W&L, XII, 389). At the same meeting Edmund Smith and William Nelson, Jr. were appointed to investi-

gate the tobacco warehouses at Yorktown and report whether the buildings could be repaired or not (W&I, XIX, 394). The committee reported that the buildings were beyond repair, whereupon the York County Court on June 16, 1746, issued a summons for John Buckner so that he might declare whether or not he would build new warehouses (W&I, XIX, 436). Apparently Buckner refused to build, for, on July 21, 1746, the court ordered Samuel Reade, William Lightfoot, and Thomas Reynolds to "agree with Workmen to build a Warehouse at York Town for the reception of Tobacco in such convenient place as they shall see fit at the Expence of the County" (W&I, XIX, 445). Thus ended the first period of the York warehouses, under the proprietorship of the Buckners.

From this time to about 1790 the York warehouses seem to have been built, repaired, and operated by the county. The building committee appointed in 1746 contracted with one John Harvey, who was not paid in great haste for his trouble. The debt was acknowledged by the court November 16, 1747 (J&O, I, 47) and on Jan. 18, 1747/8 (J&O, I, 61). On September 17, 1753, the county court ordered Dudley Digges, John Norton, and Robert Sheld to have workmen repair the "Public Warehouses", (presumably at Yorktown) at county expense (J&O, 1752-1754, p. 212). At the county court of August 20, 1759, the same committee, save for the substitution

of Edward Ambler's name for that of John Norton, was again ordered to attend to the repair of the York warehouses (J&O, III, 68). In the same year, December 17, 1359, the county court appointed John Norton, Robert Sheild, and David Jameson "to agree with workmen to build a wharf at the Public Tobacco Warehouses at York Town" (J&O, III, 110). The order infers, of course, the absence of a wharf at the warehouse constructed in 1846 or 1847, and suggests the riverside position of the warehouse.

The county's waterfront tobacco warehouses and wharf must have suffered from storms, high tides, and heavy usage, for the records indicate frequent repairs. The York County Court, June 15, 1761, appointed Dudley Digges, John Norton, and David Jameson "to agree with Workmen to repair the Tobacco Warehouses and the Public Wharf at York Town at the expence of the County" (J&O, III, 249). Possibly the debit charge in the county account for 1761, "To Robert Smith for building a Wharf 146." refers to the wharf attached to the Yorktown warehouses (J&O, III, 209). The York County Court of June 21, 1762 again appointed a committee, Dudley Digges, John Norton, Thomas Nelson, Jr., David Jameson and Nicholas Dickson "to agree with workmen to repair or rebuild the Tobacco Warehouses at York Town at the expence of the County" (J&O, III, 582). In the same year the county account contained an

item "To Joseph Stroud Junr for repairing the Wharf 14.-----"
(J&O, III, 450). Presumably this wharf was that attached to the
tobacco warehouses.

As the court orders for 1763-1765 are missing, the fate of
the warehouses for the period can only be guessed. One may sup-
pose that they went to pieces and a new, single, warehouse was
constructed during the years. In the 1765 annual county account
sheet there is an unintelligible item: "To be Sold to pay Money
Debts and building a warehouse"(J&O, 1763-1768, p. 43). The mystery
of this line is matched by the puzzle of what became of the
tobacco warehouse wharf authorized in 1759. Possibly it was
washed away. At any rate, in 1768 the York County Court ordered
a committee, Dudley Digges, Thomas Nelson, Jr., David Jameson,
Nicholas Dickson, and Jaquelin Ambler "to agree with Workmen to
build a Wharf at the Public Warehouse for Tobacco at York Town
at the expence of the County"(J&O, 1768-1770, p. 54).

Again a new warehouse was constructed. The York County Court
for December 18, 1769 issued an order as follows: "Dudley Digges
Robert Sheild Thomas Nelson Junr David Jameson and Jaquelin
Ambler Gent or any three of them are empowered by the Court to

agree with workmen [to] build a warehouse at York Town for the Reception and Inspection of Tobacco and to hire a House for that purpose until such warehouse can be built" (J&O, 1768-1770, p. 389). As the inspectors were charged by the county with warehouse rent through the year 1774, apparently the warehouse was built.

As already indicated in a previous section of this essay, there seems to have been no official tobacco warehouse at Yorktown during the years 1775-1782, inclusive. This fact bears testimony to the derangement of commercial affairs during the Revolution. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the pre-Revolutionary warehouse in Yorktown was thoroughly demolished by the military activities during the struggle.

