

333/D-284

THE EDMUND SMITH HOUSE: A HISTORY

COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

BY

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AUGUST 1969



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PREFACE

The Edmund Smith House on Lot 53 in Yorktown was a part of the late colonial and 1781 Yorktown scene, having been standing since 1751. The Federal government acquired it as part of the Blow property in October 1968 and made it a part of Colonial National Historical Park. It is adjacent to the Nelson House and for more than a century and a half its occupants were close neighbors of the Nelsons. A study of the history of the house was called for in Colonial's Historical Resource Study Proposal No. COL-H-13a.

The research proposal calls for "a general background study involving a comprehensive summary and evaluation of data about this residence, its uses and associations, particularly in the 18th century" with concern also to "the grounds and setting as well as the structure." These have been the objectives of this report.

Without the careful work of Mrs. Frances McLawhorn of the Colonial staff, who prepared the initial typed draft, and of Frances Gastellum of the Division of History, who put the manuscript in its final form, this study would not be in the usable state here presented.

Yorktown, Virginia

Charles E. Hatch, Jr.

August 29, 1969

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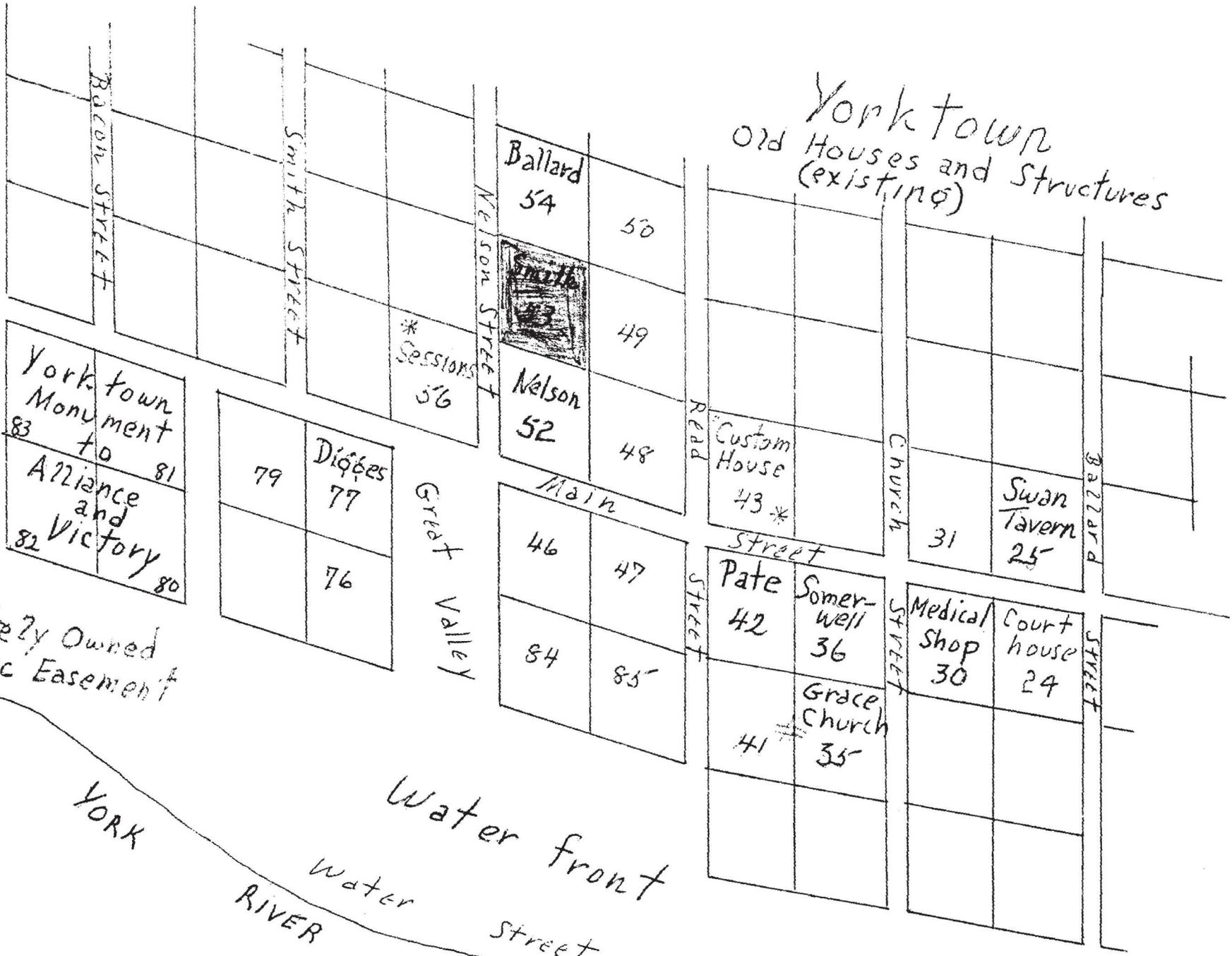
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*Colonial National Historical Park
photograph file number.

