THE OLD BARRACKS, TRENTON, N. J.

BY VICE-CHANCELLOR EDWIN R. WALKER
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[The following letter of Vice-Chancellor Walker, addressed to the President of the "Old Barracks Association," of Trenton, N. J., contains so much data that has not been used before, relating to this interesting historical pile of buildings of Colonial and Revolutionary days, that it warrants publication.]

To the Old Barracks Association,
Trenton, New Jersey,
Mrs. J. Murray Forst, President.

Dear Madame:

Ever since the unveiling of the tablets at the Old Barracks on June 20, 1909, in which ceremonies I had the honor to participate, I have thought that your Association should be in possession of a picture of the structure as it stood when first erected and before its partial demolition by the opening of Front street westerly from Willow street, and the conversion of the northerly wing running eastward into dwelling houses. A fact not hitherto generally known and concerning which the belief has been both ways, is, that the old colonial stone and brick dwelling house on the northwest corner of Front and Willow streets, was part and parcel of the original Barracks and was the officers' quarters. My idea of the desirability of the Association having a picture of the historic structure, has crystallized into practical form, and I have had an accurate drawing of it made by Mr. Henry R. MacGinnis, of the School of Industrial Arts, which drawing I herewith present to the Association, and beg its acceptance at their hands. The picture as you will notice, exhibits the Barracks as they originally stood, and also shows the portion still standing, now owned and preserved by your Association.
On this occasion, it seems to me fitting that some account of the historic old structure should be given, that it may be preserved in concrete form and save trouble hereafter to those who would explore the various sources of information which I have examined in order to write a succinct and veritable history of these Barracks. Therefore, with your leave, I will now proceed to an account of this matter, pointing out the source of authority for every fact disclosed, that it may be easily verified.

The reason for the building of the Barracks was set forth in my address on the occasion of the tablets ceremonies, in which I said: "For a time preceding the year 1757, the war cry of the allies of France was heard upon the then frontier of our country; in parts now accessible in a few hours by our modern methods of transportation, but then remote. Born of their fears, the desire of the colonists that suitable protection be afforded against the expected incursions of the savage Indians found expression in petitions to the Legislature for the erection of Barracks, in which to house the troops of Britain and of the colony, mobilized for defensive purposes, and at the same time to ease the burden of supporting soldiers quartered in the houses of the inhabitants. In compliance with the prayers of the petitions, the Legislature made an appropriation for the erection of these very Barracks among others, and they stand today, if not the only, certainly the best preserved, of the defensive fortresses built in 1757–1758." I should have stated, that a portion of the Barracks stood as originally erected. I now know that they are the only ones standing in anything like their pristine condition.

In the winter of 1757, a petition was sent to the General Assembly of the Province by magistrates, freeholders and inhabitants of the town of Trenton and other places adjacent in the county of Hunterdon, which recited:
"That altho we your Petitioners do with truly Loyal and grateful Hearts acknowledge how much we Owe to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and his Parliament, for furnishing us with repeated supplies of Troops at this Criticall Juncture of Affairs when our all is threatened and endangered by our Inveterate and Potent Enemy, in Conjunction with surrounding nations of Cruel and deceitful Savages. And altho we are cheerfully willing to exert the utmost of our power to render these his Majesties Troops perfectly usefull, and to answer the just end for which they were designed, in proportion to the number that shall from time to time fall to our share to support: Yet such is the Scituation of Trenton being so great a thoroughfare, and consequently so many soldiers continually passing and repassing upon their Severall Commands, and Quartered upon us Night and day, that unless by the Assistance of this Honourable House we can by some wholesome Law and legal Remedy be eased of this present Distress, the Country will be no longer able to bear the Burden, nor the Officers have it in their Power to keep their stragling Soldiers under due Command and Subjection.

"We shall not take upon us to dictate to this Honourable House what should be the method of this Remedy, but hope we may presume to offer our Sentiments, that if we could be provided with convenient Barracks it would answer all ends both as to the conveniency and safety that would redound to the Troops, as well as the great ease and advantage it would be to the Subject.

"We therefore your Petitioners Humbly request that this Honourable House would speedily take it into Consideration and enable us to erect and Build such sufficient and Convenient Barracks for the purpose aforesaid or to give us such other adequate Remedy, in such Measure, and with such Power & Authority, and with such Clauses, Proviso's and restrictions as to this Honourable House, in their Wisdom shall think meet and fit.