At any rate in 1783 the General Assembly authorized Yorktown as a point of inspection (H, XI, 211), incidentally the only one in York County, and Lawrence Smith, who had "undertaken to build the Warehouses for reception of Tobacco in this County" entered into bond with the county court for the performance of his obligations (OB, 1774-1784, p. 415).

Under a joint inspection with College Landing in the act of authorization in 1783 (H, XI, 211), the two points of inspection were given separate administration in 1784 (H, XI, 392).

Apparently the small business of the newly re-established

warehouses threatened them with the automatic suspension provided by-law if they were not self-supporting, for they were formally revived by act of the Assembly in 1787(H,XII,581).

Certainly the inspections in York County were inconsequential as compared with the tobacco traffic before the Revolution.

More and more the center of production shifted into the Piedmont section of Virginia and left the Tidewater counties. Except for sundry items involving minor quantities of transfer tobacco, the inspections at Yorktown were as follows for the annual period ending at the September or October court of the year indicated:

What does the calculation for years before Revolution?

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number Hogsheads Inspected</u>	<u>Source of Information</u>
1784	75	OB, 1784-1787, p. 70
1785	118	Ibid., p. 214
1786	?	No record
1787	?	Not given in report See OB, 1784-1787, p. 505
1788	257	OB, 1788-1795, p. 82
1789	146	Ibid., pp. 191-192
1790	299	Ibid., p. 314
1791	535	Ibid., p. 404
1792	507	Ibid., p. 501
1793	64	Ibid., p. 599
1794	146	Ibid., p. 659
1795	63	OB, 1795-1803, p. 26
1796	57	Ibid., pp. 123-124
1797	81	Ibid., p. 201
1798	59	Ibid., p. 282
1799	91	Ibid., p. 359
1800	106	Ibid., p. 430
1801	134	Ibid., p. 491

About 1790 the Yorktown Warehouse reverted from public ownership to its earlier character. Again it became a privately owned building operated by the inspectors, state officials, for the benefit of the public. A court order dated September 20, 1790, reads: "David Jameson Gent, is permitted to remove the Tobacco Warehouses commonly called the York Warehouses from the Ground on which they are now situate, across the Valley, on the Lands of the late Mr Secretary Nelson" (OB, 1788-1795, p. 312). Obviously the terminology here suggests more elevation than that possessed by the earlier warehouses.

The Jameson family seems to have title to the warehouses after 1790. The "proprietor of the Warehouse at York", unnamed, was by the York County Court on September 21, 1801, ordered to explain why his building was not kept in proper repair (OB, 1795-1803, p. 487). At its monthly meeting on July 18, 1803, the court, observing that John Jameson, the proprietor of the York warehouse had not kept the building in suitable condition, ordered the inspectors to remove public property, such as scales and weights, "to the out house of Thomas Archer in the Town of York and that in future the Inspection be established [sic] at the House of the said Thomas Archer" (OB, 1795-1803, p. 597).

This writer has not carefully examined the order books for

the years after 1803. It is known, however, that York County never recovered its colonial position in the tobacco industry, though a legal inspection was maintained in Yorktown as late as 1819 (Va. Code of 1819, II, 185).

Roes Warehouses

Roes Warehouses were privately owned from their origin in 1714 to their disestablishment as a point of inspection about 1788. It has already been explained how William Row [sic], in 1714, "undertook to build the Storehouses & wharf upon his land on Charles River". The old rolling-house seems to have been utilized as a point for official inspection when the act of 1780 established as an inspection "Roes storehouse, in the County of York" (H, IV, 268).

In 1759 the inspectors complained as to the condition in which the proprietor kept the warehouses. The county court, on August 20 of that year, authorized a committee, Merit Moore, Bennet Kerby, and Henry Howard [?], to view the warehouses and "in case the proprietor refuses or neglects to make the necessary Repairs to the said Warehouses that they agree with Workmen to repair the same at the charge of the County to be repaid out of the Rents of the said Warehouses" (J&O, III, 68).

There was further difficulty in 1774 over the problem of the upkeep of the building. The proprietor, Thomas Roberts, neglecting to repair the warehouse, a committee consisting of Starkey and Anthony Robinson was appointed to employ the necessary work-

men(J&O,1772-1774,p.475). Obviously the cost was to be taken from the rents collected. Again, in 1780, the county court appointed a committee of two, this time Starkey Robinson and Merritt[sic] Moore, to agree with a workman for the repair of Roes Warehouse at county expense(OB,1774-1784,p.247). For carrying out the repair job Matthew Provo by the York County Court, July 17, 1780, was allowed £200(OB,1774-1784,p.272), a sum which is understandable only in the light of the currency inflation of the times.