Yorktown Old Houses and Structures (existing)



* Privately Owned
Scenic Easement

YORK RIVER
Water front Street

Some Early Lot 53 Ownerships

Some six months before Thomas Nelson acquired Lot 52 on Main Street in Yorktown where he built the Nelson House that still stands, "Lawrence Smith Gent of ye psh [parish] & county" of York took title to Lot 53 directly behind and south of the Nelson property.¹ Smith purchased this half acre lot on February 10, 1706, and though the deed contained no reference to earlier grantees, there had been one in September 1699 in the person of "William Simson of Yorke Towne & County . . . Taylor." Simson failed to build the prescribed house of at least twenty feet, however, and forfeited the lot. Evidently Lawrence Smith paid his 180 pounds of tobacco to the "Feoffees" and proceeded to build the required structure, for he remained in possession of the lot.²

Some thirty years later (January 1734), Lawrence Smith, still of York County and York-Hampton parish, conveyed this property to Edmund (sometimes Edmond) Smith, his "Son and Heir apparent." The deed description cited it as "joining one Side

1. York County Records, Deeds & Bonds, No. 2 (1701-1713), p. 227.

2. Deeds & Bonds, No. 1 (1694-1701), p. 193.

upon Mr. Thomas Nelson /Lots 52 and 49 and on the other side upon Capt. John Ballard /Lot 54 and known . . . by the figures (53)."³

Edmund Smith in due course, though he did not live here, found it necessary to undertake a new, perhaps better, house on Lot 53; it was the one now standing there. He likely built it expressly for his daughter Mildred, who married David Jameson, a Yorktown merchant. It was under construction at the time of Edmund's death early in 1751. In his will, made on the preceding December 18, he had written: "I give and bequeath unto my Daughter Mildred Smith my Lot of Land in York Town whereon I am now building. It is my Will and desire that the House should be finished out of my Estate."⁴

Perhaps for business reasons, David Jameson and his wife Mildred Smith, on January 17, 1753, conveyed this lot "by their Indenture of Lease," to James Tarpley, a Williamsburg merchant. Nine months later Jameson repurchased the property for 10^l; at

3. Deeds, No. 4 (1729-1740), p. 332.

4. Wills & Inventories, No. 20 (1748-1759), p. 212. The will was proved on March 18, 1751. Edmund's son Lawrence inherited all of the "Tract of Land whereon I now live" near Yorktown. His will also contained provision for another son, Thomas, and for a daughter, Mary, as well as for his wife Agnes. A later deed recites that Edmund "devised the same Lot 53 to his Daughter Mildred now the Wife of the said David Jameson." Deeds, No. 5 (1741-1754), p. 560.

that time it was described as "the same Lot whereon the said David Jameson now dwelleth and all houses, etc."⁵

5. Deeds, No. 5, p. 560.

Lawrence, Edmund, and
Mildred Smith

Major Lawrence Smith of Gloucester County was a man of considerable consequence in his day. He participated in the Indian wars and had led Gloucester men against Bacon's rebels in 1677. Eleven years later he was surveyor for York and Gloucester counties when he acquired the Ludlow property north of Wormley Creek and southeast of the area of Yorktown. He laid out Yorktown in 1691, and in 1699 he was recommended among "the gentlemen of estate and standing" who were suitable for appointment to the Council; he died in 1700 and the honor went to his son John, of Gloucester, who inherited his father's lands there and who also was county lieutenant-colonel of militia.

Another son, Col. Lawrence Smith, inherited his father's holdings in York County, where he established himself. He served the area well as militia officer, a justice and member of the county court, county sheriff, a trustee (feoffee) of Yorktown and member of the House of Burgesses. He married

twice--first Mildred Chisman,⁶ and second Mildred Read.⁷ All told he had eight children.⁸

Colonel Lawrence's will disposed of his estate with provisions for his children and his surviving wife. Edmund, the oldest son, received property southeast of Yorktown adjoining the home site (which was earmarked for son Robert after the life interest of his step-mother), an interest in his father's mill plus "all the negroes, stocks, Goods, House-hold stuff and all other personal Estate that I have formerly Possessed him withall." Several years prior to his death Lawrence had conveyed Lot 53 in Yorktown to Edmund.⁹

Edmund Smith married Agnes, the daughter of Richard Sclater of York County and Mary Nutting, and lived just outside of Yorktown. They had four children--Mildred, Lawrence, Thomas,

6. Mildred Chisman was the daughter of Capt. Thomas Chisman and Elizabeth, daughter of Col. George Read.

7. Mildred Read was the daughter of John Read, eldest son of Col. George Read, and Mary, daughter of John Lilly.

8. Edmund, Lawrence, and Robert by Mildred Chisman, and Margaret, Catherine, Robert, Lucy, and Lawrence by Mildred Read.

9. This account is drawn in large measure, except as noted, from Lyon G. Tyler's "Temple Farm," in The William and Mary College Quarterly, 1st Series, II, 5-15.

and Mary. Mildred inherited Lot 53, on which Edmund was building the house at the time of his death early in 1751.¹⁰

10. Wills & Inventories, No. 20, p. 212. Among other property, Edmund had lands in Spotsylvania. These he wanted to be sold for the use of his estate and for paying his "youngest daughters legacy." This was £300 to Mary.

David Jameson and His
Nephew, John

David Jameson of Scottish family, was the son of James Jameson of Essex County, Virginia. He moved to Yorktown, where he became a respected citizen and one of the more successful merchants in this then-busy port town. He was in Yorktown at least by June 1751, for he advertised in the Virginia Gazette that "Mr. David Jameson in York, Merchant" was available to book cargo for a ship freighting tobacco for Liverpool at 67 per ton.¹¹ Virginia Gazette entries through the years show Jameson to be a man of varied business and mercantile interests. He was concerned with the sale of lands, slaves, and indentured servants, with the settlement of estates, with freighting ships with cargoes, and, from time to time, with the management of lotteries.¹²

Jameson married Mildren Smith, whose brother, Lawrence, apprenticed himself to Jameson "to learn the art of merchantdize

11. Issue of June 20. A similar notice appeared on June 12, 1752, regarding the ship Alice, a new vessel with a 300 hogshead capacity, which was then "lying at West-Port up the York River." Customers could, the announcement said, freight their "Tobacco at 66 per Ton" with "Liberty of Consignment, to any Merchant in Liverpool." Virginia Gazette, June 12, 1752.