"And your Petitioners as in duty Bound shall ever Pray &c."
There are 39 petitions of similar character on file in the military records of the state. (The Old Barracks at Trenton, New Jersey, by Adjutant General William S. Stryker, 1885, pages 4 and 5.)

On March 31, 1758, at a session of the Colonial legislature at Burlington, the above mentioned petition of the magistrates, freeholders and inhabitants of the city of Trenton was presented to the House, setting forth the great inconvenience they lay under for want of barracks and praying that barracks might be provided for, was read and referred to the committee on the bill for that purpose. It was ordered by the House, that the following members, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Yard, Mr. Read, Mr. Paxson and Mr. Leaming, be a committee to prepare a plan of the manner and an estimate of the expense of building barracks for 1500 men and lay the same before the House. The above named committee on the same day made the following report:

“We, the Committee appointed to consider of a Plan for building Barracks for 1500 Men; and computing the Expenses thereof, do hereby report, that we are of Opinion, it will be proper to build one at Burlington, for 300 Men; one at Trenton, for 300 Men; one at Brunswick, for 300 Men;
one at Amboy, for 300 Men; one at Elizabeth-Town, for 300 Men. And it appearing to us, that the Expence of Building will very much vary, according to the Place where the Building is erected: And that it may be necessary also to vary the method of Building in several Places, the Expence and method are therefore both too uncertain for us to form any tolerable Estimate: Our Opinion therefore is, that the best Method the House can fall upon, will be to appoint three responsible Freeholders in each of the above Places, and to impower any two of them to draw on the Treasury for any Sum not exceeding £1400, for Burlington; nor the sum of £1400, for Trenton; nor the sum of £1400, for New Brunswick; nor the sum of £1400, for Amboy; nor the sum of £1400, for Elizabeth-Town and with the moneys so received, to compleat the said Buildings, in the most cheap, expeditious and convenient Manner they are capable of. All of which is, nevertheless, submitted to the House by

CHARLES READ,
AARON LEAMING,
HENRY PAXSON,
JOSEPH YARD.”

The report was unanimously agreed to, and it was ordered that the following members, Mr. Smith, Mr. Nevill, Mr. Read, Mr. Fisher, and Mr. Yard be a committee to bring in a bill for building barracks for quartering soldiers. (Minutes of Assembly 1758, pages 12 and 13.)

On Friday, April 7, 1758, Mr. Smith from the committee brought in a bill for the building of barracks which was read and ordered to a second reading. On Saturday April 8, 1758, the engrossed bill entitled, “An Act for building of Barracks within this Colony, and for preventing spirituous Liquors being sold to common Soldiers without leave from proper Authority, and for other purposes therein mentioned,” was read and passed, and it was ordered that Mr. Nevill and Mr. Read carry the bill to the Council (now the Senate) for concurrence. On Thursday, April 15, 1758, a message was received from the Council by Mr. Ashfield, acquainting the House that they had passed the bill for building barracks within this colony &c., without amendment. (Minutes of Assembly 1758, pages 19 and 23.)

On Saturday, April 15, 1758, Governor John Reading came into the Council, and having by the secretary
required the attendance of the House of Assembly, the Speaker with the House attended: "When His Honour was pleased to Give his Assent to the Bill Entitled an Act for Building of Barracks within this Colony," &c. (Journal of the Provincial Council, N. J. Archives, vol. 17, p. 165.)

The act thus passed provided that the treasurers of the colony pay unto Hugh Hartshorn, Thomas Scattergood, William Skeels, John Allen, Joseph Yard, Theophilus Severns, Reuben Runion, Henry Fisher, Joseph Mount, Samuel Nevill, Thomas Barton, John Smyth, Robert Ogden, Cornelius Hatfield and Jacob Dehart, such sum or sums of money, as they might think necessary for erecting and building barracks sufficient to contain three hundred men, at each of the respective places of Burlington, Trenton, Perth Amboy, New Brunswick and Elizabeth-Town, together with necessary conveniences; and further that Andrew Johnson, James Hude, Richard Salter, Robert Lawrence, Charles Read, William Morris, John Johnson, Ebenezer Miller, and Richard Smith, were appointed trustees for the colony of New Jersey, in whose names the respective deeds of the grounds should be taken, to and for the use of barracks for the sequestering of soldiers whenever they might be sent by proper authority to reside in any of the places named.