For the repair of Roes Warehouse committees were appointed in 1781 and in 1782(OB,1774-1784,pp.292,305). In 1783 the committee for repair had its membership increased(OB,1774-1784,p.317), but it is doubtful if the citizens carried out their instructions. The act of 1783 passed by the General Assembly authorized inspection warehouses in York County only at Yorktown(H,XI,211).

The proprietors of Roes warehouse seem not to have cherished their obligations to a public which had for generations exercised its superior legal rights over the warehouse and neighborhood. The real estate, by the last decade of the eighteenth century, was in the hands of one Adam Craig, who, on the discontinuance of the warehouse, presumably by the act of 1783, stopped up the road leading to the warehouse landing, an act against which

the people of the neighborhood petitioned the General Assembly.

To the honourable the Speaker and Members of the house of Delegates — The petition of divers Inhabitants of the Counties of York Warwick & Elizabeth City humbly represents that Rose Warehouse, lying on Charles River in the lower end of York County, was by a late Act of Assembly discontinued, That there was a public landing at the said Warehouse which was found to be of great Utility to the good people of this Neighbourhood. Your petitioners further beg leave to add that a certain Adam Craig the present Proprietor of the Lands adjoining the Warehouse, and to whom the said Lands have reverted, in consequence of the discontinuance of the said Warehouse, has thought fit to stop up the road leading to the said Warehouse landing. — Your petitioners again beg leave to remonstrate that the principal articles which they have for market, consist of Grain and lumber, and unless there be a public landing fixed and established in this Neighbourhood, and your Petitioners know of no place so convenient as the one here proposed, they who do not possess lands lying immediately on the Banks of the said river will be obliged to depend upon the Will and Caprice of a few individuals for a landing from whence they may carry their produce to market, and to keep their fishing vassels at, or be put to the great Inconvenience of going five or six Miles further to Hunts point, which will occasion so great an augmentation of expence in the land Carriage of lumber as to render that principal Article of lit^{tle} value.

Incidentally, one of the points made by the petitioners was that since Charles Parish Church was only one half mile from the warehouse landing its closing would make coming to church more inconvenient (Petitions to Va. Assembly, MSS, Va. State Library, Nov. 19, 1796, York, Warwick & Elizabeth City, No. 5585).

Capitol Landing Warehouses

The store houses or rolling-houses established on Queens Creek were presumably at the same place confirmed as a point of inspection in the act of 1730, as Capitol Landing. In 1714 the proprietors had refused to build, therefore the county constructed the necessary buildings. From that time to its disestablishment as a point of inspection in 1783 and sale in 1785 (or 1786) the warehouses at Capitol Landing were (with the possible exception of one brief period) owned by the county.

On January 17, 1765 the county court ordered the sheriff to pay Lawson Burfoot "L. 1. 9. 6 for repairs at the Capitol Warehouse" (J&O, III(1759-1765), 457). A new warehouse was built by Samuel Coke at the Capitol Landing about 1766, for at the October 20, 1766, county court the justices acknowledged the indebtedness of the county to "Samuel Coke for building a Warehouse at the Capitol Landing Inspection" in the sum of £156. 14. 10 1/4 (J&O, 1765-1768, p. 159).

The York County Court, on August 19, 1771, appointed a committee "to agree with Workmen to repair or rebuild the Public Warehouses at the Capitol Landing for the Inspection of Tobacco as shall be found necessary upon viewing the same" (J&O, 1770-1772,

p.341). The members of the committee showed energy in their assignment, for by August 29, 1771, there appeared in the Virginia Gazette the following advertisement:

To be LET, to the LOWEST BIDDER, THE BUILDING of a WARE HOUSE at the CAPITOL LANDING, forty Feet by twenty, with one ten Foot Shed. Also the repairing of another Warehouse. Those who incline to undertake the same are desired to attend at Mr. Matthew Moody's, near the Landing, on Tuesday the 10th of next month, at eleven o'Clock.

JOHN PRENTIS
THOMAS NELSON, Junior
WILLIAM DIGGLES, Junior

(Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg, Inc.)