12. Virginia Gazette Index, 1736-1780 by Lester J. Cappon and Stella F. Duff (Williamsburg, 1950), I, 614.

and book keeping."¹³ He and Mildren made their home on Lot 53, though he came to own other property as well. In 1754 he acquired from Thomas Archer a 28 by 20 foot store, or storehouse, "at the waterside."¹⁴ Perhaps it was near this place that "Mr. David Jameson's lower garden," mentioned in 1770, was located.¹⁵ It was not until 1784 that he bought Lot 42 and its development from Dudley Digges and his wife Elizabeth. The purchase cost him £175 and included the old brick storehouse and two shops, one of them occupied by a tailor.¹⁶

In his time Jameson was active as merchant, scientist, and statesman. In 1773 and 1774 he was treasurer of the "Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge," organized at Williamsburg in May 1773 with John Clayton, the botanist, as president. Jameson and John Page of Rosewell, who succeeded Clayton as chairman of the Society, conducted experiments in the measurement of dew and rainfall with an instrument of their

13. Tyler, "Temple Farm," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Series, II, 11-13.

14. Charles E. Hatch, Jr., "An Historical Report on Archer Cottage . . .", (mimeographed National Park Service report dated December 15, 1957), pp. 76, 111.

15. Virginia Gazette (Purdie and Dixon), April 5 issue.

16. Deed Book, No. 6 (1777-1791), p. 223. A report on Lot 42 and the Thomas Pate House is in preparation by the author of this study.

own invention. These are said to have been the first such experiments of their kind in America and, according to Page, "the first with such an instrument in the world."¹⁷

Jameson remained active in Revolutionary War matters throughout the conflict, being elected to the Virginia Senate in 1776 and also made a manager of Virginia's salt works. In 1777 he was named to the Virginia Council, Patrick Henry's Privy Council.¹⁸ He continued his long-established mercantile activities, being interested in both public trade and private supply, and during this period supplies for Virginia were difficult to obtain.¹⁹ In 1781 he became Lieutenant-Governor under Thomas Nelson, Jr., and when Nelson became ill and unable to attend to business it devolved upon Jameson to carry on for

17. Lyon G. Tyler, Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography (New York, 1915), II, 329; Frances N. Mason, ed., John Norton & Sons . . . Merchants . . . Papers (Richmond, 1937), p. 510.

18. Tyler, Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography, II, 329; Virginia Gazette Index, I, 614.

19. This comes through to some extent in a letter which Jameson wrote to "Juynal & Co." on November 11, 1777. In this it was explained that: "If /when this was received/ there is no war between France and England goods ship'd by you to Cape Francois in French Bottoms and as French Property will be safe and will be insured at a low premium. When the goods arrive at Cape Francois and are delivered to our Agent there Rawleigh Colston Esqr he will send them in our fast sailing Boats into the waters of North Carolina at very little risk and they will be safely conveyed inland to Virginia." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXV, 285.

a period of several weeks in August 1781. Later when Nelson left Richmond and joined the armies for the duration of the Siege of Yorktown, Jameson remained in the capital to work with the government, especially with the Council. Lacking any real authority, he had a very difficult time, and he urged Nelson to return to Richmond, but Nelson wanted to remain at Yorktown. After the Revolution Jameson remained politically active to some extent, being in the Virginia Senate in 1781, 1782 and 1783. In this period, too, he was considered one of two "Senior magistrates" of York County; the other magistrate was General Nelson.²⁰

Jameson was also active in the incorporation of Yorktown in 1787 following the enabling legislation of the Virginia Assembly passed in 1785. He acted as recorder at the organizational meeting of the new Borough of York's Common Council on March 16, 1787,²¹ and "administered the oaths prescribed by Law

20. A Register of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1776-1918 by Earl G. Swem and John W. Williams (Richmond, 1918), p. 391; The Calendar of Virginia State Papers, III, 263; Emory G. Evans, The Nelsons: A Biographical Study of a Virginia Family in the Eighteenth Century (University of Virginia Dissertation, 1957, reproduced in "O-P Book" form, 1967, for Colonial NHP), pp. 331-32, 336ff.

21. This meeting "at the Court House" was the day after the election of the councilors by "The Freeholders Inhabitants of the Town of York."

for the elected officials.²² Among the twelve members elected to the Council was John Jameson, David's nephew. John, also a resident of Yorktown, would the next year be elected "Recorder" by his fellow councilors.²³

John had had a long Revolutionary War service, having become a captain of the Virginia Dragoons in 1776 and a major in the First Continental Dragoons in 1777. That same year he was transferred to the Second Continental Dragoons. Wounded at Valley Forge in January 1778, he became a lieutenant-colonel in August of the following year. He served in this rank until the close of the war. Reportedly, he participated in the capture of Major John Andre in September 1780.²⁴

At her death in 1778, Mildren Jameson was buried in the Smith family cemetery on the old "Ludlow Tract" on Wormley Creek, then owned by Augustine Moore, who had married Lucy Smith, her aunt. Mildren's tomb carried the Jameson arms,²⁵

22. York County Records, Husting Court Records (1787-1793), p. 3.

23. Ibid., pp. 43, 57.

24. John H. Gwathmey, Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution . . . 1775-1783 (Richmond, 1938), p. 413; Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, III, 92. John received 7,416 acres of land for his service.

