

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
BRANCH OF MICROGRAPHICS
LIBRARY COPY

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
HISTORICAL DATA SECTION

D5

GRAFF HOUSE



INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK / PENNSYLVANIA

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

GRAFF HOUSE

HISTORICAL DATA SECTION

By

John D. R. Platt

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER, 1972

PREFACE

The writing of the Declaration of Independence can be viewed as a culminating event, in which may be seen the hands of many and the experience of many years. In that view Jefferson, the draftsman, becomes a tool or mechanism through whom the accumulated wisdom of his generation and his associates in making revolution was given expression in the best possible form. Jefferson's later characterization of his purposes, if taken out of context, may be thought deferential:

Not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we are compelled to take. Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion.

But, as biographer Dumas Malone has written of Jefferson, "there could be no doubt that his mind was prepared." So the Declaration can also be viewed as a personal emission that surpassed the needs of the hour to become a charter for the ages. The elements of both views were unquestionably present in 1776. Jefferson wrote the Declaration with a minimum of direct influence from any source; but he was moved to inspired effort by the current of which he was a part.

Given Jefferson's personal role in the proceedings of 1776, attention is certain to focus on the attendant circumstances, and particularly the place where he labored so well over the Declaration. That the Graff House, where he roomed at the time, long ago departed the Philadelphia scene along with so many of the buildings lived in by the founding fathers, is common knowledge. But, unlike the others, it was subject to a determined effort to salvage what could be salvaged. And though this effort achieved little of material value in the end, it has helped to set the stage for current attempts to return the Graff House to its former location. Its contribution to the record doubtless will help those responsible to study and plan design of the reconstruction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

1. Death of a Famous Landmark	1
2. Thomas Jefferson and Jacob Graff, Jr.	3
3. Building the Graff House	11
4. Owners after Jacob Graff, Jr.	13
5. Some Observations on the History of the Graff House	29

Appendix

Illustrations

Sources

1. Death of a Famous Landmark

The year was 1883 and vandalism was in the air. A Philadelphia lawyer, Thomas Donaldson, at the time general agent of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum, sniffed it out and was on the alert. Thus, he was indignant but not taken unawares when on the frosty morning of February 28, 1883, while gazing from a street car at the Jefferson House, corner of Market and Seventh streets, he witnessed a shocking scene:

I happened to look up at a dormer window . . . , I saw a man come out of the window with an iron bar in his hand . . . Presently another one came out, and after a bit, a dozen more men, similarly armed, were on the roof of the historic house. I saw a huge Celt, at the word of command, thrust his crow-bar under the shingles of the roof, and the destruction of one of the most historic buildings on the globe was begun.¹

After the first workman's sudden appearance Donaldson "dismounted from the car at once." Soon he was on his way to the current owner of the house, the Penn National Bank, and a chat with its president.

This was not Donaldson's first encounter with the gentleman. Knowing earlier of the bank's acquisition of the property and having long studied its claim to recognition as the house where Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence, the former had already approached him about buying the building materials. He discussed the possibility of rebuilding it on the National Museum grounds with Smithsonian Secretary Spencer F. Baird, and bearing his assurances, arranged with the bank to purchase and receive them. On the morning when he spied the workmen being disgorged from the dormer window, he awaited word from proper authority to commence the operation. But it was not happening his way.

Before the morning ran its course, Donaldson had effected a substitute procedure. Directed to the bank's contractors, he was delighted to find himself among patriots like himself. The woodwork contractor had soldiered with Walker, the "gray-eyed man of destiny" in Nicaragua, and they spent long hours discussing Walker and the West while Jefferson's old haunt came down. For the "nominal sum" of \$75 he separated this

1. Thomas Donaldson, The House in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence (Phila., 1897), pp. 78-79.

Mr. Thomas Little from the bricks and all finish work of the second floor and the woodwork of the entire structure. This mass of materials he stored temporarily in a nearby cellar, then in the lot next to his house in West Philadelphia. Donaldson abandoned all other interests while thus engaged:

I remained in and about that building from Wednesday, February 28, 1883, until March 12, 1883, when it was levelled to the ground It was cloudy for five days after the destruction of the building began and no photograph of it was taken. The 'kodak' was not in general use then. I saw Mr. F. Gudekunst, the eminent photographer, about taking some views of it, but it could not then be done. . . . I remained exposed to the weather in this duty for thirteen days, and at the end of that time went to bed, ill with a cold and quinsy, and remained there two weeks.²

His chilly watch yielded important information about the building's relationship to its neighbors that will be discussed later.

Subsequently, Donaldson's plan for enriching the National Museum's grounds fell through--Professor Baird died, inconveniently enough, and the materials lay under cover in the vacant lot while the years rolled by. In 1897 Donaldson detailed his exploits as a pioneer preservationist through the privately printed book entitled The House in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, terming it "the requiem of a most historic and sacred house." But even this last public appeal was overtaken by disaster before reaching a wide audience when "most of the edition was burned-up in the John D. Avil Printing Company fire, . . . about 1899."³ It became a "rather rare book," the influence of which would not be felt until 75 years had passed.

The same year, 1883, a robust, high-gabled, stone bank building rose in the historic house's place. With a beneficent gesture bank authorities fixed a shield-shaped plaque on its Market Street wall that called attention to the site's historic significance. The bank building in its turn was demolished in 1932.

Donaldson died not long after writing his book. The building materials became scattered; inquiries of more recent date show that nothing remains on the storage lot in West Philadelphia.⁴

2. Ibid., pp. 80-82.

3. Thomas B. Donaldson to Judge Eugene C. Bonniwell, Feb. 26, 1941, Folder E-14, "Thomas Jefferson Commemorative Committee," Charles Abell Murphy Correspondence, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

4. Donaldson's final word on the subject was that "No comment upon the character or condition of the period in which it was destroyed is

2. Thomas Jefferson and Jacob Graff, Jr.

Let there be no mistake about it. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence while living in rooms on the second floor of the new house of young Jacob Graff, Jr., at the corner of Market and Seventh Streets, Philadelphia, during June 1776. For more than a century after the event, a century spent in and out of Civil Wars, national expansion, centennial celebrations, and the firecrackers of that great annual festive occasion, the Fourth of July, the question, where? arose about every quarter century. Claimants motivated by commercial interest or misplaced zeal advanced other locations in-between times, only to be put in their places as champions of right repaired to the records in rebuttal.

A few months before the Declaration's fiftieth anniversary, Dr. James Mease of Philadelphia put the question to Jefferson for the first time: "which house, and in which room of the house, you composed it. If a private house, the name of the person who kept it at the time would be acceptable."⁵ Jefferson replied at length, anxious in this instance

necessary other than to record the fact that it was torn down to make way for trade and commerce." Donaldson, op. cit., 5. His associate, Edward T. Steel, who tipped him about the proposed demolition and to whom he dedicated the book expostulated "that it was a cloud upon the patriotism of the city, and that he would be glad to join anyone in buying the buildings back and making a city museum of them, so that they might be preserved." Someone also suggested that the house be rebuilt in Fairmount Park, while "one rich gentleman said something . . . about buying it and erecting it as a School of History at the University of Pennsylvania." Ibid., p. 75. Park Historians Richard Tyler and William M. Campbell in 1960 located the Donaldson residences in West Philadelphia and searched in vain for any remaining scraps of salvaged materials.

5. The Exchange between Jefferson and Mease is reproduced in toto, interlineations and all, by John H. Hazelton, The Declaration of Independence Its History (New York, 1906), pp. 149-51. As a young man in the 1790's Mease had been an arch Republican and Jeffersonian, influenced perhaps by his preceptor in medicine, the younger Dr. William Shippen, onetime Continental Surgeon General, and much involved politically during and after the Revolution. An early civic interest in Philadelphia Mease demonstrated by publication in 1811 of a guidebook, The Picture of Philadelphia. This later account of the circumstances underlying Mease's inquiry provides plausible explanation of its timing: "The house would probably have been forgotten had not Lafayette, when he returned on a visit to the United

to please, as fond remembrances had come to envelope his part in declaring independence:

at the time of writing that instrument I lodged in the house of a mr Graaf, a new brick house 3. stories high of which I rented the 2^d floor consisting of a parlour and bed room ready furnished. in that parlour I wrote habitually and in it wrote this paper particularly, so far I state from written proofs in my possession the proprietor Graaf was a young man, son of a German, & then newly married. I think he was a bricklayer, and that his house was on the S. side of Market street, probably between 7th & 6th or perhaps higher and if not then the only house on that part of the street, I am sure there were few others yet built near it. if there be extant a Directory of that year it will probably lead to a recognition of the identical house, for the name of the owner may be relied on, while I may misremember the particular location. I have some idea, but very faint that it was a corner house, but no other recollection throwing any light on the question, or worth communication⁶

In a postscript he ventured that it was on the southeast corner of the block, "fronting Eastwardly," but in a further communication corrected this to put it on the northeast corner.⁷ Finally, his interest aroused,

States, awakened popular interest in places made sacred through association with the principal events of the Revolution. Philadelphians, fired by his example, exerted themselves to discover in which house so important a document had been prepared, and fortunately Jefferson was then alive to give the necessary information." Elizabeth Robins, "The Old Jefferson House, Philadelphia," Harper's Weekly, Apr. 14, 1883.

6. Jefferson prefaced his directions with the following well-aimed observation" "It is not for me to estimate the importance of the circumstances concerning which your letter of the 8th makes inquiry. They prove, even in their minuteness, the sacred attachments of our fellow citizens to the event of which the paper of July 4, 1776, was but the declaration, the genuine effusion of the soul of our country at that time. Small things may perhaps, like the relics of saints, help to nourish our devotion of the holy bond of our union, and keep it longer alive and warm in our affections. This effect may give importance to circumstances however small." Hazelton, op. cit., p. 457. Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XLI, 248.

7. Hazelton, op. cit., p. 150.

he wrote again to Mease, asking the results: "Your letter . . . has excited my curiosity to know whether my recollections were such as to enable you to find out the house."⁸ Mease had indeed been successful: "upon reference to the sons of your landlord, I find that the house in which you resided in 1776, is at the South West Corner of Market and Seventh Streets . . . The rooms which you occupied, are generally filled with goods . . ."⁹ Jefferson died on July 4, 1826, having contributed this last remembrance to the record.

Doubtless Mease informed his circle of friends about the site, but it remained for Bank of the United States president, Nicholas Biddle, to give wide circulation to this exchange of correspondence. His "Eulogium on Thomas Jefferson" of April 11, 1827 (delivered before the American Philosophical Society and published subsequently in pamphlet form), reproduced the letters in an appendix. Biddle during the course of his oration observed penetratingly:

These lodgings, it will be heard with pleasure by all who feel the interest which genius inspires for the minutest details of its history, he had selected, with his characteristic love of retirement, in a house recently built on the outskirts of the city, and almost the last dwelling-house to the westward, where in a small family he was the sole boarder. That house is now a warehouse in the centre of Philadelphia, standing at the southwest corner of Market and Seventh streets. There the Declaration of Independence was written.

Although Jefferson warned Mease that "the following addn. specifies are from a memory too much decayed to be relied on with much confidence," his recollection was amazingly, even uncannily accurate. The intervening half-century had been unusually panoramic for a man of that day and age. Wartime responsibilities as governor of Virginia amid crisis, ministerial duties colored by the rich panoply and cultural variety of Europe, years of domestic politics and executive duties as Secretary of State, Vice President, and President, and his architectural labors of love at Monticello might have blocked a less accutitive mind, or one caring less about the matter. But none of his later honors meant quite so much to Jefferson as that of having been the great Declaration's penman. As a frequently recurrent subject in later years, it prepared him for inquiries such as Mease's. Also, as a gentleman architect he customarily took note

8. Ibid.

9. To which he added: "I shall be deprived therefore of the pleasure of joining my friends to celebrate the anniversary of our national independancy in them, but I still feel happy in being able to designate the house" Ibid., p. 151.

of building types, and so typically a Philadelphia street corner model as Graff's could be expected to leave an impression in his memory.