General Stryker informs us, that soon after the passage of the above mentioned act, the ground at the west end of Front street, the river road (which is now State street, turning south through what is now Willow street), was purchased from Mrs. Sarah Chubb, whose father, Joseph Peace, purchased the lot in a tract of 36 acres from James Trent, son of William Trent, and that the erection of the Barracks was commenced on May 31, 1758. (The Old Barracks, &c., pages 10, 11 and 12.) This deed appears never to have been recorded. I made a diligent search for it in the office of the Secretary of State where deeds were recorded at that time, but was unsuc-
cessful. Though barracks were built in pursuance of the act in all of the places provided for, namely, Burlington, Trenton, Perth Amboy, New Brunswick and Elizabeth-Town, only the deed for the Burlington barracks, dated June 3, 1758, appears to have been recorded. (Book of Deeds, vol. "O," page 290, Secretary of State's office.)

The committee of the Provincial Assembly were quite right in their surmise that the expenses of building would very much vary according to the place where the building was to be erected, as I find in the Minutes of Assembly (1760, pages 52, 54; 1765, pages 34, 68), that the barracks at Perth Amboy cost £4052-2-7; at Burlington, £2643-9-2; at Elizabeth-Town, including furnishing, £3589-7-8½; at Trenton, £1040-14-2; plus £2446-6-9, there being a record of two payments with reference to our Barracks.

The building of the Trenton Barracks was pushed so rapidly that more than one-half of them were filled with soldiers in December, 1758, and they were fully completed in March, 1759. In October, 1759, the Barracks were occupied by a regiment of Highlanders, whose peculiar dress created much interest among the people of the town. (The Old Barracks, &c., page 12.)

We come now to the interesting question of the old colonial house on the northwest corner of Front and Willow streets. General Stryker says, that in December, 1759, a small addition was built to the Barracks for the use exclusively of the officers in charge of the English troops. (The Old Barracks, &c., page 12.)

The Barracks, as you know, were erected in the form of three sides of a hollow square, the main building running north and south with two wings, one at the northerly and the other at the southerly end, both extending eastward. General Stryker says, it was built entirely of stone, undressed, two stories in height, the main building—130 feet in length and 18½ feet in width, with two wings each 58 feet in length. The time between the com-
pletion of the Barracks in March, 1759, until December, when the addition for the officers was built, and when the building must have resembled the only pictures of it which have ever been published, namely three sides of a hollow square with wings of equal dimensions, is a period of months only, after which time until the partial demolition of the building for the opening of Front street, the appearance of the building must have been unchanged and included the officers' quarters, which were, in fact, the colonial house on the northwest corner of Willow and Front streets. I assume that General Stryker was correct, when he says that the officers' quarters were built in December, 1759, although he does not disclose the source of his authority, nor does he mention the colonial building as being those quarters. He doubtless assumed that that was a fact known to those who were conversant with local history. However, in the twenty-six years that have elapsed since his pamphlet was written, this fact, if ever generally known here, has been practically buried with the older inhabitants who have passed away, and is almost entirely unknown to the living Trentonians of today. I was able to find only one person who could assure me of the historical fact, that this building was the officers' quarters and part and parcel of the Barracks built in 1759, and that was Miss Emeline R. Johnston, of 184 West Front street, whom I interviewed last August (1910). Miss Johnston was then nearly 89 years of age and in the full possession of her faculties. She told me her family moved into this very house in 1836, when she was in her fifteenth year, and that she and her sister resided in the house until the time of the war of the rebellion, when she left and her sister, who is now deceased, continued to reside there many years afterwards. Miss Johnston informed me, not only that she had always understood that the old house was part of the Barracks and occupied by the British officers, but that a daughter of Conrad Kottz, who lived on the west side of South
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Warren Street between State street and Front street during the Revolutionary War (see General Stryker’s Trenton 100 Years Ago, page 11), and who was 16 years old at the time of the battle of Trenton, and who when a widow by the name of Robinson (whose first name she had forgotten, but who went by the name of “Aunty” Robinson), called upon the Johnston family in 1836, when they first moved into the old house, in conversation told them, that the house in which they were living was standing there during the Revolutionary War, and was occupied by the officers in command of the troops quartered in the Barracks. Miss Johnston also informed me, that when she lived in the house, there was an iron plate in the fire-place in the kitchen about one yard square, with the British coat-of-arms upon it, the lion and the unicorn being distinctly remembered by her. Many of the older people of Trenton are acquainted with Miss Johnston and knew her sister, and will remember the private school which they conducted in the old house for several decades.