25. The arms on the tomb include the Jameson ("az a soltier cantoned with 4 ships under sail, ar.") impaled with the Smith ("az. a chevron between three acorns leaved and slipped, ar."). Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXV, 285 (Note).

featuring ships under sail with pennants and a motto "vive ut vivas."²⁶ David lived on until 1793 and by his will, filed in the Hustings Court Records of Yorktown,²⁷ he bequeathed "one moiety of my Estate both real & personal" to John Jameson of Yorktown and one "moiety to David Jameson of Culpeper and David Jameson, Jr., of Caroline." All were nephews; he and Mildred left no sons or daughters.

Jameson had made his will on October 14, 1792, "being of sound mind, but at present of indifferent health." Since he did not hold office in the new town government and since he disposed of waterfront business property in 1788,²⁸ it may be that his poor health was chronic. Perhaps there is a reflection of the man in the codicil to his will that was accepted in court

26. The inscription on this tomb in the Moore House burial ground reads:

Underneath this marble lies the Body of
Mildred Jameson,
Wife of David Jameson,
and Daughter of
Edmund and Agnes Smith
of York County
She departed this Life
the 10th Day of December, 1778,
in the Forty-sixth Year of Her Age

27. Page 39.

28. In March 1788 he sold his lots 90 and 91 to Sarah Cooke for 150 pounds. This was property to which he established ownership by purchase from the trustees when the waterfront /town commons/ was surveyed for release to private ownership just three months before. Husting Court Records, p. 2.

on July 22, 1793, after his death. It made disposition of three slaves--"a Negroe Man," "a Negro Girl," and "a mulattoe Boy."

Mr. David Jameson of York desired me William Reynolds, a friend and neighbor to add by way of Codecile to his Will that Cupid & Frank two of his Slaves should at his decease be Emancipated the last mentioned to be bound out to some Trade by the administrators of his Will and that Grace a Girl at present about the House should be given to Mrs Mary Mennis.²⁹

His administrators were three nephews who gave "Bond in the sum of Thirty thousand pounds with William Goosley, William Cary and William Reynolds all of Yorktown as their securities."

29. Ibid., pp. 39-40. Evidently Jameson and William Reynolds had been friends and neighbors for many years and often worked together as in 1782 when they were to secure timber for "the Barracks." But in this instance, at least prior to August 19, they had been unsuccessful. Those who earlier had supplied timber had now lost their "sawyers" and others had a pile of back orders. Calendar of Virginia State Papers, III, 263.

Insurance Records and Lot 53
(a lot of dependency changes)

As in the case of the Nelson House and Lots 52 and 48 in Yorktown, there is good coverage (seven policies)³⁰ for the Edmund Smith House and Lot, but unfortunately it is for a shorter span of time. The earliest policy is dated 1819 and details five structures, each of them a kind typical of the eighteenth century. Perhaps all, or most, of them could be survivals from the period of the Siege of 1781 though there had been a lapse of forty years. The 1820 policy adds a sixth unit--an "old stable, wood." The language of the policy is such that the stable obviously existed before 1819.

The main residence on Lot 53 was located near the east corner of the lot with the dependencies on the southwest half, more particularly in its south quadrant. The units in the group were:

- 1 (A) Dwelling (listed as "Dwelling & Tavern" in 1838)
- 2 (B) Laundry

30. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia Policies Nos. 1401 (1819); 7611 (1820); 5047 (1823); 10767 (1838); 14, 293 (1846); 17298 (1852) and 21355 (1860). Society records are in the Virginia State Library. The plot drawing from each of the policies in 1819, 1820, 1838 and 1852 are reproduced as Illustrations Nos. 2-5 of this report.

- 3 (C) Kitchen
- 4 Dairy
- 5 Smokehouse
- 6 "old stable, wood"

The 1819 policy also carried this notation: "The Building A is contiguous within thirty feet to four wooden buildings. The Buildings B and C are contiguous to three wooden buildings, and to one Brick building covered with wood."

1 (A). In 1819 the "Dwelling," the principal unit in the group, was described as "Brick covered with wood-one story high" measuring 40 by 28 feet, though in 1830 the measurements were given as 44 by 27.³¹ Beginning in 1838 the policies list the house as one and a half stories high. This statement need not necessarily suggest building alteration as it was not accompanied by any significant change in insurance evaluation. A case can be made that the "one story" designation in earlier policies actually could, and did, include a full story plus a dormered second floor. It is also true that in 1838 the structure was listed as a "Dwelling & Tavern," and this innovation was accompanied at least by some dependency changes on the property.

31. The 44 by 27 was repeated in 1838 but in 1860 it was described as 44 by 28.

There was a significant increase in the evaluation of the "Dwelling House" in 1852, up to \$2,500 from \$1,500 in 1846. Part of this evaluation, perhaps, was the now developed "Front yard, Porch, & C" between the residence and the "Cross Street."

2 (B). The "Laundry" was "of wood entire" and measured 16 by 18 feet in 1820, being located southwestward, or diagonally westward, of the main house. It was shown beyond the dairy. In 1838 its measurements were given as 16 by 16. Likely it perished as there is no reference to it as such after this date. By 1846 it had been converted to a "Wood Kitchen," (now listed as "C"), or replaced by it.

3 (C). The Kitchen, too, was initially listed as "wood entire, one story" and measuring 16 by 20 feet. It seemingly continued in use as a kitchen until some time prior to 1846.³² At this date it was listed as "B Wood Work Shop" and then it disappears. Prior to 1852 there was a new "Kitchen B of Wood with Shed 18 by 30," the shed being on the back.³³ This building, some 17 feet distant from the west corner of the residence, occupied the former site of the dairy.