In spite of Mease's and Biddle's efforts, by 1850 the issue had once again become cloudy. John Fanning Watson's Annals of Philadelphia in that year's edition reported that the "place of writing the Declaration had been differently stated (vol. II, 309)." He advanced the candidacies of the Indian Queen Tavern and Mrs. Clymer's boarding for the honor as well as the Graff House (vol. I, 470). Heiskell's Tavern had by then also gained its adherents, while George Ticknor Curtis' Life of Daniel Webster reported that Jefferson told visitors in December 1824 that the "Declaration of Independence was written in a house on the north side of Chestnut Street, between Third and Fourth, - not a corner house."¹⁰ By December 1854 the controversy had become so ripe that a "D.W." found it desirable to republish Jefferson's letter to Mease in the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

At almost precisely this confused juncture Benson J. Lossing, gathering materials for his Field Book of the Revolution, appeared in Philadelphia to garner descriptions of that period's historic sites and make sketches of them. Misguided and confused, he managed to present in the completed work the wrong house, illustrating it with an entirely erroneous drawing. Following appearance of Lossing's publication in Philadelphia, the city's oldest and best informed antiquarian, John McAllister, who had been in business there since before 1785 and kept a complete run of directories,

10. The octogenarian Jefferson's fascination with the circumstances surrounding the writing of the Declaration led him into a propensity for story-telling. Whether his memory faltered in the instance related above or his listeners misunderstood him, when Mease wrote, he consulted the records, personal accounts among them, and made a well-considered and reliably authoritative reply. The same sort of confusion over place and occasion may have transformed his famous anecdote about the Declaration and the flies from meetings held by the committee of five to the person of Congress itself: "While the question of Independence was before Congress it had its meetings near a livery-stable. The members wore short breeches and silk stockings, and with handkerchief in hand they were diligently employed in lashing the flies from their legs. So very vexatious was this annoyance, and to so great an impatience did it arouse the sufferers, that it hastened, if it did not aid in inducing them to promptly affix their signatures to the great document which gave birth to an empire republic." This anecdote I [an unnamed "frequent visitor"] had from Mr. Jefferson at Monticello, who seemed to enjoy it very much, as well as give great credit to the influence of the flies. He told it with glee, and seemed to retain a vivid recollection of an attack from which the only relief was signing the paper and flying from the scene." In recalling this tale from Randall's biography of Jefferson, the author comments "It seems probable that Hiltzheimer's stables [across Seventh Street from the Graff House] are referred to" Thomas Allen Grenn, Some Colonial Mansions and those Who lived in them . . . (Phila., 1899), pp. 224-25.

set about correcting the record. On May 18, 1855, he sent to Lossing from his personal copy of Biddle's eulogium extracts enough to satisfy the question of location accompanied by "a particular description of the building." This earliest known description of the Graff House has somehow evaded publication to the present. Sold from the Lossing Collection years ago, it is at present on deposit at the American Philosophical Society Library in the Feinstone Collection. It contains valuable and important details about the house's early appearance, as well as its situation in 1855. Reproduced as it appears in the manuscript the description reads:

S.W. Corner of Market & 7th St

The original building was three Stories in height--with a Gable to the 7th St. side--the Dimensions were probably 36 or 38 ft on Market St--and about 45 feet on 7th St.--over the Market St. front were (one of) the Garret Windows--Dormer Windows--Philadelphia Custom--I think there were two of these Windows--Mr. Gratz thinks the same--and two Windows in the Gable wall looking into 7th street Some years ago perhaps 20 years ago--a fourth Story was added as now seen--and the height of the building along 7th St; thus increased--the original building had, in the 2nd and 3rd Stories, 5 Windows facing 7th St--these Windows remain--but the 3rd & 4th Windows in the 2nd Story have had new Sashes with larger panes of Glass--The 1st & 2nd Windows in the 2nd story have the original Sashes with Panes of Glasses only 8 by 10 Inches--In the time when the House was built, the finest buildings had panes only 8 by 10--it was at the 1st of 2nd Windows in the 2nd story that Mr Jefferson wrote the Declaration--He had the Space divided into 2 small Rooms one of which was his Chamber--In the other he did his writing--

There are two Dormer Windows now to the Roof over 7th St--these are in the old fashioned style, and it is quite probable that they were the Windows on the Roof facing Market St before the enlargement--turn over

This Memorandum was hastily written for my son--I had not then an opportunity of looking at Mr Richard's Photographic Picture of the Building--I have since been looking at it--The Original House and the addition made some years ago can be readily distinguished--the old part is of a lighter colour for the Bricks have been painted Yellow--I observe there is still a Dormer or Garrett Window on Market St.--but I still think there were two when the building was only 3 stories--and perhaps the other is the Garret Window now on 7th St

J. Mc

[across the bottom of second sheet]

The Independence House S. W. Corner of Market & 7th St was only three Stories high when Jefferson

boarded in it in 1776.--It was raised to a 4th Story some years ago and about one third added to the height--

All about the old 2 Story House in 5th St being the boarding House of Jefferson is incorrect--some body may have thrown out a remark to that effect and the Keeper of the Grogg Shop in it encouraged the Notion and raised a Sign of Jefferson Wigwam in large letters--

Mr Lossing ought to have a Copy of Dr Mease's Correspondence with M^r Jefferson, at the End of Biddle's Eulogium, and also of Mr Biddle's remarks--Agnes will take a Copy for you this afternoon--

From his home at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., replying the next day, Lossing acknowledged himself to be in error and explained what had happened:

I have undoubtedly made a mistake in giving, as a picture of Jefferson's boarding House the one that I have. I have fallen into the Error, under the lead of residents of Philadelphia, and who, having the Entire means of certain knowledge at hand, I supposed reliable Watson does not give a picture of the house, and I supposed the original to be demolished, and no drawing of it preserved, until I met that from which I copied, in the "New York Journal" an illustrated Literary Periodical, of the date of August 27th 1853.¹¹

11. Penned at the bottom of McAllister's first sheet was a transmittal note signed by his son, John A. McAllister, a collector and antiquarian of note in his own right and a member of the House of Representatives, prepared in explanation of the house description: "Since writing to you My Father has had Conversation with Mr Gratz the owner of the property SW 7th & Market Sts respecting the appearance of the building before it was altered & has furnished the above as the result of their deliberation" The earlier McAllister letter and the photograph by Richards are not known to have survived. Lossing went on to explain "Below the picture are the words 'Old House where Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.' 'Drawn by Devereux, from an Original sketch' etc. Devereux being a Philadelphia artist, I presumed he had been careful about the authority of the 'sketch.' . . . Unfortunately, I never met with the Eulogy of Mr. Biddle. . . ." Benson J. Lossing to John A. McAllister, May 19, 1855, McAllister Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The "Original sketch" with which the mischief began was, in fact, the drawing of a house at the corner of Fifth and Minor Streets by Gabriel Harrison, done in 1846. Old Philadelphia Views, Library Company of Philadelphia, vol. 6, p. 87.

Although Lossing promised to correct the account in the next edition of his field book, nothing came of it, and 20 years later a correspondent in the January 1875 issue of a Philadelphia magazine, Potter's American Monthly (p. 62), revived the question in an article entitled "Where was the Declaration of Independence Written?" The correspondent strongly supported the location next door to the Graff House at 702 Market Street. A rejoinder by McAllister's daughter, Agnes, in the May issue (pp. 223-4), not only reproduced the Jefferson-Mease correspondence, but a floor plan of the second story and a description:

Mr. Hyman Gratz sketched for my father a plan of the house as it was in 1776. This, with some account of the property, which my father had collected, and made note of, he inserted in his copy of Mr. Biddle's "Eulogium."

There the matter stood when Donaldson's labors commenced eight years later. It was rehashed once again to the same conclusions in the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 1917 volume XII (pp. 247-8).

What brought Jefferson to the younger Graff's house in the first place? The answer to this question and elements of his situation there fit nicely into his account and offer further internal substantiating data bearing on its reliability. Earlier he had enjoyed the hospitality and fine surroundings of cabinetmaker Benjamin Randolph's house opposite Carpenter's Hall and the new Pemberton mansion on Chestnut Street. With Dr. Franklin's equally hospitable courtyard only a gateway removed, he might be thought ideally located. But the block was tightly built up; stables and tanneries were near to hand with their odors and flies. Having arrived in town on May 14, two days later he wrote to a friend "I think, as the excessive heats of the city are coming on fast, to endeavor to get lodgings in the skirts of the town where I may have the benefit of a freely circulating air."¹² By May 23 he had found Graff's new house and moved there on a week-to-week footing at 35 shillings per, according to his account book.¹³ Jefferson's own later recollection must be accepted for the extent and nature of his accommodations while residing there, as no materials of any extent relating to these concerns are known to exist. There remains his spelling of Graff's name as "Graaf" to be explained. This was at the time as correct spelling of the name as the several others in use. It reflects a long-A applied

12. Julian P. Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton, N. J., 1950-), I, 292.

13. Lodging at Randolph's had cost 40 shillings a week, so he effected a 5 shilling savings and the welcome space of an extra room. May 23; June 3, 9, 23; July 10; August 29; September 3. MS account book, 1776-78, University of Virginia.

in pronouncing it that is not known to the modern spelling and pronunciation. And in the background to both is the family history of that era.

Although Jefferson's landlord had been born in Philadelphia and from his employment of the "Graff" spelling may be supposed to have been a contemporary Philadelphia type of young man, his father, Jacob Graff, Sr., had come to this country from Germany.¹⁴ Next to nothing is known about either Jacob Graff. If either corresponded even infrequently with friends or relatives, there is nothing to show it. Surviving are, however, a receipt book kept by the elder Graff during his lifetime and by the younger Graff after his death in administering the estate and receipt and cash books maintained by the younger Graff in his business.¹⁵ They show both to have been bricklayers, but the cash book also shows Jefferson's landlord to have been engaged in a dry goods establishment as well as a partner of the firm Shinkle and Graff.¹⁶ Brought up to the bricklayer's trade, he widened his interests somewhere along the line while, as stated in the Dictionary of American Biography, establishing the "family fortunes on a firm basis."¹⁷ This seems to have been accomplished in part at least through the agency of his marriage, for Mrs. Graff's maiden name, as given in the church records, was Maria Schinckel.¹⁸ The books also reveal that around 1758 the senior Graff's name was commonly spelled "Grave" by those with whom he dealt, while later they spelled his name "Graffe," "Graeff," and "Graff" with and without an umlaut over the "a". Jefferson's "Graaf" appears more than once as well. So there is good reason for the belief that people pronounced "Graff" with a long-A.

14. Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1931), VII, 467. The elder Graff arrived in 1741. He was the first "of a line of builders, contractors, and engineers." Grandson Frederick Graff invented a pioneer hydraulic water system for Philadelphia. Great-grandson Frederic Graff was the father of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park and became the country's leading water-works engineer with a hand in establishing the systems of Cambridge, Mass.; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Providence, R. I.; and Washington, D.C.

15. Jacob Graff Receipt Book, 1758-1805, Detroit Free Library; Jacob Graff receipt and cash books, 1776-90, 2 vols., Dreer Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

16. They handled general merchandise and shoes as well. Ibid.

17. Dict. of Am. Biography, VII, 467.

18. "Record of Pennsylvania Marriages, Prior to 1810, St. Michael's & Zion Lutheran Church," Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, IX, 356. The entry reads "September 21, 1774, Jacob Graef, Jr., and Maria Schinckel, L."

These books, scattered references to both Graffs as men of business, and estate papers demonstrate that the young couple Jefferson chose to lodge with in 1776 were of a first and second generation family on the rise. In their generously proportioned, new, brick house with a suite or rooms available for rent to a gentleman like himself, kept spotless by the Pennsylvania Dutch housewife, they symbolized the admixture of opportunity, application, thrift, and confidence in the new America that Jefferson saw as the hope for all mankind. The toddling baby son, Frederick Graff, who reputedly rode Jefferson's knee in the parlor then, became a famous engineer. Here, in this scene, was embodied the promise of American life. What better a place to write the Declaration of Independence!

3. Building the Graff House

Before his marriage to Maria Schinkel on September 21, 1774, the younger Graff in all probability lived with his father two blocks to the east on Market Street. The next eighteen months might have been spent by the young couple under either family roof. Little more than eight of them passed before he purchased the lot at the corner of Market and Seventh Streets on which he would build a home for his family. He bought it from a man of stature, Edmund Physick, Keeper of the Great Seal and Receiver-General of Pennsylvania. The deed, dated June 1, 1775, gave the metes and bounds as extending 32 feet along Market Street and 124 feet along Seventh to an alleyway leading into the block's interior. This valuable property was subject to a quit rent of £ 2.13.4 per annum and 85 1/3 Spanish pieces of eight a year for 17 years.¹⁹

On June 17, 1775, the senior Graff purchased scantling to the amount of £ 3.15 enough to have provided scaffolding to build the house. As his receipt book indicates a rate of activity that would bring him to one undertaking at a time, it is probable that he and his son did the Graff House brickwork side-by-side. During the months that followed, through April 1776, regularly spaced payments to suppliers and tradesmen indicate the phases of building as they passed. To Hart and Salter, lumber and board dealers, Graff paid £ 15 June 20 "on account" and £ 14.16 on July 3 "in full."²⁰ The firm of Salter & Burr received £ 4.10.9 on October 26, 1775, as payment "in full" for 1100 "drest shingles,"

19. Deed Book I-15, 89-92, Register of Deeds, City of Philadelphia.

20. Jacob Graff Receipt Book, 1758-1805. On April 16, 1775, Graff paid John Armstrong £ 13.4 for 2400 feet of "ceder Bords." And on June 3 he paid Thomas Watson £ 8.2 "in full for shingles and all other Demands for Britton & Thomas."

an indication that the roof was on.²¹ Two days later he paid again "in full for wood" £ 2.5 to a John Jones.²² Early the next month he paid mason Caleb Hewes [Hughes] £ 5.7.6 for unspecified services.²³ He paid Conrad Wever £ 8.15 for stonework on November 27, 1775.²⁴ On December 26 he paid Clark and Wetherill £ 3.15.11 1/2 for unspecified services.²⁵ An employee of Wetherill & Cresson's lumber dealership received £-8/6 payment "in full" on January 17, 1776.²⁶ This was the city's leading supplier of wood stock, and this final small payment for earlier services doubtless had to do with finish woodwork applied before plasterers Carble and Volans did their work for which payment in the amount £ 7.4.11 was made January 6, 1776.²⁷ On February 7 Joseph Hillborn and Caleb Attmore, Jr., received £ i.4.9 for unspecified services.²⁸ The same day painters and glaziers George Epple and Peter Bowyer received £ 2.5.²⁹ Jacob Masoner, an employee of the plastering firm of Corman and Barge, received £ 6.2.7 "in full" for their services.³⁰ The same day he received £ 2.8.2 "in full for my uncle Jacob Barge."³¹ Three payments made during April, to Robert Haysham for John Steinmetz, to Edward Simmons, and to Alexander Mackey, completed the payments apparently covering construction of the Graff House.³² By May the house was ready for occupancy--and Jefferson was house-hunting.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Nov. 3, 1775, Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid. Samuel Clark and Samuel Wetherill were North Ward Carpenters.