The building designated as "another Warehouse" was presumably the "old warehouse", which the inspector, James Shields, was authorized by the county court on December 15, 1775, to sell to the highest bidder for the benefit of the county (OB, 1774-1784, p.114). Like other warehouses those at Capitol Landing must have suffered from the depredations of the British in 1780 and 1781. In 1780 there were two different orders given for the repairing of the public warehouses at Capitol Landing. The committee appointed with the first order, on March 20, 1780, consisted of

William Graves and Benjamin Powell. The second order, dated July 17, 1780, added Thomas Nelson, Jr., to those already named (OB, 1774-1784, pp. 258, 274). It may easily be imagined that the times were too troublous to have the repairing adequately completed, or that further destruction by the British called for additional repairs, for on August 19, 1782, according to an order of the York County Court, "James Sheild & William Eaton are appointed to agree with some persons to repair the ware House at the Capitol landing" (OB, 1774-1784, p. 304).

It may well be doubted whether the last order was obeyed, for the act of 1783 did not include Capitol Landing in the list of authorized points of inspection (H, II, 211). On December 19, 1785 the York County Court ordered Benjamin Powell, John Winson Galt, and William Eaton to sell "the late public warehouse" at Capitol Landing, taking bond as security for payment (OB, 1784-1787, p. 260). Between the December court and the January court the sale was effected to "Samuel Beall Esquire for the sum of Twenty four Pounds on three Months Credit" (OB, 1784-1787, p. 264).

A Suggestion Concerning Further Research

From the information already discovered in the preparation of this essay a good beginning may be made towards locating the warehouses used as official points of inspection in the colonial and early national period. The names of the proprietors might be traced in the deed books and the will books and the situation of their property more accurately determined.

As the loose papers have not been examined, no statement can be made in regard to their value. It is not unreasonable to suppose that they contain much material which would serve to amplify the items gleaned from the order books. Undoubtedly an examination of the Norton, Jerdone, Reynolds and Nelson papers will throw additional light on the problem of the warehouses.

There has been compiled a "Tabular List of Inspectors, Proprietors, etc.: York County Warehouses before 1800", which is not of sufficient importance to be incorporated in this report. All names of proprietors in this list have been included in the various sections of this essay. The names of the inspectors, at this point in the investigation, do not seem of great significance. In any study of the tobacco inspectors it should be borne in mind that the number of men recommended by the county court was twice the number that could be appointed. The governor, apparently without exception,

appointed those first on the list. It might be of interest in a general survey of the commercial history of York County or Yorktown to obtain an idea of the standing in the community of the men appointed to judge of the most valuable staple of the time. From the wills, inventories and deeds an idea of their property and social position might be obtained.

In the notes which are deposited with this memorandum there are suggestions of other phases of the commercial history of Yorktown, the general problem on which a report was planned. As the season draws to a close, however, it has seemed best to present a fairly detailed report on the material gathered concerning tobacco warehouses, one phase of the commercial history of Yorktown before 1800, rather than to gather a few more notes.

Typed
November 9, 1937
by OLD

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J.C.K.
Yorktown
September 25, 1937

York County Warehouses in General

Almost coincident with the founding of the first settlements in the Yorktown area, the planters of the neighborhood benefited from a public warehouse. An act passed by the colonial assembly in 1652/3 provided for the establishment of five stores or warehouses, one of them to be at "Kiskyake" (H,I,406). In less than a year the act was re-phrased, and the number of warehouses increased to seven: "And the seventh store to be in Charles river, for the inhabitants of Kiskyake, Yorke, and the places adjoining" (H,I,411).

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In 1712 an act confirmed the legality of the "public rolling-houses" already built (H, IV, 22-26). Citing authority given him by the Assembly in 1712, Lieutenant Governor Spotswood in a letter written to the York County Court and considered by that body Dec. 21, 1712 announced that he was appointing commissioners to meet with those designated by the county courts. At the meeting the purpose of which was to erect store houses, the commissioners were not to regard county boundaries, but only the ease and convenience of the people. At each place designated there was to be built, according to Spotswood, "the storehouse as shall be directed by ye Commissioners & Justices aforesaid together with a good wharf at ye landing adjoining thereto..." (OH, XIV, 296-297). For the meeting, which was scheduled for Williamsburg on January 28, 1712/4, the York County Court appointed as delegates Lawrence Smith and Joseph Walker (OH, XIV, 294).