32. It was listed in 1838 as "C Kitchen of wood, one Story 20 by 16."

33. In 1846 the kitchen may have been temporarily in the old laundry with the former kitchen building being the now "Wood Work Shop."

4. In 1819 the "Dairy" was a small, square, structure between the laundry and the residence, built altogether of wood. Evidently it remained through 1838, when it was described as "F" measuring 10 by 10. There is some indication from the 1846 policy that it was then used as a smokehouse. In 1852 it was moved, or replaced by another 10 by 10 structure of wood. It was now in the area of the former laundry. At this date, and in 1860, it was carried with a building "C" listing and located six feet from the south corner of the new kitchen.

5. The "Smoke House" stood near the south corner of the lot between the kitchen and the cross street. This too was of all wood construction. It remained here through 1838, when it was described as "Smoke house and sheds of wood 16 by 16 feet." By 1846 it appears to have either vanished or been relocated to the area beyond the west corner of the residence where the dairy had been. In 1852 it evidently had been replaced by a new structure in the old location, being then described as "D. Smoke house & shed 10 x 27" to which was attached, on the southwest end, a "Crib for Corn."

6. The "old stable" was near the southwest lot line, between it and the kitchen, and in 1820 must have been near the end of its usefulness, though in 1823 it existed by implication since five structures were said to be on the lot. It was one

of the "two other wooden buildings." In 1838 a new "stable, wood" ("E") seems to have been built in the very south corner of the lot.

Insurance Evaluations:

	<u>1819</u>	<u>1820</u>	<u>1823</u>	<u>1838</u>	<u>1846</u>	<u>1852</u>	<u>1860</u> ³⁴
Dwelling	3050	1700	1500	1700(A)	1500	2500	2000
Laundry	350	175	200	100(B)	100	--	--
Kitchen	350	150	200	100(C)	100	250(B)	250
Dairy				- F		100(C)	100(C)
Smokehouse				- D		100(D)	
Old Stable-- 1820							
Stable--1838				- E			
	<hr/>						
	3,750	2,025	1,900	1,900	1,700	2,950	2,350

34. This policy was reduced in total values in 1866 to \$1,600 for the dwelling and \$280 for kitchen and dairy combined. Ten years later it was dropped to \$1,200 on the dwelling and nothing on the dependencies. It remained at this level in 1877.

Survival and Refitting

The Edmund Smith House is the most precisely dated one in Yorktown, since it was under construction when Edmund Smith died early in 1751 and he provided in his will for its completion. It was first occupied by David Jameson and his wife Mildred, who resided here until their deaths in 1793 and 1778 respectively. Alexander Berthier shows it on his plan of Yorktown, which he evidently detailed for billeting purposes for French troops in the winter of 1781-1782.³⁵ He shows the residence and two outbuildings, or dependencies. The buildings generally correspond in location to the "Laundry" and "Kitchen" of the insurance plan of 1819.³⁶ For some reason the Berthier plan indicates an enclosure, or fence, embracing this house, its two dependencies, the Nelson House, and one side of the Nelson House kitchen. This must have been for some particular military use as the Nelson and Jameson properties were never under a single ownership until this century when the Blow family acquired it.

35. See Illustration No. 1.

36. See Illustration No. 2.

On the death of Jameson, this residence became the home of his nephew John Jameson; an insurance policy referred to it in 1796 as "the house of John Jameson," and in 1810 notations on another policy stated that the lot was Jameson property and included "John Jamieson buildings."³⁷

From Jameson the property passed, by 1815, to Major Thomas Griffin of Yorktown.³⁸ He was a leading town citizen at that time and had served in Congress in the 1803-05 sessions. Also he often served in the Virginia House of Delegates in the period between 1793 and 1830. Griffin had participated, too, in the battle near Hampton when the militia clashed with the British on June 25, 1813, during the War of 1812. He had married his cousin Mary, the daughter of Judge Cyrus Griffin.³⁹

The insurance policy for the house and dependencies on Lot 53 was drawn for Thomas Griffin in 1819. He was described as the owner, but the property was "now occupied by no person"

37. These are from Mutual Assurance Society policies covering adjacent Lot 52 and the Nelson House.

38. Other policies for Lot 52 substantiate Griffin ownership of Lot 53 and its buildings in 1815, 1823, and 1830, and in 1838 note it as "Frederick B. Powers lot late Griffins." It continued in the Power estate at least into 1846.

39. Tylers Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, I, 151; Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, I, 256.

and the bounds were listed as "Burts lot" on the southwest, Nelson "lots" on the northeast and northwest, and "a Cross Street on the SE." By the time of the drawing up of the 1820 policy Griffin evidently had found a lessee for "my buildings on a cross street in York Town" as they were "now occupied by one William Foushee." However, by 1823 Griffin himself had moved to the property, as it was stated that the buildings and premises "are occupied by him." He died on October 7, 1836.

By 1838 the property had passed to Frederick B. Power, who seemingly had opened a tavern here and done some renovation.⁴⁰ There was no reference to tavern use in 1846, when the property was occupied by James F. Power. It remained bounded by William Nelson lots, Samuel Sheild's estate, and the cross street. In 1852 the "underwritten" was William S. Mallicote, who seemingly had made a goodly number of changes in the structures on the property.⁴¹ Mallicote took another policy in 1860 which was continued at a reduced evaluation in 1866, 1876 and 1877.⁴²

40. There had been a change of neighbor on adjacent Lot 54. This was now "Samuel Sheild formerly Burts lot S.W."

41. Neighbors then were (1) "Nelsons Dwelling &c 120 feet off" on the northeast, (2) "Nelson's garden and open lots" on the northwest, and (3) the "W.H. Sheild dwelling &c" on the southwest.