26. Thomas Betagh, *ibid.*

27. "in full," *ibid.*

28. Ibid. Kaighn and Attmore sold painter's supplies on Front St. in 1782.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid. Jacob Barge was a glazier who advertised the "glass house" in the Pennsylvania Chronicle, July 17, 1769.

32. Ibid. £ 19.9.10 on April 12; 16/9 on April 17; and £ 5.2 on April 27. Steinmetz made bricks, while Haysham was a clerk, later principal clerk in the office of Secretary of the Senate of the United States, Samuel A. Otis.

Jefferson stayed at the Graff House altogether about one hundred days. Evidently satisfied with his accommodations, he remained until September 3, 1776, the day of his departure for Virginia. Paying Maria Graff was practically his last act before leaving.³³ The Graffs themselves continued to reside there two years longer, experiencing nothing more exciting, so far as is known, then hosting the highly-regarded member of the Virginia delegation to Congress. On July 28, 1777, Graff sold the house to Jacob Hiltzheimer. The Graff family continued to live in the city. Jacob Graff died in 1793.³⁴

4. Owners after Jacob Graff, Jr.

The circumstances of Hiltzheimer's purchase are not known. He recorded the event in his diary with the following cryptic but informative entry:

July 28 [1777].--This afternoon I paid Jacob Graff, Jr., for the house and lot at the southwest corner of Seventh and Market Streets E1775, and received the deed for the same.³⁵

The deed recorded in 1791 is, in fact, dated July 24, 1777.³⁶ It recites for the first time in documented form data about the houses "And whereas the said Jacob Graff erected a Brick Messuage or Tenement on this described lot." It also gives Graff's occupation or trade of that date as "bricklayer."

Through the pages of his diary Hiltzheimer has become well known to specialists in the history of eighteenth-century Philadelphia. An often newsy account of the sights and occasions of three decades in the city, it also adds greatly to their understanding of the complexity of personal relationships. Also public undertakings in which he became deeply involved become comprehensible through his brief but frequent and varied reference to them.

Jacob Hiltzheimer was born at Mannheim, Germany, in 1729, and came to this country in 1748. Apprenticed to a silversmith, he farmed in

33. MS account book, 1776-78, University of Virginia, under date of Sept. 3, 1776.

34. In April of that year. His father died in 1781.

35. Jacob Cox Parsons, Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer, of Philadelphia, 1765-1798 (Phila., 1893), p. 34.

36. Deed Book D-27, pp. 317-20, Register of Deeds, City of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia's suburbs following his term in the trade. His specialty became fine livestock, and with the coming of the American Revolution, he assumed important duties with the Quartermaster's department, establishing the Continental Stables with primary responsibility for transport of all forms. After the war he served for three years as a street commissioner of Philadelphia, a period of grading and paving unmatched before. From 1786 for eleven years he represented Philadelphia in the Assembly, chairing the Committee on Claims. He belonged to a long list of charitable and civic societies. Little of note escaped his interest. Married to Quaker Hannah Walker in 1761, he lived across from the Graff House, on the southeast corner of Market and Seventh streets. He never took residence in the Graff House, but rented it, and developed its lot in ways advantageous to himself and his business.³⁷

At the time of purchasing this property, Hiltzheimer was engaged night and day with the demands of Continental agencies while continuing to run his livery business. Philadelphia was on the verge of becoming one of the war's principal theaters. General Howe's army had embarked on British ships for an unannounced destination. But there was little doubt that Philadelphia would be his target. The day before the sale some seventy ships had been sighted off the capes; three nights later Washington arrived "with about 200 light-horse."³⁸ Hiltzheimer's horses and wagons played a conspicuous part in the pell-mell evacuation of Philadelphia that followed defeat on the Brandywine.³⁹

For years after the war the Graff House stood untouched. Hiltzheimer managed it as a unit of the complex of properties owned by him at the junction of Market and Seventh streets. In 1794 he built a house next door to his own home, east of Seventh.⁴⁰ Active and enterprising beyond his years, in 1796 he started another house, adjacent

37. Hiltzheimer's tenants are discussed below.

38. Parsons, Hiltzheimer's Diary, p. 34. The entire army arrived on August 24.

39. Ibid., pp. 35-36. "A number of Waggon's are wanted to remove the ammunition & stores from this city. You are therefore to send down [blank] Waggon's, with four horses each, as soon as possible, to be subject to the orders of Council, and to rendezvous at Mr. Jacob Hiltzheimers in seventh street." Circular of Council to Justices, Sept. 4, 1777. Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, V, 581.

40. Parsons, Hiltzheimer's Diary, p. 209. On June 14, 1782, Hiltzheimer bought the adjoining lots south of the Graff House from Samuel Flowers, extending the property 34 feet. He built additional structures on them. "Where the Declaration of Independence was Written," Potters American Monthly, May 1876, p. 343. On August 28, 1782, he made this diary entry: "Paid Thomas Bond, Jr., £175 on account of the lot purchased on Seventh Street for £275." Parsons, p. 51.

to the Graff House on Market Street:

January 10.--Cloudy forenoon. Edward Wells came to see me; conversed with each other concerning the house he is to build for me next spring, in Market street, adjoining the southwest corner of Seventh and Market.⁴¹

April 21.--This afternoon Mr. Barge and I laid the foundation stone of the house I am to build on Market Street adjoining the southwest corner of Seventh.⁴²

April 28.--Mr. Lybrand, the carpenter, put the first floor joist, next to my house at Market street.⁴³

July 9.--Had the raising supper on the second floor of the house adjoining the house at the southwest corner of Market and Seventh streets, which was begun in April last, intended for a store.⁴⁴

Three days later while driving to his farm, he stopped to observe the preparations for putting up a wall around the property:

July 12.--Drove to Gravel Hill before breakfast and around by Robert Morris' stone quarry on Schuylkill, where I saw five teams loading stone to be taken to the building at Seventh and Market Streets. At the latter a large number of men are employed, as well as building a wall around the lot.⁴⁵

This large work force apparently had the intended effect, for two months later the building was completed and leased:

September 23,--Delivered the key of my new store to William Harrison, who rents it at \$450 per annum.⁴⁶

41. Quoted in Donaldson, The House in which . . . Jefferson wrote the Declaration, p. 88.

42. Parsons, Hiltzheimer's Diary, p. 227.

43. Donaldson, p. 88.

44. Ibid.

45. Parsons, Hiltzheimer's Diary, p. 229. Earlier he had showed concern for appearances. He notes in his diary for March 23, 1786: "I planted two lime trees on Seventh Street at the house John Dunlap [tenant of that period of the Graff House] lives in." Ibid., p. 88.

46. Ibid., p. 234. "Forenoon Edward Wells brought his accounts for building a small house adjoining the one I live in; and addition to the one my son Thomas lives in; and a store in Market Street, adjoining the corner house." Ibid., p. 250.

In 1798 the life of this respected and useful citizen came to an end. Hiltzheimer contracted yellow fever during the epidemic of that year, on September 5, judging from the diary's termination date.⁴⁷ He died on September 14.

Not until 1801 was the property in Hiltzheimer's estate divided among the heirs. A daughter, Mary, wife of William C. Rogers, received the Graff House in her share.⁴⁸ On December 15, 1801, the Rogerses sold it for \$6,700 to the firm of Simon and Hyman Gratz.⁴⁹ This same firm consolidated the section of Hiltzheimer's Market Street properties covered by the Graff House and the 1796 house by purchase of the latter the next day, following bankruptcy of the owner, son Thomas W. Hiltzheimer.⁵⁰

The partnership of Simon and Hyman Gratz had only recently appeared on the Philadelphia business scene. Sons of Michael Gratz, who with his brother Barnard had an extensive business in furs through Virginia and western Pennsylvania, and the former Miriam Simon, daughter of a great Lancaster landowner, they had started their own firm when the other was dissolved in 1798.⁵¹ Renting the house and office next to the

47. Ibid., p. 260.

48. Hiltzheimer died intestate, leaving a large estate to his two sons and three daughters. The partition of it is detailed in Orphans Court dockets. "Where the Declaration of Independence was Written," Potters American Monthly, May 1876, pp. 341-44. This division of the property altered the old property lines. The Rogers received the Graff House on a lot the house's 16 foot eight inch width and ninety feet along Seventh Street to the wall of the two story house to the south. Thomas W. Hiltzheimer received the adjoining house. Westcott, Historic Mansions, p. 317.

49. Deed Book EF-10, 461-3, Register of Deeds, City of Philadelphia.

50. Simon Gratz was the purchaser in both cases. Ibid., pp. 463-65.

51. Michael and Barnard Gratz have been called "merchant venturers," in recognition of varied line of trade and widespread movements. Among their associates were David Franks, William Trent, and George Croghan. Their adventures are part of the old Northwest Territory's history. Their division of effort left Barnard at home in Philadelphia and took Michael to frontier Lancaster, from whence he directed trading operations farther afield. This is discussed in detail by William V. Byars, Papers of B. & M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798 (Phila., 1916). The family became prominent in the life of Philadelphia and the nation during the nineteenth century through many channels of enterprise and participation. Frank M. Etting, great grandson of Michael and Miriam Gratz, lawyer and onetime Director of Public Schools in Philadelphia, wrote the first history of Independence Hall and undertook and early restoration of the building. Distinguished soldiers, admirals, lawyers and doctors from the family abounded throughout. David Philipson, Letters of Rebecca Gratz (Phila., 1929), pp. ix-ivi.

Graff House from Hiltzheimer in that year, they had enjoyed quick success and stood ready to acquire the entire property at this opportune moment.⁵² They ran not only a large wholesale grocery business, but had also administered large holdings in Kentucky of their Illinois and Wabash claim, including the land occupied by Mammoth Cave.⁵³ Expansion of their quarters at the Market Street locations was the logical end of this consolidation of properties. Their business volume and stock doubtless warranted it. It was not long in coming.

Just after assuming title to the Graff House, Simon Gratz checked up on his fire insurance. Hiltzheimer had taken out insurance on it in 1794:

At a Meeting of the Trustees [Mutual Assurance Company] at the Golden Swan Wednesday the 11th June 1794 . . . The following buildings have been surveyed for Insurance, viz:

Jacob Hiltzheimer's House Situate on the South side of High Street & corner of Seventh street--

On the House	£500 @ s32/6%
2 Small Trees	@ s15 & s10 ⁵⁴

At a meeting of the Trustees at the Buck in Second Street, Wednesday 10th December 1794.

52. Their father's business had its offices at Chestnut and Front Streets. He retired from business with crippling arthritis the year they set up shop on Market Street. In leaving the old address, they cast their lot with the future of Market Street as the future hub of business in Philadelphia, a correct judgment. Frank Willing Leach, "Old Philadelphia Families," The North American, Dec. 1, 1912. The Philadelphia directories after 1798 show the Gratz brothers with a "grocery and wine store" on Market St. See Westcott, Historic Mansions, p. 316.

53. Philipson, Rebecca Gratz, pp. ix-x.

54. These are the same two lime trees Hiltzheimer planted along Seventh Street on March 23, 1786. They probably were the reason he took his business to the Mutual Assurance Company in 1794. That company was formed in 1784 when the original fire insurance company, Franklin's Contributionship, refused insurance on houses with trees in the vicinity. Its managers adopted as an insignia a green tree. Like the Contributionship's hand-in-hand this symbol of the company's origins survives to the present on plaques, letterheads, and advertisements. Mutual Assurance Company Minute Book, 1784-1801.

Thomas Ewing, John Kaighn and George Wescott were appointed to sign the following Policies, viz:

No 484- £500 Insured to Jacob Hiltzheimer
the 15 November Deposite £9:7:6⁵⁵

Subsequently, the policy had disappeared. Unfortunately, the survey of the house has also disappeared, and as the records show that Graff never insured the house, all such descriptive materials ante-dating 1800 as early surveys must be done without.⁵⁶ But Simon Gratz addressed himself in 1802 to the Mutual Assurance Company board of trustees:

A letter was received from Simon Gratz that he has purchased the House at the South West Corner of Market & seventh streets insured in this Office by Policy No. 484 which has been lost & requesting that a New Policy be issued in lieu thereof - The Board thereupon resolved that a duplicate Policy be issued accordingly.⁵⁷

In point of fact, no duplicate was ever issued. Sometime between the board's resolution and its implementation, the Gratz firm decided to insure both houses instead of renewing the insurance on one. Mutual Assurance Company surveyor, H. Jones, in June 1802 viewed the premises and wrote a survey of the two adjoining buildings. The Rogerses assigned their interest in Hiltzheimer's policy to Simon Gratz, and the company cancelled it and applied earlier payments to the new one.⁵⁸ On December 8 the trustees signed Gratz's new policy.⁵⁹

55. Ibid.

56. Neither the numerical listing nor street book of Contributionship policyholders list Graff or Hiltzheimer. The Park's index of properties and policyholders also omits reference to either party. In the absence of specific reference it must be assumed that no insurance was made on the house before 1794.

