ST. JAMES’ HOUSE
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

THE ST. JAMES’ HOUSE WAS BUILT ON THE OUTSKIRTS
OF FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA AROUND 1768-69.
EARLY RECORDS ASSOCIATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF
THE BUILDING WITH JAMES MERCER, A LOCAL LAWYER,
WHO PURCHASED THE PROPERTY FROM FIELDING LEWIS
AND GEORGE WASHINGTON.

A MUTUAL ASSURANCE POLICY FROM 1808 PROVIDES THE
FIRST KNOWN PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING
DESCRIBING IT AS A “20’X46’ WOOD FRAMED DWELLING
COVERED IN WOOD.” ALSO NOTED ON THE POLICY ARE A
NUMBER OF AUXILIARY STRUCTURES ALIGNED IN A LINEAR FASHION
ALONG CHARLES STREET, INCLUDING A NEARBY WOOD FRAMED KITCHEN
TO THE NORTH. IN 1847, A FIRE DESTROYED THE ORIGINAL KITCHEN WHICH
WAS REPLACED THREE YEARS LATER BY THE CURRENT BRICK KITCHEN,
NOW ENCAPSULATED BY A NUMBER OF LATER ADDITIONS. FIRE AGAIN
RAVAGED THE BUILDING IN 1870 DESTROYING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN
THE ORIGINAL DWELLING HOUSE AND THE BRICK KITCHEN. THIS
CONNECTOR WAS RECONSTRUCTED IN THE LATER 19TH CENTURY AND
REMAINS TODAY, ALTHOUGH LATE 19TH CENTURY MODIFICATIONS,
PARTICULARLY TO THE KITCHEN HAVE ALTERED ITS INTERIOR
APPEARANCE. DESPITE THESE CHANGES THE ORIGINAL DWELLING HOUSE
STILL RETAINS MUCH OF ITS INTEGRITY FROM THE MID 18TH CENTURY
MAKING IT UNIQUE AMONG FREDERICKSBURG DWELLINGS. TODAY THE
BUILDING IS MAINTAINED BY THE WASHINGTON HERITAGE MUSEUMS.