Now, the information imparted to me by the venerable and respected Miss Johnston is, it seems to me, perfectly conclusive of the question under examination. Here is a person who tells us that the old house was the officers’ quarters at the Barracks, not because of tradition handed down to her for several generations, but by testimony received first-hand and from the lips of one who was practically a contemporary of the building. Furthermore, doubtless no one would have installed an iron plate bearing the British coat-of-arms in that house soon after the Revolutionary War, the feeling against England being intense for many years after the close of the conflict. Again, undoubtedly the house would not have been built where it is as a residence, disassociated from the Barracks, until after Front street had been opened, as before that time the Barrack’s lot was entire and in the ownership of a single individual. However, I did not permit my researches and investigation to end
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here, but later discovered a piece of evidence which is documentary in character and absolutely conclusive of the fact, that the old house was a part of the Barracks. Having learned that Doctor Carlos F. Godfrey, late of the Adjutant General's office, had made some researches concerning the Barracks at one time, I told him of the investigation I was making and requested that he give me any information he might have concerning the subject in hand. He very obligingly told me, that he had found in the cellar of the state house a ground floor plan of the Barracks which showed the old house as the officers' quarters. Through his kindness I was placed in possession of the plan, or rather plans referred to, for they are in duplicate, one on each side of the same sheet of paper, and I have had them photographed. These photographs I also send you along with this communication, and beg your acceptance of the same. From inspection, it would appear that the plans are not the working plans from which the Barracks were built in 1758–9, but that they were made at a later date and for a different purpose, as I will now proceed to show. The French and Indian war ended with the establishment of peace with France in 1763. During the year 1765, the building seems to have been unoccupied and the attention of the General Assembly was called to the fact in May, and they ordered that the perishable articles therein should be sold and the building kept in repair and rented. William Clayton and Abraham Hunt were appointed commissioners to carry out these orders of the legislature, and they immediately sold the furniture and rented the building and premises, a clause in the lease requiring them to be given up at any time on suitable notice of the governor, that they were needed for the use of British soldiers. (The Old Barracks, &c., pages 12 and 13.) Now it will be observed by looking at the photographs of the plans, that the building was divided into rooms, which are numbered, and a price set opposite the number of each room. It is obvious that there was no one in Trenton
in the Colonial period who would for any reason or purpose desire to rent the Barracks as an entirety, and therefore, it clearly appears that the building was divided into rooms for the purpose of renting to families and others, and this arrangement must have been made in or about 1765 and continued down to 1776. Therefore this plan must have been made not earlier than seven nor later than seventeen years after the erection and completion of the Barracks, and must have been made by a man who was contemporary with the constructure and knew when he drew the plans and marked indelibly upon them as he did "officers house," that he was making a correct drawing and truly stating a fact, concerning the Colonial mansion on the corner of Front and Willow streets.

Digressing for a few moments from the examination of data concerning the history of this interesting structure, I desire to bring to your attention an historical incident connected with the Barracks not hitherto published anywhere, save in the public records and archives of the state. It consists of the documents laid before a meeting of the Provincial Council in 1767, concerning the reception by the last Colonial governor, William Franklin, from Earl Shelburne, one of the Secretaries of State of England, of the disallowance of an act passed by the Provincial legislature in 1766, appointing commissioners for supplying the several barracks erected in the Colony with furniture and other necessaries for accommodating the King's troops in, or marching through, the Colony, and for defraying other incidental charges. Thus it appears, that a matter of importance concerning our historical Barracks, among the others, was passed upon by the King of England and his Privy Council, and disallowed because the act of the legislature of the Colony which was vetoed, flouted an Act of Parliament. The full minute of the Colonial Council on this question, is herewith submitted for your perusal, because of its interest and because of the illustrious Englishmen who
sat in judgment, advising the King as to the audacious
law of the Colony.

"At a Council held at Burlington on Friday the 26th day of November
1767.

"Present

"His Excellency William Franklin Esqr. Governor

\{ \text{Charles Read} \}

\{ \text{John Smith} \}

\{ \text{Samuel Smith} \}

"His Excellency laid before the Council two letters he had lately received
from the Right Honble the Earl of Shelburne, one of his Majestys Principal
Secretaries of State, dated at White Hall July 18th 1767 and August 7th
1767, enclosing the Opinion of the Board of Trade, that an Act of Assembly
of this province passed in June 1766, ought to be disallowed, and his
Majestys Royal disallowance of the said Act, which are in the following
words, viz.

"To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty.

"May it please your Majesty.

"We have had under our Consideration an Act passed in your Majestys
Province of New Jersey in June 1766, and Entitled, 'An Act appointing
Commissioners for supplying the several Barracks Erected in this Colony
with Furniture and other necessarys for accommodating the Kings Troops
in or marching through this Colony, and for defraying other incidental
Charges.'

