

Varnum's Headquarters

Quick Facts

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Valley Forge National Historical Park

General Info

- Two-story and three bay masonry farmhouse with attic and half basement.
- Date probably between 1711 and 1735. Enlarged to east, probably before 1800 and raised to a third story, ca 1830.
- First restoration beginning in 1921, second in 1934-36, and third restoration in 1975-76.
- Size 33 by 22 feet.
- Foundation: rubble fieldstone. Cellar extends only 15 feet westwards from east wall. Outcrop of stone at north side.
- Walls: coursed rubble fieldstone with quoins dressed more squarely; 22" thick at grade. Shallow stone water table immediately above pent roof on façade and rear. Low arches over windows and entry on original south façade but filler stones between sash and the arch are not set back. Raised beveled mortar joints of white mortar 1976. Wood shingled pent roof rebuilt in 1936 and restored in 1976 with hipped ends.
- Windows: 6/6, first and second floors, pans 8-3/4 x 11-1/4" on the first floor, 8 x 9-3/4" on the second floor, 2/4 at west end of stairs, 2/2 at east end and attic, panes 8 x 10". Shutters: none.
- Doors: at south and north entries, 8-panel with small panels at top and below lock rail, larger panels above lock rail and at foot.
- Cellar door: No door at cellar wall; modern hatch type of head of stone steps, supported on low stone walls extended above retaining walls at access steps, board and batten with modern hinges and hasp.
- Roof: No gutters. Pent roof, wood shingles. No gutters.

Interior

- Floors: cellar concrete. First floor all new joists, flooring all pine, random 7- 1/2 to 10", new in 1975 in the west room, re-set in 1975 in the east room from boards, possibly original, salvaged from remainder of first floor. On the second floor and in the attic, all joints and flooring original except where patched.
- Walls: plaster, all replaced in 1975. Reveals at windows slightly splayed. Partitions and stair enclosure in the east section, all 1975, and consisting of "panel boards" from floor to ceiling with raised centers and canted sides, mortised into alternating wide boards with 1/2" ovolo molding on their edges, cant and ovolo averaging 2" same in reverse.
- Ceilings: First and second floors all original, floor joints with chamfered edges exposed. (Subsequent plastering was removed in an earlier restoration, probably in 1920s.)
- Doors, Trim, Stairs, and Cabinet work: All replaced in 1975.
- Fireplaces; First floor, west room: cooking fireplace, stonework original, chimney repaired, brick top restored; 9'-7" wide by 5' - 2" high, 56" deep. Provided by a small angle nook window on the west wall with original wood stool. Rough stone hearth, stones resets in 1975 but probably installed in 1920s. Walls and back plastered, original curves lintel damper ca 1933.

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List of Classified Structures Reports Volume I Historical Building No. 1,
John and Cherry Dodd
Valley Forge National Historical Park.
Classified Structure Field Inventory Report, Structure #101



Spring House

- Masonry spring house with partitioned work room on the lower level, possibly used as a kitchen for hired hands as wash house, with finished living quarters, without partitions, on upper level and interior and exterior access to attic. Date after 1798 and probably in 1830's during period of addition of third story of house.
- Size: 28 x 17 ft, with 16 x 17 ft open areas on south side.
- Foundation: rubber sandstone
- Windows: all 1975; 6/6 with no parting beads.
- Trim, doors, and hardware all 1976.
- Roof: wood shingles; rafters enclosed in soffit, joist ends exposed, end joists bedded in stone masonry of the gable walls.
- Chimney: stone below the roof line, brick above, corbelled for two penultimate courses.

Interior

- Floors: in the spring room, original stone floor re-set in 1975. In upper level replacement, random pine in 1975.
- Walls: All plaster, all partly original, lower level board partition, 1975 random beaded boards.
- Ceilings, door, and trim all replaced in 1975.
- Fireplaces: rebuilt and new finished in 1975

Ruin: Stone Foundation

- Fieldstone foundation wall excavated in 1973. Possibly an earlier house with oven, possibly slave quarters.
- Date: between 1686 and 1720 or so, destroyed before 1800.
- Size: 22 x 16-1/2 ft, rounded extension 7 ft at conjunction with main wall, protruding 5-1/2 ft.
- Foundation Walls: rough dressed fieldstone, dry laid, 18 to 20" thick at the north end and east and west sides, 26" thick at the south end from which rounded extension protrudes southwards. 18" deep in "oven foundation" area.
- Floor: crushed rock fill.