57. Mutual Assurance Company Minute Book, 1795-1802, Jan. 13, 1802.

58. The survey, as much a working paper as a report, is endorsed: "Deduct the Premium on \$1333.33 Insured on the Corner part of this above building being included in this survey & Insured in this office by Policy No. 484 to Jacob Hiltzheimer 15 Nov. 1794 & assign'd by Wm. C. Rogers & Mary his wife on the 16 day of Nov^r 1802 to Simon Gratz amounting to (w^{ch} is now Cancell'd) [\$] 25" At page bottom is this statement: "Note there is an Insurance of \$1333.33 on part of the above property say on the Corner House & the Sum to be insured on the Property as it now stands is to be made up \$4000 including the above sum already Insured." Mutual Assurance Company Old Surveys, Policy No. 1345, Survey No. 505.

59. Mutual Assurance Company Minute Book, 1795-1802, Dec. 8, 1802. The trustees approved assignment of Hiltzheimer's Policy No. 484 during the November 16, 1802 meeting.

That part of the insurance survey describing the Graff House reads as follows:

Survey of Simon Gratz's three Story Building situate on the south side of High street and Corner of Seventh streets, Dimensions, 32 [16' 8"] feet on High Street and 50 feet on seventh street, Lower story, East part of the front hath a Breast, surbase, washboards, windows Cased, and a Dentle Cornice round the Room, the Southeast room was finished for a Kitchen as is Customary, . . . second story, East part, Mantles, Closets washboards, surbase, windows, cased, and two Rooms, hath Cornice round them . . . Third Story, East part, washboards, and windows, cased . . . Garrets not plastered, Trap Door winding stairs, Common floors in the Eastern part, . . . one Chimney hath Marble, Pediment and Architraves in Front, . . . the Roof of the other [eastern] part patched.⁶⁰

Six years passed; business boomed and the Gratz brothers completely rebuilt the upper stories of their adjoining houses, adding a fourth story, and extending the entire structural entity forty feet to the rear along Seventh Street. In so doing, however, they appear to have retained all principal features of the Graff House's first and second floors. Requiring revised fire insurance coverage, they made application and in August 1808 Mutual Assurance Company surveyor Philip Justus wrote a survey of the renovated buildings. That section descriptive of the Graff House survivals reads as follows:

A part has been finished for A dwelling house, First Story, 2 Rooms, Breast, mantles, Surbase, washbd^s, Closets, windows Cased & wood Cornice in one Room, a marble mantle in one room, Second Story, Similar, except the marble mantle, Third Story, 3 Rooms, washbd^s, Closets, & windows Cased, 2 flights Common winding Stairs, The first Story of this part is occupied as Counting Rooms, The whole communicates with the other parts of the Store, . . .⁶¹

Company officials signed the policy on August 29, 1808.⁶² In both excerpts above underlining denotes features of the house and its rooms known to Jefferson's

60. Mutual Assurance Company Old Surveys, Policy No. 1345, Survey No. 505.

61. Mutual Assurance Company Old Surveys, Policy No. 1345, Resurvey No. 1300.

62. Mutual Assurance Company Minute Book, 1805-1809, Aug. 29, 1808.

time. Taken together and read while viewing Illustrations No. 1 and 2 they give an accurate idea of the setting in which Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. Those features described are believed to have been in the house on July 4, 1776. Between 1776 and 1802 the house remained practically untouched; between 1802 and 1808 it was expanded, reroofed, and remodelled upstairs - but without a gutting of the interior at those levels where fine finishes would be lost. All such amenities of 1775 were retained for perfectly good reason: until 1801 the Graff House served entirely as a residence and after that date the better rooms provided the Gratz brothers with company offices. Thus was obviated the refitting and stripping that accompanies conversion to common commercial use. It is believed to have survived in this state until after the firm of Simon and Hyman Gratz failed in 1826.

What the first survey describes is a Philadelphia end-of-row type house of somewhat more generous than usual proportions. Two rooms to a floor, no kitchen wing, no dormers, a pedimented frontispiece with moldings, and a stairway but no separate hallway (suggesting positioning between rooms). Interior appointments while far from lavish were generally better than average, with some ornamenting. The first and second story woodwork, fireplace treatment, and cornices show them to have been superior rooms, while the plain finished bedrooms of the third story and the unplastered garret lacked show. The first story's dining parlor with its marblework at the fireplace was thus the only fine room reserved for family use while Jefferson was in residence. Jefferson himself had all the best of it with rooms sporting not only panelling and dentil cornice but such conveniences as closets. These two rooms presented him with moderately spacious comfort and minor architectural pretense as well. As the later photograph shows (Illustration No. 2) each had four windows and provided the cross-ventilation of a "freely circulating air." The second survey confirms first and second story features, and indicates that the 1808 renovation converted the kitchen to office space and gave the third story rooms elements of finish they had not previously enjoyed. The type of house thus described shows a lineage consistent with McAllister's 1855 description, having a "Gable" wall fronting Seventh Street equipped with, it is safe to assume, the characteristic double-pitched roof and boldly projecting, corniced pediment on that side.

During the years after 1808 the enlarged premises answered entirely to business purpose. The brothers lived in a spacious house on Chestnut Street near Seventh with the immediate family until after Simon's marriage when he moved to "Willington," his country seat.⁶³ Then, in 1826, the Gratz brothers went bankrupt. They lost the property, then regained it in 1835 but did not return to business there: Simon recouped his fortunes in other enterprises while Hyman devoted himself to philanthropies.⁶⁴ Following

63. Philipson, Rebecca Gratz, pp. 85-87.

64. By deed of February 20, 1835. Deed Book AM-59, pp. 504-08, Register of Deeds, City of Philadelphia. According to one writer Simon Gratz owned large land tracts in Dauphin and Huntington Counties at the time of his death in 1839. Frank Willing Leach, "Old Philadelphia Families," The North American, Dec. 1, 1912.

dissolution of the firm, the building was rented to various businesses. As reported in R. A. Smith's Philadelphia as It Is in 1852 (p. 433) under the heading "HULTSHEIMER'S NEW HOUSE," it was ". . . occupied, the lower story as a clothing depot, and the upper by a printing office and meeting rooms for the United Order of American Mechanics. The very chamber occupied by Mr. Jefferson is now the office of the secretary of that association." Hyman lived until Jan. 27, 1857, and was thus able when approached in 1855 to sketch the second floor, showing Jefferson's two rooms to have been separated by the stairhall:

They [Gratzes] . . . closed up the door on Seventh street and removed the stairs (those across the building). The whole of the second story of the corner house is now in one room (in 1855), but the place where the old stairway came up can be seen by the alterations in the boards of the floor The sketch of the original plan of the house, . . . was drawn for me to-day by Mr. Hyman Gratz.

John McAllister, Jr.⁶⁵

July 6, 1855

Donaldson confirmed the correctness of Gratz's sketch while undergoing his chilly vigil in March 1883:

The bricks in the space of the original side door on Seventh Street were of a different kind from those in the body of the building. The dimensions of the two second story rooms were about 48 feet 9 inches by 14 feet 6 inches. The joists filling in the original hallway (stairs) were of another kind than those of the rest of the floor. . . . An entrance to the second story was afterward placed in the south end of the building on Seventh street and this remained until 1883. There was at one time, a stairway to the second, third and fourth floors from Market street and on the west side of the building. The joists were cut all the way up and the old trimmer was in sight in 1883. Such a front stairway was common to stores on Market street in early days.⁶⁶

In 1878, only a few years before demolition of the buildings, the Gratz heirs made extensive, but for the most part superficial, alterations

65. The Graff House had engaged the attention of McAllister as early as 1833 at which time he discussed it with a Mrs. Shepherd. "Hyman Gratz" in Henry Simpson, The Lives of Eminent Philadelphians, Now Deceased . . . (Phila., 1859), 448. The McAllister quotation is from Donaldson, The House in which . . . Jefferson wrote the Declaration, 72-73.

66. Ibid., p. 71n.

obviously designed to increase income from the property. These changes were, interestingly enough, limited to the space encompassed by the Graff House itself, the walls of which remained in place as they had been since the bricklayers Graff put them up in 1775. As surveyed by the Contributionship, little more than the shell of the Graff House remained at this point (see appendix for complete survey).

Then in the early 1880's the buildings were put up for sale, and sold by William and Louisa Weightman to the Penn National Bank on September 30, 1882.⁶⁷ Weightman, earlier a partner of the firm that pioneered in introducing quinine to this country, was "reputed to be the largest individual owner of real estate in Philadelphia, making a practice to purchase blocks of old houses, have them demolished, and erect in their place modern dwellings or business establishments as the neighborhood might demand."⁶⁸ The corner section had drifted into distressed circumstance:

At present its ground-floor, the exterior of which is a favorite corner for circus posters, is occupied by a dealer in trunks, satchels, etc. The upper floors are rented out to men of various trades and callings. From a door on Seventh Street a flight of stairs leads to that portion of the second story which was occupied by Jefferson, but it is to be hoped he never had to mount such narrow, dark, rickety, rat-haunted steps. What was once the great statesman's bedchamber is now the office of a manufacturer of 'fancy' advertisements. Sun-flowered, highly-decorated announcements of Oscar Wilde's Poems - price, ninety cents, 'lying cheek by jowl with painted overflowing beer mugs bearing the notice, 'Cool Ale always on draught,' and large-lettered signs of 'Free Lunch this Morning,' have replaced bed and dressing-table. And to what use has the room once his parlor been put? Alas, that we should have to tell the tale! It has been made into a hall or passageway, and there by the window a hatchway has been cut, and so - farewell to all its greatness!⁶⁹

67. "...for a year or two prior to 1883, the two properties 700 and 702 Market Street were for sale, and, I think, at \$80,000. No effort was made to purchase and preserve them for a city museum or for their historic value. Shortly after they were sold to the bank, and public notice of the same given." Ibid., 74. Deed Book JOD-53, 452-457. Register of Deeds, City of Philadelphia.

68. "In 1875 the Elliott Cresson gold medal was awarded the firm by the Franklin Institute for the introduction of an industry new in the United States, for the ingenuity and skill shown in the manufacture, and for the perfection of workmanship." Weightman also was interested in floriculture and had a chrysanthemum named after him. He served as director of several banks as well. Charles J. Cohen, Rittenhouse Square Past and Present (Phila., 1922), 251-5.

69. Elizabeth Robins, "The Old Jefferson House, Philadelphia," Harpers Weekly, Apr. 14, 1883.

While providing sidewalk superintendency of the demolition in 1883, the indispensable Mr. Donaldson made some valuable observations about the structural character of the Graff House.. Reported in a letter to the editor at that time and published in his book later, they read:

The western wall of the corner building, No. 700, against which lies the plaster of No. 702, is a smoothfaced wall of hard brick, with the joints struck--an outside wall showing that the corner house was built first. The inside of the party wall between the two houses, or western wall of the corner building No. 700, which is to the east, is a rough soft brick wall--an inside wall such as is never built for an outside wall; and the joists in the corner building, or No. 700, are built into the walls, or at the time the walls were built The party wall between Nos. 700 and 702 being the west wall of No. 700 and the east wall of No. 702, is simply the west wall of No. 700, the return being to the front and rear wall of No. 700.⁷⁰

Supplementing this discourse are some particulars about the building materials he saved:

The nails of the old portion of the house were hand made, and the joists were of cherry, oak, walnut, and other rare woods--all of them imported. The outside bricks on Seventh street, and the front, were imported and were laid alternately, black and red. The house had been painted a gray or yellow, thus hiding or covering the original color of the bricks. Some large keys were found, perhaps 150 in all, which I have, and also an ancient door lock, hand made, a work of art, which once adorned the front door of the Jefferson house. Some mantles, stairways and rails were also ancient and rare. All of these articles of any interest, along with the window-frames stone caps and sills, old doors and sashes, floors, stringers and wood-work, I took out The middle second-story window, Mr. Dallett [Gillies Dallett, then president of the Penn National Bank], I think, received.⁷¹

From the specific items of the bill rendered Donaldson by Thomas Little for salvaged materials come further details about the house's finish work:

To oak and cherry joists, window frames and sash, marble door and window heads and sills. Stairways--steps and risers. Doors, cupboards and mantels, par-

70. Donaldson, pp. 84-85.

71. Ibid., p. 81. Further evidence of the glazed header bricks noted here can be detected in photograph of the house, Illustration No. 2.

titions Also flooring (and bricks of 2nd story); and
woodwork of building S. W. corner of 7th Street and
Market Street.⁷²

Choice of the term "cupboards" here suggests that the "closets" of the insurance surveys were shelved.

Around the turn of the century Donaldson died. His cherished building materials by then had become sadly depleted, unbeknownst to him. John Hazelton, while preparing his history of the Declaration, inquired of son Thomas B. Donaldson what had become of them. The reply, dated January 23, 1901, leaves no room for hope that they can be recovered in any considerable body:

The lot, on which the rough material of the house lay for many years, was next to a house which we owned at 877 Preston Street, West Philadelphia Last summer, a year, 1899, I had the lot stripped of wagons of trash until the Jefferson House material was uncovered. To our dismay, we found that vandals had carried off much of good and bad. The corner closet was not there, neither were the stairs and rails. All that we now have is in our back yard at 326 N. 39 Street. It simply includes some frames, short joists and yet, best of all, a number of the stone keystone caps which you will notice over the windows [apparently referring to a photograph] They are white stone and about five feet long.⁷³

By referring here to the missing "corner closet," he identifies a pleasing room feature of particular interest if it can be shown to have been one of those in Jefferson's rooms as recorded by the 1802 insurance survey.