As a result of the deliberations in Williamsburg four points for warehouses to be used for the storage of tobacco and other

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By the act of 1730, which gave full form to the inspection system, public warehouses were established at (1) "Ross storehouse, in the County of York", (2) "Colledge, and Capitol landings, upon

Mr. Holloway's land" [College Landing was in James City County], and (2) "At the town of York, where the agents house was" (H, IV, 266-267). Note that of all the York County warehouse points indicated in 1714 only Skimeno (Skimeno) is omitted. Under the act of 1730 not one of the warehouses supported an independent set of inspectors, but in 1732 it was provided by law that of the warehouses just designated only "Capital Landing and College Landing, in Williamsburg" were to be under the same inspectors (H, IV, 832).

In the period from 1730 through 1774 York, Ross, and Capital Landing were the three official points of inspection in York County (See H, IV, 835, 836; V, 145; VI, 174; VIII, 79). These forty-odd years were the grand era in Yorktown's commercial history. In the war period, 1775-1782, apparently Yorktown was discontinued as an inspection point; at least no record is found in the order books for those years. Both Ross and Capital Landing continued to be used (See order books for that period and Henning IX, 154, 463; X, 475-476).

In 1783 the inspection at Yorktown was re-established; Ross and Capital Landing discontinued. At no time after 1783 does there appear to have been any rival official point of inspection in York County.

Yorktown warehouses

The words of the act of 1730, already cited, undoubtedly mean that the new inspection point was at the same location as the old rolling-house established in 1714. For about two years after 1730 the York warehouse was operated by inspectors who divided their time between this and one other warehouse, that "at Gloucester town, upon Capt. Hannar's land" (H, IV, 267). At the end of that time, however, the York warehouse had a set of inspectors of its own (H, IV, 252).

In December 1744 the hogsheads at York warehouse (or warehouses), and presumably the building itself were seriously damaged "by the overflowing of the tide" (H, V, 266-271). The record of this unfortunate event proves conclusively that the proprietor of the York warehouse built the structure below the bluff, and on the water's edge. John Buckner, the proprietor, was negligent about making repairs, a tardiness which caused the inspectors to register a complaint against him with the county court on August 10, 1745 (H, XII, 209). At the same meeting Edmund Smith and William Nelson, Jr. were appointed to investi-

gates the tobacco warehouses at Yorktown and report whether the buildings could be repaired or not (W&L, XIX, 334). The committee reported that the buildings were beyond repair, whereupon the York County Court on June 16, 1746, issued a summons for John Buckner so that he might declare whether or not he would build new warehouses (W&L, XIX, 436). Apparently Buckner refused to build, for, on July 31, 1746, the court ordered Samuel Seade, William Lightfoot, and Thomas Reynolds to "agree with Workmen to build a warehouse at York Town for the reception of Tobacco in such convenient place as they shall see fit at the Expence of the County" (W&L, XIX, 445). Thus ended the first period of the York warehouses, under the proprietorship of the Buckners.

From this time to about 1790 the York warehouses seem to have been built, repaired, and operated by the county. The building committee appointed in 1746 contracted with one John Harvey, who was not paid in great haste for his trouble. The debt was acknowledged by the court November 16, 1747 (J&O, I, 47) and on Jan. 18, 1747/8 (J&O, I, 61). On September 17, 1753, the county court ordered Dudley Digges, John Norton, and Robert Shells to have workmen repair the "Public Warehouses", (presumably at Yorktown) at county expense (J&O, 1752-1754, p. 318). At the county court of August 20, 1759, the same committee, save for the substitution

of Edward Ambler's name for that of John Norton, was again ordered to attend to the repair of the York warehouses (J&O, III, 68). In the same year, December 17, 1759, the county court appointed John Norton, Robert Shield, and David Jameson "to agree with workmen to build a wharf at the Public Tobacco Warehouses at York Town" (J&O, III, 110). The order infers, of course, the absence of a wharf at the warehouse constructed in 1846 or 1847, and suggests the riverside position of the warehouse.

The county's waterfront tobacco warehouses and wharf must have suffered from storms, high tides, and heavy usage, for the records indicate frequent repairs. The York County Court, June 15, 1761, appointed Dudley Digges, John Norton, and David Jameson "to agree with workmen to repair the Tobacco Warehouses and the Public Wharf at York Town at the expense of the County" (J&O, III, 249). Possibly the debit charge in the county account for 1761, "To Robert Smith for building a Wharf L48.-----" refers to the wharf attached to the Yorktown warehouses (J&O, III, 239). The York County Court of June 21, 1762 again appointed a committee, Dudley Digges, John Norton, Thomas Nelson, Jr., David Jameson and Nicholas Dickson "to agree with workmen to repair or rebuild the Tobacco Warehouses at York Town at the expense of the County" (J&O, III, 232). In the same year the county account contained an

item "To Joseph Stroud Junr for repairing the wharf 14....." (J&O, III, 450). Presumably this wharf was that attached to the tobacco warehouses.