"Whereupon We beg leave humbly to represent to your Majesty That
Whereas the Act of Parliament passed in the fifth year of your Majestys
Reign, for Amending the Mutiny Act, and for rendering it more effectual
in your Majestys Dominions in America, does direct the Governor and
Council of the respective Provinces to appoint Commissioners for furnishing
your Majestys Troops with certain necessaries therein Enumerated,
and that all the Expenses incurred thereby shall be paid by the said Prov-
ince respectively, this Law does on the Contrary make the Nomination
of the said Commissioners An Act of the General Legislature of the Province
referring them not to the Act of Parliament above recited but to the Usage
of the Province for the several Articles with which your Majestys Troops
are to be supplied and limiting the Money to be paid by the said Province,
on Account of the afsd Service, to the Sum of One hundred Pounds for
each of the five Barracks in the said Province.

"For these Reasons, as this Act of the Legislature of New Jersey does
not make provision either in the Mode, or to the Extent allowed by the
Act of Parliament above referred to, We do humbly recommend it to your
Majesty to signify your Royal disallowance of this Act.

"Which is most humbly submitted

\{ \text{Whitehall} \}

May 8th 1767
"At a Court at St. Jame’s the 13th day of May 1767.

"Present

Seal of the Privy Council

The Kings Most Excellent Majesty

His Royal Highness
the Duke of York
ArchBishop of Canterbury
Lord President
Duke of Bolton
Duke of Queensbury
Duke of Argyle
Marquis of Granby
Lord Steward
Lord Chamberlain
Earl of Denbigh
Earl of Shaftsbury
Earl of Litchfield
Earl of Marchmont
Earl of Bristol
Earl of Harcourt
Earl of Ilchester
Earl of Besborough
Earl of Hillsborough
Earl of Shelburne
Viscount Falmouth
Viscount Barrington
Viscount Clare
Bishop of London
Lord Berkley of Stratton
Lord Bathurst
Lord Sandey
Mr Treasurer of the Household
Jas Stuart McKenzie Esqr
Wellsbore Ellis Esqr
Sir Gilbert Elliot
Master of the Rolls

"Whereas by Commission under the Great Seal of Great Britain, the Governor Council and Assembly of his Majestys Province of New Jersey are Authorized and impowered to make, Constitute and Ordain, Laws, Statutes and Ordinances, for the publik Peace, Welfare and good Government of the said Province; which Laws, Statutes and Ordinances are to be, as near as conveniently may be, agreeable to the Laws and Statutes of this Kingdom and to be transmitted for his Majesty’s Royal approba-

tion or disallowance, And Whereas in pursuance of the said Powers An Act was passed in the said Province in 1766 and transmitted, Entitled as follows, vizt

"An Act appointing Commissioners for supplying the several Barracks Erected in this Colony with Furniture and other necessaries for accommodating the Kings Troops in or marching thro’ this Colony and for defraying other incidental Charges.

"Which Act having been perused and considered by the Lords Com-

missioners for Trade and Plantations and by them presented to his Majesty at this Board as proper to be disallowed His Majesty was thereupon this Day pleased, with the Advice of this Privy Council to Declare his disal-

lowance of the said Act. And pursuant to His Majestys Royal Pleasure thereupon expressed, the said Act is hereby disallowed, declared Void and of none Effect Whereof the Governor or Commander in Chief of his Majestys sd Province of New Jersey for the time being, and all others whom it may concern, are to take notice and govern themselves accord-

ingly."
(See Journal of Governor and Council, N. J. Archives, vol. 17, page 459.)

Returning to the subject of our narrative, I perhaps cannot better tell of the use and occupation of the Barracks during the Revolutionary War, than by here inserting that part of the inscription on the inside tablet above referred to, which covers the Revolutionary period, and is as follows:

“For a short time preceding the battles of Trenton and Assumpink it (the Barracks) was occupied by British troops, Hessians, Provincial recruits for the service of the Crown, and Tory refugees, and during the remainder of the war by troops of the Continental Line, State Militia and their French Allies.”

For three years after the war of the Revolution the Barracks were disused, and on June 1, 1786, the legislature directed the commissioners of this state to sell all the barracks and lands attached to them. (The Old Barracks, &c., page 14.)