Ten years more passed before the younger Donaldson did anything more with his father's treasured remnants. Addressing a letter of notification to Philadelphia's Bureau of City Property, he revealed:

I have sent to Curator Jordan, for the Independence Hall Museum, a stone window-cap from the original house in which the Declaration of Independence was written, 7th and Market sts., Philadelphia. My father, the late Thomas Donaldson, purchased the wrecked material and stored it away, in the 80's.⁷⁴

72. Ibid., opp. p. 82.

73. John H. Hazelton, The Declaration of Independence, Its History (New York, 1906), pp. 459-60.

74. June 8, 1911. Correspondence in Accession folder No. 508 of City Collection. It was accessioned on Nov. 2, 1912. The Park Specimen Number is 10.037 for the item itself.

This relic is now in the museum collection of Independence National Historical Park, incorporated with newer accessions since the Park's establishment.

Tall, angular "Tommy" Donaldson, as Judge Edwin O. Lewis knew him while in law school, served as insurance commissioner and later moved to Glen Ridge, N. J. Until 1940 or later he maintained offices at 1500 Walnut St., Philadelphia. In that year he still owned the Philadelphia property and a residue of the salvaged building materials stored there. Charles Abell Murphy, assistant head of the Works Progress Administration's Philadelphia models project, searching at that time for "definite, positive data on the architectural lines" of the Graff House, approached Donaldson, who replied:

I may be able to recover a window cap (Keystone)
if it has not been moved away from the PLOT adjoining
my old home - 326 N. 39 St. . . . I have several
keys (large ones) from the Jeff. house.⁷⁵

Following up this encouraging lead, Murphy evidently found among the "frames" referred to by Donaldson above a window casing, for his papers contain a scaled drawing of an "end of Stone Window Sill" and a section of "Wood Window Frame," attached to a sheet entitled "Information on 'Declaration House 700-02 Market St.'" (Included in this report as Illustration No. 7.) Relying on this and whatever other materials

75. Thomas B. Donaldson to Charles A. Murphy, Nov. 8, 1940, Charles Abell Murphy Correspondence, Folder E-14, Thomas Jefferson Commemorative Committee, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. For several years Murphy through the committee and other organizations pushed hard for improvement of the block above Independence Hall. The Philadelphia of that day chose to regard him as a visionary, and his schemes for a narrow mall leading to the site of the presidential mansion lined with busts of chosen patriot leaders, restoration of the mansion itself, the Park of the Republic, and raising of public and private funds for such purposes proved more entertaining than availing. He managed to involve some very responsible and influential people in the Jefferson Committee: George E. Nitzsche, C. Barton Brewster, Michael Francis Doyle, Eugene C. Bonniwell, and others. From this organization in 1943 evolved Doyle's Committee for the Restoration of the Jefferson House. Among the models successfully rendered by Murphy's WPA projects were those of the presidential mansion and the President's House, now on exhibit in the Atwater Kent Museum.

In the hope that some of the younger Donaldson's trove might remain at the addresses given in his 1901 letter, Historians Richard Tyler and William M. Campbell of the Park staff searched out the two house sites during the summer of 1960--but found nothing early enough in type to qualify as Graff House originals. Mr. Campbell, also a registered architect, dated the small amount of woodwork seen to around 1880. Richard Tyler, "Report on Graff House Materials," Sept. 2, 1960, Independence National Historical Park Research note card file.

he may have unearthed, he claimed a few years later "I have in my possession, the exact interior and exterior architectural phases of this sacred relic [Graff House]."76

Through the years since Donaldson's crusade ended in a West Philadelphia lot, various of the structural elements stripped from the Graff House in 1883 have reappeared. The Central Penn Bank retained some of the spoils, as is indicated by that section of a draft narrative manuscript entitled "Where Jefferson Wrote the Declaration of Independence" (p. 8) contained in Philadelphia annalist Joseph Jackson's collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania:

So far as is known the only object that has survived was a mantle, which was given to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. This was incomplete, and never erected, and now . . . is stored in the basement of the society's building in Philadelphia . . .

Since Jackson penned this sometime in the 1930's, the mantle has been put back together again in the society's board room (see Illustration No. 8), where a brass plate inscription bears legend that the bank held it until 1898. The Park's museum collection has three such items at the present time. One is the lintel block discussed above. The

76. Charles A. Murphy to Gilbert Chinard, Jul. 23, 1943, Folder E-14, Thomas Jefferson Commemorative Committee, Charles Abell Murphy Correspondence, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. In spite of the positive tone of this assertion, the drawing prepared by E. J. Meeke under Murphy's guidance relied heavily upon earlier undocumented drawings of like character and presented erroneous conceptions of such key features as roof type, location of doorway, and dormer style. Fired by the prospect of a restoration, Murphy gave priority to W.P.A. project report No. 20070, "Recorded by Charles A. Murphy assisted by Charles Ellis," an "Appraisal Report 700-702 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania." Further inquiry of Donaldson while interest remained high elicited this additional information about the circumstances affecting disposal of the Graff House materials: ". . . my father bought the wreckage, stored it in West Philadelphia (time and a garage tossed the material away.) G.W.B. Hicks talked to me about five years ago about restoring the site. I referred him to my father's book . . ." To this he added: "I was about nine years of age when the famous shrine was demolished. In mature years I have been somewhat staggered to think that a city of the size of Philadelphia -- or a city of ANY size -- would permit demolition of a house where the greatest document in 2,000 years of modern life was prepared." Donaldson to Judge Eugene C. Bonniwell, Feb. 26, 1941, *ibid.*

second is an iron key.⁷⁷ The third is a knob lock.⁷⁸ Yet another relic purported to have graced a chamber in the Graff House during the year of Independence is the walnut door in the Atwater Kent Museum, diagonally across Seventh Street from the house site, that bears the following sign:

This is to certify that door was part of building at South West Corner of 7th and Market Street, formerly the home of Thomas Jefferson, and was removed by Thomas P. Dillon, dec'd who conducted a business there.

Ella M. Dillon
Widow Thomas P. Dillon Dec'd⁷⁹

Evidently, this treasure, presented to the museum by the estate of Cyrus H. K. Curtis, survived without benefit of Donaldson's ministrations. Another door of walnut claimed to be from the house serves as the stout portal of a summer home in Ventnor City, N.J. (see illustration No. 5 and caption). Other purported owners of reliquiae include a Philadelphian who claims to have a fireback from the house and a resident of New York state who has a stone lintel block.⁸⁰ The last known and fully authenticated such survival to emerge since Donaldson's time is the "green tree" Mutual Assurance Company firemark (Donaldson's "escutcheon"), reported to be in Mr. Gillies Dallett's possession after 1883. It has turned up at the Home Insurance Company's Firefighting Museum in New York City.⁸¹ (See Illustration No. 4 for view of plaque.)

77. Received on Sept. 23, 1959, from Mr. Hiram B. Grone, without explanation in the records.

78. From the city collection originally, it bears the Park Specimen Number 57-091.

79. Of 5117 Kingessing Ave., Philadelphia, Nov. 3, 1916. Between this date and establishment of the Atwater Kent Museum, the door appears to have been in the possession of the Central Penn National Bank, successor to the Penn National Bank with offices in Ledger Building across from Independence Square. According to Murphy's notes a walnut door reputedly from the Graff House was stored on the Ledger Building's 13th floor in 1939. Folder E-14, Thomas Jefferson Commemorative Committee, Charles Abell Murphy Correspondence, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

80. A Chris Hoffman in the early 1950's had this fireback at his home, 442 South Fourth St., Philadelphia. This building has since been demolished, and Mr. Hoffman has dropped from view. Mr. Milton Rhodes of 22 Sandalwood Lane, Scotia, N.Y., wrote to Park authorities about the lintel on October 3, 1969, sending snapshots. Their correspondence is in the Park's indexed files.

81. Alwin E. Bulau, Footprints of Assurance (New York, 1953, 29, 32, and frontispiece). The firemark can be seen in its original location between the second and third floors of the Graff House's Seventh Street side in Illustration No. 2. Also see Illustration No. 4.

Finally, in perfecting the reliquary that is to be created at the corner of Market and Seventh Streets, a last fragment of data relative to the appearance of the Graff House when in full flower is offered. Hiltzheimer's diary for September 15, 1790, notes that he that day "Paid a man half a dollar for putting up the numbers to my house and lots on Market Street, Nos. 224, 226, 228, and 230."⁸² It is evident that as a Philadelphia Street Commissioner Hiltzheimer was already aware of the ingenious house numbering system that Col. Clement Biddle proposed to put into effect with publication of his 1791 Philadelphia Directory. What he had affixed to his houses on that September day was a black, oval, badge-like plate with white numerals of the system that was to prevail in the city for over 60 years. Under that system the Graff House was numbered 230.

In salvaging and storing materials of the Graff House the senior Donaldson relied heavily on finding a civic-minded, history-conscious angel to bankroll a reconstruction. As the decade changed and another followed and no one came forward, he resorted, as related earlier, to authorship of a book in publicizing the cause. Though the book tells much, nowhere does he get involved with measurements in any detail, an apparently needless exercise where he believed himself still possessed of the building materials themselves. His plans, previously forestalled by absence of backers, frustrated doubly by fire, now received the coup de grace from vandals. With hope all but gone and Donaldson himself dead, the Bricklayers Company of Philadelphia around 1900 commissioned draughtsman William Smith of 1417 W. Dauphin St. to draw floor plans and elevations of the house. As they turned out neither square with documentation now available on the house, but in going about the task Smith and the bricklayers turned naturally enough to the remaining salvage. From the plate's legend, consequently, emerges what little has survived from measurement, windows excepted, as shown in Illustration No. 9. Prefacing the dimensions as given is this acknowledgement of source: "Sizes have been obtained from material on lot 39th and Bearing St. belonging to the late Thomas Donaldson Esq who bought the material with the idea of having it erected in Fairmount Park." The dimensions themselves are as follows:

Outside Measurements Fifty feet by Sixteen To center
of party Wall
Elevation 16 ins Platform and Sill
Brick Wall Flemish Bond Black Headers
Paneled Shutters and Sash 1 1/2 in Thick
Height of First and Second Story 10 ft 8 in

82. "Paid a man half a dollar for putting up the numbers to my house and lots on Market Street, Nos. 224, 226, 228, and 230." Parsons, Hiltzheimer's Diary, p. 164. Since the 1850's the Graff House location has born the number 700 Market Street.

Height of Third Story 9 ft in the Clear
First and Second Story Window Frames 9ⁱⁿ x 12ⁱⁿ
Glass 24 lights
Third Story Window Frames 9ⁱⁿ x 14ⁱⁿ 16 Lights

Eighty-eight years have passed since most of the Graff House's last remains were lost, nearly 40 since the strongwalled bank that replaced it came down. Half a dozen banks, realty holding companies, and other parties have held title to the site of the Graff House over this span of time, and the property has been enlarged by the addition of other lots. The Market Street frontage is presently occupied by a luncheonette, the "Tom Thumb," while the area to the rear has become a parking lot.

5. Some Observations on the History of the Graff House

This report is not intended as a vehicle for involvement with the Declaration of Independence itself or circumstances attendant on the writing of it, however many of them may have happened in the house. Suffice it to acknowledge here that between appointment of the Committee of Five on June 11 and its reporting of the Declaration on June 28, Jefferson prepared three drafts of that document and found time to work on the preamble of Virginia's new constitution, among other writing tasks.⁸³ He thus spent practically all of his time during this interval in the Graff House, hard at work that though rewarding left little time for anything else. Committee members John Adams, Roger Sherman and Robert R.

83. Jefferson was accompanied to Philadelphia by his servant, Bob, who may be supposed in the absence in Jefferson's account books of provision for his lodging elsewhere to have stayed at Graff's in an upper story. Mrs. Jefferson remained behind, putting him in an "uneasy, anxious state." Dumas Malone, Jefferson the Virginian, vol. 1 of Jefferson and His Time (Boston, 1948), 216; Jefferson to Thomas Nelson, May 16, 1776, Julian P. Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton, 1950), I, 292. On June 15, 1776, Congress instructed the colonies to institute governments. Virginia's convention was already in session when Jefferson was appointed to the Committee of Five. He kept touch with the proceedings in Williamsburg, and drafted the charges against the monarch of Virginia's preamble so similar in sound to those of the Declaration. His reputation as a penman had assumed such currency that Congress kept him busy with the resolutions of the committee of the whole house respecting Canada, as well as other such tasks. Though he bore up patiently, he would rather have been attending the Virginia convention. Having no forewarning of the place the Declaration would assume, that it would be immortal, he set about fastidiously to word an important state document that had to have the right tone and spirit. Malone, Jefferson, 221.