As the court orders for 1763-1765 are missing, the fate of the warehouses for the period can only be guessed. One may suppose that they went to pieces and a new, single, warehouse was constructed during the years. In the 1765 annual county account sheet there is an unintelligible item: "To be sold to pay money Debts and building a warehouse" (J&O, 1765-1768, p. 43). The mystery of this line is matched by the puzzle of what became of the tobacco warehouse wharf authorized in 1759. Possibly it was washed away. At any rate, in 1768 the York County Court ordered a committee, Dudley Digges, Thomas Nelson, Jr., David Jameson, Nicholas Dickson, and Jaquelin Ambler "to agree with Forkien to build a Wharf at the Public Warehouse for Tobacco at York Town at the expence of the County" (J&O, 1768-1770, p. 54).

Again a new warehouse was constructed. The York County Court for December 18, 1769 issued an order as follows: "Dudley Digges Robert Sheild Thomas Nelson Junr David Jameson and Jaquelin Ambler Gent or any three of them are impowered by the Court to

agree with Korkner [to] build a Warehouse at York Town for the Reception and Inspection of Tobacco and to hire a House for that purpose until such warehouse can be built" (JEO, 1768-1770, p. 399). As the inspectors were charged by the county with warehouse rent through the year 1774, apparently the warehouse was built.

As already indicated in a previous section of this essay, there seems to have been no official tobacco warehouse at Yorktown during the years 1775-1782, inclusive. This fact bears testimony to the derangement of commercial affairs during the Revolution. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the pre-revolutionary warehouse in Yorktown was thoroughly demolished by the military activities during the struggle.

At any rate in 1783 the General Assembly authorized Yorktown as a point of inspection (H, XI, 211), incidentally the only one in York County, and Lawrence Smith, who had "undertaken to build the Warehouses for reception of Tobacco in this County" entered into bond with the county court for the performance of his obligations (OB, 1774-1784, p. 413).

Under a joint inspection with College Landing in the act of authorization in 1783 (H, XI, 211), the two points of inspection were given separate administration in 1784 (H, XI, 391).

Apparently the small business of the newly re-established

warehouses threatened them with the automatic suspension provided by law if they were not self-supporting, for they were formally revived by act of the Assembly in 1787(H,XII,581). Certainly the inspections in York County were inconsequential as compared with the tobacco traffic before the Revolution. More and more the center of production shifted into the Piedmont section of Virginia and left the Tidewater counties. Except for sundry items involving minor quantities of transfer tobacco, the inspections at Yorktown were as follows for the annual period ending at the September or October court of the year indicated:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number Hogsheads Inspected</u>	<u>Source of Information</u>
1784	73	OB, 1784-1787, p. 70
1785	118	Ibid., p. 214
1786	?	No record
1787	?	Not given in report See OB, 1784-1787, p. 505
1788	257	OB, 1768-1795, p. 82
1789	148	Ibid., pp. 191-192
1790	290	Ibid., p. 214
1791	335	Ibid., p. 404
1792	307	Ibid., p. 301
1793	84	Ibid., p. 589
1794	146	Ibid., p. 659
1795	63	OB, 1795-1805, p. 26
1796	57	Ibid., pp. 122-124
1797	21	Ibid., p. 201
1798	59	Ibid., p. 282
1799	91	Ibid., p. 363
1800	106	Ibid., p. 450
1801	134	Ibid., p. 491

About 1790 the Yorktown Warehouse reverted from public ownership to its earlier character. Again it became a privately owned building operated by the inspectors, state officials, for the benefit of the public. A court order dated September 20, 1790, reads: "David Jameson Gent, is permitted to remove the Tobacco Warehouses commonly called the York Warehouses from the Ground on which they are now situate, across the Valley, on the Lands of the late Mr Secretary Nelson" (OB, 1788-1795, p. 312). Obviously the terminology here suggests more elevation than that possessed by the earlier warehouses.

The Jameson family seems to have title to the warehouses after 1790. The "proprietor of the Warehouse at York", unnamed, was by the York County Court on September 21, 1801, ordered to explain why his building was not kept in proper repair (OB, 1795-1805, p. 487). At its monthly meeting on July 18, 1805, the court, observing that John Jameson, the proprietor of the York warehouse had not kept the building in suitable condition, ordered the inspectors to remove public property, such as scales and weights, "to the out house of Thomas Archer in the Town of York and that in future the inspection be established [sic] at the House of the said Thomas Archer" (OB, 1796-1805, p. 597).