By deed dated February 18, 1787 (Hunterdon county Clerk's office, volume 1 of Deeds, at page 222), Moore Furman, one of the commissioners for the state, sold the Trenton Barracks to William Ogden and William Patterson. Moore Furman was a distinguished Jerseyman of the late Colonial and early State epochs. He was Deputy Quartermaster-General of New Jersey State Troops during the Revolutionary War, and was an all 'round man of affairs. One of his descendants was the late Capt. William E. Hunt, of the United States Navy, and his present day descendants in Trenton are of the families of Green, Hilson and McIlvaine. Some five years after he sold the Barracks as commissioner for the state, Moore Furman acquired the property individually by conveyance from William Ogden and William Patterson and their wives, by deed dated March 30, 1792 (Hunterdon county Clerk's office, volume 1 of Deeds, page 661). The “Old Barracks” and their grounds have at all times since the last mentioned date been owned by
private individuals, first in their entirety, and afterwards in divided form.

In the course of my investigations, I endeavored to ascertain the exact date of the demolition of that part of the Barracks through which Front street was extended when opened westward from Willow street to Delaware street. General Stryker in his "Old Barracks at Trenton," page 14, says that this was done in the year 1813. I endeavored to ascertain the exact date in 1813, and the source of authority for the extension of Front street, but found nothing relating to Front street. I examined the old atlases and maps in the office of the city engineer but could find nothing bearing on the question; files of the newspapers covering every period during which the street may have been opened, so far as any statement recorded in print seemed to indicate, but found nothing on the subject.

In Raum's History of Trenton, at p. 271, it is said that Front street was continued to the state house yard directly through the old Barracks in 1801, making two separate buildings of it instead of one as theretofore.

This diversity of dates between Gen. Stryker and Mr. Raum perplexed me, and I undertook by a search of the records for conveyances both here and at Flemington, Hunterdon county, for you know that Trenton was in Hunterdon until Mercer county was formed in 1838, to ascertain when lots were first conveyed on Front street, including any part of the "Old Barracks," in the hope and expectation of finding that the street was laid out as a private enterprise by the owner of the entire tract and not by virtue of any public authority, and thus, approximately at least, to ascertain the date of its opening. In this I was disappointed, as a break in the record title occurs between the years 1792 and 1813. The last recorded conveyance of the Barracks lot to any one was that to Moore Furman in 1792, above mentioned. The next conveyance of any part of the premises was in 1815, and was made by the heirs of Samuel W. Stockton.
There is no conveyance of record here or at Flemington showing any divestiture of title out of Moore Furman or any devolution of title upon Samuel W. Stockton. From extensive and laborious searches of the records at Trenton and Flemington, with regard to this matter, it was found, that in 1793, the surveyors of the highway under and by virtue of proceedings in the Hunterdon county court of Common Pleas, laid out Front street westerly from Willow street to the state house lot as a highway, the lines of which passed through the "Old Barracks." This is perfectly apparent from the beginning point of the new road and its course as described in the return of the surveyors, corresponding as it does with the courses in deeds for lands bordering on the street. A copy of the return taken from Road Book "A," Hunterdon county, page 187, is as follows:

"Road fr. ye end of)  
Front Street in)  
Trenton to ye State)  
House lot &c.)

"We the Surveyors of the Highways of the Townships of Trenton, Maidenhead & Hopewell being legally called by order of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas for the County of Hunterdon to lay a road fr. the end of front street in the City of Trenton to the State House Lott, & we after viewing the premises & hearing the allegations of all parties do agree to lay a road forty-two feet wide as follows: Beginning at the end of Front street afsd. near the Barracks from thence running in the middle of the Road North seventy degrees west, four chains & seventy links to the State House Lott, thence North twenty-two degrees East, three chains & forty-nine links out into the road that leads from Abrm Hunts to Beatty's ferry and that the said road be opened on or about the first day of September next.

"And we the said Surveyors being also called by the afsd order to vacate a certain Alley running between the Lotts of Agr. Appleton & Isaac Peace, and we do agree to take up & vacate the s'd alley as follows. Beginning at the end of said Alley at the Southeast corner of said Abr. Appleton's Lott & we do agree to take up & vacate the same until it intersects the afsd's new road. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands & seals May 27th 1793.