Livingston, out-of-towners all, almost certainly met there with him from time to time. And while Sherman and Livingston are not known to have changed anything in the Declaration, they must have had their innings at various points. In all likelihood Adams' changes were effected right in these rooms. Reasonable doubt has been raised over the extent of Franklin's participation at this time, and the odds favor his changes, if made in Philadelphia at all, having taken place at his home rather than the Graff House.⁸⁴ Jefferson's movements before June 11 and after June 28 are of little less interest but much lesser moment. All of this certainly will receive much attention between now and July 4, 1976, in reports of wider scope than this one.

Jefferson was but the first of a number of more or less historically important figures associated with the Graff House. During Jacob Hiltzheimer's long ownership he appears to have reserved the house for better-than-average tenants. Sometime after purchasing it in July 1777, the fragmentary records show he rented to Dr. William Jones, representing Georgia in the Continental Congress.⁸⁵ His tenant in 1780-81 was Col. Ephraim Blaine, at the time Commissary General of Purchases.⁸⁶ From 1785 to 1787 John Dunlap, printer of the Declaration of Independence, publisher of the Pennsylvania Packet, and printer of the Constitution while in residence, rented the house.⁸⁷

For five years after 1788 Hiltzheimer's tenant was one of the country's most celebrated figures, the Hon. James Wilson, Professor of Law at the University, fresh from his triumph in the Federal Convention where he made important contributions to the Constitution.⁸⁸

84. Malone, relying on Julian Boyd's research and discovery of a key Franklin letter by Lyman H. Butterfield (confining Franklin to Edward Duffield's house with gout), states flatly his presumption that "the five members met at the house on the Bristol pike. . . , and discussed the general form of the Declaration." Jefferson, p. 220n.

85. Parsons, Hiltzheimer's Diary, p. 242.

86. County Tax Assessment Ledger, Middle Ward, for the Years 1780 and 1781 (pages 41 and 22, respectively), Philadelphia Municipal Archives.

87. "[August 10, 1783] Mr. Dunlap moved into my house yesterday, at £ 120 per year." Parsons, Hiltzheimer's Diary, p. 57.

88. "[March 31, 1788] James Wilson, Esq., is to rent my house at Southwest corner Seventh and Market Street at £ 75 per annum." Ibid., p. 145 "To be let, the house at the southwest corner of Market and Seventh Street, occupied by James Wilson, Esq. Possession may be had about the middle of April next. Jacob Hiltzheimer." Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser, Marr 25, 1793, p. 2.

While residing at the Graff House, Wilson was appointed associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. As an expert in political economy and upholder of the principle of popular sovereignty, he enjoyed an enviable reputation at this time.

After Wilson more occupants of substance if not fame tenanted the house. It served merchant Joseph Mussi as a dignified residence in 1793 and 1794, and the same purpose for merchant John Richards in 1795 and 1796.⁸⁹ By 1801 and the two years following it is listed as the home and place of business of merchant Jacob Cox, Hiltzheimer's son-in-law.⁹⁰

There followed the long ownership and occupancy by the Gratz brothers discussed above. Their prominence in business was matched by their participation in civic enterprise. Both patronized the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and Hyman held the offices of treasurer and president. Their lovely sister, Rebecca Gratz, Scott's heroine in *Ivanhoe*, joined with them in the activities of the Philadelphia (dancing) Assembly.⁹¹ Hyman also became deeply involved in charitable causes and religious affairs. For years he was associated with the Pennsylvania Company for Insurance on Lives and Granting of Annuities. He also took a leading part in administration of the Mikveh Israel congregation's concerns and helped organize the Jewish Publication Society in the United States during 1845. By deed of trust he endowed the establishment of Gratz College in Philadelphia.⁹²

With a background of occupancy and use having such interest, there will be much more to interpret in the reconstructed Graff House than might be suspected.

In the flurry of comment that resulted from the demolishing of the Graff House, Harper's Weekly (April 14, 1883) made the following still-valid points:

The house in Philadelphia in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence is at present attracting more attention than it has probably

89. Mussi and Richards had their places of business elsewhere, according to Hardie's, Hogan's and Stephens' directories, 1793-96. A Nicholas Rash may have had a grocery business there in 1785, though the two directories for that year confuse matters pretty generally. Thomas Passmore lived there in 1798, Charles Schroeder in 1799, and John Mercier in 1800, according to the directory and tax records.

90. His wife's name was Sarah, according to Westcott, Historic Mansions, p. 317.

91. Rollin G. Osterweis, Rebecca Gratz, A Study in Charm (New York, 1935), p. 81.

92. Philipson, Rebecca Gratz, pp. x, xi.

received since the time when Jefferson had lodgings in it. This is because, as usually happens to our old landmarks, it is to be sacrificed in order to make room for newer buildings better suited to the demands of increasing business in the neighborhood. So long as there was no immediate probability of its being destroyed, few gave it a thought.

It must be confessed that at first sight there is nothing to distinguish this house from those surrounding it, or to denote its age. On a little closer observation one notices the stone facings to the windows usually found in houses built about a century ago, and the old-fashioned dormer windows in the roof. But in itself it is so far from being remarkable that we can understand why many antiquarians have had doubts as to its identity. . .

The necessity for pulling down this house is to be regretted. The interest attached to it is not of a local but of a national character. The corner of Seventh and Market streets may possibly be improved in appearance by a new building, but the removal of the old one is a loss to the whole country.⁹³

93. Authored by Elizabeth Robins and accompanied by Joseph Pennell's pen and ink impressions of the house.

APPENDIX

PHILADELPHIA CONTRIBUTIONSHIP FOR THE INSURANCE OF HOUSES FROM LOSS BY FIRE SURVEY NO. 12315, FEBRUARY 8, 1878, OF GRAFF HOUSE

I have surveyed a brick Store for Caroline Gratz and Simon Gratz Trustees, Situate at the South West corner of Market and Seventh Street, the Store being Sixteen feet Six inches Front by Fifty one feet Six inches deep, Four stories high Walls 9 and 13 inches thick--

First Story, in one room and transverse passage, Yellow pine floor, Moulded base, The front in this Story removed and a 5 inch iron column placed under the lintel over the opening. Four 2 light 20 X 31 in doors in folds, hung to two 2 light 16 1/2 X 31 inch fixed jambs, the upper light being curved and having a small triangular light above it. One battened door to passage. Two 24 light 8 & 10 in windows, one pair of outside shutters; one inside wire guard. One pair of folding Store doors, with sliding shutters outside.

Close winding stairs to 4th Story in passage.

Second Story, in 3 rooms and passage or hall for stairs, White pine floor. Beaded base, One 2 light 26 X 20 in, and three close doors, One 2 light 32 X 30 in and six four light 16 X 30 in windows. 2 in Architraves. One access closet. Grooved board lining 32 inches high on front and flank walls. One wooden Mantel, one raised grate, one hatchway door Iron sink box, cock for cold water.

Third Story, in 2 rooms and a short passage, White pine floor wide boards Two doors. Seven 16 light 8 X 10 in windows. Two inch Architraves. One closet with 6 short battened doors, One wooden Mantel, One hatchway door.

Fourth Story, in one room. White pine floor. (wide boards) narrow strip for base. No doors. Seven 16 light 8 X 10 in windows. No Architraves. Step ladder to Loft: battened door. Folding hatch door.

Loft. No divisions: rough floor. Rough ashler boards, 2 feet high, The 12 light 10 X 12 in dormor window with semi-circular head containing 4 radial and one central light in the head.

Basement Story in two rooms. Yellow pine floor walls and ceiling [sic] lined with grooved boards. One 4 light 13 1/2 X 18 in door, one battened door, Three 2 light 13 1/2 X 36 in windows hung with hinges. Iron sink box, Enclosed: cock for cold water, close Stairs in 1st Story

Roof, Single pitch roof, covered with slates, except about 4 feet of the lower part which is tinned. One hip at the angle of the Streets; plain cornice, apparently Metal, All doors are paneled, and all windows Single hung, unless otherwise described. The Walls and ceilings of the first second, and basement stories are papered

2 Mo 8 1878

Louis Mourel, Surveyor

Omission. A wooden balcony projecting about 4 feet, with 2 wooden brackets under it, projects from the 2nd story, on Market Street, Liberty of
a Restaurant in the cellar, Trunk Store 1^s story, Lithographer & Wood
Engraver 2^d story, & repairer of trunks in 3^d & 4 stories

Loss by
fire
4 P.M. Saturday

ILLUSTRATIONS



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Illustration No. 1

HOUSE OF CAPTAIN JOHN WOODS, southwest corner of Lombard and Front Streets, Philadelphia. Like the Graff House a pre-Revolutionary War corner house with double pitch roof and five window openings on the long side, it gives some idea of the Graff House appearance before radical changes to the upper stories.

Illustration No. 2

(See following page
for description.)

Illustration No. 3

Photograph of 700-706 Market St. taken by E.N. Peabody in 1876 shows half the Graff House on extreme left when occupied by trunkmaker Henry Simons. Note change in sash of second story windows since taking of photograph, Illustration No. 2. Also seam in brickwork between it and 702, next door. Practically every brick of the second and third stories can be counted. Jefferson's study was behind window overhung by bunting. Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.

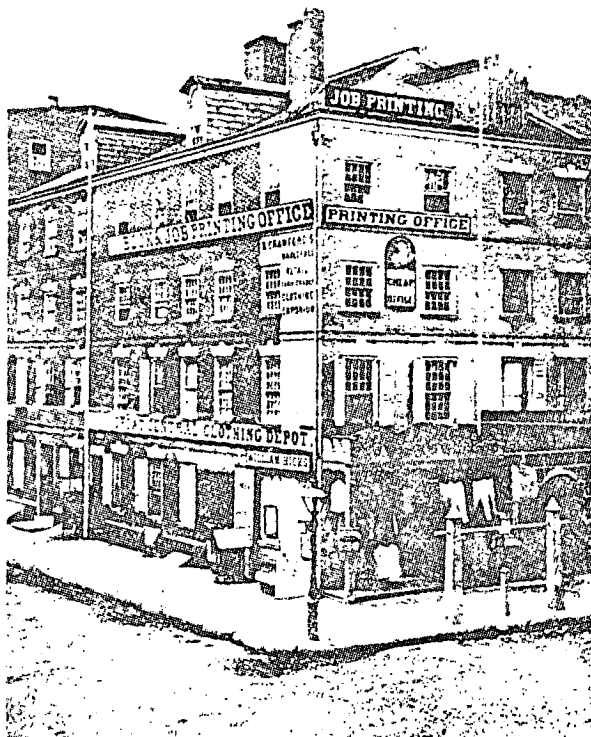
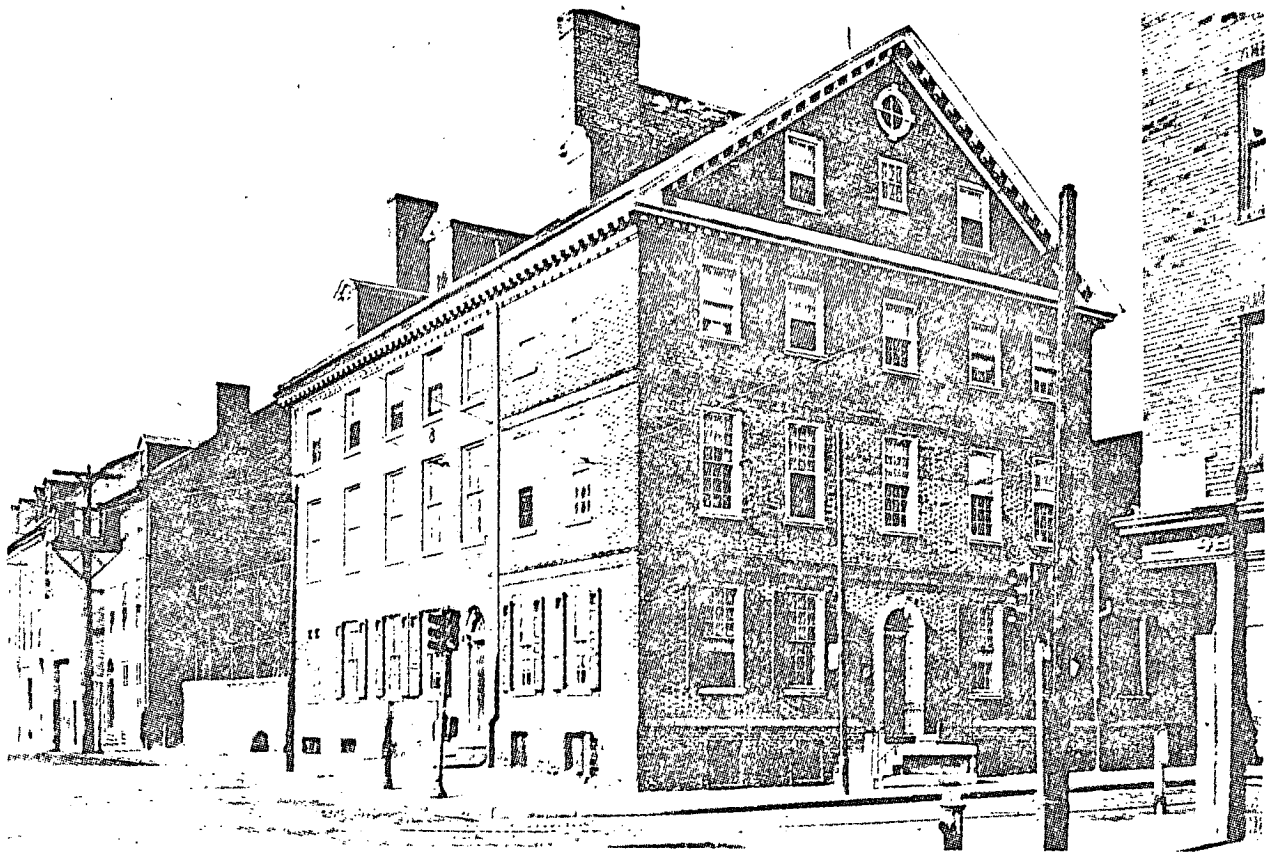