This writer has not carefully examined the order books for

the years after 1803. It is known, however, that York County never recovered its colonial position in the tobacco industry, though a legal inspection was maintained in Yorktown as late as 1819 (Va. Code of 1819, II, 125).

Ross Warehouses

Ross Warehouses were privately owned from their origin in 1714 to their disestablishment as a point of inspection about 1785. It has already been explained how William Row [sic], in 1714, "undertook to build the Storehouses & wharf upon his land on Charles River". The old rolling-house seems to have been utilized as a point for official inspection when the act of 1780 established as an inspection "Ross storehouse, in the County of York" (H, IV, 260).

In 1759 the inspectors complained as to the condition in which the proprietor kept the warehouses. The county court, on August 20 of that year, authorized a committee, Morit Moore, Bennet Kerby, and Henry Howard [?], to view the warehouses and "in case the proprietor refuses or neglects to make the necessary Repairs to the said Warehouses that they agree with Workmen to repair the same at the charge of the County to be repaid out of the Rents of the said Warehouses" (JEO, III, 68).

There was further difficulty in 1774 over the problem of the upkeep of the building. The proprietor, Thomas Roberts, neglecting to repair the warehouse, a committee consisting of Starkey and Anthony Robinson was appointed to employ the necessary work-

men(JAO,1772-1774,p.475). Obviously the cost was to be taken from the rents collected. Again, in 1760, the county court appointed a committee of two, this time Starkey Robinson and Merritt[sic] Moore, to agree with a workman for the repair of Roess warehouse at county expense(OB,1774-1784,p.247). For carrying out the repair job Matthew Provo by the York County Court, July 17, 1760, was allowed £100(OB,1774-1784,p.272), a sum which is understandable only in the light of the currency inflation of the times.

For the repair of Roess Warehouse committees were appointed in 1781 and in 1782(OB,1774-1784,pp.432,505). In 1785 the committee for repair had its membership increased(OB,1774-1784,p.517), but it is doubtful if the citizens carried out their instructions. The act of 1785 passed by the General Assembly authorized inspection warehouses in York County only at Yorktown(II,II,511).

The proprietors of Roess Warehouse seem not to have discharged their obligations to a public which had for generations exercised its superior legal rights over the warehouse and neighborhood. The real estate, by the last decade of the eighteenth century, was in the hands of one Adam Craig, who, on the discontinuance of the warehouse, presumably by the act of 1783, stopped up the road leading to the warehouse landing, an act against which

the people of the neighborhood petitioned the General Assembly.

To the honourable the Speaker and Members of the house of Delegates — The petition of divers Inhabitants of the Counties of York Warwick & Elizabeth City humbly represents that Rose Warehouse, lying on Charles River in the lower end of York County, was by a late Act of Assembly discontinued, that there was a public landing at the said Warehouse which was found to be of great Utility to the good people of this Neighbourhood. Your petitioners further beg leave to add that a certain Adam Craig the present Proprietor of the Lands adjoining the Warehouse, and to whom the said Lands have reverted, in consequence of the discontinuance of the said Warehouse, has thought fit to stop up the road leading to the said Warehouse landing. — Your petitioners again beg leave to remonstrate that the principal articles which they have for market, consist of Grain and Lumber, and unless there be a public landing fixed and established in this Neighbourhood, and your Petitioners know of no place so convenient as the one here proposed, they who do not possess lands lying immediately on the Banks of the said river will be obliged to depend upon the Will and Caprice of a few individuals for a landing from whence they may carry their produce to market, and to keep their fishing vessels at, or be put to the great inconvenience of going five or six Miles further to Hunts point, which will occasion so great an augmentation of expence in the land Carriage of Lumber as to render that principal Article of little value.

Incidentally, one of the points made by the petitioners was that since Charles Parish Church was only one half mile from the warehouse landing its closing would make coming to church more inconvenient (Petitions to Va. Assembly, MSS, Va. State Library, Nov. 13, 1786, York, Warwick & Elizabeth City, No. 5685).

Capitol Landing Warehouses

The store houses or rolling-houses established on Queens Creek were presumably at the same place confirmed as a point of inspection in the act of 1750, as Capitol Landing. In 1714 the proprietors had refused to build, therefore the county constructed the necessary buildings. From that time to its disestablishment as a point of inspection in 1783 and sale in 1785 (or 1786) the warehouses at Capitol Landing were (with the possible exception of one brief period) owned by the county.