John Riggs, (L. S.)  
Israel Moore, (L. S.)  
Theophilus Phillips, (L. S.)  
Recorded May 28th, 1793."
Notwithstanding the laying out of the road to be opened on or before September 1, 1793, it seems not to have been accomplished in fact, at least not through the Barracks building, until 1813, although portions of Front street were certainly opened between Willow and Delaware streets prior to that year, because by a deed made in 1809, property was conveyed on the lower side of Front street, east of the Barracks, one line of which ran to the "Barracks lot," and by a deed made in 1811, property was conveyed on the north side of Front street by a line running from Delaware street westerly about eighty feet which, of course, did not extend east as far as the "Barracks lot" proper. In view of these facts, and others which will be hereafter mentioned, I am of opinion, that General Stryker was right in his assertion that the street was actually opened through the barracks in 1813, because: (1) he was an eminent historical authority; (2) he wrote his account twenty-six years ago and had better facilities than I, at least traditionally, and probably documentary, to enable him to ascertain the facts; (3) Mr. Raum was not as thorough and accurate as General Stryker. What precedes Mr. Raum's assertion, that Front street was opened west of Willow street in 1801, is this: he says the buildings known as White Hall (Old Barracks) were erected by the King as barracks for his officers. This we know is a mistake. The King never erected the Barracks, nor was his permission even asked. They were erected exclusively by the Colony and maintained for its defence. True, they housed the soldiers of the King, but were not built exclusively for officers. Then again, in describing the building, Mr. Raum says, it commenced at Willow street, extended thence west toward the state house, thence ran south crossing Front street, thence taking an easterly direction terminated again at Willow street, forming three sides of a hollow square. As Front street, by his own assertion, was not opened until 1801, the Barracks running south in 1758, could not have crossed that street, unless he
means they crossed what is now Front street. The description if not inaccurate is certainly loose. Therefore, I say that General Stryker’s date should be given preference, and as no information is obtainable showing any other date as the time of the actual demolition of the walls of the building to admit of the extension of Front street, that year, 1813, should, I think, unhesitatingly be accepted as the true date of the event.

It must be a source of pride to Trenton, that the Barracks here are the only ones of the five erected that are preserved in anything like original form and appearance. I have made inquiry of gentlemen living in the other cities where barracks were erected, namely, former Chancellor Magie, of Elizabeth, Captain James Parker, of Perth Amboy, Mr. Henry S. Haines, of Burlington, surveyor-general of West New Jersey, and Mr. William H. Benedict, of New Brunswick, and learn from them that the old barracks in their respective towns are totally demolished, with one exception, and that is in Burlington, where but fragments of the original structure remain. These remnants of barracks are incorporated into St. Paul’s Catholic Church and Parochial School, Burlington. They consist of the extreme end of the wings of the Barracks, one being the rear portion of the church and the other the rear of the school. The barracks there, unlike those at Trenton, were built of brick instead of stone. Mr. Francis B. Lee and I visited Burlington and inspected the remains of its barracks in company with Mr. Henry S. Haines, during the month of December last (1910). Mr. Lee gave it as his opinion, that the reason the Burlington barracks were built of brick was because bricks were manufactured in that locality at that time, and no stone quarries existed in the neighborhood. At Trenton, as we know, there are numerous quarries, one or more of which were open in pre-revolutionary days.

Besides the old mansion on the corner, that part of the Barracks which was the north wing proper, is now incorporated into the three dwelling houses to the west of the
mansion, being Nos. 106, 108 and 110, West Front street. The two houses adjoining the mansion are under the original Barracks' roof as is plainly to be seen by a mere inspection, and by comparison with the roof on the old building which is intact on the south side of the street. The most westerly house is extended several feet into Front street and built above the original Barracks' roof. The lower west wall, however, of this building, and the rear walls of all of them are of the original structure of 1758.

It will be noticed by even a casual observer, that the front wall of the mansion and the two adjoining houses on the west, are of brick instead of stone, and the question arises: were the buildings thus constructed originally, or were they altered at or after the time of the extension of Front street? Mr. Jules S. Ferriot, a mason-builder of this city, at my request made a careful inspection of these buildings and gives it as his unqualified opinion, that the brick walls were not originally incorporated in them, but were put in afterwards. This, coupled with General Stryker's assertion, that the building was "entirely of stone," seems to abundantly show that the brick walls must have been of later origin than the structure itself. Another evidence that the brick walls were put in at or after the alteration of the Barracks is this: When the change was made a new front wall had to be supplied to the most westerly part of the building on the north side of Front street, and that wall when built extended into the street on a line with the officers' quarters on the east, leaving the intermediate building a few feet back in recess, as the two houses composing it exist today. The front wall of the most westerly house, now of stucco, was of brick, as Major Samuel S. Armstrong has informed me, and he says he well remembers his father, the late Horatio G. Armstrong, covering it with stucco and raising the roof another story in the year 1863. Still another evidence, and one which is quite conclusive, of the fact that the brick front walls were put in the buildings on
the north side of Front street west of the officers' quarters after the extension of that thoroughfare, is the fact that there are no ends of sawed-off joists which supported the balcony to be seen upon the face of the front walls of the two houses in recess on Front street, while a glance up under the projecting eves, will plainly show the marks of the square upright posts that supported the balcony. This clearly indicates that the balcony was there, and out of some other walls than those there now must have projected the timbers that held the floor. Ergo, there must have been another wall there originally, and that wall must have been a stone wall corresponding with the one still extant on the face of the Barracks on the south side of the street. This reason does not exist as to the front wall of the mansion, but there is abundant evidence without it, and that evidence applies to all four houses on the north side of the street.