Illustration No. 2

The Graff House in 1854 from photograph in Donaldson's book (opp. p. 68). The white lines were supplied by Donaldson to denote the building's original limits. Note also 1796 building to right of line, put up by Hiltzheimer and four story building to left of line on Seventh Street, erected by the Gratz brothers before August 1808. Glazed header bricks are in evidence. The Graff and Hiltzheimer structures, as described in the 1802 insurance survey, Mutual Assurance No. 505, reads:

Survey of Simon Gratz's three Story Building, situate on the south side of High street and Corner of Seventh streets, Dimensions, 32 feet on High street and 50 feet on seventh street, Lower, story, East part the front hath a Breast, surbase, washboards, windows Cased, and a Dentle Cornice round the room, the Southeast room was finished for a Kitchen as is Customary, the west Room is a Store quite plain, with rough floors, the Ceiling is plastered, but the walls are not, there is a small Counting Room in the rear, having a Mantle, surbase, washboards and window Cased, second story, East part, Mantles, closets washboards, surbase, windows, cased and two Rooms, hath Cornice round them, the west part plain and not Plastered Third Story, East part, washboards, and windows, cased west part, quite plain, Garrets not plastered, Trap Door winding stairs, Common floors in the Eastern part, and rough ones in the western part, one Chimney hath Marble, Pediment and Architraves in front, the westernmost part of this Building is new, the Roof of the other part patched

As altered by the Gratzes and described in the 1808 survey, Mutual Assurance No. 1300, the building was now a

. . . four story Brick Store Situate on the South west Corner of High & Seventh streets, Dimensions 32 feet by 90 feet, - A part has been finished for A dwelling house, First Story, 2 rooms, Breast, mantles, Surbase, washbd^s, Closets, windows, Cased & wood Cornice in one Room, a marble mantle in one Room, Second Story, Similar, except the marble mantle, Third Story, 3 rooms, washbd^s, Closets, & windows Cased, 2 flights Common winding stairs, The first Story of this part is occupied as Counting Rooms, the whole communicates with the other parts of the Store, the first Story of which is plaister'd, Second, Third & Fourth Stories, and Garret all occupied for Storeing, not Plaister'd, Trap Door, Slate Roof. Stone Cornice, Battlements, 3 Arch head Dormar windows Common strait Stairs, Floors all heart pine bd^s & plain'd, first floor are 5/4 boards, Materials good Sound & well Built, In the Garret is a strong Truss'd partition to Support the Roof. Ashes are kept in an Iron pan, water plenty, Bounded west by A two Story frame & South A two Story Brick houses. . . .



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Illustration No. 4

Fire Mark No. 484 of Mutual Assurance Company (Jacob Hiltzheimer's policy number) that remained affixed to the Graff House wall from 1794 until 1883. Weathering of board has left it misshapen. Plaque originally had shape of fire mark to the right, that of Frederick Heisz at 610 Race Street, Philadelphia, issued in 1792. Photocopy from Alwin E. Bulau, Footprints of Assurance, p. 32. Fire marks are in Home Insurance Company's Firefighting Museum in New York City.

Illustration No. 5

Walnut door reputedly from Graff House, since installed at summer home in Ventnor City, N. J. Lead came from a Mrs. Edward G. Haack of Narberth, Pa., who reported that at the time the house was torn down ". . . the door was salvaged intact by a man named Shreve. . . ." The demolition contractors for the Penn National Bank were Steel and Evans. Memo, Regional Archeologist Cotter to Chief of Interpretation Nelligan, Oct. 16, 1957, Research Note Card File, Independence National Historical Park. Photograph taken by writer Jul. 29, 1971. Donaldson's friend, A. J. Steele owned the properties at 706, 708, and 710 Market St., and it was in the cellar of 710 that the Graff House salvage was stored until moved to the lot in West Philadelphia.



25



26





1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Illustration No. 6

Copy of Hyman Gratz's sketch of Graff House second floor, prepared in 1855 for John McAllister. Original is in Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Illustration No. 7

Scaled drawing of marble window sill from Graff House, showing details of design and dimensions as well as setting in window frame. From Folder E-14, Thomas Jefferson Commemorative Committee, Charles Abell Murphy Correspondence. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Illustration No. 6

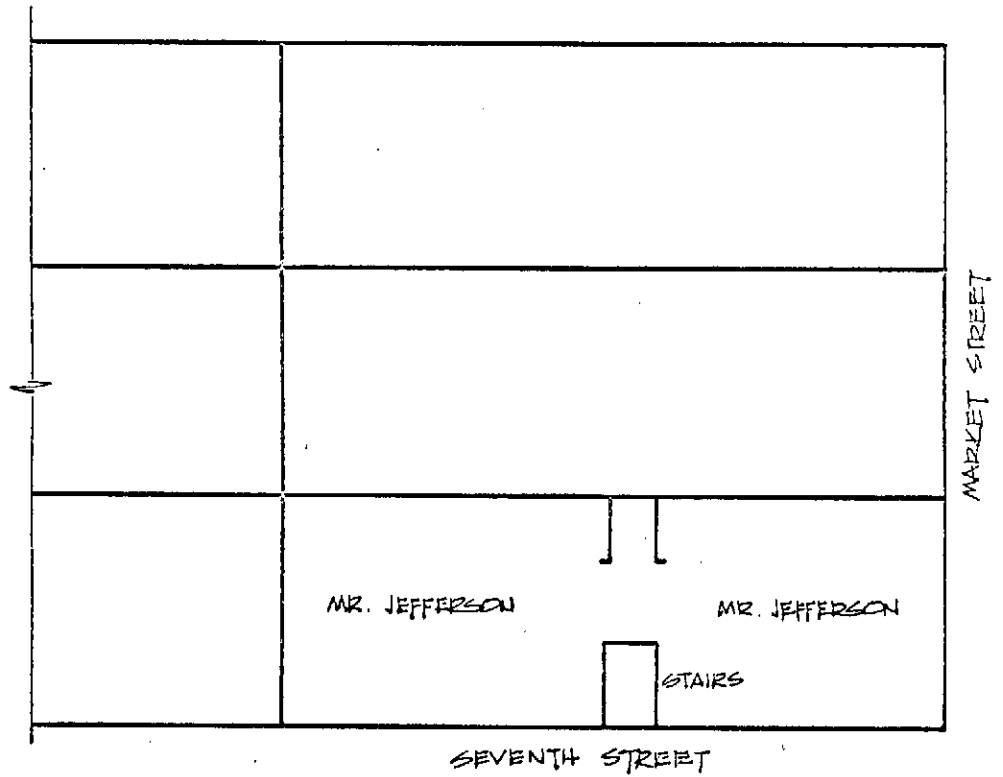


Illustration No. 7

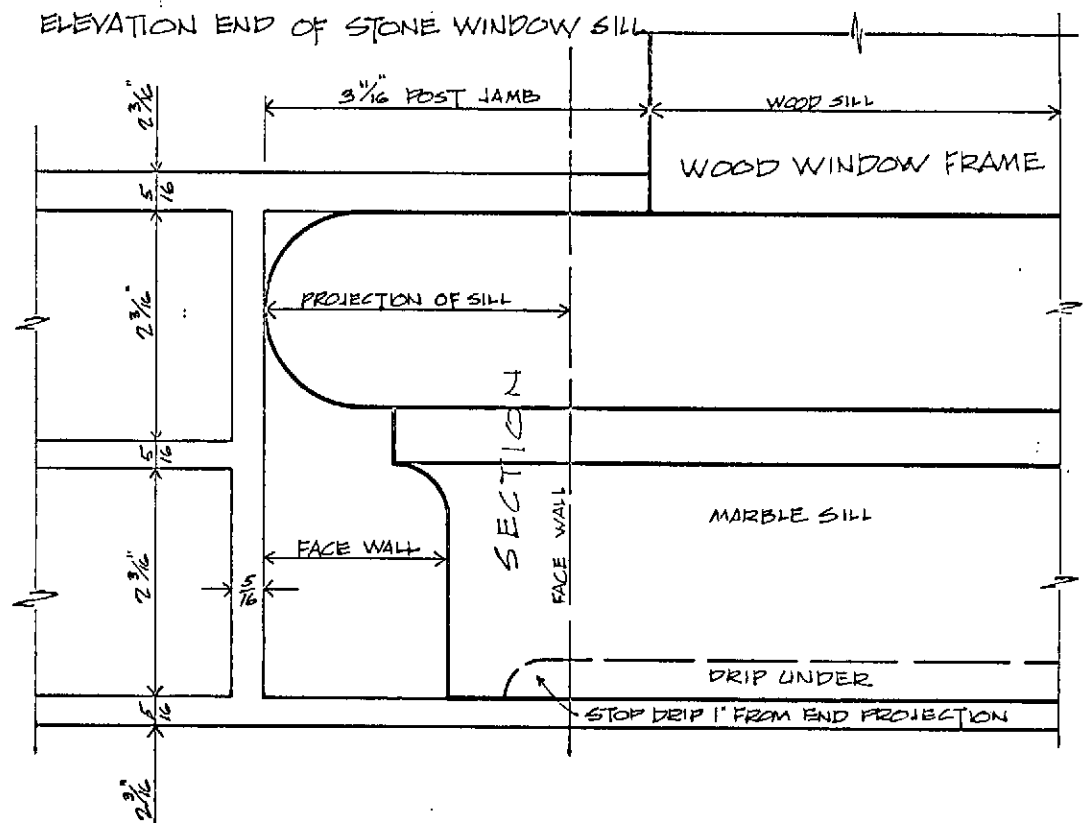
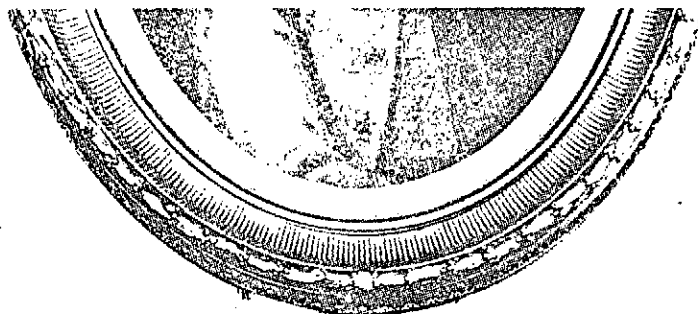






Illustration No. 8

Graff House mantle in board room of Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It is of Pennsylvania grey marble. Topmost brass plate above mantle bears inscription: "This mantle/formerly stood in the room occupied by/Thomas Jefferson/at the time he wrote the Declaration of Independence/. It was presented by the Directors of/the Penn National Bank to Mrs. Wm. C. Ludwig/November 1898." Bottommost plate bears inscription: "Presented by/Mrs. Wm. C. Ludwig/to/the Historical Society of Pennsylvania/April 27, 1906." Courtesy of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