42. A Nelson House insurance policy in 1853 mentions that "William S. Mallicote's house and Lot" formed its immediate southwest bound, Policy No. 21355.

Because of his long association with the residence, the home on Lot 53 became known as the Mallicote House, a usage that continued into this century.

After the Civil War the Edmund Smith House continued its quiet and unpublicized way, seldom being mentioned in the record and evidently seldom a photographer's subject. The York County Land Books indicate little change except decline, judging by the monetary value assigned for tax purposes. This same situation is reflected in insurance value drop as mentioned earlier.⁴³

Mr. J. R. Chandler, who was a youth at the turn of the century, remembers the house very well at that time. He reports that its condition was not particularly good. At one time, when the "Hudgins" family was in residence, the kitchen and living room were in the full basement. He remembers, too, a small porch on the front much like that now on the old Sessions (Sheild) House close by. Likely this porch was the one added by Mallicote in the mid-nineteenth century. Chandler knew the Mallicote House

43. Its taxable value in 1879 was listed as \$500 (\$50 for the lot, \$450 for the house). It then was a part of the Alexander Tabb Estate. The 1880 evaluation was the same, as it was again in 1883. By 1891 it had dropped to \$300 and in 1911-12 to \$200. To admit of some comparison, in these same years, the Nelson House and lot was \$1,250 (1880), \$800 (1891), and \$1,150 (1911-12).

name, but did not know its origin.⁴⁴ Mrs. W. L. Scott, another who was born and reared in Yorktown, indicated that the house in 1913, when she was a first grader, saw temporary service as a school that year due to overcrowding in the regular school building. She remembered, too, that one of the fireplaces was "burned through" and "there could be a fire only in the corner of it."⁴⁵ Neither Mr. Chandler, nor Mrs. Scott, has recollection of the dependent structures for the house, and lack of reference would indicate their disappearance before the turn of the nineteenth century.

In due course the heirs of A. C. Tabb, whose ownership followed that of Mallicote, in November 1911 sold "All that certain house and lot (53)" to George L. and Herbert L. Smith for five hundred dollars. Four years later the Smiths sold part of the lot "together with the building thereon which said building is known as the 'Mallecote House'" to George P. Blow of La Salle, Illinois. Two years later Blow, in a second transaction with

44. Mr. Chandler, a long-time resident of Yorktown, 82 years of age, was interviewed by the writer in August 1969. He also related a ghost story that the old-timers, especially the Negroes, often mention when he was a youngster, and later as well. Once a year or so, a small light appears on the wall at night and with it a hand that writes.

45. Mrs. W. L. (Lettie Sheild) Scott.

the Smiths, acquired the remainder of the lot.⁴⁶ This incorporated the old lot and house into Blow's York Hall Estate. Estate plans and development were the work of the architectural firm of Griffin & Wynkoop (particularly Percy Griffin) of New York. Landscaping and grounds treatment was the work of Charles F. Gillette of Richmond.⁴⁷

In a published account of the restoration of the Edmund Smith House, the architectural firm reported:

The grounds of York Hall include a small building once used as a school house . . . recalling in its lines the early English cottage, and this has been fitted up as a guest house. Originally fronting upon the road its entrance has been changed so that it now faces into the grounds about the Hall from which it is reached by a broad walk. The formal garden has been restored [?] and in its arrangement and in the setting of the guest house the landscape architect has used much of the old box which was originally upon the grounds.⁴⁸

46. The sale prices were five hundred and a thousand dollars respectively. Deed Book, No. 31, p. 31; No. 34, p. 117; No. 35, p. 387.

47. For a more complete account of the York Hall Estate, see Charles E. Hatch, Jr., "The Nelson House and the Nelsons" (National Park Service report now in process in the Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation), particularly Chapter IX.

48. "Restoration of a Southern Colonial Estate, 'York Hall,' The Residence of Captain George P. Blow, Yorktown, Va." by Griffin & Wynkoop, Architects, The Architectural Forum (Rogers and Mason Co., publishers), December 1921, pp. 219-20.

The account includes illustrations with one before (a rear view) and several completion views, all exteriors. Converting the house into a dependent structure gave the home a character that it never had in colonial times, when it was a residence property in its own right. It also led to adding two more dormer windows on the rear (the new front) to bring the number up to four,⁴⁹ to equal the number on the street front. Architectural study will likely indicate other changes in fenestration and otherwise produced by "the restoration."

49. Ibid., p. 216.

ILLUSTRATIONS

**No. 1. The Alexander Berthier Plan of Yorktown, 1781.
(Added arrow points to the Edmund Smith House
and its two delineated dependencies).**

**This is document No. 29 in the Berthier Papers,
Princeton University Library.**

Plan de York - conçu pour servir à l'établissement du Quartier d'hiver du Régiment de Joffannois; et des Grandiers et Chasseurs de St-Onge, le 27. Mars 1758.