On January 17, 1765 the county court ordered the sheriff to pay Lawson Burfoot "L 1..3..3 for repairs at the Capitol Warehouse" (J&O, III(1754-1765), 457). A new warehouse was built by Samuel Coke at the Capitol Landing about 1762, for at the October 20, 1768, county court the justices acknowledged the indebtedness of the county to "Samuel Coke for building a Warehouse at the Capitol Landing Inspection" in the sum of L156..14..10 1/4 (J&O, 1765-1768, p.159).

The York County Court, on August 12, 1771, appointed a committee "to agree with Herkison to repair or rebuild the Public Warehouses at the Capitol Landing for the Inspection of Tobacco as shall be found necessary upon viewing the same" (J&O, 1770-1772,

p.541). The members of the committee showed energy in their assignment, for by August 18, 1771, there appeared in the Virginia Gazette the following advertisement:

To be Laid, to the LOWEST BIDDER, THE
BUILDING of a WARE HOUSE at the CAPITAL
LANDING: forty Feet by twenty, with one ten
Foot Shed. Also the repairing of another
Warehouse. Those who incline to undertake
the same are desired to attend at Mr. Matthew
Moody's, near the Landing, on Tuesday the 19th
of next month, at eleven o'clock.

JOHN FRENCH
THOMAS MALLON, Junior
WILLIAM BIGGLES, Junior

(Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg, Inc.)

The building designated as "another Warehouse" was presumably the "old warehouse", which the inspector, James Shields, was authorized by the county court on December 18, 1775, to sell to the highest bidder for the benefit of the county (OB, 1774-1784, p.114). Like other warehouses those at Capitol Landing must have suffered from the depredations of the British in 1780 and 1781. In 1780 there were two different orders given for the repairing of the public warehouses at Capitol Landing. The committee appointed with the first order, on March 20, 1780, consisted of

William Graves and Benjamin Powell. The second order, dated July 17, 1780, added Thomas Nelson, Jr., to those already named (OB, 1774-1784, pp. 258, 274). It may easily be imagined that the times were too troublous to have the repairing adequately completed, or that further destruction by the British called for additional repairs, for on August 19, 1782, according to an order of the York County Court, "James Sheild & William Eaton are appointed to agree with some persons to repair the ware House at the Capitol landing" (OB, 1774-1784, p. 304).

It may well be doubted whether the last order was obeyed, for the act of 1783 did not include Capitol Landing in the list of authorized points of inspection (H, XI, 211). On December 19, 1783 the York County Court ordered Benjamin Powell, John Minzon Galt, and William Eaton to sell "the late public Warehouse" at Capitol Landing, taking bond as security for payment (OB, 1784-1787, p. 260). Between the December court and the January court the sale was effected to "Samuel Beall Esquire for the sum of Twenty four Pounds on three Months Credit" (OB, 1784-1787, p. 264).

A Suggestion Concerning Further Research

From the information already discovered in the preparation of this essay a good beginning may be made towards locating the warehouses used as official points of inspection in the colonial and early national period. The names of the proprietors might be traced in the deed books and the will books and the situation of their property more accurately determined.

As the loose papers have not been examined, no statement can be made in regard to their value. It is not unreasonable to suppose that they contain much material which would serve to amplify the items gleaned from the order books. Undoubtedly an examination of the Horton, Jerdons, Reynolds and Nelson papers will throw additional light on the problem of the warehouses.

There has been compiled a "Tabular List of Inspectors, Proprietors, etc.: York County Warehouses before 1800", which is not of sufficient importance to be incorporated in this report. All names of proprietors in this list have been included in the various sections of this essay. The names of the inspectors, at this point in the investigation, do not seem of great significance. In any study of the tobacco inspectors it should be borne in mind that the number of men recommended by the county court was twice the number that could be appointed. The governor, apparently without exception,

appointed those first on the list. It might be of interest in a general survey of the commercial history of York County or Yorktown to obtain an idea of the standing in the community of the men appointed to judge of the most valuable staple of the time. From the wills, inventories and deeds an idea of their property and social position might be obtained.

In the notes which are deposited with this memorandum there are suggestions of other phases of the commercial history of Yorktown, the general problem on which a report was planned. As the season draws to a close, however, it has seemed best to present a fairly detailed report on the material gathered concerning tobacco warehouses, one phase of the commercial history of Yorktown before 1800, rather than to gather a few more notes.

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by OLB

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