IN THE
CHURCH OF
ST. MARY
AT
ST. MARY'S

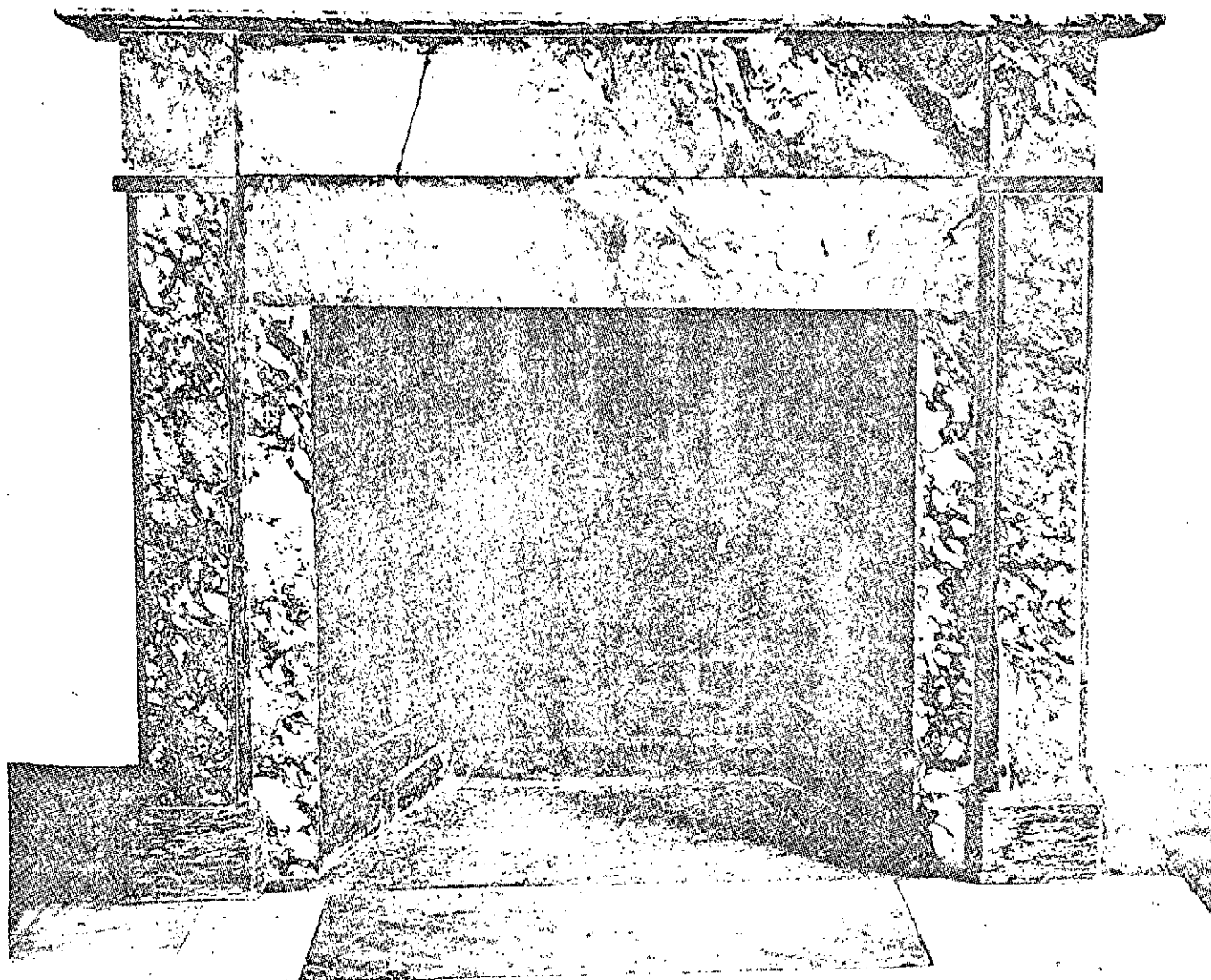






Illustration No. 9

Photocopy of drawing prepared for the Bricklayers Company of Philadelphia of Graff House elevation and floor plans around turn of the century. As discussed in body of report, drawing is misleading but data supplied in legend at upper left assumes importance with reconstruction of the house ahead. Drawing supplied by company member George W. Biddle of the firm of Biddle-Van Every, Philadelphia brick and mason contractors. Courtesy of The Bricklayers Company of the City and County of Philadelphia.

PLANS OF HOUSE IN WHICH
THOMAS JEFFERSON
 LIVED

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

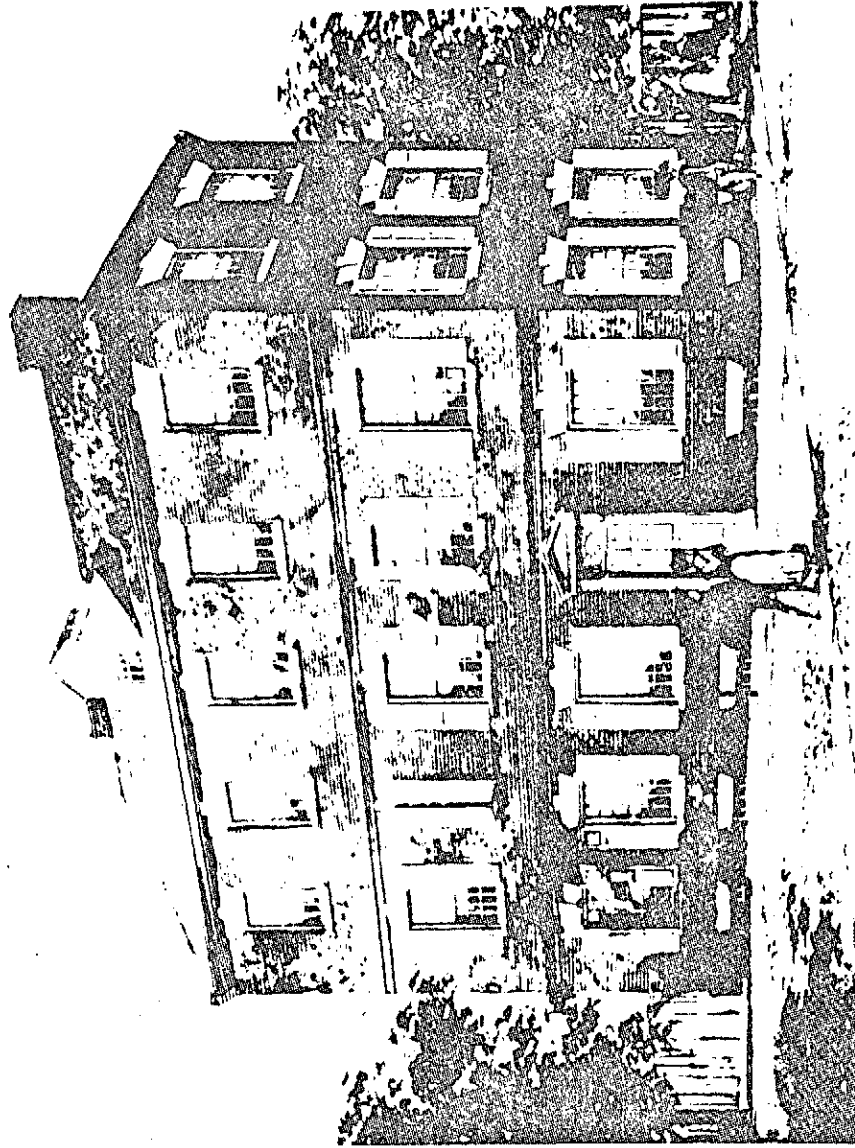
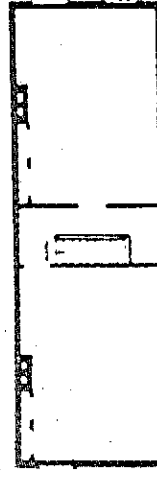
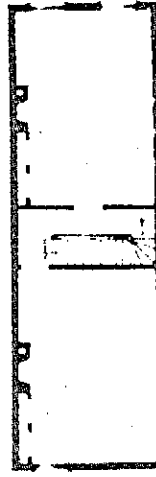
1776
 100 N. 2ND ST. PHILADELPHIA, PA.
 PENN. NATIONAL BANK

100 N. 2ND ST. PHILADELPHIA, PA.
 PENN. NATIONAL BANK

MEASUREMENTS OF BUILDING

100 N. 2ND ST. PHILADELPHIA, PA.
 PENN. NATIONAL BANK

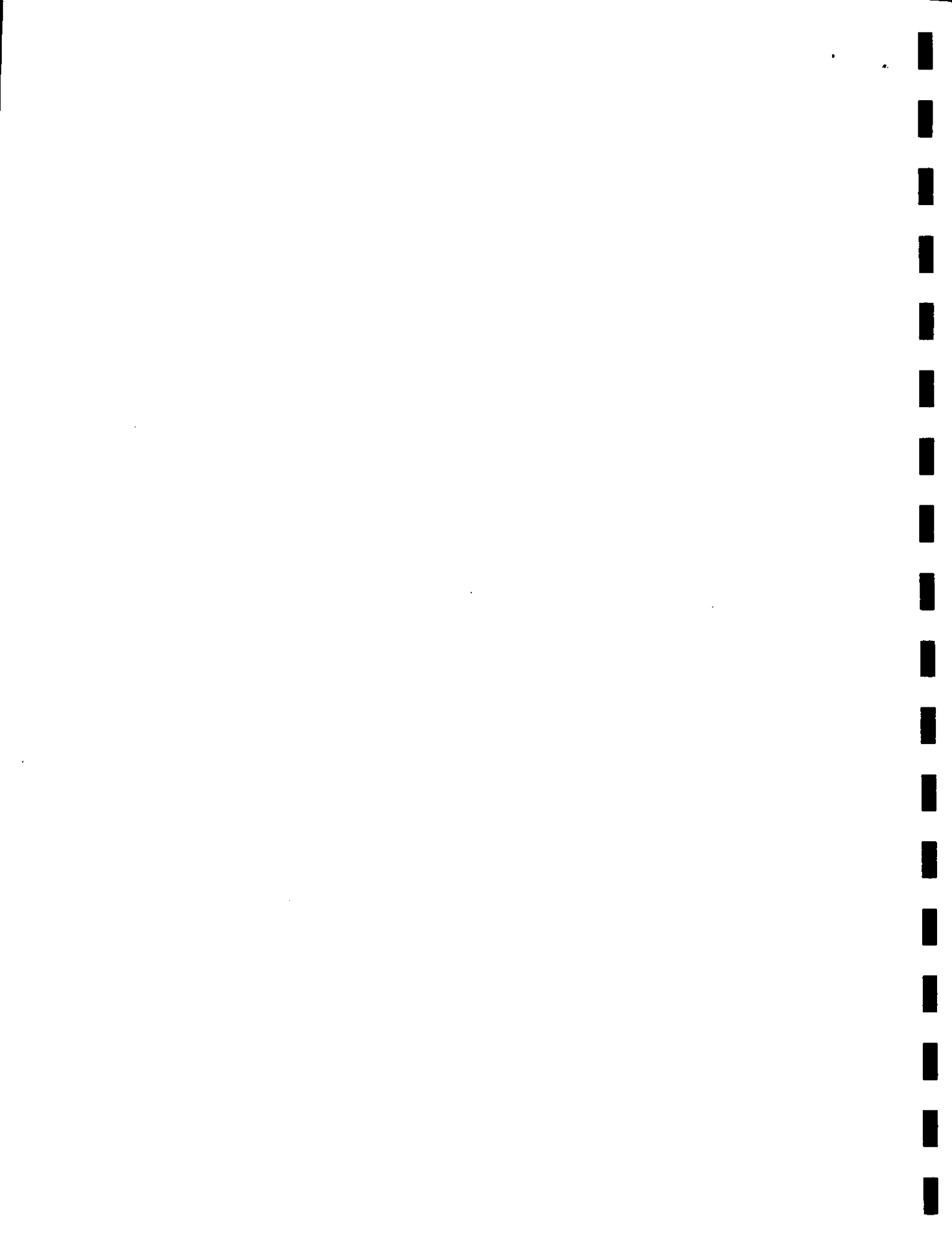
100 N. 2ND ST. PHILADELPHIA, PA.



PREPARED FOR THE **BRICKLAYERS COMPANY**

OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA

FOUNDED A.D. 1790



ICONOGRAPHY OF THE GRAFF HOUSE

The Graff House attracted no early interest as an art subject; nothing in its appearance invited the Birches, Duvals, Peales, or Bowens to capture it in oil or watercolor, ink, pencil, or other medium. Indifference during the first 50 years, confusion thereafter surely undermined its appeal, while remodeling and rebuilding marred its outward graces. With the advent of the photographer's tools of trade, it quickly became a subject of their plates and lenses. By the early 1850's it was being photographed, but only one picture appears to have survived, the photograph presented here as Illustration No. 2, taken perhaps as early as 1854. This is the most revealing as far as details of structure go, conforming to the description committed to paper in 1855 by John McAllister, even to the painted front facing Market St. If this photograph fails to attain quite so early a standing, it shows nevertheless with a fair degree of accuracy the house as it was then.

By the 1870's, with the centennial approaching, a marked acceleration of interest brought a number of photographs onto the scene. Donaldson and Joseph Jackson later misattributed two or three of these to the 1850's, but a check of city directories by the writer shows them to date much later. They are not believed to add to knowledge about the house, but copies are available in the Park files for anyone who would pursue the subject further. An exception is the north wall closeup presented here as Illustration No. 3.

With the realization that the house had been much changed came the first attempt at an artist's reconstruction, the undated watercolor by Benjamin R. Evans, now in the print collection bearing his name at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Whatever the basis for his rendition, it misrepresents principal features of the house, attempting to conform to the general structural outline of the four story building with its hipped roof and redistributed dormers, stripped of cornices of proper characteristic and doorway out of place. Nevertheless, this drawing proved to be of immense influence, perhaps owing to the prominence of Evans as delineator of the old Philadelphia scene. Scharf and Westcott's 1884 History of Philadelphia placed it before a very large audience. Donaldson made it his frontispiece. And the Bricklayers Company even made their floor plans conform to the misplaced doorway by laying a path through the first floor front corner room to the center stairhall (see Illustration No. 9). All later drawings down to the present have fallen in line.

Under the circumstances National Park Service architects will have a golden opportunity to set straight a public until now ignorant or misinformed about the "House in which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence."



SOURCES

The Graff House is not a well-documented structure. In the sparseness of detailed and specific materials from the date of construction and the absence of interior views, much will have to be guessed at or made representative rather than exact. Much primary and printed primary source materials have gone into this report, with little extension of coverage into secondary sources. So the writer, as is his custom with reports of this description, has dispensed with the more extensive bibliography possible where one deals with Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence.

As is the case with reports about buildings and sites of Independence National Historical Park generally, this one has behind it twenty years of highly organized research in all the most important repositories here and abroad. The footnotes reflect the extent of this effort as well as its effect. The historical data chapter of the Park's Preliminary Development Plan for the Graff House, May 1967, written by Martin I. Yoelson, has been very helpful to this writer. The research recommended on pages 8 and 9 of Section 1 has been done, most of it by Mr. Yoelson himself, and it has brought a number of the matters discussed herein more clearly into focus. The reconstruction project can be proceeded with now in the full confidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to exhaust documentation.