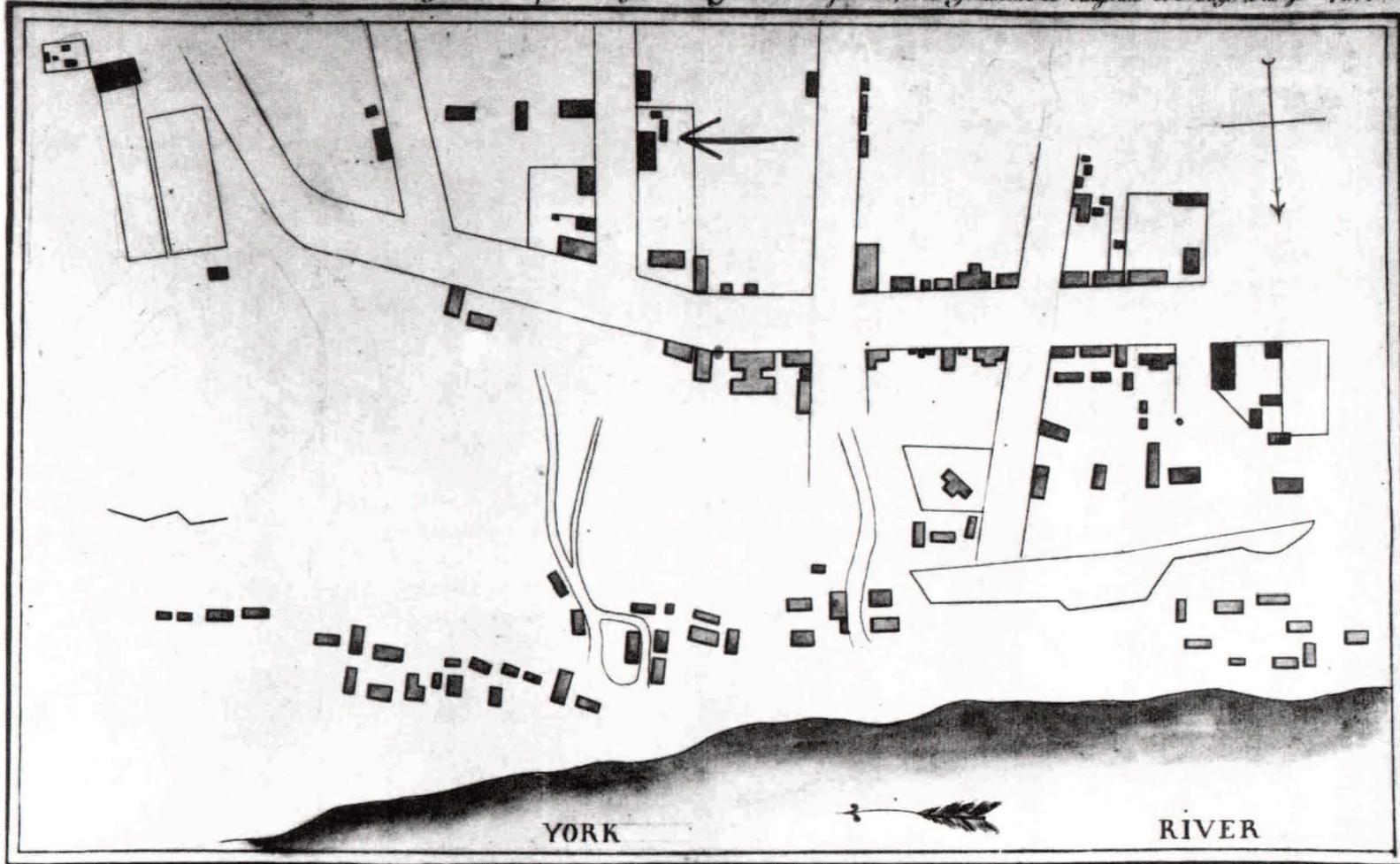


Illustration No. 1

No. 2. Plot Plan from Mutual Assurance Society Policy for
(16571) Lot 53 in 1819.

(From negative photostat of document in the Society
Papers in the Virginia State Library).

I the undersigned do hereby certify that I
truly believe the building herein des-
cribed not overvalued.

Wm Power

Residing at

York

A. Dwelling Brick
Covered with wood - one
story high. 40 x 28



Smoke House

C. Kitchen
Wood entire
one story
16 x 26

Dairy

B. Laundry of
wood entire
16 x 18
one story

The Building A is contiguous within thirty feet to four wooden
buildings. The Buildings B and C are contiguous to three wooden
buildings and to one Brick building covered with wood.

Illustration No. 2

**No. 3. Plot Plan from Mutual Assurance Society Policy for
(16570) Lot 53 in 1820.**

(From negative photostat).

described are not over-valued.

Ro Anderson

Special Agent.

N Taylor

York

Agent

Special

The

SE
SW
NW

A Dwelling of Brick
lined with wood, and
one story 44 by 27

Smoke House
wood

Kitchen C
wood entire
16 by 20

old stable
wood

Dairy
wood

Laundry B
wood entire
18 by 16

The buildings marked A, B, and C are contiguous to each other
and also to the Dairy, smoke house, and old stable which are of
small value.

W. Griffin

W. Housler
N Taylor

Illustration No. 3

**No. 4. Plot Plan from Mutual Assurance Society Policy for
(16572) Lot 53 in 1838.**

(From negative photostat).

I verily believe the buildings herein described are not over-valued.

Ro. Anderson

Special Agent.

BPL
Wm H. Reed

111 20
York

Nelson & others lot N E

The buildings marked A B C D E and F are contiguous within thirty feet of each other and also of one other wooden building. D E and F are under \$100 value.
Ro. Anderson, Sp Agent

A Dwelling & Tavern. Brick covered with wood. One & half stories 14 by 27

Nelson & others lot N W

BPL
Wm H. Reed

F Dairy of wood 10 by 10

B Laundry of wood one story 16 by 16

C Kitchen of wood one story 20 by 16

D Smoke house & sheds of wood 16 by 16

E Stable, wood

Cross Street S. E.