My theory is, that when Front street was extended and the north wing of the Barracks including the officers' quarters was detached and turned into residences, the brick walls were put in the fronts by the then owner or owners to give them a more modern appearance and to dissociate them as much as possible from the old Barracks of which they had been an integral part, little dreaming that that association would be a desideratum in future generations.

A matter barely mentioned, and which is of interest, is the fact that the Barracks have been known to some extent as "White Hall." Reference to them by that name is to be found frequently in old conveyances. Lossing in his "Field Book of the Revolution," vol. 2, page 244, makes mention of the building by that name and prints a sketch of it made by himself, when on his visit to Trenton in search of historic data in the year 1848.

Some of the pictures of the "Old Barracks" that have heretofore appeared, have shown it with plain walls running from the ground to the overhanging eves of its roof, and some have shown it with a balcony between
the first and second stories on the inner sides of the square. That the balcony existed there is the most cogent proof. This matter has already been touched upon in explaining about the brick front walls in the present structures on the north side of Front street.

A glance at the walls facing north and east of the detached portion on the south side of Front street, will disclose the ends of sawed off joists on a line with the second floor. These joists are close together, thus giving the balcony great strength, which was required. This fact, coupled with the pictures, which amount to corroborating evidence, establish, beyond doubt, the fact of the existence of the balcony in the early days of the structure, and, therefore, I have had the balcony incorporated into the drawing which I send you. Another thing: Mr. MacGinnis, who drew the picture, discovered the exact number of posts that supported the balcony and has correctly reproduced them. The marks are still visible under the eves of the remaining roof on both sides of the street, and indicate the entire number originally existing.

I will trespass upon your time to exploit but a single other thought, and one for which I claim no originality; one that has been rather wished than hoped for,—but one that is perfectly feasible, and may some day be an accomplished reality. It is the restoration of the “Old Barracks” to their original condition. Independence Hall, the historic old State House in Philadelphia, has been restored, why not the “Old Barracks” at Trenton?

In my address at the unveiling of the tablets, I took occasion to remark, that in a humble way it may be said that this building bears something of the same relation to Trenton as does the Tower of London to the historic city of that name. We cannot boast that this stronghold has never fallen into the hands of a foreign foe, as England proudly boasts of her Tower, but we may with pride allude to the fact, that within these walls no such frightful scenes of blood and carnage have been enacted as in the gloomy fortress on the banks of the River
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Thames. With us, quite differently, these bloodless Barracks are associated with hallowed memories of the Revolution.

Think of the possibilities to be derived from a restoration of this historic structure! Within its walls might be instituted an armory, as in the Tower of London, where various weapons used in warfare might be exhibited, especially weapons which are of historic value in themselves. Meetings of patriotic societies could be there held, and innumerable other uses and advantages could be attained. These are but suggestions. This is a fact: If these Barracks were restored they would comprise one of the most, if not the most historic building in the state of New Jersey! Is this not a matter in which not only the citizens of Trenton, but the citizens of the state should take an interest? Are not the "Old Barracks" something for the people of New Jersey to cherish with pride? At least, the Barracks as they now exist will be preserved, and I cannot, I think, more fittingly conclude this article than to again quote from my address at the unveiling of the tablets and say:

"If in the calm that succeeded the storm—if during the period that followed the Revolutionary struggle—the supporters and defenders of our country, weary of the conflict, turned their hearts and minds to other things, and permitted the ravages of time to obliterate many an object of historic interest, we, their descendants, atone for their sins of omission, and, fired with an unalterable zeal, are resolved, that every remaining relic shall be preserved—a sacred altar! at whose shrine we may worship."

In this spirit these Barracks will be preserved:—preserved in the name of their builders; in the name of their owners:—for all time and for all the people,—a link connecting the martial past with the peaceful present.

Respectfully,

EDWIN ROBERT WALKER.

Trenton, February 6, 1911.