Samuel Sheld, formerly Burt's lot S W

Illustration No. 4

**No. 5. Plot Plan from Mutual Assurance Society Policy for
(16573) Lot 53 in 1853.**

(From negative photostat)

will

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I verily believe the buildings herein described are not over-valued.

R. O. Anderson

Special Agent.

Fred. W. Power
W. Powalle

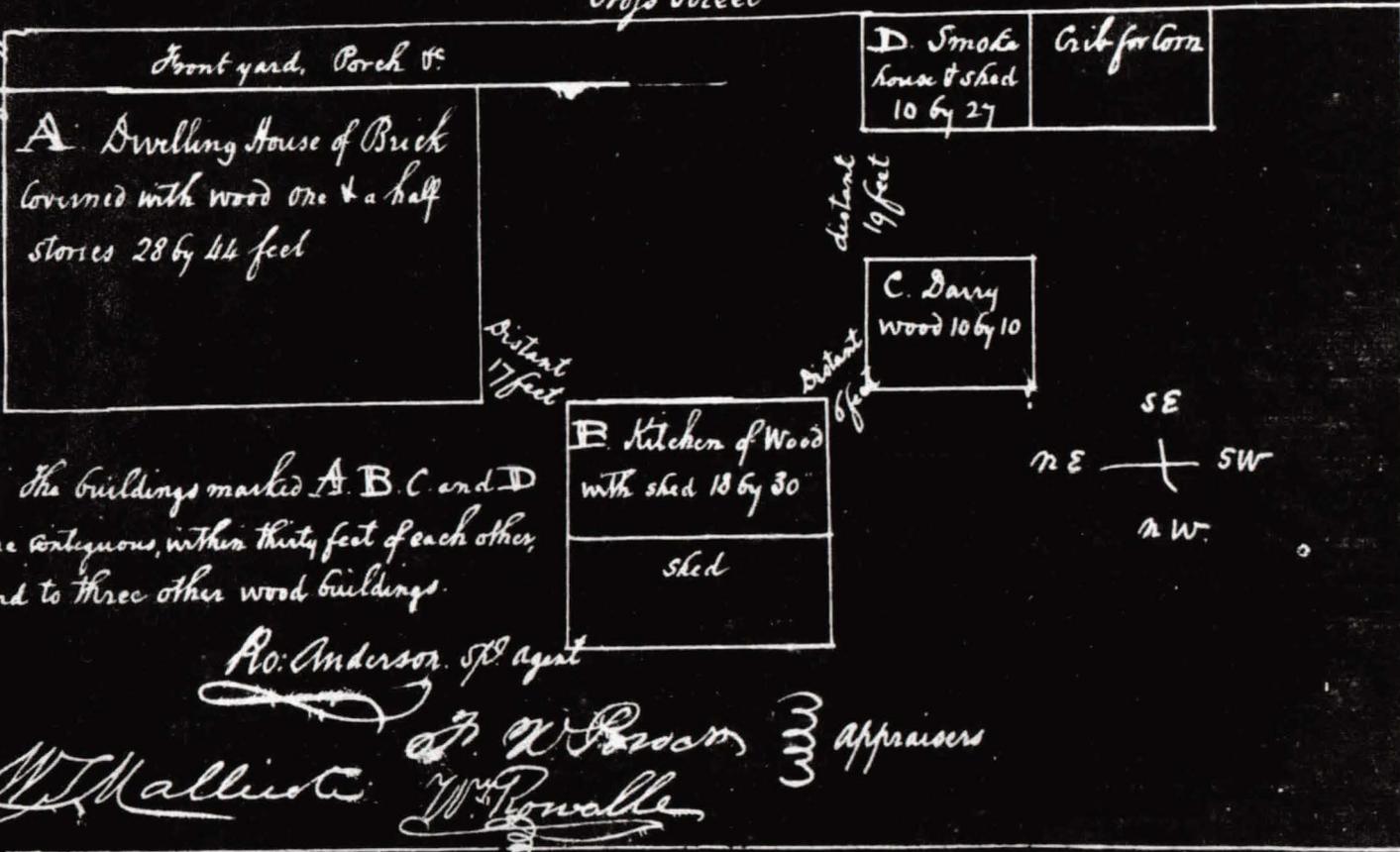
Reside in
Ark. Iowa

Agent

Special

The

Nelsons Dwelling is 120 feet off



The buildings marked A, B, C and D are contiguous, within thirty feet of each other, and to three other wood buildings.

R. O. Anderson, Sp. Agent

W. Malliot *F. W. Power* *W. Powalle* appraisers

Nelsons garden and open lots

Mr. A. Shields's dwelling is

Illustration No. 5

No. 6. Nelson House and Kitchen Chimney with Chimney Stacks
of Edmund Smith House on Extreme Right. Note privy
just behind Smith House.

(From Blow Family Album).



Illustration No. 6

**No. 7 Front (Street) View of Edmund Smith House Just Prior
(16543) to Its Renovation as a York Hall Estate Guest Cottage.**

(From Blow Family Album).

**Note remains of small front porch, probably that
added at mid-nineteenth century by William S. Mallicote.**



Illustration No. 7

No. 8. Edmund Smith House (Nelson House in background) Just
After Its Conversion to a Guest Cottage.

(About 1920, a print from a negative of W. L. Scott,
Yorktown, Virginia).

Entrance has been changed from street front (right)
to grounds front (here). Two dormers have been added
to the two that were on the back (grounds front now).



Illustration No. 8

3679 m.R